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Sports in relation to the purposes of Norwegian higher education

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December 2021

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Acknowledgments

I enrolled at the University of Oslo's Master's program in International Higher Education in 2003. In the length of time, it took me to finally complete this project, I got married, learned a language, we had 2 kids, and I completed two careers. Also, during this time, the world managed to understand that climate change was an existential threat, the U.S. finally left Afghanistan and a reality TV personality fulfilled an entire term as president, while managing to be impeached twice in four years. I may be slow, but I don't quit.

My life took turns I didn't foresee shortly after I started this project. Ultimately this project was sidetracked for a burgeoning career in professional baseball, which parlayed into a career in the oil and gas sector. I always made sure that the research materials I had collected always stayed visible on a shelf in my office, reminding me of the unfinished business.

I'm thankful to the University of Oslo and the lovely people behind the International Higher Education program. Specifically, Kristi Lynette Barcus-Sævareid deserves my thanks as she helped me navigate my way through a bureaucratic world that I hadn't been in for a long time. While we have not interacted, I know Peter Maassen has served as an influence in allowing me the opportunity to return to this project and finish old business. Without my advisor Martina Vukasovic I would not have managed any of this. You have provided honest, efficient, and professional guidance through the process, much of which was spent in lockdown with a preschooler attached to your hip.

Finally, my wife Hege deserves more of my gratitude than I can express. Her patience, encouragement and logistical help made this process possible and at times bearable.

1. Introduction

Norway has a high level of participation in physical activity and sports club membership throughout numerous segments of the population. The Nordic country witnessed an explosion of participation in physical activity between 2001-2007 adding to an already heavily active population (Green, Thurston, Vaage, & Roberts, 2015). While the primary growth in activity among 16-19-year-olds nearly doubled in participation rates, the survey conducted revealed that only 8% of the population between 16-79-year-olds did not participate in any physical activity (Green, Thurston, Vaage, & Roberts, 2015).

Norway also has a significant participation in higher education. According to Statistics Norway, 35.3% of the population has attained some form of higher education. This has been a relatively stable percentage since a massive growth began in the 1970's. Today's current rates are a 25-percentage point increase from the 1970's (Statistics Norway, 2021).

The institutions of higher education, as well as sports and physical activity, encapsulate a significant portion of the Norwegian population's time and focus. Therefore, it begs the question as to how they are related, if at all. This research seeks to explore the relationship between sports and higher education in Norway by understanding what the relationship is, why it exists, and how they impact one another.

1.1. Rationale

Sports plays a central role in most people's lives in one way or another. To some it is

recreation, to others it may be a profession, and to many it may be a tool for personal development. Considering Norway's extensive degree of engagement with higher education and sports, I am motivated to understand how higher education addresses sports and how sports influence higher education.

Sports and its many facets have become mainstream subject areas within higher education curriculum throughout the world. Within academia, sports tend to be studied and taught through the lenses of physiology, sociology, business, and medicine. There is no shortage of academic work examining human performance, sports injuries, and the impact of sports on human development.

As will be presented in Chapter 2, much of the research being done surrounding sports and higher education emanates from the United States where the collegiate sports model consumes much of the spotlight. This professionalized form of sports as entertainment is embedded within and among U.S. higher education institutions. This model generates and consumes massive amounts of funding as shown by the National Collegiate Athletic Association's report from September 2020 that, in 2019 their member institutions reported revenue of \$18.9 billion (NCAA N. C., 2020). This provides a strong rationale for why it is important to investigate the entire realm of sports in higher education. The professionalized U.S. collegiate sports model consumes most of the oxygen within the sports and higher education discussion. This leads to little analysis being done concerning the role of sports within higher education beyond professionalized forms of competition. Specifically in the Norwegian context it appears that little analysis has been done in understanding how and why sports resides within

higher education.

1.2. Research Aim and Research Questions

This research seeks to fill a gap in the research around sports and higher education in Norway by investigating what makes the relationship between these two what it is. This will include an examination from the perspective of higher education actors within sports academia in Norway, as well as from the perspective of representatives of the Norwegian sports community. Areas of exploration will include the understanding of how sports is organized in and around higher education in Norway and the alignment of higher education's primary purposes with sports. Utilizing the primary purposes of higher education as my starting point, the research will explore funding, student choice, and organizational strategies as they relate to sports.

Within specific disciplines we see an obvious linkage of sports within higher education through specific curriculum aimed at the sports community. One specific example of this includes the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). NTNU offers degree programs and conducts research in sports science as well as physical education and sports within the department of sociology and political science. Meanwhile, in southern Norway at the University of Agder (UiA), sports-related courses are offered within a specific faculty for health and sports science. There is little analysis of the relationship between Norwegian higher education and Norwegian sports that examines why and how these institutions have organized their sports offering so differently. Similarly, one can find a load of research within the sciences

aimed at sports performance or medicine, or leadership curriculum aimed at teaching sports and coaching. A simple Google Scholar search of the former produces over a million examples, and the latter produces over 400,000. Similarly, there is no shortage of material from higher education examining sports and its role in society, medicine, business and even government. Using a similar snapshot through Google Scholar we see nearly half a million hits when searching “sports” and “higher education”. However, the reasons why higher education takes on this role and the way sports impacts how higher education interacts with it, is seemingly non-existent in Norway.

When completed, my goal is that I will have developed a clearer picture of a few key components of the relationship between higher education and sports. First, I want to establish a means by which to view and discuss the various ways in which sports and higher education institutions are formally organized. Not all purposes of higher education are the same, and not all sports and their various levels of competitiveness are the same.

Secondly, I seek to gain an understanding of how higher education views its role towards sports, and how representatives of sports view higher education’s role toward sports within the Norwegian context. I want to examine what they may be gaining from one another, how they are potentially doing each other harm, and to what degree are they potentially cooperating.

This research will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the primary purposes of higher education?

2. How is the position of sports in Norway perceived by various higher education actors, including sports university colleges?
3. How does the position of sports in higher education relate to the understandings of the purposes of higher education?

I will base my theoretical framework on Johan Olsen's *four visions of the university* which will be explained in chapter three. I have chosen a qualitative approach for my methodology, basing the process on the *Interactive Model of Research Design* as described by Maxwell, which I will cover in chapter four.

1.3. Thesis outline

Chapter two will review the literature providing an overview that covers the purposes of higher education, college sports in America, and the role of sports in society.

Chapter three will provide the background for my theoretical framework, emphasizing the work of Johan Olsen as well as applications of his work by Gornitzka and Maassen.

Chapter four will explain the choice of a qualitative methodology as well as a description of the *Interactive Model of Research Design*.

Chapter five will provide the results of the interviews conducted within the framework of the posed research questions.

Chapter six provides the conclusions of my research and pathways for further research.

2. Literature Review

Understanding how higher education stakeholders perceive sports and how sports' role in higher education relate to the overall purposes of higher education, requires a broader analysis of the literature in three specific areas. First, I will dive into the literature surrounding the purposes of higher education. Secondly, I will explore research relating to sports within higher education. Much of this literature stems from the U.S. collegiate sports model because it has a vast and unique national system that, while controversial in many academic circles, has resulted in significant analysis. Finally, I will examine research on topics related to the role of sports in society.

2.1. The Purposes of Higher Education

Arguably the heaviest of hitters in the higher education literature surrounding the purposes of higher education is Manuel Castells (2001), particularly his work on *Universities as dynamic systems of contradictory functions*. He presents the universities' purposes based on four functions with variations existing between countries, historical context, and specificity of the university in question. The four functions he describes are generation and dissemination of ideology, formation of the dominant elites in that society, production and application of knowledge and training the skilled labor force.

Castells argued that, while the modern university carries an ideology of being ideology-free, the historical influence of universities serving as an incubator and disseminator of ideology

carries over to today's institutions. He references Touraine's contention that the university is influenced by and amplifies ideological struggles in society, encapsulating both radical and conservative ideologies (Castells, 2001).

Castells explains that the selection of societal elites through the establishment of networks, socialization, and codes that separate elites from the rest of society is a mechanism that has always existed in universities (p. 207). He cites Oxford and Cambridge, U.S. Ivy League universities, and the University of Moscow as examples of institutions that create their own elite selection process within their own cultural and historical context.

The generation of new knowledge, Castells argues, is the most obvious function to us today, but is a relatively new phenomena that political institutions and businesses began to recognize only during the information age (2001). While Europe was slower to acknowledge universities role as a knowledge creator, the U.S. higher education system embraced the idea and popularized it, particularly in the years following World War II, but only as an add-on feature to another key purpose of higher education in the 'professional university'.

The professional university focuses on the training of a skilled labor force. Castells points out that this is not a new purpose, providing examples of the early church-related universities, the Napoleonic model, as well as examples from Asia. It was however the formation of the Land Grant universities in the U.S. that provided the best environment for professional universities to establish themselves, leading to a spreading of the concept (Castells, 2001). However, with the flourishing of professional universities, particularly in the west,

higher education has become a social need leading to the massification of higher education and eventually a ‘warehouse’ of ‘restive youth’. Here, he implies that the university has become a place to store an overflowed labor market (Castells, 2001).

The key points Castells make here, is that all these functions take place within the university simultaneously, although not always with equal emphasis and at the peril of potentially contradicting each other (Castells, 2001). This is difficult for policy makers to understand, as they push to capitalize on the university as an economic engine by establishing specialized universities but fail to remember or even realize these functions are often conflicting making it impossible for all of them to succeed simultaneously. Ultimately, the university will continue to try and execute all the functions, sometimes to the detriment of the policy makers original intent.

Martin Trow addressed a component of the contradictions that Castells amplifies, in analyzing what Trow coined the ‘Public’ and ‘Private’ lives of higher education. Trow describes the private life of universities as the internal and often informal relationships that occur within the university walls characterized by what is being “*discussed in the classrooms, the libraries, the laboratories.... the moment-by-moment, day-to-day activities...*” (Trow, 1975, p. 113). He describes the public life as all the decisions that are made, affecting the university by parties other than teachers and students. This includes policy makers, governments organizations, and even public discourse.

Trow digs further by highlighting the challenges that the U.S. higher education system

faces, as it moves toward universal access, expands to accommodate greater societal demands, and subsequently requires more funding to meet those demands (Trow, 1975). All these factors inevitably require, as Trow points out, a greater desire for scrutiny and influence by governmental authorities to ensure efficiency.

This desire for accountability ultimately leads to an excessive reliance on quantitative steering, that undermines the larger and more important results of the university experience, which '*increases the tolerance of citizens for unpopular political views and decreases the racial cowardice and bigotry...*' (Trow, 1975, p. 118). He posits, that if higher education has had this impact, then it far outweighs any presumed economic benefits. Without more confidence in the measurement of such difficult concepts, Trow argues that we are taking a great risk in applying effectuations that could potentially damage or make obsolete these critical strides in society.

Trow summarizes by admitting that he has not presented a cure for the public versus private dilemma, but instead pinpoints a series of questions to guide future research. He asks if state steering is inevitable if costs are rising, if public management is a negative force on diversity in higher education institutions, and if so, can they develop tools that instead protect that diversity.

Johan Olsen takes up the questions Trow posed in his discussion concerning *institutional dynamics of the European university*. He describes *four visions of the university*, as they are governed by *internal* and *external* factors: and as their actors having *conflicting* or *shared* norms (Olsen, 2005, pp. 7-13). He paints a picture that separates the idea of the university as an

institution and the university as an instrument to fulfill other actor's objectives. He specifically describes the university as a self-governing community of scholars, as an instrument for national political agendas, as a representative democracy, and as a service enterprise embedded in the markets (Olsen, 2005).

Gornitzka and Maassen analysed the steering approaches of several northern European countries including Norway. They did so through the lens of Olsen's four models, which he described as the sovereign state, the institutional state, the corporate-pluralist state, and the state supermarket model (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000). They conclude that Norway's reforms from the 1980's and 1990's resulted in a mixed steering approach of the sovereign model regarding Norway's colleges, the institutional model regarding the universities and the supermarket model (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000). They highlight that while these reforms resulted in a greater degree of autonomy from the government, the metrics imposed by government concerning this autonomy make it questionable that this was intended by the reforms (p. 284). This argument highlights the truth in Castell's position concerning conflicting purposes and leads us to Kerr's explanation of how to manage such a chaotic enterprise.

Kerr, in describing the American university of today through his experience as a former university president, coined the description *The Multiversity*.

"A university anywhere can aim no higher than to be as British as possible for the sake of the undergraduates, as German as possible for the sake of the graduates and research personnel, as American as possible for the sake of the public at large-and as confused as possible for the sake of the preservation of the whole uneasy balance"

(Kerr, 1963, p. 14).

Kerr describes the university environment from the perspective of numerous stakeholders, revealing that the American institution has evolved to serve the needs of virtually all of society. This leaves one to wonder if it has any clear distinct purpose. His view shows us how the various actors interact with each other and describes the presidential role as that of a mediator among all stakeholders. Yet, for all the wide-ranging stakeholders in play Kerr argues the universities' success is realized in this chaos by way of its adaptiveness, responsiveness, and flexibility, allowing it to represent everyone and no one simultaneously.

In summary, the purposes of higher education are numerous, but depend greatly on the perspective of the stakeholder. Castells tells us it is an institution that develops and shares ideology, creates elites, generates knowledge, and trains the labor force. Trow describes a tale of two ideas in the private versus public life of the university, while Olsen gives us the tools to dissect it from multiple perspectives dependent on the stakeholder's context. Gornitzka and Maassen then show us, specifically with reference to Norway, that multiple steering approaches can and often are applied, depending on the types of outcomes desired as well as the type of entity attempting to be steered. Finally, Kerr provides a glimpse from his experience as a U.S. university president, given all that we have now learned. Kerr's experience includes managing the phenomena that is the U.S. collegiate sports program.

2.2. College Sports in America

Craig Calhoun characterizes the diversity of American institutions as the systems most

distinctive feature (Calhoun, 2000). These same features hold true in the collegiate sports systems that operate within American higher education universities. Understanding how they are organized and what their purposes and goals are, provides context to my larger theme of understanding the purposes of sports within higher education in Norway.

The U.S. collegiate sports system is governed primarily by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA defines itself as a “*member-led organization focused on cultivating an environment that emphasizes academics, fairness, and well-being across college sports*” (NCAA, 2021). It has become a billion-dollar organization embedded in the fabric of American higher education, which has raised numerous controversies’ including academic integrity, dark money in recruitment, and over-commercialization on the backs of unpaid students. It begs the question of how it came to be that sports became such a significant component of the American higher education system.

David Rose defined the controversy of college sports through the lens of two specific questions. First, he asks if college athletes are professional or amateur, and secondly, are college sports programs education or entertainment (Rose, 1985, pp. 143-144)? He goes on to characterize universities within this controversy by labeling them “*the establishment, the reformers, and scholars and radicals*” (pp. 144-147). The establishment describes the view that college sports are amateur, and commercialism is necessary to fund it but within reason, thus requiring greater regulation by the NCAA. The reformers believe college sports need new leaders that will uphold collegiate sports to its moral obligation or make division one (the top and most professional in nature) professional and establish a new structure with less commercialism.

The scholars and radicals believe college sports are already professional without the title, making the problem one of definition and desire to hold on to the old ideals that college athletics is not professionalized (Rose, 1985).

Rose extends the discussion to conclude that it is the institutional response to market demands that makes reform of any type nearly impossible (Rose, 1985). The pressure placed on institutional leaders who feel the need to maintain sports programs as a means of institutional prestige, serves as the foundation of the collegiate sports debate in the U.S. Given the high degree of fragmentation and subsequent number of ambiguous goals any activity can be justified as a means of promoting those goals (Gross, 1968). In this we see a tension build. All stakeholders believe their work is in the best interest of the institution, while others may see it as a threat to their very being. This shows us that sports share similar characteristics to the university at large, which also experiences these conflicts as Castell's and Trow point out.

2.3. Historical Context

There is a wide body of literature surrounding the history of sports within higher education in the U.S. For the purposes of this literature review we will sharpen our focus through what former University of Michigan President James J. Duderstadt describes as three basic stages for the evolution of collegiate sports. He sarcastically describes the '*Amateur model*' as the first phase, which was highly unorganized and amateurish in nature, but lent itself to the hiring of outside talent to help teams win while having little to do with education

(Duderstadt, 2000). This era included the first collegiate contest between Harvard and Yale in rowing, the formalization of collegiate football, and the passing of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862. Kerr describes this phase, emphasizing particularly the 1920's, as an establishment of new contacts for the university, highlighting the public's interest in collegiate sports for entertainment (Kerr, 1963).

The second phase Duderstadt describes is the '*exhibition*' phase (Duderstadt, 2000). The advent of radio and increased media exposure of collegiate sports raised the stakes leading to an increased pressure to procure winning teams, which created the motivations for abuse and cheating (Duderstadt, 2000). This phase also generated some of the first scrutiny of collegiate athletics, some of which still holds true today. The 1929 Carnegie Report on College Athletics noted concerns at the increasing commercialism and professionalism of college football. In the 1950's, the N.C.A.A began implementing policies related to business objectives, including regulation of television coverage and ticket sales (Sperber, 1989).

Duderstadt describes the 1960's and beyond as '*show business*' (Duderstadt, 2000). To illustrate this era, Allen Guttman describes a scenario in *A Whole New Ballgame, An Interpretation of American Sports*, in which Louisiana State University had to choose between shutting down their well-known literary publication, the Southern Review, or purchase a fresh supply of meat for the team's mascot, which was a tiger (Guttman, 1988). "*No contest. The tiger won...but it is difficult to imagine a similar choice at Oxford, the Sorbonne, or Tubingen.*" (Guttman, 1988, p. 101).

When we consider the foundations of American higher education and their connection with Oxford and Cambridge, it causes us to question why their rowing or track and field clubs, which began earlier than American sports clubs, have remained in the hands of the students, while in the U.S., sports activities have been absorbed by the institution and turned into a massive economic enterprise.

One attempt at explaining the unique relationship American higher education has with sports was devised by Donald Chu. He describes a purpose or desirable function of universities' as "*a societal legitimized understanding of what the college/university should strive to do and the means to be employed to reach those goals*" (Chu, 1985, p. 36).

Chu puts forth the argument that the Morrill Act led to institutions of the time basing their curriculum on the development of intellectual culture as opposed to most of society's view of promoting work and survival over education (Chu, 1985). He continues to argue that the ensuing enrollment boom in higher education left education up to the states, creating what Knoles referred to as a lack of uniformity in the 'theory of education' (Chu, 1985). Institutions thus lacked a consistent stream of funding and sports, it was felt, could alleviate some of the financial pressures the institutions faced (Chu, 1985). Chu cites Veysey, who expands slightly on this position arguing that industrialization, democratization, and expansion were the driving force behind universities opening their doors to more students, as well as expanding into areas such as sports to fulfill a demand for social and personal development (Chu, 1985).

Chu expands on his position, highlighting that in many institutions' establishment of a

board of regents, or similar governing body, they were often filled by well-known businessmen with a business-minded approach to institutional management. This resulted in a lack of educationally focused individuals, which may have kept sports out of the eye of commercialism (Chu, 1985). This contributed to the practice of evaluating an institutions success in the same way one would evaluate a business.

Chu connects sports and university faculty to the problem, highlighting that the lack of faculty personnel within the governing bodies of higher education institutions as one reason collegiate sports drifted from the educational mission of the university (Chu, 1985). Duderstadt points out however that, “*Faculty control (of governing athletics) is generally achieved through two mechanisms: faculty bodies formed to govern intercollegiate athletics, and faculty representatives to athletics organizations such as the conferences and the NCAA*” (Duderstadt, 2000, p. 113).

Through this historical lens, one begins to recognize two key developments. First, that what started as fun and games to meet the needs of students, evolved to serve as a tool for universities to capture status and revenue, as higher education expanded throughout the U.S. Secondly, we see the formation of conflicts arising from an increased status of collegiate sports with the academic world.

2.4. The Role of Sports on Student Choice

In his book, *Beer and Circus, How Big-Time College Sports is Crippling Undergraduate*

Education Murray Sperber depicts big-time college sports programs throughout the country as the opiate for the masses of undergraduates, who should be up in arms over a lack of quality in their education package (Sperber, 1989). He claims that universities use ever-increasing tuition costs and student fees to fund the institutions research and graduate programs as well as the excesses of college athletes and coaches. One method Sperber claims institutions use is a marketing concept referred to as the “*New 3 R’s*” (Sperber, 1989, p. 248). This refers to recruitment of new students, retention of current students and renewal of alumni support (Sperber, 1989). He denounces the use of the 3-R approach through three basic points. First, he explains that those who support investment in sports programs only site rare examples of big-time programs that invest and become successful(Sperber, 1989). Most programs, he claims, do not go on to athletic success instead get lost in the anonymity of mediocre sports programs. Secondly, he refutes the ‘retention’ idea by giving examples that show the lower retention rates at big-time universities versus higher retention rates at smaller, more academically inclined institutions (Sperber, 1989). The argument highlights the effectiveness of attending to smaller class sizes, rewarding of teaching, and establishing a community based on shared educational values. The last idea, ‘renewal’ Sperber claims is the myth “most deserving of a silver stake through its heart...” (Sperber, 1989, p. 256). Citing a U.S. News and Report “Alumni Ranking” he displays the top ten universities list which, except for Duke University and Notre Dame, contain no other top division football school on the list (Sperber, 1989). Instead, he highlights seven of the ten as Ivy League Institutions.

These market driven concepts linking collegiate sports success and student enrollment

are, whether real or perceived, a result of strategic choices by higher education leaders to align with societal expectations which I will dive into in the next section and regarding the purposes of higher education specifically the expectation that more students need to be prepared for the labor force.

2.5. Sports and Society

Higher education reflects societal needs and demands as does sports. Understanding how sports manifests itself in the societal realm helps establish a rationale for understanding the role of sports in higher education.

James Michener describes several means by which people participate in sports including as a spectator, mild to vigorous participant, therapeutic participant, and social participant to name a few (Michener, 1976). Kluckhohn's statement expands on the purpose of sports when he writes that "*Any cultural practice must be functional, or it will disappear before long...It must somehow contribute to the survival of the society or to the adjustment of the individual*" (Kluckhohn, 1949, p. 39).

Cozens and Stumpf describe a few of the foundations of sports that contribute to the survival of society, particularly American society, while looking at spectator sports as a fundament of democracy. They describe; the 'competitor' as a means for gaining attention as established at a young age, aesthetic appreciation as we experience in the case of art and music, and ritual of ceremony that draws people together in creating a sense of "*oneness...an*

indispensable ingredient in a successfully functioning culture” (Cozens & Stumpf, 1953)(Cozens and Stumpf p. 284-293, 1953).

Moving into the Norwegian context Giulianotti, whom I refer to in the theoretical framework, investigates Nordic physical culture through the lens of globalization (Giulianotti, 2021). He concludes that the Nordic physical culture is both clearly influencing the world outside itself as well as being influenced by external global culture.

Enjolras and Wahldal take the conversation over to the policy realm in their investigation of two case studies from 1999 and 2002 in which they ask if a neo-corporatism framework was present in the policy development process. They concluded that neo-corporatism was not used and that it appears an increasing politicization by the Norwegian Olympic Committee and a greater desire by the department of Sports Policy to exert direct control over the NOC are the driving forces in establishing a modified approach to policy development in sports based on *“clientela relationships and policy community relationships”* (Enjolras & Waldahl, 2007).

Houlihan and Kristiansen analysed the development of private sports schools in Norway and the processes’ relationship with democratic values. Using Kingdon’s multiple streams framework they come short of concluding but heavily insinuate that governmental inaction served as a policy path in allowing private sports schools to flourish in Norway (Kristiansen & Houlihan, 2015).

Here we see that sport, like many disciplines and subjects found in higher education, have an important societal function, and is therefore engaged to be guided and regulated through

policy mechanisms just as many other societal institutions are.

2.6. Summary

I explained at the beginning of this literature review that I would look at the body of work focusing first on research in and around the primary purposes of higher education, secondly on sports within higher education and third the role of sports in society. In each section I have tried to take the focus from a wider lens in both subject and geography to a narrower viewpoint, particularly to the Norwegian context.

The research surrounding the primary purposes of higher education, specifically Olsen's work, provides us with categories which we can apply to explore the relationship between sports and higher education. Much of the literature relating sports to higher education comes from the U.S. and shows the impact of the multiversity on the development of one type of higher education sports model. The literature does not however compare very easily to Norwegian sports, both in and outside of higher education for a few reasons. First, the historical context of U.S. higher education's evolution and relationship to sports is uniquely influenced by their need for economic stability. Sports became a tool for generating students, revenue, and prestige ultimately leading to its current controversial standing. That controversy drives inquiry leading to a saturation of research and commentary on the world of college sports. Secondly, it appears that the societal consciousness related to sports and what the purposes of sports are vary greatly between the two countries. The Norwegian research in and around sports ultimately focuses on

human development and society while the American research tends to focus on the economics and organizational issues relating to a professional style sports system. I referenced research centered on the role of sports in society, which while significant, also does not take on the questions of how higher education addresses or relates to sports within higher education in Norway. It is at this juncture that my research questions focusing on the purposes of higher education, the position of sports within higher education and how sports relate to the primary purposes of higher education comes to light.

3. Theoretical Framework

I have chosen Olsen (2005), Gornitzka and Maassen (2000) and Giulianotti (2021) as the main building blocks, based on the literature review presented in the previous chapter.

Olsen's *four visions of the university* provide a lens, by which to view all aspects of the university in helping identify its purposes based on who it is serving or reacting to. I will present a version of this model later in the chapter, which adapts the visions to the context of sports and higher education. I will do this by working off Olsen's description of the university as a self-governing community of scholars, as an instrument for national political agendas, as a representative democracy, and as a service enterprise embedded in the markets (Olsen, 2005). The application of Gornitzka and Maassen pulls my theoretical framework into the Norwegian context just as they applied Olsen's model to Norway where they concluded that reforms in the 80's and 90's helped establish a mixed steering approach of Olsen's sovereign, institutional and supermarket model (Gornitzka & Maasen, 2000).

This brings to light similarities in steering strategies shown by Enjolras and Wahldal's (2007) analysis of sports policy in two case studies. The case studies involved the adoption of the governments new sports policy and the regulation of gambling revenues, which greatly impacted the funding of sports in Norway (2007). They analysed each case by identifying the actors involved, the characteristics of these actors' relationships, and the nature of the process in reaching a conclusion. Enjolras and Wahldal identified a modified or mixed-steering approach toward sports policy. The change they uncovered indicated a move from a neo corporatist setting to a mixture of clientele relationships and policy community relationship (Enjolras &

Waldahl, 2007).

3.1. Visions of Sports in Higher Education

I mentioned, at the start of this chapter, Olsen's four visions of the university. Below I apply this model through the lens of sports within higher education. In adapting the model, I leaned on Olsen's emphasis of the *internal and external visions* as well as the *conflicting and shared values* component (Olsen, 2005).

In labelling the visions I made a choice very early that admittedly defined the vision based on its ability to help describe the relationship between sports and higher education. While I have kept a reference to the *service enterprise*, just as Olsen does in his model, as an external and conflicting vision, I modified the other visions to make them more relevant to sports in higher education.

Sport as a threat to academic life was inspired by Olsen's representative democracy. It identifies as a conflicting value and can be characterized by a fight between sports as entertainment or recreation at the cost of academic resources, including time, money, space or even focus.

Sport as a service enterprise is also a conflicting vision and describes a scenario in which the university opens itself up to outside parties with the intent of using sports as a tool for improving institutional prestige or economic status. Conversely, this also opens the university to potential influence by external parties, who seek to use the universities sports platform for their

own gain.

Sport as a student right and value-added service is an internal vision with shared values as Olsen's vision of self-governing scholars was. This vision directs us primarily toward students and in some cases student athletes and is characterized through such things as the health and fitness facilities, entertainment value of sports or academic offerings.

Finally, *Sport as a representative of societal interest* is also a vision, which was informed by Olsens university as an instrument for national political agendas. Its shared values are aimed at the way sports is represented in all of society. Public health and general entertainment being two primary examples of which stakeholders may include the public and politicians or government agencies.

The *Visions of Higher Education Sports model* could be used to help inform policy decisions, operational actions, or even cultural aspects in sports through any of the four visions that seem most suitable for a given institution or state body.

Taking the perspective in which, the visions are a descriptive tool made me realize that in the Visions of Sport in Higher Education Model, the stakeholders may change but that the actual visions displayed have a distinct purpose. I envisioned it being used when one analyses a policy, or even a specific institution's sports program, by investigating the policy or institutions and identifying if the characteristics in that case are reflected within a specific vision.

Table 1. Visions of HE sports. Developed by author based on Olsen (2005) and Gornitzka and Maassen (2000)

	Internal Visions of HE Sports	External Visions of HE Sports
Visions with <i>shared</i> Values	<p><i>Sport as a Student Right or Value-Added Service</i></p> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Students • Student Athletes <p>Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health/fitness facilities • Entertainment • Campus Rallying Point 	<p><i>Sport as representing Societal Interests</i></p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectators • General Public • Public Health • Politicians • Alumni <p>Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectator Identity • Media Exposure • State/city Identity
Visions with <i>conflicting</i> values	<p><i>Sport as a threat to Academic Life</i></p> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professors • Dept. Leaders • Students • Administration <p>Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Athletic Dept. • Budget Deficits • Impact on academic life 	<p><i>Sport as a Service Enterprise</i></p> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsors • Media Outlets • Athletic Department Personnel • University President <p>Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to increase institutional profile • Competitive values • Packaged and Sold Externally

In my re-application of Olsen’s model (Table 1), one can view the role of sports in higher education institutions as, *a threat to academic life, a service enterprise, a student right or value-added service, and a representative of societal interest.*

Sport as a value-added service or student right resides in the model as an internal vision

because it was intended to focus on the universities provision of sports in numerous forms to the student. It is a shared norm because it does not emphasize a demand by one stakeholder to another but refers to the offering of sports by the university as a right or value-added service, making life on campus more inclusive, entertaining, and comfortable. It takes the form of recreational facilities, intramural activities, and even educational offerings many students seek when choosing an institution. This has come to be expected by prospective students as a part of the institution in many countries and in many cases contributes greatly to the overall experience of the student. I have defined this as an internal vision with shared values because it is best expressed as sports providing higher education with a benefit, which may include improved health and entertainment for students.

Sport as representing societal interest was intended to describe the communities demand for sports, whether it be through educational and research programs in sports that contribute to improved public health or alumni cheering for their alma-mater at the annual homecoming match. It is in this description of the public, who resides outside the university, expecting something provided by the university that makes it external. Politicians or governmental agencies, representing the public, may influence what characteristics are relevant to the institution or national context, but they do so in this vision through shared values including public health research, entertainment, or national identity. In the case of the American university, we see an investment of emotion and connectedness to a given sports team in many instances that extend beyond alumnus and into the general population. In the case of the Norwegian university, the literature shows a strong emphasis on sports within higher education,

focusing on research aimed at improving the living standard, as well as contributing to the national identity by way of improved international results.

Sport as a threat to academic life refers to, as I stated earlier, a battle for resources within the institution between sports and academia, thus making it internal and conflicting. Competition for funding, competition for visibility in the community and beyond the institution's immediate community, and in some cases the motivation of the student themselves whose focus may be more on sports than academic life. A comparable and contrasting example of this could include the professionalized collegiate sports model in the U.S., spending massive resources on training facilities for their football team, while the science department operates in a dilapidated lab.

Sport as a service enterprise was defined as external and conflicting, not only due to the vast resources it requires, but also because it opened the institution up to a world beyond the campus that can both generate revenue while also consuming significant resources. As an extension of Kerr's multiversity concept (Kerr, 1963), one sees numerous examples of athletic departments in American universities utilizing sports as a product for marketing and even presenting institutional prestige, leading to increased donor support, recruitment of a students, and even merchandise and advertising sales.

Giulianotti's research was heavily influential in that he made it clear that *Sport as a representative of societal interest* is highly applicable in the Norwegian context. He looks at the relationship between the Nordic model of society and what he calls physical cultures in a global

context. He characterizes Nordic sports as being based on ‘*sport for all*’, collectivist values, and *friluftsliv* or outdoor life (Giulianotti, 2021, p. 238). He connects the physical culture in Nordic society and globalization through five key points. First, that ‘*Nordic identities are experiencing a growing transnational consciousness* (2021, p. 241). Second, Nordic physical cultures have significant scaling, in that they provide a wide range of sports alternatives from the global, such as in football (soccer), to the local, such as Telemark skiing (2021). Third, the influence of other physical cultures, through globalized media, has heavily influenced the Nordic culture (2021). Fourth, he questions if the impact of globalization on Nordic physical cultures is convergent or divergent, suggesting that the form of these cultures may be convergent, while the content is divergent (2021). Finally, he refers to the overall influence of globalization, as shown in examples of shopping centres, brand names, and pop culture, infiltrating physical culture of Nordic physical culture (2021).

3.2. Summary

This theoretical framework will provide the pathway for the remainder of my research in several ways. First, my adaptation of Olsen’s model provides a basis for categorizing any common characteristics, that I may or may not recognize throughout the investigation process. Secondly, these categorizations will guide the development of my interview guide and influence who I attempt to interview, as well as the nature of the questions I ask them. Finally, Giulianotti’s views on the Nordic model and their physical cultures in a global context serve as a common denominator in the Norwegian context, when conducting the interviews and

interpreting the results. Specifically applicable are the ideas of Norway's transnational consciousness and Nordic physical culture's scaling. These two concepts specifically widen the impact of sports on society, making it a more relevant topic for higher education to address.

4. Methodology

I have chosen a qualitative approach for this study. In this chapter I will describe my understanding of the qualitative approach as well as justification for its use in this case.

4.1. The Choice of Qualitative Research

Brymann characterizes qualitative research as having to do with words rather than numbers, as well as describing it as inductive, interpretivist, and philosophical. He notes, however, that not all researchers will adhere to all of them (Bryman, 2008). Qualitative research offers the topic the opportunity to be investigated without the constraints and limitations of a preordained process. In this case the flexibility inherent in qualitative research allowed me to dig deeper with interviewees because the openness of the process allowed them to freely provide more depth compared to a closed question survey where the respondent is put in a position to answer a direct question with no opportunity for follow up questions. In this instance, it provided the opportunity to ask and answer the question ‘why’ with the intent of exploring the perceptions of people living within the topic of the research.

Rossmann and Rallis identify eight characteristics of qualitative research and the researcher (Rossmann & Rallis, 1998). They describe the research as taking place in the natural world, interactive and humanistic, emergent, and interpretive. The researcher they describe as one who views the social phenomenon holistically, is self-reflective, and utilizes complex reasoning that is interactive. These characteristics were evident in this research, through the use

of Joseph Maxwell's Interactive Model of Research Design.

4.2. The Interactive Model of Research Design

The *Interactive Model of Research Design* can be characterized as a coherent method of organization and structure that allows for continuous interaction amongst the key aspects of a qualitative study (Maxwell, 2008). Maxwell justifies its use through three main reasons. First, he argues it identifies the key areas in which decisions need to be made, resulting in less likelihood that something will be missed. Secondly, it puts emphasis on the true nature of design decisions in qualitative research. Thirdly, it provides a model for the structure of a qualitative study that justifies the design decisions and the connections among them. The interactive model's use for the purposes of this study most notably impacted the development of interview questions and the analysis of the data but was present in virtually every aspect of the process, as described in the following subsections.

The model itself is simple in design, placing the *research questions* at the heart of the model, flanked by the research *goals, methods, validity, and conceptual framework*. It depicts a flexible interplay among each component, while Maxwell emphasizes the close integration between goals, conceptual framework, and the research questions on one hand and the methods, validity, and research questions on the other (2008).

The *goals* Maxwell describes as focussing on answering the *why* and the *what* including understanding the value of the study and who the researcher wishes to influence. The *conceptual framework* he explains revolves around understanding what is happening in the field you aim to

research, including the literature, theories, and personal experiences. The *research questions* which reside at the centre of the model aim to narrow the research focus by asking questions that specifically seek to understand the problem. The *methods* refer to the techniques that will be used in collecting data and analysing it to execute the entire strategy behind the research. Finally, the *validity* asks the researcher to understand and explain how the results may or may not be correct, driving the researcher to convince the consumer of the information's believability (2008).

In the subsections that follow I will explain how I utilized the components of the *Interactive Model of Research Design* to execute my research.

4.3. Preunderstanding and Bias

Maxwell, in describing the recognition of goals in qualitative research, emphasizes that one cannot eradicate their personal goals from their research, but that they can develop awareness as to how these goals may influence the researcher's decisions (Maxwell, 2008).

The origins of this study began 15 years earlier, while I was a student who had only recently moved to Norway and had little experience and understanding of the Norwegian higher education or Norwegian sports environment. The research was side-tracked for many years due to career choices before being revisited in 2020. This 15-year window impacted my understanding of Norwegian culture, the higher education system and Norwegian sports organizations and culture. Additionally, my personal position in life changed dramatically having become a husband, a father, an employee, and a participant and leader in local sports clubs as well as elite sports programs. While this evolution allowed me to develop a deeper

understanding that would later provide a foundation for my research questions, it also developed the opportunity for me to develop greater bias in my personal understanding of the research topic.

Upon re-engaging the research, I undertook what can best be described as a self-reflection conversation with my advisor, which revealed that I was potentially approaching my research as an advocate with too much attention on my interest in sports rather than addressing sports within the context of higher education. I addressed these points with three concrete processes.

First, I redesigned my research questions taking the focus from a comparative inquiry into the factors that lead to the development of collegiate sports in America, to an investigation of the role of sports in Norwegian higher education as it pertains to the purposes of higher education. Second, I modified the data collection strategy from an analysis of existing documentation, research, and data to a semi-structured interview with key stakeholders within Norwegian higher education sports programs. Finally, I implemented a review process prior to each interview, in which I studied the interview guide with the intent of reminding myself of potential moments in the questioning when I could potentially be most likely to influence the interviewee and emphasize sports more than their role in higher education, as a sports researcher, teacher, or administrator. These steps set the foundation, upon which the interviews and data analysis process would occur.

4.4. Interviews – developing the guide and identifying respondents

In developing the interview guide (Appendix A), I started by isolating each individual research question with which to base my follow-up questions. I then utilized the interplay of the purposes, context, methods, and validity to shape the questions into their final product. This included broadening some questions to accommodate the context that the interviewer may be representing, as well as ensuring that the questions were not overtly leading, which could impact the research validity. The final step in developing the interview guide was to have it evaluated through the perspective of another person. In this case my advisor provided feedback that helped to minimize potential for leading the interviewees.

The next step in the process was identifying, contacting, and arranging a meeting with subjects. Brymann describes purposive sampling as a non-probability form of sampling that is not based on random selection but instead a sampling based on strategic choices (Bryman, 2008). According to the online service www.studentum.no there are 14 higher education institutions in Norway that offer sports related programs (Group, 2021). Through online research I identified five higher education institutions geographically placed in the southern half of the country but spread out to represent the core of the country's population. Three of the institutions contacted provided at least one interviewee, resulting in representation from Oslo, Trondheim, and Kristiansand. In two of the three cases the initial department member I contacted referred me to another colleague who they felt was better positioned to perform the interview.

I also requested interviews with representatives from the Norwegian Sports Confederation (NIF) and the Norwegian Olympic Top Sport (OLT) program, as well as the

Norwegian Federation of Student Sports which is a member of NIF. I received one positive response from OLT. Finally, I also contacted a recent graduate student from the bachelor's program in a sports related field at the University of Agder in Kristiansand.

Participant one was a highly experienced man, having studied sport science abroad prior to moving to Norway, where he eventually served as faculty dean for several years. His current position at the University of Agder is as a professor within the sports faculty, focused on research and teaching. He is described as *sports academic* through the remainder of this research.

The second subject was also a man, originally trained in sociology and only later developed a focus on sports and its role in society. Today he is a professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim. He is described as *sports sociologist* through the remainder of this research.

The third subject was a female who was new to her administrative leadership role at the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences in Oslo but had previously served in a leadership role with NIF. She was also previously an elite-level athlete, who studied while competing. She was able to provide insights from both the university perspective as well as the perspective of NIF. Through the remainder of this research, she will be referred to as *administrative leader*.

The fourth subject was a male who had a role as a development consultant at OLT splitting time between two of their locations, in Oslo and Agder. He had previously performed and coached at an elite-level of sport and was also a graduate of a sports related field at the

University of Agder. He is referred to as *development consultant* in the remainder of this research.

The final subject was a man who had recently graduated from the University of Agder with a bachelor’s degree in a sports related field. He was a non-traditional student in that he is older, has children and was reinventing himself after a previous career as a small-business owner. He is referred to as *student* in the remaining sections of this research.

Table 2: Overview of Respondents

<i>Descriptive title for respondent</i>	<i>Role description and background</i>
<i>Sports academic</i>	<i>Career academic who previously served in a leadership role within a Norwegian higher education sports department.</i>
<i>Sports sociologist</i>	<i>Career academic at a Norwegian institution with a background in sociology who has focussed his research primarily on sports and societal themes</i>
<i>Administrative leader</i>	<i>New to her role as an administrator at Norway’s oldest and most well-known sports university. She previously worked for the Norwegian Sports Confederation and was an elite athlete herself.</i>
<i>Development consultant</i>	<i>He is employed at the Norwegian Top Sports center where he helps create development programs for top athletes in southern Norway.</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>He is a recent graduate of a Norwegian sports program but notably a non-traditional student who previously owned his own business.</i>

Each of the interviews was scheduled for one hour. The longest interview lasted eighty

minutes, while the shortest was forty-five minutes in length. The interviews were conducted in English although some Norwegian terms were used, which I later translated in the transcription process.

The interviewees were provided with a consent form (Appendix B) that included an overview of the nature of the questions in addition to the consent agreement. In all instances there was a degree of discussion on email prior to the interview that included logistical information such as when to meet and through which channels. There was also dialogue helping them understand that I was interested in their experience and perceptions, not their specific disciplinary expertise.

It is notable that the interviews took place through an online video meeting to accommodate distance, but it was primarily for safety as the research took place throughout the Covid 19 pandemic. In all instances the interviewees were working from their homes at the time, as part of the Covid 19 protocols implemented nationally. The videos were recorded and saved directly on my personal computer. I then played back the interview during the transcription process, allowing to stop and start the recording as needed to record the dialogue accurately. The recordings have since been deleted.

4.5. Data Analysis

Maxwell refers to Coffey and Atkinson when he states “I treat analysis as part of design and as something that must itself be designed” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 236). He categorizes

qualitative analysis strategies into three groups, noting that it is likely the researcher will use more than just one: Categorizing strategies (coding and thematic analysis), connecting strategies (narrative analysis and case studies), and memos and displays (2008). In the case of this research coding and thematic analysis along with connecting strategies was used. While I initially intended to utilize a software program to assist with this process, I ultimately decided to do it manually. I did however use a software program to note the extent of specific word counts and weighted word counts. I did this by copying and pasting the transcribed text into the software program and noted the themes that emerged more than others and cross referenced them with my own interpretations of the emerging themes.

4.6. Validity and reliability

In discussing construct validity Kleven explains that “*Empirical research, quantitative or qualitative, has to link constructs to indicators*” (Kleven, 2007, p. 224). He argues that it should not matter if indicators are identified, leading to constructs or vice versa, but that any inference should be valid. The process of validation becomes complicated when the indicators are not numerical. He suggests that a “*communicative dialogue with the respondents may be a fruitful way to get information about construct validity...*” (p. 226).

To infer that something is influenced by another thing refers to internal validity. Kleven argues that the way internal validity is applied in quantitative and qualitative research have significant similarities essentially requiring a “rational assessment of alternative interpretations” (p. 229).

External validity, according to Klevan, refers to the “*validity of inferences from the context of the study to a wider context*” (p. 229). He is referring to the concepts of transferability or generalization applied to people, time, or situations which can be addressed using *rich descriptions* of the researched topic.

5. Results

The purpose of this study was to understand the position of sports in Norway as it is perceived by stakeholders within higher education and to understand how the position of sports in higher education relates to the purposes of higher education. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five stakeholders within the sports and higher education environments. In this chapter, the thematic structure that emerged from these interviews will be presented and explained.

The results will be presented through the perspective of the research questions. I will begin by examining the perceptions of sports in higher education followed by the purposes of higher education and how they relate to sports. I have chosen this ordering as it best reflects the content of the interviews.

5.1. Perceptions of Sport in Higher Education

This section will summarize through the respondents' words and my interpretations of their responses with regard to how they perceive the role of sport within higher education.

The administrative leader was a former elite athlete, but later worked for NIF in developing training platforms for child and youth coaches. Her present role working with curriculum at NIH had less focus on elite development, but she admitted that among the researchers' elite sports are attractive areas of research, *“So, I think many of the researchers really like to be around the top athletes and do research on that.”*

While discussing an ongoing audit process with NOKUT the *administrative leader*, while referring to the last time an audit had been performed, characterized the situation as:

“No, in 2017. It was last time, and then they have big challenges Some of the professors they have been there since the beginning. So it's a cultural institution that they are very proud of. And in a way, my role, they wanted someone in this new position that I got, or it's not a new position. But I know they wanted someone from outside to help modernize and bring in some new thoughts.”

Her descriptions of organizational and structural changes at NIH along with the realignment of Norwegian Olympic Top Sport highlight the emphasis being placed on research focused on children and youth. *“And for the government, it's more important to have good research on children and youth.”* She referenced it again later in the interview but this time in the context of training students for the labor force:

“Yeah, so that's how it is. Like, you need the competence, because that's what I have been like, talking about for many years now. The competence. It's so important to have a good children and youth sport, you need a competence. You can't just say that, oh, I played football or baseball 10 years ago, and then I'm a good teacher.”

The *sports sociologist's* perspective was unique in that his department is imbedded within the social sciences department, and he identifies most as a social scientist who studies sport, "So *I'm a social scientist through and through. But I teach Sport Science, mostly within the field of the sociology of sport.*" Yet he too shared experiences expressing a maturing component within his field, "*I think when we started up, we were defined as, we had a major responsibility of developing the sociology of sport and national responsibility.*" He goes on to describe how he views his department, and even the university on a whole, as being a place in which identifies as having a national responsibility to produce research that contributes to the national well-being.

He also highlights in the same exchange a focus on social well-being and that he has "*developed an interest into youth sports. For instance, participation and social inequity in participation and dropouts from youth sport and stuff like that.*" The emphasis on health was amplified again when he described the work of his colleagues, "*So, that what researchers in my field have claimed is that you can get better public health from making fully different priorities than sport do.*"

When the *sports academic* described the evolution of the sports faculty and his role within it he described on multiple occasions a maturation scenario. First, when discussing the University of Agder's transition from college to university status, "*So, that process and in Norway, it met resistance... changes in sport always come from the people that are trying to climb the ladder, not the people that are at the top of the ladder.*" When discussing his underdog status he added, "*Nursing and sports, and they're still in Norway, it's just still part of that old way of thinking is what is an academic discipline and what is not?*"

In discussing funding and the steering of research focus areas he explained his understanding of the sports and health relationship in research, as well as alluding to a change process within the sports research community.

“Exercise is health promoting, at least as long as you don't smack each other in the head doing it. But in general, it's a health promoting activity for humans. And so, that is, a lot of sports science departments in Norway are focused on various aspects of health, whether it's exercise and cancer, or exercise and aging. So, behind this, if you go to NIH, you would see that there's much less sport at the sports college than there used to be, and much more health related research.”

In describing his evolution as an academic, he proudly described a turning point that highlights the relationship to elite sport development, where he said to himself:

“I am not going to just be some damn physical education teacher. I want to do more... I was involved in analyzing the Olympic results for the Norwegian teams... and giving them data to show that maybe they needed to do a better job at kind of a couple of steps under on the developmental ladder for talent development. And so, part of that helped fuel the development of these regional centers. These regional centers within the Olympiatoppen structure.”

The overarching themes that emerged concerning the perceptions of sport in higher education were clearly that this is a discipline or field of study that is maturing and seeking

credibility within the traditional academic community. The narrative seems to be that they are gaining legitimacy within Norwegian institutions by primarily focussing on research that promotes improved health and improved well-being for kids. The themes regarding elite development come across as being rooted in a combination of personal interest from academics, who were once ambitious athletes themselves and a sense of importance and pride associated with contributing to national and international success at the highest echelons of sports.

5.2. The Purposes of Higher Education and Relationship to Sport

In presenting the themes that emerged from the interviews relating to the purposes of higher education, I will rely primarily on the four visions provided by Olsen and how I adapted them with regards to visions of sports in higher education. Here, I reemphasize that the themes which emerged are likely to cross over into multiple visions dependent on the interviewee, their role, experiences, and objectives.

5.2.1. The institutional state model / sports as a student right and value-added service

I start by examining the responses associated with the *university as a self-governing community of scholars* or *institutional state* model and associated with the vision of sports as a student right and a value-added service. One notable narrative was that of the old university mentality that struggles to modernize and holds onto power.

The *sports academic* based much of his responses on the context of his experience in a

long career within the same institution, referring to the development and evolution of the discipline of sports at the university and his career path from professor to faculty leader during this growth. He had, at one point, put his name in the running as the rector of the university and told a story of a colleague asking him years later *“Did you really think you were ever going to get it? You’re a man and a sports guy, they were never going to hire you.”* This confirmed his impressions that many of his colleagues did not view his discipline as legitimate. *“There are people in the humanities that cannot understand how in the hell, sport science can be seen as any kind of a legitimate academic discipline, and they’re sure as hell not going to have a leader blowing whistles at them.”*

He found the feeling of contempt lessened within the professional disciplines like engineering and nursing.

“... it's just still part of that old way of thinking is what is an academic discipline and what is not? Some of these fields that are mostly the professional educations like engineering, like nursing, like teacher education. ... I'm sure it's not only in Norway, but that's part of just certain academic traditions of what's a university discipline? Should we still be speaking Latin?”

In part, his experience with professional disciplines is noticeable through his description of the early part of his career when sports studies were a developing discipline. The *sports academic* described the evolution of the sports department at his institution and others in

Norway, as a part of the environment that developed in the consolidations within Norwegian higher education in the 1990's.

“So, that process and in Norway, it met resistance, of course, from the established institutions like University of Oslo, like University of Bergen, because when you're on top of the heap, then you want to stay there, so, you don't want rule changes. You don't want the rule change... you sure as hell don't want to let some upstarts change the rules on you or come in from the side with a David and Goliath, where David can use a slingshot and avoid competing on the terms of the giant.”

Specifically, he credits the Norwegian School of Sport (NIH) and its diaspora spreading out into the academic community in Norway, as helping to move sports education from a purely physical education teacher training into an academic field backed by hard science, research driven, and PhD producing.

If we examine the responses first in the light of the *institutional state model of higher education* and the idea of *sports as a student right and value-added service*, we see themes that align with much of the literature we have examined earlier. One notable narrative was that of the old university mentality that struggles to modernize and holds onto power, justifying it through what Olsen's model describes as authority belonging to the most qualified (2005).

All the respondents echoed to some degree the sentiment that NIH was indeed the

founding institution for sport research in Norway and that its presence is still felt today. The *administrative leader* who works at NIH also described the institution as archaic in many respects and in need of modernization. In describing NIH's internal reforms, stemming from the initiatives established through regular quality audits by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), she commented "...they have their traditions, and well, there was like the king at Sognsvann (campus of NIH), and they didn't like following what was going on around them. And that's in a way not true, but they need some more innovation, and like understand what's happening around." In this description you can hear again a reticence on behalf of the established authority to relinquish power and she also hints that change was happening only because it was a crisis, which is another theme characterized by Olsen (2005).

While many of these characterizations carry with them a negative tone, there were positive sentiments that aligned with the vision of the *university as a self-governing community*. When asked how they determine what to research in his department the *sports sociologist* described a very free process; "...because all staff at our department have what's called freedom of research, we choose our own subjects for research." He mentions a few caveats linked to recruitment and funding which I will address later but he concluded that "...as long as the faculty decides that the department is allowed to set up a master's program, then they don't really bother much how the profile of the program is as such. That's defined by the staff really." Again, we hear echoes of Olsen's descriptions of the institutional state model particularly in a change process and sense of autonomy residing among those who are qualified.

Finally, a very notable example described by one of the professors who had previously

served in a leadership role, was his description of his time in leadership as an opportunity to help fulfill growth initiatives on behalf of the faculty that he came from. This included securing funding for facility investments and research, as well as capitalizing on opportunities to market the department to a wider audience both within the university and beyond, ultimately adding to the department's legitimacy. This characterization hints at influence espoused via the vision of the university as *an instrument for national political agendas*, which is addressed in one of the following sections.

In comparing the responses from the three respondents most embedded in higher education institutions, we see similarities in the overall theme, but often for different reasons, depending on their perspective. First, it's important to remember their individual context. The *sports sociologist* represents a well-established institution, which houses its sports studies program within the department of social sciences and political science, while the *sports academic's* institution has only had university status since the 1990's and whose sports department stands on its own. In a sense they are two opposites of the same coin, with the sociologist seemingly having an easier time operating under the insulation of a well-established department, while the *sports academic* feels he must carve a path of legitimacy at every turn. Meanwhile, the *administrative leader*, who is also at a well-established institution, finds herself being the voice demanding change among the old guard.

All the respondents expressed an experience related to change and a developing theme amidst those change processes is an increased presence of the study and teaching of sport within higher education, as Norwegian higher education was also expanding. The next section reveals

some of the potential drivers behind the expansion of sports programs in Norway, in examination of the sovereign state model and seeing sports as representing societal interests.

5.2.2. The sovereign state model / sports as representation of societal interests

The vision of the university as *an instrument for national political agendas*, also referred to as the *sovereign state model* is described as higher education being used as a tool for government to achieve political, economic, and social goals (Gornitzka & Maasen, 2000). With regards to sports, this concerns seeing it as a representation of societal interests.

In the previous section, concerning the *institutional state model*, experiences were shared that often took place under the scope of change, particularly related to the formation of their respective programs or departments in sports. An important aspect of understanding the context of these changes were significant reforms to the Norwegian public sectors in the 1980's and 1990's, as well as subsequent reforms to higher education steering mechanisms, as explained by Gornitzka and Maasen in the literature review (Gornitzka & Maasen, 2000).

A core component of the steering we see present today centers around the improvement of public health, which is a political agenda. When asked if he felt that there has been a change in the responsiveness of the *sports academic's* community to society, he replied:

“Yeah, I think so, and a lot of it's because sport has been conflated with and connected to health... If you want to get funding for research in Norway, it's very useful, very helpful if you can demonstrate there's a health component, that you

are contributing to the health of the population”

He goes on to explain, however, that a focus on public health is not as altruistic as it may seem when he adds that “*...follow the money... If you want to get funding for research in Norway, it's very useful, very helpful if you can demonstrate there's a health component, that you are contributing to the health of the population.*” This amplifies that research may be steered through funding on behalf of a political agenda. He continues to explain that within the context of freedom of research within exercise and sports science “*If you neutralize sport, which implies some competition, then it becomes just exercise, and exercise is health promoting, at least as long as you don't smack each other in the head doing it.*”

The *sports sociologist*, as I referred to in the previous section, specified that while he never felt overtly guided in his decisions on what to research, he acknowledged that funding influenced the direction the research may go. “*...we choose our own subjects for research. Of course, if you have to apply for money, then the available money will decide which direction things go.*”

Another interesting example by the *sports sociologist* described a scenario, in which research done by Norwegian academics, focused on improving health outcomes for all of society. Their findings conflicted with funding allocations by the Norwegian Sports Confederation toward youth sports facilities.

“Because there's a tension between designing facilities so that children, youth can participate in sport on the one side. And then designing facilities so that the whole population, including adults, and elderly, can become physically active to enhance public health or something like that, right?”

In this case both entities received funding from the state, NIF was to provide sports facilities to improve health outcomes, while researchers were to conduct research focusing on the funding of facilities needed to improve health outcomes. He concluded, *“So not all of us are very popular in the Norwegian, organizations because of tensions like that.”*

The *administrative leader* displayed the extent of the bond between NIF and the sports research community in describing a process initiated by NIF in 2015. The example also displayed a very blunt means of fulfilling a national political goal, in which funding decisions were made with the intent of gaining more structure in the research surrounding critical sports topics. *“...together with the kulturdepartementet, they give the money for four centers ... And so they said we wanted first three center, children and youth, technology, and sports medicine.”* She goes on to describe specifically how this process unfolded at NIH,

“Inside (NIH) they were looking more at talent, and not so much children and youth. And for the government, it's more important to have good research at children and youth. And then they wanted to divide that, and that was a process that I was a part of, at NIF. So we worked from NIF, and we had interviews with

all these institutions that well, Tromsø, Bergen, different universities. And from our recommendation it was NTNU who ended up getting the talent portion.”

The *administrative leader’s* description of this split in focus areas goes a step further in her description of the establishment of the Research center for children and youth, as well as the Center for sports injuries.

“But there are two centers at NIH. It’s one for children and youth, and one for sport injuries. And that’s where these centers should be placed. They are at NIH, but they are like in between the society and NIH. So, also external money can go into the center.”

There wasn’t enough time in the interview to explore exactly why this type of organization was necessary to secure external funding, but the reference to it and her assuredness implies that this was a very state-driven plan with the intent of partnering with the market, a topic which will be explored in a later section.

It was clear that chasing funding and at the very least appealing national political agendas is part of the course in the academic world the respondents operate within every day. The tone and way they described them differed and understandably so. The most obvious was the *administrative leader’s* business-like pragmatism in describing organization structure necessary to achieve outcomes. Meanwhile the *sports sociologist* only seemed to mention in passing, as if

these were all just things other people need in place so he can do his research.

The discussion of funding and organizational structure introduced a clearer sense of the primary actors involved in the Norwegian higher education sports environment. Organizations such as NIF, OLT, and the Research council were mentioned more and more and while these entities are government funded, but removed from any centrally entity, it makes them potential examples of the *corporate pluralist model*, which are examined in the next section. In some cases, including NIF there are strong connections to commercial funding, which is a feature of the vision of the *university and sports therein as a service enterprise* example of which will be described later.

5.2.3. The corporate pluralist model and sport as a threat to academic life

The *university as a representative democracy* or *corporate pluralist model* can be described as having several actors vying for power and using influence to guide the direction of higher education. In the visions of sports in higher education model, this relates to sports as a threat to academic freedom, in that it describes actors and their decisions regarding sports as a conflict to academic life. It is arguable that the descriptions I have associated with the sovereign state model also fit into the corporate pluralist model, considering the numerous centers of influence the respondents described including the Norwegian Sports Confederation, Research Council and Norwegian Olympic Top Sport program. The content in this section focuses primarily on the relationship between higher education and OLT, as an arm of NIF. Additional

examples described by the respondents that I will focus on include partnerships with Olympic Training Centers and elite athlete partnership programs.

All the respondents mentioned close working relationships with OLT, which consists of eight regional training centers, all of which are near universities with sports programs. The centers are open to elite athletes as defined by established criteria and focus on testing of key performance metrics aimed at athletic development. Seemingly however, OLT's existence brought with it numerous byproducts.

The *student* who was working towards a bachelor's degree at the University of Agder in sports studies emphatically described the highlight of his experience as, *"what I really like is the connection between Olympiatoppen and the University, and how we as students have been at Olympiatoppen at the lab there doing research on ourselves in real labs."* OLT is in a brand-new, shared facility, practically on the campus of UiA, wedged between the primary campus in Kristiansand and the major training center in the city, a project the *sports academic* referred to as a special project during his time as dean of the faculty.

"And so, when I was up there, I said, I'm going to use my bully pulpit a little bit to try to first, channel some funding into the sports science program. I succeeded. I was able to get 10 million kronor in and help renovate and create the Olympiatoppen, the regional Olympiatoppen in the facilities."

There was very little indication from any of the respondents that OLT was vying for power, but instead described the relationship as a win-win situation for both entities. However,

under the surface, some of the respondents described scenarios in which one would expect that influence was being asserted upon the institutions. When asked what other influences besides the higher education reforms of the 1990's impacted the development of sports studies program in Norway, the *sports academic* said.

“And then I think also, you have the Olympiatoppen, the Olympic Federation, and the Olympic Development Center in Oslo... then partly related to work I did analyzing the Olympic results for the Norwegian teams, and giving them data to show that maybe they needed to do a better job on talent development.”

The student echoed a similar sentiment after having spent his most enjoyable hours of his bachelor's program in the lab at OLT. He added that *“I feel like more Olympiatoppen is doing the tests and doing their everyday work with athletes. And it's the university doing the studies”*. While the relationship seems symbiotic, it cannot go unnoticed that Olympiatoppen is getting something out of this that furthers their agenda. They are getting access to students generating ideas and conducting research near their workspaces, which can eventually be applied to development programs for their athlete's benefit. The ultimate example of this relationship being successful is the use of research that impacts the performance of a future gold medal winner.

The *development consultant* who is employed at OLT described the relationship as one that provides OLT with knowledge from the universities that they in turn utilize to improve

performance and share across the sports community to capitalize on cross over competencies and knowledge. *'The university provides the science, and we use and share that science'* said the OLT respondent. When asked about the nature of the relationship between OLT and universities he expanded his response:

"Let's say now we have a project on working with people from both the University of Agder, and NIH, and UiO. So we also discuss kind of things to kind of keep up with the science. We work in the field, but we also want to know what's the newest in science. So to keep in touch there is important for us, because we want to be kind of science-based in how we work."

They also characterized the partnerships as being based on an informal network of professors, coaches, and administrators who share a common interest. *"Yeah, I think it's more of who we know, and how we know them and interests."* It was also stated multiple times that there are numerous people employed by universities and OLT simultaneously. *"Yeah, there is a lot of people working at Olympiatoppen, who also works at Norges Idrettshøgskole, NIH in combined positions. And we also try to involve in some parts of research that we want to focus on."* He goes on to describe the relationship among researchers.

"Olympiatoppen has kind of a star, so to speak. So for a lot of people, when you wear the Olympic rings on the clothes, then it can probably help build a stronger network. But we don't get too much of people trying to involve, or participate, or

make stuff like that. But when we ask people, it's normally not hard to get help for projects, because it's often viewed as positive to be linked with Olympiatoppen in Norway, I think."

It's important to note that Olympiatoppen is technically organized under NIF, but the relationships are seemingly so blurred and mixed among one another that the development consultant wasn't sure.

"It's hard to answer, but I know when I get my salary, it says from Norges Idrettsforbund, and not from Olympiatoppen. I am sort of employed by Norges Idrettsforbund but working with Olympiatoppen."

OLT's intent is to train elite athletes for Olympic competition. The *development consultant* described their role as:

"We work as advisors for different sports. They (the athletes and coaches) control what they're doing, but we're helping with strength training, endurance training, mobility training, sports psychologists, and stuff like that. And also to organize the Olympics for Norway. So when the Summer Olympics is going now for Tokyo, the Olympiatoppen will have... They will kind of book the planes, they will fix everything around the Norwegian team there. And that's the administration, just that kind of job. And me and my colleagues we're consultants on how to prepare

for the Olympics.”

The proximity of OLT to universities under this regional model makes it convenient for these elite athletes to begin working toward an education while they pursue their sporting careers. Several of the respondents indicated that they were aware of specific instances, and in some cases, specific programs that aim to make it more palatable for elite athletes to study at their institution. Another description from the OLT development consultant:

“In Olympiatoppen Sor, for the South region, where I also work, we have a cooperation with the university, for elite athletes. Let's say you run a training camp, or you have a competition, and you can't have your final exams, then the university has to find another day where you can have the final exam.”

He goes on to explain that other programs exist, helping athletes' study, find work, and deal with the challenges associated with the end of an intense career in sports, often at a relatively young age. Others confirmed, when asked, that these programs are structured. The student commented, *“Yeah, it's a complete package, they get the status of elite athletes, they're into Olympiatoppen, and they get very good follow-up. I believe there were maybe 20 elite athletes during the first year.”*

At first glance this type of arrangement could be seen as a form of sports culture reminiscent of U.S. collegiate sports, but as the *sports academic*, who obtained his education at a large U.S. institution, put it, *“nobody here views sport as anything like you see in the U.S.”*

The relationship between OLT and the higher education sector seems to be from these responses to be a benevolent relationship, in which both parties are getting access and feeding off one another in a positive light. It is difficult to imagine, however, that this viewpoint isn't at least a bit naïve. OLT's core currency is its reputation as the backbone of Norwegian Olympic sport, which carries with it a tremendous platform. One could question what structures are in place to help ensure that they aren't abusing their reputation and relationships with higher education for the further development of Olympic glory and national pride, while being backed by the political might of NIF. The relationship between NIF and higher education will be examined more closely in a later section, but it should be clear that their reliance on higher education goes beyond developing elite athletes. With roughly two million members spread across more than fifty official sports, NIF needs knowledge to train a massive, often volunteer-based, sports apparatus of coaches and club leaders, creating a type of market for higher education sports to feed.

5.2.4. The supermarket model of higher education and sports therein

The *university as a service enterprise or supermarket model*, as well as the related vision of sports in higher education are characterized by minimal state involvement and institutional autonomy, leaving the university to their own success and failure at the hands of the market (Gornitzka & Maasen, 2000). The themes that emerged in the interviews, which I have categorized here as *supermarket* oriented, focused primarily around two themes. The first was a competition among the 19 sports-related study programs in Norway, vying to be the best. The

second was a transaction of sorts that had supply and demand characteristics to it, involving the sports clubs and NIF's need for knowledge to impart on a massive volunteer coaching population. It is worth noting, however, that the hand that facilitated these individual demands may not be purely market influenced. As the respondents will show, there was seemingly heavy influence from NIF in the formation of the current organization of OLT and the impact on research at various institutions.

First in discussing the competition among sports studies programs in Norway the *administrative leader* described her responsibilities in her new role as *curriculum administrator*:

“Well, I'm sitting for the strategy. But I know, this strategy is like finding NIH's position in both this university world, how to be the best sport University in Norway, because that's our role. We started with being the only sport University, but now there are 19 universities that have some kind of sport education.”

When asked how they measure success internally, she was quick to point out that they rely on various ranking lists, *“NIH is one of the top institutions in Norway, with some kind of points for research.... And also, we are still at the three of the five highest sport educations with 4.6 appliers for each study.”* However, she also explained that the number has been falling for a number of years and now needs to be addressed through reforms internally.

The academic leader, previously held a role in educational initiatives in NIF, described a gap in high quality job opportunities for young graduates and the tightrope of balancing Norway's cultural tradition of volunteerism in sport versus their desire to improve quality of

coaching and leadership in sports clubs.

“I think it's more than 80% of the sport clubs are just volunteering, no professional. So the students that come from NIH, they are looking for a job. ... so there's a gap between their competences and the job opportunities, in for example, the sport organization. So the positions they are looking for, is like what I have earlier in the Sport Federation in the in like that kind of level. It's increasing the numbers of employed people in the clubs as well.”

The desire to improve quality influences the clubs to professionalize which in turn requires that they generate more revenue. This challenges the clubs to increase membership fees which ultimately damages the ‘member’ identity and turns them into a ‘customer’. This in turn changes the relationship and expectations of the member/customer from one of participation through volunteerism to one of value for money.

Another strong characteristic of the labor market for graduates of sports studies programs is the training of physical education teachers. The *sports academic* commented that *“When I came here, it was purely part of teacher education.”* The *sports sociologist* described his institutions focus on teacher education in that,

“we have a lot of teachers. And most master’s program in the social sciences now have developed what we call lector program, teacher educational program, masters who have an equal share of disciplinary studies, for instance, in Sport Science or sociology or whatever, pedagogic science.”

The respondents all described an environment geared toward attracting students, manifesting itself in several ways that influence the university as existing in a marketplace for students. Examples cited in the interviews included multiple references to the development of modern facilities, both for education as well as recreation and fitness including proximity to OLT regional centers. The *student* interviewed referred to the university's partnership with OLT as the most valuable component of his education.

This expansion of offerings to attract students is now also expanding into the adult education realm. The *student*, when asked if he would pursue a masters or PhD, remarked that it is a lot more difficult at his age, but that he recognized the opportunities available to him, *"Yeah, and those are small, we call them after education-like, building on. As they get more and more of those courses, we're trying to reach out to educate the people."*

The *academic leader* emphasized that lifelong learning programs were being developed as a strategy to increase revenue, as these part-time courses often come with a price tag that bachelors courses do not. *"So NIH want to earn money on the courses, and the study programs that is offering for like lifelong learning, it's coming into the society now."* However, they also described this as an effort to capture some of that 'lånekasse' money referring to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. Ultimately this begs the question, who is paying, the state or the student, and how much?

The role and characteristics of sports programs in Norwegian higher education isn't clearly associated with the supermarket model, but it certainly has characteristics that hint at its

presence. The competition for students, funding, and improved facilities all point to a type of marketplace, as does the unique manner in which NIF uses their platform to train volunteers while seemingly promoting at times and increased professionalization of coaches. It is a cloudy at best picture of the market, but a market, nonetheless.

5.2.5. Summary

The four visions of the university and their counterparts concerning sports, were described in various forms by all the participants. It must be emphasized that within each interview, examples of multiple visions recognizable, suggesting a hybrid approach just as Maassen and Gornitzka concluded (Gornitzka & Maasen, 2000). This does not come as a surprise in that these programs are a part of the Norwegian higher education system, thus falling within their description. The most obvious visions were the *institutional state model* and *sovereign state model*, while the *supermarket model* seemed less obvious, but was present regardless.

The *institutional model* manifested itself most clearly in the respondents' descriptions of growth processes and the Norwegian sports studies expansion over the last two decades. The resistance experienced internally by the *sports academic* as well as the expansion of competency previously embedded at NIH, serving as two of the most glaring examples.

The *sovereign state model* was most clearly identifiable in the respondents' descriptions of funding and what areas of study were most likely to generate funding. This included research

that generated knowledge that could be used to improve public health, particularly topics that were associated with children and youth. While the *corporate pluralist model* matched some of the descriptions regarding the relationship between NIF, OLT and the higher education structure, I did not feel that the respondents characterized it as having conflicting values or norms. Perhaps somewhat optimistically, I interpreted the relationship as a symbiotic relationship that benefits all parties, while contributing to a common national agenda of public health and Olympic success.

The *supermarket model* was certainly recognizable in the respondents' descriptions, but was less obvious and almost omnipresent, like an aura surrounding the entire conversation. The competition for students and rankings were the most obvious examples. I suspect, however, that the nature of the interviewees' positions, which were all closely linked to academia, may have resulted in a picture that is shielded from some of the more obvious *supermarket* characteristics and that discussions with more administrators may have at the least provided a better glimpse at more examples.

6. Conclusion

The final chapter will provide a summary of the answers to the research questions proposed in chapter one. I will also discuss some reflections related to the theoretical and methodological approach and conclude with suggested avenues for future research.

6.1. Answers to the research questions

Three research questions were posed in chapter one: What are the primary purposes of higher education? How is the position of sport in Norway perceived by various higher education actors including sport university colleges? How does the position of sport in higher education relate to the understandings of the purposes of higher education? I will briefly summarize my findings for each one of the questions.

Through this research I have confirmed, as Maassen and Gornitzka have, that the primary purposes of higher education are whatever the stakeholders attempt to make them to be, thus making an even more relevant question to ask; who is steering the university, how are they steering it, and why are they steering it this way? This research, in effect, attempted to answer those questions through the lens of the remaining two research questions.

I found that the perception of sports in Norway may be viewed as a less than legitimate discipline when viewed through the eyes of more traditional disciplines, but that sports has found its greatest value within higher education as a means for providing society with important knowledge necessary for improving health and social well-being. Meanwhile sports studies as a discipline are also contributing knowledge that improves performance at the elite level, thus

contributing to the formation of a positive national identity.

Finally, when identifying these roles, we see that sports relationship to higher education's purposes shape the relationship as one in which sports studies are responsive to the needs of society and the stakeholders who represent that society. This is evident in the disciplinary focus on health outcomes and social wellbeing, particularly for children, as well as through the contributions of knowledge that can lead to improved elite performance.

6.2. Reflections on the theoretical and methodological approach

Using Gornitzka and Maassen as a framework provided the necessary lens to start the conversation and while I ultimately don't see a lightning bolt of new ideas emanating from this research, I do see the origins of new questions that if posed correctly and in the right context, could help understand the role of sports in higher education with more depth and clarity.

It is important to highlight that all the respondents in this research represent the higher education sports community, so the themes that emerged are telling only part of the story. I did not interview other faculty members or general administration personnel. The only administrative role among the interviewees was from NIH, which is a very sports-specific institution. The responses I got conveyed perceptions of sport in higher education as that of a maturing field, with a responsibility to community health and social wellbeing and as a contributor to elite development.

All research, when completed, is subject to second guessing by the author(s) and external parties. In hindsight there were several things I would have approached differently. Most

notably I regret not having respondents with a greater variety of backgrounds particularly from those associated with higher education in non-sports roles. Secondly, my interviewing techniques can be vastly improved upon. Throughout the interviews I thought I was aware of not talking too much and allowing the respondents to guide the conversation, but looking at the transcripts, I feel I was too engaged in the topic and could have potentially gotten more by staying quiet and see where the respondent took the conversation. Finally, my preconceived thoughts on the topic of collegiate sports were a constant roadblock for my mental process in this research, potentially resulting in the narrative focussing too much on sports and not enough on higher education.

6.3. Possible avenues for further research

Norway has had tremendous success in Olympic competition and is often looked upon as a leader in youth sports participation, life span and public health. Appropriate and practically relevant questions to ask in the future could investigate how sports studies programs in Norway influence these things and how that differs from other countries. In this context steering strategies would again be wholly relevant and I can see how the adaptation of the Visions of Sport in Higher Education Model could be an applicable tool in labelling the role of sports in various national contexts.

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Appendix A

Semi Structured Qualitative Research Interview Guide

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International Higher Education

Martina Vukasovic-Advisor

Research Topic: The role of sports in relationship to the purposes of higher education.

Research Questions:

1. How is the position of sport in Norway perceived by various actors in higher education?
2. How do the purposes of higher education impact the position of sports in higher education?
3. What is the relationship between sports and higher education?

Interview Candidates:

1. Personnel in leadership roles who have an impact on determining curriculum requirements in higher education sports programs in such institutions as Norges Idretts Høgskole, Universitet i Agder etc...
2. Personnel in leadership roles within Norges Idrettsforbund including the Norges Studenters Idrettsforbund and general leadership in NIF.
3. Policy influencers within the department of culture who oversees NIF.

Introduction:

- Greeting
 - Introduction of myself and who I represent.
 - Explanation to the interviewee on the topic of my research.
 - Explain to the interviewee how the information will be used.
- Confidentiality
 - The interview will be recorded.

- The interviewee will be informed that their personal data will be protected in accordance with Norwegian law.
- Study Identifiers
 - I will not use the interviewees name or any other personally identifiable information that can be traced back to them if they do not wish.

Interview Guide:

- 1) Welcome and thank you for taking the time to do this. Please start by stating the following.
 - a) Name
 - b) Institution, department, position
 - c) Job description and description of your daily work and authorities.
- 2) *Academia*
 - a) Can you describe the role of sport within this institution?
 - b) Who are some examples of key stakeholders within the organization?
 - c) Can you characterize sports existence in this organization?
 - d) What is your understanding or perception of how external stakeholders viewing your organization and sport's role within in?
 - e) What other ways has your institution considered utilizing sport to serve academia?
- 3) *Society*
 - a) Can you describe how sport is utilized by the institution?
 - b) Are you able to identify parties who either benefit or are negatively impacted by this utilization process? If so, how are these benefits or negative impacts manifested?
 - c) What other ways has your institution considered utilizing sport to serve society?
- 4) *Students*
 - a) How does sport serve the student in your institution?
 - b) Why do you think sport has this relationship with students?
 - c) What other ways has your institution considered utilizing sport to serve students?
- 5) *Organization:*
 - a) Can you tell me anything about the history of the sports department in your institution and how it was formed?
 - b) Key moments in the sports line's development?
 - c) Can you describe the process for determining the establishment of the various departments?
 - d) What motivates this establishment?
 - e) Who decides and how?
 - f) What factors are considered?
 - g) Do you have ongoing processes to consider future development of new areas of focus?

6) Funding

- a) Can you describe the funding process for your institution and/or department?
 - i) Commercial vs public vs private vs self-generated
- b) Do you have any public documents describing this process I can publish?
- c) Who controls the budgets within the institution and/or department?
- d) What mechanisms are in place for reporting the use of these budgets?

**Are you interested in taking part in the research project
"The Role of Sport in Higher Education"?**

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to understand the relationship between sport and higher education]. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This master's thesis project for the department of International Higher Education and the University of Oslo seeks to examine the relationship between Norwegian higher education institutions and sport. Specifically, this research seeks to gain an understanding of how higher education views its role toward sport and how representatives of sport view higher education's role toward sport. This research is formed through the following research questions:

- How is the position of sport in Norway perceived by various higher education actors, including sport university colleges?
- How do the purposes of higher education relate to the position of sport in explaining the relationship between sports and higher education?

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Oslo Department of utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are being asked to participate as a sample in this project as one of no more than 10 people identified by myself in a role of influence within an organization or institution dealing with sport and higher education.

What does participation involve for you?

You are being asked to participate in an interview via zoom or telephone that will be guided through a semi-structured interview lasting no more than 60 minutes. The nature of the interview will focus on your understanding of the organization you represent, how it functions, and how it relates to sport within higher education.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- Only myself and my supervisor will have access to original data.
- I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data», you will store the data on a research server, locked away/encrypted, etc.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end 30.June.2021. Any personal data will be anonymized at the conclusion of the project.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *[insert name of institution responsible for the project]*, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Supervisor Martina Vukasovic martina.vukasovic@uib.no, +4740642435
- Andrew Johnson (myself) andyjohnson22@icloud.com, +4797732204 or the UiO personvernombud
- Our Data Protection Officer: personvernombud@uio.no
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Martina Vukasovic
(supervisor)

Andy Johnson (student)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project [The Role of Sport in Higher Education] and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in an interview (*insert method, e.g. an interview*)

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 30.June.2021

(Signed by participant, date)