

## Distributional logics of Swedish sports organizations to elite athletes

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### Aim

The aim of this presentation is to map out and analyze how Swedish sport organizations decide which elite athletes that will receive financial means. The focus is on the distributional logics guiding these decisions. The organizations in question are the Swedish Olympic Committee (SOC) and the Swedish Football Association (SFA). I define distributional logics as the principles guiding the organizations decisions regarding distribution of money. I haven't found any studies that analyze how distribution of financial means is done in sports. There are however studies about money in professional sports. So my study is a different way of viewing payment to elite athletes.

### Theories

I use three starting points that will guide my analysis of the results. I will use these because they can be discussed in relation to elite sports where gender and justice issues are contrasted by a need for sports to be a business. First, the market logic saying that actors on a market should reinforce strong products and lose the weaker ones (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen, 2012). Second, men's activities and performances are considered more worth according to the gender order (Ridgeway, 2011). Third, unequal distribution of means is only acceptable if it benefits the less advantaged (Rawls, 1972).

### Method

The study is based on interviews with representatives of the sport organizations (the chair of SOC and the chair and the economic manager of the SFA). I chose interviews to be able to ask questions and discuss elite athletes, and their economic situation in a general term and also to discuss the organization's role towards the athletes. The data will be analyzed by viewing their answers through the starting points. Do they see it as a business and are they considering gender equality and justice when they distribute means.

### Results

The SOC distribute scholarships to elite athletes within their program. Only a few selected athletes are included in this program. What decides this inclusion is how big the chances are for the athlete to win an Olympic medal. You could call it a competitive logic. There are no consideration taken to gender or specific sports. To receive a scholarship it's crucial that the athlete is able to train and compete, which means that athletes will not receive financial support during for example rehabilitation or parental leave. But there is a possibility to receive money to be able to bring along the family to competitions.

A case with other distribution logics is the SFA. They have the economic ability to give symbolic payment for loss of income when athletes are playing for the national team as well as bonuses for performances in championships. When it comes to distribution logics I have identified three different logics that is

applied to different situations. Within a national team money is distributed equally no matter how much the athlete has played or performed. You could call it an equality logic. Between the men's and the women's national team there is a difference, where women receive less. This is based on the fact that men earn more money in their clubs, which ultimately is connected to a market logic. But if you should maximize profit, as one market logic says (Kotler et al, 2012), then that would mean the women's team wouldn't receive bonuses for their performances in championships since their participation is a cost and don't generate any money at all. So you could say there also exist a gender equality logic that grants the women's team money for their achievements.

### Discussion

The SOC's competitive logic for the distribution of money could be problematic from a gender perspective. According to Ridgeway (2011) women are often overlooked and viewed as less competent than men. There's a risk that these stereotypical views could also affect the distribution of SOC's means. Concerning not giving money for pregnancy but supporting athletes with family will consequently affect women more negatively since pregnancy affects their ability to train and compete. This is something that SOC needs to consider as an equality matter.

The SFA adhere to a market logic to defend unequal payment to men and women. Rawls (1972) says that unequal distribution is permitted if it benefits those who are disadvantaged, which in this case are women. So to adhere to market logics is not only unjust according to Rawls, it also feeds on the perception that men's performances are more worth and therefore recreates inequality (Ridgeway, 2011).

### References

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