



Bachelor's thesis

IDR600 Sport Management

How does the academy classification system affect the work of AkerAkademiet?

A single case study of the initial phases

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Preface

This thesis finalizes my bachelors degree in sport management at Molde University College. I would like to thank everyone I have met here for three wonderful years filled with great memories.

Also a big htank you to the people in Molde Fotballklubb and AkerAkademiet for welcoming me som warmly, and giving me all the information I needed.

A special thanks to my supervisor, Birnir Egilsson for excellent help with this task.

But the most deserving thank you of all goes out to my family for their support throughout these years three.

Abstract

Toppfotballsentret, a centre of excellence for the teams of the top two divisions in Norway has developed an academy classification system with the intention to improve talent development in Norwegian football. AkerAkademiet, Molde Fotballklubb's academy are in the process of their first classification process. This study has looked at how this system affects their work through the lens of institutional isomorphism and organisational change.

This study has been conducted qualitatively as a single case study with participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The findings show that the academy classification system has forced some organisational change on AkerAkademiet that would most likely not have taken place if not for the implementation of the system. Some of these changes will most likely give an isomorphic effect on the clubs involved. In the case of AkerAkademiet, these changes are viewed as very positive. Therefore, this study argues and concludes that the classification system lifts the level of AkerAkademiet, and should be regarded as an important step in order to improve their operations. It is still important for each club to remember their own local context, not all solutions are universal. Molde Fotballklubb and AkerAkademiet have been aware of this and acted accordingly.

Key words: Football academy classification system, AkerAkademiet, Molde Fotballklubb, institutional isomorphism, organisational change.

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1.0 Introduction

Over the years football as has grown in popularity, the money involved has skyrocketed, and the competition has become more fierce than ever. For national football associations and clubs to be able to compete in this highly competitive environment the involved parties has had to professionalise their organisations and practices (Gammelsæter & Senaux, 2011). The importance of keeping good working practices was enhanced in 1995 when the Bosman ruling took place and players could move freely at the end of their contracts (Binder & Findlay, 2012). A part of having good practices is avoiding becoming an overly static. A club in such a state will not be able to compete at the highest level for long. In an attempt to professionalize and improve talent development in football, some nations have implemented an academy classification system.

The two top-tier football leagues in Norway have had their own interest group, Norsk Toppfotball (NTF) since 1972, their aim is to lead the economic, commercial and administrative development of Norwegian top football at club level (eliteserien.no, 2017). In 2008 Toppfotballsenteret (TFS) was created, a centre of excellence for Norwegian football. This was done as a reaction to divide the media income earmarked talent development in a way that rewarded those who invested the heaviest. TFS' aim is to secure top international quality on the clubs' sporting development. This entails having a permanent focus on improving the systems, structures and cultures that help to develop the vital performance enhancing factors in top football. Among others, a special focus is kept on player and coach development within the top clubs and contributing to improve the performance of the clubs competing in European tournaments (Eliteserien.no, 2016). Their latest and current project is to implement an academy classification system. This system has been developed with the intention to improve and manifest quality processes in the clubs youth departments, or as TFS phrase it "The aim is to considerably improve the football nations competitiveness through developing more and better players at a high national and international level" (Fotballtreneren.no, 2017).

The rationale of the classification system is to formalise, professionalise and improve the processes used in the clubs to develop top-level football players. It is also meant to give incentive to the clubs to prioritise the development of home-grown talent and by this,

improving Norwegian football in the long-term. This kind of system is already in place in other European football nations such as France with their “Charte du Football Professionnel” and other countries such as Germany, Belgium and Finland. These have all implemented Foot PASS (Professional Academy Support System) with good results (Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne and Richardson, 2009). With the new classification system, the clubs that do well (ranked highly from a fixed criteria) are allocated more money each year. Therefore, Norwegian football clubs are facing pressures from a key stakeholder (TFS), many of the clubs need to restructure internally, and how they operate externally in the quest to perform well within the new system, which leads to organisational change. Little do we know how these pressures will affect the clubs. This study will be looking at the initial planning stages with the aim to investigate (1) how a highly ranked Norwegian academy reacts to these pressures, (2) what new practices they need to implement to fulfil the criteria of the classification system and (3) how does the classification system affect their work.

As a mean to do so, this study has been conducted as a case study of Molde Fotballklubb and their academy (AkerAkademiet) and relied on institutional isomorphism theory to analyse the pressures, and organisational change literature within sport organisations to analyse the clubs reactions in terms of practices.

This study is structured as follows; it starts with a presentation of the framework of analysis; the academy classification system followed by the literary framework, which will be on institutional isomorphism and organisational change. Secondly, the methodology will be presented, followed by description of the case that is under analysis. It will then be finalised by presenting key findings and lastly a conclusion.

2.0 Theoretical framework

2.1 The development of the football industry

According to Jakobsen, Gammelsæter and Fløysand (2009, p. 261) football has become an international business that flows between countries. Since the mid-1990s, Norwegian football has had an increased commercialisation period. During the 1990s, Norway was the leading Scandinavian country when it came to selling players to larger European leagues and in terms of high wage budgets. This was helped forward by the national side doing well and qualifying for major competitions, along with Rosenborg Ballklubb regularly getting into the Champions League. After the successful years of the 1990s Norwegian football has struggled to make its mark on the global scene. The governing bodies of Norwegian football now feel pressure to take action for this to improve.

Jakobsen et al (2009, p. 273) state that the business of football over the years has become increasingly institutionalised and consequently, clubs have experienced homogenization in the way clubs are organised and managed.

After a period of globalisation for the business, Norwegian football has reached a major fall in performances. The national team is no longer qualifying for major tournaments and the clubs are struggling to reach out on the European scene. This might be partly down to the influx of foreign players to the top league. During the golden years of the 1990s there were only 13 (in 1995) foreign players in the Norwegian top league. By comparison there was 110 foreign players in 2005 (Jakobsen et al, 2009, p.274). This has of course led to fewer young Norwegian players getting their chance to break through. Norwegian football has now seen that in order to bring its football to a higher level they need to take care of and develop the domestic players they have at hand. Lifting the importance of talent development is crucial if Norwegian football wants to experience successful times yet again. As a mean to contribute TFS has now developed the academy classification system.

2.2 The academy classification system

As mentioned, this study attempts to explain how the newly created academy classification system affects the work of AkerAkademiet. Therefore, it will be useful to get a short introduction as to what this system is.

The academies are rated from one to five stars through a system that is divided into ten categories. Of these ten, three have threshold requirements that need to be met in order to be classified at a higher rating. Productivity points are counted separately and added to the total score at the end. The productivity points are points the clubs receive depending on how much and where players they have produced play matches. The clubs receive these points for three years after the player has left the club or up to the age of 24. The remaining six categories give points that are added together, the lowest sum needed to classified is 40 points (and meeting the threshold requirements), whilst the highest possible score is 135 (plus the productivity points =165).

One star	Two stars	Three stars	Four stars	Five stars
40 points	74 points	108 points	121 points	135 points

Table 1. Star distribution of the classification system.

As we can see from table 1., reaching five stars is 30 points less than maximum, which seems a lot. Nevertheless, TFS have constructed the model in such a way that some of the areas are directly contradicting; you cannot fulfil all requirements. This means that no club is meant to get a top score. TFS does this as a mean to retain each clubs own distinctiveness, they do not want force the clubs to do everything in the same way.

The money for talent development that NTF are responsible for sharing amongst their members is divided as a result of the classification system, clubs with higher scores will receive more than those with lower scores. They believe that the clubs should receive a sum that is equivalent of the amount and quality of work, the system works as a tool for this. A result of implementing a system like this might be that the clubs become more similar through what we call institutional isomorphism.

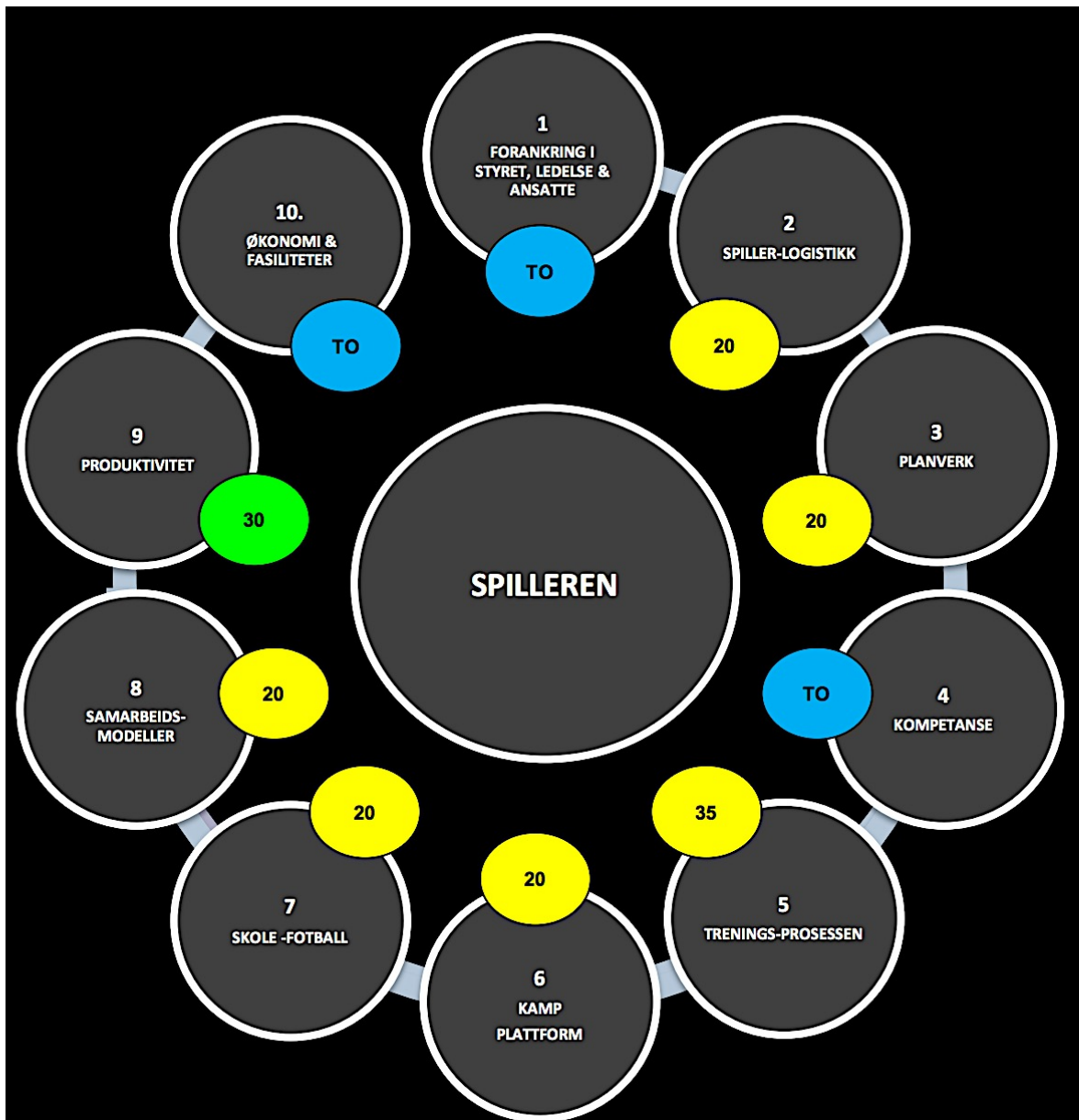


Figure 1: Academy classification model (Fotballtreneren.no, 2017)

Since this is the first time such a system has been implemented in Norwegian football there is no previous research on the field. There are however, some articles regarding the implementation process in other countries. Van Hoecke, Schoukens and De Sutter (2006) found that the implementation of a constructive and distinctive quality system for youth academies of professional football clubs was considered useful by the academy directors in the clubs. Carlsson and Ring (2012) looked at the implementation of a football certification system in Swedish elite football clubs. They found that the system appeared to give what they call “*a satisfying insight into the organizational demands’ of the certification system.*” They also found that having a positive attitude was key to overcome

experienced difficulties that were associated with the process, along with having the right prerequisites when it came to staff, time and documentation. Overall, there is a lack of empirical findings looking into the processes of implementing these academy classification systems. As mentioned, this study aims to look at it through the lens of institutional isomorphism.

2.3 Institutional isomorphism

To understand institutional isomorphism it is useful to firstly explain the field in which it lies under; institutional theory. Institutional theory has become a dominant theory for organisation theory literature, also in the context of sport management (Kikulis, 2000). Washington & Patterson (2011) refers to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) when explaining that the early concerns of institutional theory originally focused on trying to understand why organisations had such striking similarities despite of them being very diverse, this work was rooted in sociology. It also looked at how organisations tend to buffer themselves from environmental demands, according to Meyer and Rowan (1977) (as cited in Washington & Patterson, 2011).

Washington and Patterson (2011) review six concepts of institutionalisation: institutional change, institutional logics, organisational fields, legitimacy, institutionalisation and isomorphism. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 149)

“The concept that best captures the process of homogenization is isomorphism. In Hawley’s (1968) description, isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions”.

For this thesis institutional isomorphism is the most relevant form of institutionalism, and thus the one I will be focusing on. Does the academy classification make the involved clubs more isomorphic or are they able to protect each clubs distinctiveness, as they state they to intend.

Institutional isomorphism is a theory that explains the homogenisation process to organisations. Homogenisation happens due to environmental pressures. The environment

pushes specific processes and practices on the organisations, making them essential if the organisation wants to survive. Meyer and Rowan, (1977) argue that the adoption of the environmentally forced practices does not guarantee a competitive advantage. When a practice is widely recognized as a solution to a perceived problem by more organisations, this phenomenon is what we call institutional isomorphism. An example of this might be that football academies do not feel that they get to optimize the days of their players. As a result of this they choose to make an agreement with the local school to follow up on their players more closely. This is now normal for clubs to do on high school level, and some even do it in secondary school. This might work in larger places like Oslo, however in a smaller city like Molde, doing this for players in secondary school seems an lesser ideal solution because of the geographical and contextual conditions. Seeing other clubs implement solutions might lead to pressure for other clubs to do the same, though they are not under the same contextual conditions, and the solution is therefore lesser ideal option.

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) there are three mechanisms through institutional isomorphic change may occur, these are:

2.3.1 Coercive isomorphism

Coercive isomorphism is defined in the following way by DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 150):

“Coercive isomorphism results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function. Such pressures may be felt as force, as persuasion, or as invitations to join in collusion. In some circumstances organizational change is a direct response to government mandate”.

Coercive isomorphism comes from organisations that are depending on one another and the power relationships between them. The higher standing organisation might put pressures on the others to get achieve what they desire and punish them if they do not comply (Washington & Patterson, 2011). The academies of the clubs in the top two leagues might be looked at as under coercive pressure from TFS. If they do not act according to TFS' wishes, they will not be rewarded as well financially.

2.3.2 Mimetic processes

Mimetic processes are explained in DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 151):

“Not all institutional isomorphism, however, derives from coercive authority. Uncertainty is also a wonderful force that encourages imitation. When organizational technologies are poorly understood (March and Olsen, 1976), when goals are ambiguous, or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty, organizations may model themselves on other organizations. The advantages of mimetic behaviour in the economy of human action are considerable; when an organization faces a problem with ambiguous causes or unclear solutions, problemistic search may yield a viable solution with little expense (Cyert and March, 1963).”

Modelling, the term used by DiMaggio and Powell (1983 p. 151) is often a response to uncertainty. The organisation being modelled might have no desire for it. It might happen intentionally or unintentionally through for example change of staff, through other organisations such as consultant agencies or through industry trade organisations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Depending on the environment surrounding the organisation one might experience a demand to deliver the same services other similar organisations provide, thus encouraging mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 151)

“Organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful. The ubiquity of certain kinds of structural arrangements can more likely be credited to the universality of mimetic processes than any concrete evidence that the adopted models enhance efficiency.” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 152)

The organisations being copied function as benchmarkers of standards. The Norwegian Football Association (NFF), for example might look to the Royal Dutch Football Association or the Royal Belgian Football Association, nations that have been doing well in the field over. What are they doing that we might be able to adopt to our practices? The same goes for the clubs, a smaller club like Kristiansund Ballklubb might mimic some of the work Molde Fotballklubb does.

2.3.3 Normative pressures

Normative pressures are explained by DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 152) in the following way:

“A third source of isomorphic organizational change is normative and stems primarily from professionalization. Following Larson (1977) and Collins (1979), we interpret professionalization as the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control “the production of producers” (Larson, 1977:49-52), and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy”.

Socialisation is a major aspect when it comes to normative pressures. For example students educated through the same university, all going into the same business, with the same backgrounds and values will build a more isomorphic organisational climate, than if an industry were to recruit people with more diverse backgrounds. For example, if the Norwegian football clubs were to only hire from the Norwegian School of Sport Science they would limit the flourishing of innovation in their organisations. In addition, the circulation of employees within the industry will work as normative pressures; a given employee will bring his way of thought into each organisation, making them increasingly similar.

“It is important to note that each of the institutional isomorphic processes can be expected to proceed in the absence of evidence that they increase internal organizational efficiency. To the extent that organizational effectiveness is enhanced, the reason will often be that organizations are rewarded for being similar to other organizations in their field. This similarity can make it easier for organizations to attract career-minded staff, to be acknowledged as legitimate and reputable, and to fit into administrative categories that define eligibility for public and private grants and contracts. None of this however, insures that conformist organizations do what they do more efficiently than do their more deviant peers.”

DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 152-154)

If we read into what DiMaggio and Powell are saying organisations are often rewarded for being similar to each other, this however does not mean that they are more effective than those who choose to do things differently. This might also go for the clubs during the implementation of the academy classification system, it is not given that the clubs who follow the steps more rigidly have better practices than the ones who choose to do things differently.

As a result of the clubs trying to react to isomorphic pressures organisational change is likely to occur.

2.4 Organisational change

Pettigrew (1987, p. 657-658) cited in Slack and Parent (2006, p. 243) explains the word process in organisational change in the following way: *“refers to the change the actions, reactions, and interactions from the varied interested parties as they seek to move the [organization] from its present to its future state”*

Sport organisations are in constant change, people (players especially) come and go, they strive to innovate in order to have a competitive advantage. There are pressures from many stakeholders such as owners, fans, media and the employees. All these factors push forward change on a sporting organisation (Slack and parent, 2006, p. 239). A club that is not willing to change will experience stagnation and is likely become less competitive.

In this section the planned types of organisational change that may occur will be presented. Slack and Parent (2006, p. 239-240) informs us that there are four areas in a sports organisation where change might take place:

- **Technological change:** applies to changes that happen in the production process of the organisation, their methods, skills or knowledge used to deliver its services.
- **Products and services:** the deletion, addition or modification of other areas. For example in these social media times football clubs might set up Wi-Fi systems for their supporters in the stadium to please the customers needs and demands.

- **Structural and systemic changes:** changes in this category regards to the more formal and structural matters. How many members the board consists of, who answers to who and so forth.
- **People change:** peoples mind-sets, their relations and ways of being. Teambuilding exercises, group planning and so on might excel this type of change.

No matter what area of change, according to Greenwood and Hinings (1996), they can be divided into two types, radical and convergent. Radical change applies to completely changing orientation of the organisation, whilst convergent change is more towards fine-tuning a specific orientation.

The concept of paradoxical change stems from the fact that if a sport organisation wishes to stay competitive it must change (Peters, 1990), yet management will normally prefer the organisation to be stable and have predictability. Managers must control and balance the changes, something which is not an easy task. They must also understand the need for it to take place, and not disregard it. All organisations change, willingly or not (Slack and Parent, 2006, p. 240). Some organisations might resist change. They might even do so when facing failure (Slack and Parent, 2006, p. 242). Resistance to change can stem from varying factors such as being reluctant to deviate from existing habits or the fear by some managers that change will reduce their power (Slack and Hinings, 2006, p. 242-243). Slack and Parent (2006, p. 245) however, argue that resistance to change is not always dysfunctional. Managers must understand why resistance takes place, interest groups inside or outside of the organisation have different opinions of what direction the organisation should be heading. They might bring perspectives or issues the manager has overlooked. Resistance can be a way of avoiding potential problems before they get a hold, thus resistance to change might actually serve a beneficial effect in some instances.

Slack and Parent (2006, p. 245) gives us an overview of four of the major sources of resistance to change:

- **Self-interest:** People naturally tend to put themselves and their goals ahead of the organisation. Changes that might impact their own career path, prestige, salary and so on might not be viewed as popular, though the organisation as a whole would benefit from them.

- **Lack of trust and understanding about the implications of change:** Change might bring uncertainty, members of the organisation are not sure of how the changes will influence them. This is especially the case if there is a lack of trust between those initiating the change and the ones it will affect. With this you risk disrupting the organisational culture by creating rumours or the spreading of distorted information about the consequences of potential change. To minimize the members of the organisation getting defensive and reluctant, managers should always thoroughly explain the impacts of change in advance of the implementation.
- **Different assessments of change consequences:** This goes to when the stakeholders have fundamentally different values towards the change at hand. They might disagree to the benefits and costs the change will bring. Inadequate information is often the source to this sort of resistance.
- **The cost of change:** Some might view the cost of change in terms of efforts and resources as too large compared to the benefits, particularly in short-term.

To sum up the theoretical framework chapter, we have now looked at institutional isomorphism and organisational change and their subcategories. This study as the research question says will be looking at AkerAkademiet in the initial planning stages with the aim to investigate (1) how a highly ranked Norwegian academy reacts to these pressures, (2) what new practices they need to implement to fulfil the criteria of the classification system and (3) how does the classification system affects their work.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research design

Given the nature of this study and the lack of empirical studies within the Norwegian context, an exploratory case study design was adopted (Yin, 1984; Eisenhardt, 1989), with the intention to investigate the implementation of the new academy classification system in the initial phases and what changes they need to implement to fulfil the criteria.

3.1.1 Explorative single case study

According to Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 545-546) one has to clearly define what the case is going to cover, and what it is not going to cover. Something that might sound simple but actually in many cases turns out to be quite challenging, but limiting the area of research and not cover everything that looks interesting is essential. As the aim is to analyse the process of organisational change at AkerAkademiet and see if the academy classification system leads to institutional isomorphism, this study does not intend to analyse if the criteria in the system are ideal for talent development, nor does it intend to analyse the general need for Norwegian football to implement such a system. Since it will just look at AkerAkademiet and not give comparison to others, this will be a single case study.

According to Zainal (2007, p. 3) “*exploratory case studies set to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves a point to the researcher.*”

“Case study research is more than simply conducting research on a single individual or situation. This approach has the potential to deal with simple through complex situations. It enables the researcher to answer “how” and “why” type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated. For the novice research a case study is an excellent opportunity to gain tremendous insight into a case. It enables the researcher to gather data from a variety of sources and to converge the data to illuminate the case.” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556)

According to Yin (2003) cited in Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 545) it is natural to consider a case study on four occasions:

- a) When you are to answer how and why questions.

- b) When you are not able to manipulate the behaviour of the ones involved in the study.
- c) When you want to show contextual conditions that you believe to be of interest for the thing you are studying.
- d) When there are not clear boundaries between the phenomenon studied and its context.

This thesis will be looking at how the academy classification system affects the work of AkerAkademiet, ergo checking of point A of Yin's list. Point C is also relevant for this thesis in regards to institutional isomorphism and organisational change, the academy of for example Tromsø IL might not have the same reaction patterns to organisational change as AkerAkademiet even though they are faced with the implementation of an identical system.

3.2 Research method

This thesis is build on participant observation folowed up with two semi-structured interviews.

3.2.1 Participant observation

This study firstly relied on participant observation in its data collection. During the time it was written, I was also doing a student internship at AkerAkademiet as part of the finalisation of my bachelor's degree in sport management. Whilst doing this internship I was involved in the process of preparing the organisation for its first classification at the end of the year. Thus, I was able to observe and take direct part in the process, gaining knowledge of the ways of thinking and reaction patterns that existed. This way of collecting data is what we call participant observation; I as a researcher will both participate and observe. As we know from our own lives, what we say and what we do is not always the same thing. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005, p. 13) therefore argues that observation can work as an effective tool in checking reports from for example interviews, or the other way around. The work for this study has mostly been conducted at Aker Stadion where AkerAkademiet operate. In addition to this I attended NTF's yearly seminar at La Manga where the theme this year was the academy classification. Here leading figures from youth departments from all clubs that have signed

up for the classification attended, and was thus a great arena for both familiarising myself with the way Norwegian football academies think an work in general and in regards to the academy classification specifically.

According to Mack et al. (2005, p. 13) participant observation should always take place somewhere of relevance to the research question. The researcher must approach participants in their own habitat and not the other way around. When the researchers are conducting their participant observation they make precise and objective notes of what they see, usually this work is done in what is called a field notebook. This also includes observations made in more informal context. Everything that might be relevant should be documented.

“Generally speaking, the researcher engaged in participant observation tries to learn what life is for an “insider” while remaining, inevitably, an “outsider”.”
(Mack et al, 2005, p. 13)

Participant observation gives us data that is not dependent on participants’ subjective conception of what they believe and do. It also helps give context in different areas like economic, cultural and social. It is also useful to see the relationships of the people in the organisation both internally and externally, and their general behaviour. Participant observation is also helpful in the sense that even if the answers one might get from interviews or similar are truthful, it might not be the right questions being asked. An in depth understanding is of course essential for securing quality research (Mack et al, 2005, p. 14).

“...the method enables researchers to develop a familiarity with the cultural milieu that will provide invaluable throughout the project. It gives them a nuanced understanding of context that can come only from personal experience. There is no substitute for witnessing or participating in phenomena of human interaction – interaction with other people, with places, with things, and with states of being”
(Mack et al, 2005, p. 14)

According to Mack et al (2005, p. 16) when participant observation is conducted in applied research it is almost always combined with other qualitative methods, such as interviews,

which is the case for this thesis as well, backing up the data collected through different channels. Doing participant observation prior to the interviews helps the researcher identify the right people to interview, and ask the right questions. The interviews might also give more information as the researcher can read the interviewed person better and might get more open answers.

Whilst performing participant observation it is important that the researcher is open and truthful about whom he is, and his objectives. No one is obliged to talk to you if they do not want to (Mack et al, 2005, p. 17-18). The researcher should be discreet and not interrupt the natural milieu of the organisation. It is important that the researcher documents what he sees and not what he expected to see. Participant observation is partly about trying to confirm what you think you know but to a greater extent discovering unanticipated truths (Mack et al, 2005, p. 23).

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews and participants

I conducted two semi-structured interviews to confirm that the data collected through participant observation is correct and to get more official statements from key members of the organisation. Semi-structured interview is a form of interview where the questions are not precisely written down, but in a more fluent form. The interviewer has written down key words or descriptions as a base to build the interview on (Store norske leksikon, 2015). I chose to interview the CEO of AkerAkademiet, Knut Hallvard Eikrem who is in charge of the implementation process, and managing director of Molde Fotballklubb, Øystein Neerland who also helped form the classification system in cooperation with TFS.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they give more freedom, the interviewee are able speak freely in his own natural rhythm without a rigid course to follow, giving the interview a more natural flow. If I had chosen a more rigid form of interview the study might have missed out on points and reflections that would otherwise not see the light. I wanted the interviewees to say what was natural for them within the theme, not herd them in one direction to back up my pre-existing assumptions (Jacobsen, 2013, p. 151). I relied on a pre-planned interview guide with open questions (Smith and Sparkes, 2014) developed deductively from the theoretical framework of this thesis.

3.2.3 Data analysis

Creswell's (2009) model "Data Analysis in Qualitative Research" was used to analyse the data. The figure gives a linear hierarchical approach that starts at the bottom and builds upwards. The stages might in some cases interrelate, or happen in a different order than shown in the model. It consists of six steps:

1. **Organising and preparing data for analysis:** Transcribing interviews, typing field notes and sorting the data.
2. **Reading the data:** Getting a sense of the data at hand and reflecting over its meaning. What are the trends in the informants' answers, what is the overall depth and credibility?
3. **Coding the data:** I conducted my data coding by hand. Segmenting the data collected into categories, I used labels from my theoretical framework surrounding institutional isomorphism and organisational change.
4. **Description and themes:** Description serves the purpose of rendering information in detail; people, places and so on. Themes (or categories) regards to what appears to be the major findings of the qualitative study. They should show multiple perspectives and be supported by quotations.
5. **How will the description and themes be represented:** Narrating what your findings in the analysis are.
6. **Interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions:** Does the information found correlate with the theoretical framework?

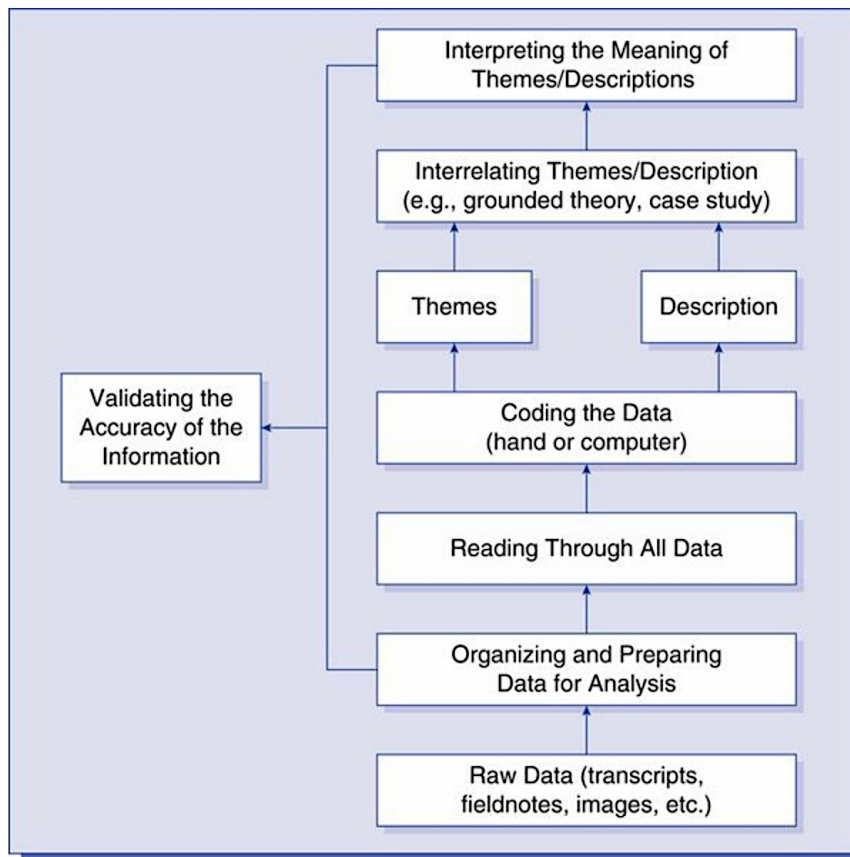


Figure 2: Data Analysis in Qualitative Research (Creswell, 2009)

The same interview guide was used on for both informants. By doing this I could get an impression of whether they had shared view of the classification process. The quotes with content that matched in both interviews were viewed as the most reliable information collected. By conducting interviews after four months of participant observation, I was able to interpret whether the information collected was credible and valid.

An example of matching quotes that strengthen the reliability of the research:

“For us it is positive to know how other clubs work, both in Norway and abroad. We get ideas that we can use in our club. Some things we might be able to copy and use, but more often we get ideas that we can use and develop so that it fits us. It is an incredibly important way to develop. We are incredibly dependent of openness and sharing information so that others can learn, that is something we have done on many occasions.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem

“I believe that us leaders an coaches in football are together a lot more today compared to some years ago, we talk a lot more and share information. This is something I believe we must get even better at in Norway if we want to improve internationally.” – Øystein Neerland

3.2.4 Research timeline

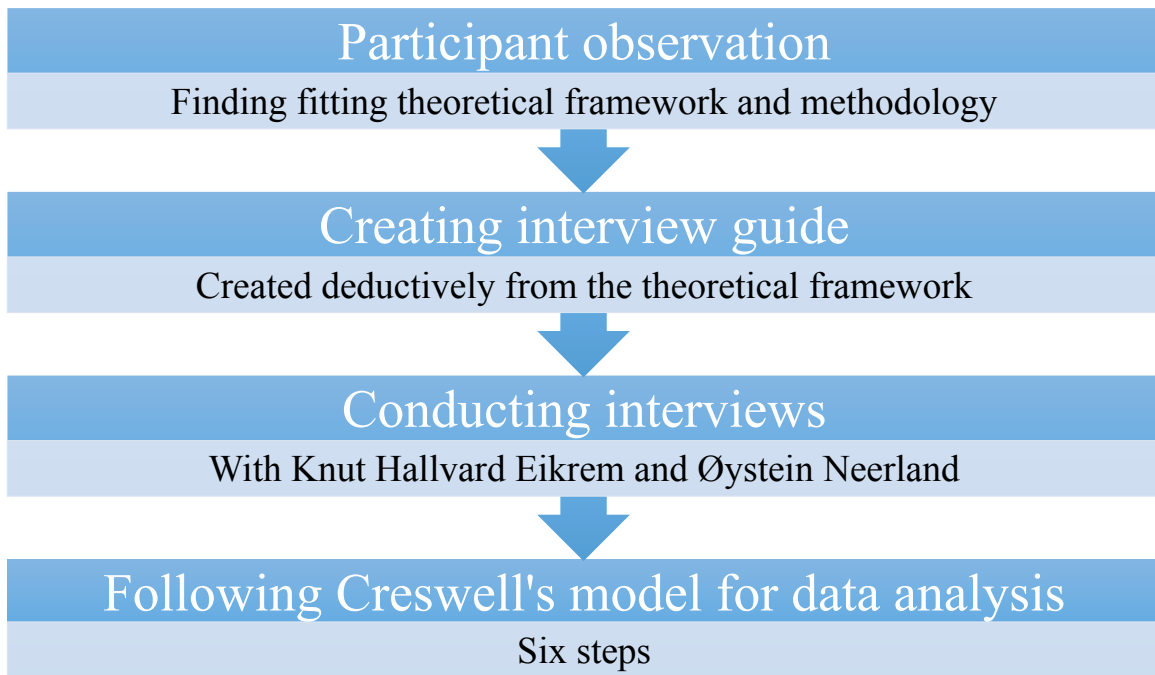


Figure 3: Timeline for research process

3.2.5 Research validity

According to Smith and Sparkes (2014, p. 84) the strength of a semi-structured interview is that it gives more control to the participants than what a structured interview does. It gives flexibility, and does so that the participant has the chance to reveal more about their meanings in regard to their experiences. There are however several weaknesses as well, it might be more difficult to analyse than the structured interview which means you risk losing some of the complexity. There can also be a barrier between the interviewer and the interviewee that hinders some information being shared.

This study does not provide generalisation, as the aim of the study was to provide insight from one single case. It is worth noting that the interviews were conducted in Norwegian and translated to English, therefore the quotes used in this thesis have been added in Norwegian to the attachments at the end.

It should also be specified that I was doing a student internship at AkerAkademiet while writing this bachelors thesis and hence had an active role in the process of implementing the academy classification system. To stay objective and avoid my own subjective opinions I have tried to back up all my findings with quotes from my interview objects.

This was especially important, as my field notes from the participant observation were inconclusive as a response to my inexperience as a novice researcher.

3.2.6 Ethical reflections

AkerAkademiet and its employees were informed of my presence and intentions to write this thesis based on observations made in the organisation. I was in some instances asked to not share certain information as it was regarded as confidential, this has been respected and the information given under these circumstances was left out of this study.

During the interviews with Neerland and Eikrem both were asked if it was OK to record the conversations and use quotes in the text, something both accepted with the demand that what they said was correctly communicated and not twisted in any way. They gave their permission to use their full names despite having the option to be presented anonymously. Thankfully, as presenting this thesis in a way where the identities remained hidden would have been very difficult.

4.0 The case for analysis

AkerAkademiet has since its establishment in February 2007 functioned as Molde Fotballklubb's academy. They are responsible for developing young local talent into players eligible to play for the first team. Molde Fotballklubb is a big part of the identity of the region of Molde, a small city in the northwest of Norway. For a city of just over 25 000 inhabitants, having a club that performs well is a big source of pride. Molde Fotballklubb won their first league trophy in 2011 and repeated the success in 2012 and 2014, and also won the Norwegian cup for the club's third and fourth time in 2013 and 2014. Additionally their under-19s won the Norwegian junior cup in 2016 (Moldefk.no, n.d.). The last six years (2011 to 2016) have arguably been a good period for the club.

Player development is essential if Molde Fotballklubb wants to succeed in their goals. Having a record of developing players that become good enough for their own team and subsequently sold to a stronger league/club, will make them more lucrative to new players. It will also generate money for the club that can finance their work further.

AkerAkademiet aims to develop one new player that plays a minimum of 10 games for the first team each season, and additionally two players good enough to be taken into the first team squad. The academy has in recent years developed players such as Sander Svendsen, Eirik Hestad and Stian Rode Gregersen.

AkerAkademiet consists of three training groups making up five teams: Molde 2, U19 National, U16 National, U16 local and U14. In addition to this they have got what they call SPU groups, which are player development groups, here they gather the best players in the region to train together every Thursday. The SPU groups are divided into four age groups, from 11 to 14 years old. Other than this they offer an after school program four days a week, where children get to play football, eat some fruit and do their homework. During holidays, AkerAkademiet often arrange football schools for children. To better show the organisation's operations I have constructed an organisational map of AkerAkademiet for the spring of 2017:

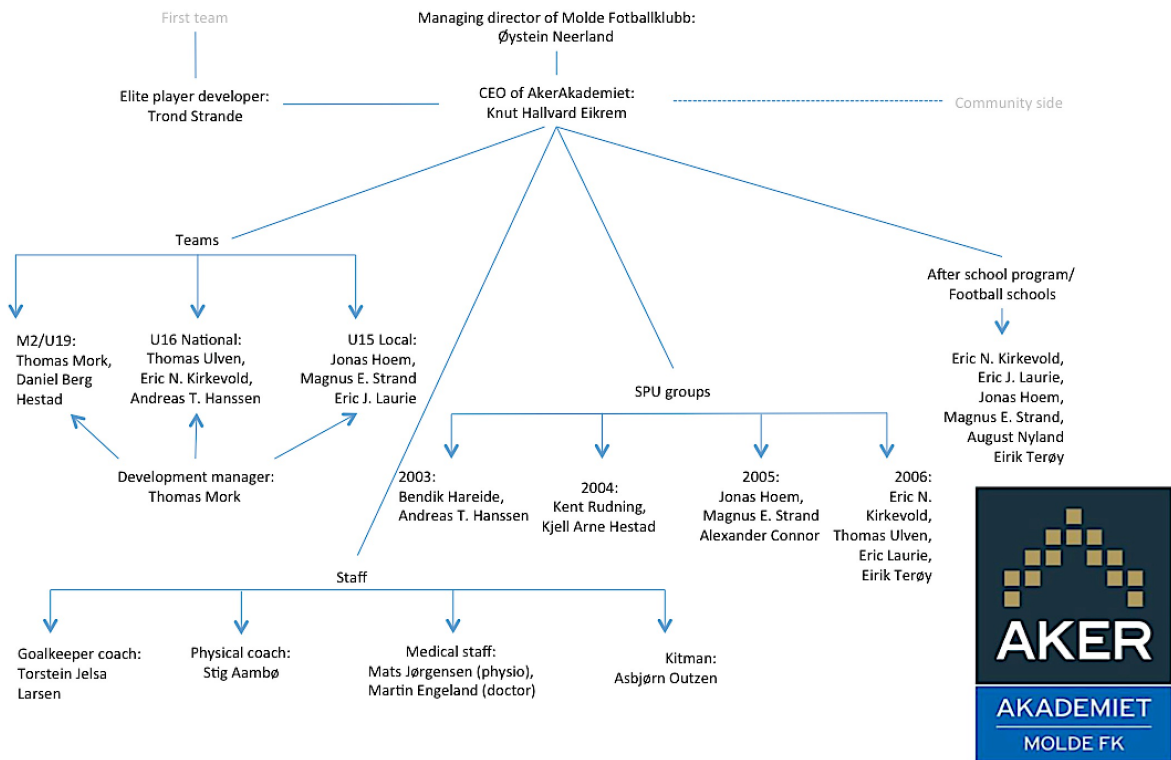


Figure 4: Organisational map of AkerAkademiet

According to Strand (2016) there has previously been done research on AkerAkademiet. These have been on coaching efficacy (Kirkevold, 2012), this study focused on the coach's belief in his own ability to influence team and individual performances. Moberg (2010) looked at selection criteria, how the coaches identify talent and what sort of player are they after? He found that AkerAkademiet looked at the following criteria: physical (speed), technical, tactical and mental abilities. Pettersson (2013) looked at the correlation between date of birth and selection. Pettersson found no evidence of relative age effect in AkerAkademiet. Strand (2016) himself compared AkerAkademiet and foreign academies based on some set elements, trying to find out where they stand. He among other things found that AkerAkademiet had fewer players in their teams compared to their European counterparts, between 12 and 14 compared to 18,2 players per team. He argues that this is because of contextual reasons and a wish to keep a close relationship between the coaches and the players.

5.0 Findings and discussion

AkerAkademiet have welcomed the academy classification and acknowledge the fact that they have been in need of an external push in order to develop further. Stagnation through complacency is a risk the organisation is well aware of, which is in line with Peters' (1990) description of paradoxical change. Both Øystein Neerland and Knut Hallvard Eikrem points to the fact that it was the clubs within NTF who decided that a classification system was the way to go. Neerland himself on behalf of Molde Fotballklubb was part of the development process, AkerAkademiet are very open to its contents and demands. The club and AkerAkademiet might because of Neerland's participation feel a larger sense of ownership of the system, and therefore acceptance than lesser-involved clubs.

“We want to be one of the best football clubs in Norway, top 3 is the objective. The same goes for the academy as well, we want to be among the best academies in Norway. To have something to reach for, which we do have internally with “the blue thread” and all, but I believe in getting feedback from external sources will give us a clearer path of how to get to the next level. It will make our work more measurable. I believe it is good to measure our work. If you lose your goals out of sight, soon you will not know where you are going, this is something I am concerned with. The goals need to be known, and you need to know if you are on your way to reaching them. I believe that the academy classification is a very good confirmation to this.” – Øystein Neerland (quote #1)

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study was to investigate (1) how AkerAkademiet reacts to these pressures, (2) what new practices they need to implement to fulfil the criteria of the classification system and (3) how does the classification system affects their work.

5.1 Findings institutional isomorphism

The academy classification system has been designed to take each clubs own identity and distinctiveness into consideration, but still institutional isomorphism seems a likely outcome. As mentioned earlier AkerAkademiet are very positive to having someone external evaluating their processes. However, when NTF visit each club with the same standardised documentation sheet it seems highly likely that similar solutions will be suggested to similar issues.

“The system challenges us in many ways. The clubs in Norway are very different. In the classification system it says that they will try to take each own clubs distinctiveness into consideration, and nurture this so that the clubs will not become too similar. But we will see that the clubs easily can become more alike, I think. Many clubs will now be working with the classification in mind and try to satisfy its demands. I guess that academies will be more similar in the future than they have been now. If that is a good thing or not, I do not know.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #2)

This quote from Eikrem tells us that clubs will try to make changes to adapt to the classification system. The system is as we have heard made to take care of each clubs’ own distinctiveness. Being able to do this is very important as one needs to remember the contextual differences the clubs face. All the clubs can improve, but it is important that they focus on making changes that help them develop in their own contextual environment. AkerAkademiet cannot do everything the same way as for example Stabæk or Rosenborg.

5.1.1 Coercive isomorphism

NTF is, as we know the interest organisation of the clubs in Norway’s two top leagues. It is therefore natural to think that there will be a sense of pressure to join in on their initiatives. Even though NTF does not force the clubs to take part in the academy classification, it is logical to think that most of them will (29 out of 32 decided to participate). When there are financial motives involved these pressures are likely to be experienced as stronger. AkerAkademiet is part of a club with a solid economy, and both Eikrem and Neerland say that money was not their main incentive for taking part.

“The main reason that we chose to take part is that we want to become better, and we feel that this is something that can help us with that and make us improve in many areas, that is the main reason. That we can do the work we have been doing a little bit better and produce more players that can play for the first team, that has to be the main reason.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #3)

Because the classification is built on a system ranking from one to five stars, it is important for the academies images that they score well and appear competitive. Clubs with more stars are likely to be more interesting to sponsors and young talent than the lower rated clubs. A club can do great work in developing the next generation of footballers, without necessarily fitting into the classification system. However, this will be more difficult to

convey to a board or the general public. Consequently, this is informal coercive isomorphism. Meaning that clubs not only are ‘punished’ financially if they do not fulfil their demands, but they will possibly also be worse off in terms of recruiting players and sponsors.

5.1.2 Mimetic processes

In the very beginning of the classification process, AkerAkademiet saw that there was work to be done in order to achieve points in category three; plans. They have for years built their work around trusting their coaches and their competence. Therefore, there have not been rigid plans for them to follow as to how they should work. Instead, there has been a large focus and reliance on giving the coaches autonomy. When faced with having to provide these plans they looked to how successful academies, mainly abroad. How these had structured theirs and what the content in them was. As both Neerland and Eikrem say, looking to others is very common in the industry.

“For us it is positive to know how other clubs work, both in Norway and abroad. We get ideas that we can use in our club. Some things we might be able to copy and use, but more often we get ideas that we can use and develop so that it fits us. It is an incredibly important way to develop. We are incredibly dependent of openness and sharing information so that others can learn, that is something we done on many occasions.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #4)

Modelling their own work on the work of others looked an easy and smart solution at the time, but during the process they saw that many of the things necessary were already there, it just needed structuring. The plans they had looked at therefore served of an inspirational purpose than as blueprints.

Though AkerAkademiet is very open to learning from others regarding how they conduct their business, they are very focused on keeping their work contextually correct. A solution that fits nicely for a different club will not automatically be as fitting for another. There might be both cultural and geographic reasons for this. AkerAkademiet believe that in order for Norwegian football to improve its player development, clubs must be willing to learn from each other.

“We think that you must have its your distinctiveness in the way you think. There is a globalisation, constant globalisation in the world when it comes to

consolidating industries, this is an industry and is also being consolidated in many ways. However, the smartest thing we can do is to find a clever way of doing things, although the surroundings are getting more and more similar. We believe that us, leaders and coaches in football are together a lot more today compared to some years ago, we talk a lot more and share information. If we want to improve internationally this is something I believe we must improve if we want to be more competitive.” - Øystein Neerland (quote #5)

5.1.3 Normative pressures

The academy classification in itself seems to be an answer to normative pressures. NTF has seen that many successful football nations have introduced similar systems, and thought that if Norwegian football wants to reach their level we should do the same. When a system of this sort is implemented in a nation it will most likely have an isomorphic effect on the clubs. When faced with the same pressures and criteria to fulfil, their operations will be more alike than under freer circumstances.

The clubs taking part in the classification system might be viewed as a reaction to normative pressures (along with coercive). “The other clubs are doing this so we should probably do it as well”, though there is an economic incentive to participating that sum is not big enough to fully finance the operations of an academy. There is a competitive factor involved, the star rating system will put academies up against each other and the better ones will seem more lucrative, even though it is more than possible to run a great football academy with just one star. Many clubs will most likely sign up as a preventive incentive from fear of falling behind.

The perhaps most obvious sign of normative pressure on AkerAkademiet is through the implementation of Skillrace. Skillrace is a computer program designed for football clubs to improve their training processes and the monitoring of their players. This program has been developed in cooperation with NTF, and it was highly recommended that all the clubs adopt it. The system is also supposed to make the some of the documentation processes for the classification easier. As a natural reaction to some clubs starting to use it, others will think it is the best for them as well. Using this program seems to be norm in the making.

5.2 Findings organisational change

AkerAkademiet are making adjustments to fit into the classification system, changes that most likely would not have taken place if the classification system was not implemented, at least not for some time.

“We will probably be changed and start doing things in different ways to be more in line with the classification system, we have to do this if we want to receive points and thus money which is a part of this. We have to do few things aimed at the classification, even though we have quite a few things we are pleased with from before, I am guessing we will have to make changes.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #6)

5.2.1 Technological change

I found two technological changes in AkerAkademiet through this process. Firstly i found that they stau true to their methods. AkerAkademiet will more or less conduct their business as they have been doing but with slight adjustments.

“I believe that to a large extent we will keep doing things the way we have done, at least for the near future. Things might twist slightly, but I do not believe there will be dramatic changes. It will most likely just be moderated slightly in one or another direction, small adjustments. I do not believe we will experience big changes, we are still dependent on working with the other local clubs, if we cannot cooperate with those clubs for some reason we are in trouble.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #7)

The second finding was the implementation of Skillrace. Skillrace has been implemented as a tool to help AkerAkademiets work become more rooted in the organisation itself rather than just on the people there. Even if the people of the organisation changes the system remains, keeping continuity.

“I believe this can be positive. It will be positive for us to try and develop and make use of the system more and more. Especially when it comes to saving data and so forth. Perhaps we can have data from the tests we do on players over time and look back to see how effective our methods are. We have kept hold of a lot of data from physical tests, but they are not stored in one common place. We can start making complete trainings that we put into the system, exercise and more. Hopefully we can get this up and running efficiently. It is a big job in the beginning, but in the long run if we can get it up and running it will be positive for us.” - Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #8)

“I do not know enough about the system and its content too well, but this has been discussed for a year or so I think. I believe that it is important to make use of natural tools to register and keep control of things. Football in general, the football industry is a young industry in industrial terms. I believe that we are miles behind the normal business world when it comes to technology, type of structures and documentation. I think this is a challenge for football, many players go on to be coaches, and they do not have that business dimension, to document and keep order, planning and so on. Some do, but way to many do not. The fact that we are starting to write down and document in the academy, making notes, saving reports and goals, it helps the players with their awareness as well. To store all the medical staff's documentations, we are 20 years behind compared to other industries. We do not have these things in place, none of the Norwegian clubs have got it 100 % in order. I think this will help. Someone has to write things down, and someone has to read it later, that is what this is about in the end.” – Øystein Neerland (quote #9)

The quotes from Eikrem and Neerland tell us that they see the value in securing the organisations' knowledge. Changes can happen fast in a football club and building structures that can support the organisation under these circumstances seems a smart move. It also points to one of the meanings of the classification system; the professionalization of the industry.

5.2.2 Products and services

The product of an academy is football players. They develop players to use in their own first team and to sell for a profit. Their services are helping the players develop into the products the club request. The services they provide are knowledge, training sessions, physiotherapy and more.

The standout finding was their approach to parental meeting structures through plans (how to cope with agents etc.). The structures and services have not changed for AkerAkademiet during this process, however they share more information to one of the perhaps most influential groups for the players: their parents. Third party involvement is more and more common in football, agents now play a big role. Molde Fotballklubb have until now not had a fixed plan as to how to communicate to players and their parents how to deal with these. Having this in place will give points in the classification, and is something the club will get in place in the near future.

5.2.3 Structural and systemic change

The standout change in this category is the appointment of the coaches coach. When you get to three stars you receive subsidies to appoint a coaches' coach; a person who is responsible to follow up the coaches on a daily basis. AkerAkademiets aim is three stars and have already started the process of hiring this person. His task will be to help the other coaches and work as a sparring partner for discussions and so on. This appointment will mean that Eikrem will not have to work as closely in following up the coaches on an everyday basis, instead he can focus on other more the big picture development of the organisation.

“We have already done some changes inn regards to the employees, adjustments to job descriptions, 50 and 100 % employment which is required in the organisation. We also wish to develop a coaches' coach, which is part of the classification system. In this context, we have made changes in order to adjust to the classification. I think this will be positive for us in the long run even though it is new to us now and we have to incorporate things.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #10)

With many clubs hiring a coaches' coach as part of the classification process, this is likely to have an isomorphic effect on their operational structures. However one should keep in mind that coaches are not one homogeneous group and different people bring different knowledge and skills to their organisations.

The second finding in the structural and systemic change category is the formalisation of cooperation agreements. AkerAkademiet are working closely with its local community, cooperating with schools, neighbour clubs and NFF Møre og Romsdal. There have been common understandings and oral agreements of how they cooperate up until now. As part of the classification process these agreements must now be formalised. This seems to be a good thing, like with the implementation of Skillrace, having things formalized makes it easier for these things to continue even if there is a change of people in the organisations.

5.2.4 People change

There were made two findings in this category, the fist on was regarding mind-set. There has been an increased awareness of the academy's work and importance throughout the organisation.

“I think this process has been pleasing, the board would probably say the same. We have always in Molde Fotballklubb had AkerAkademiet as a clear brand. What has happened during the last six months is that it has become a board matter, the process has been oriented to them and in internal meetings. I believe we have raised the status of the academy. I believe that when things are in place and stars are being handed out, the idea is to lift them and promote the results. I believe it will do something with the people working there. AkerAkademiet will shine a bit brighter and this does something with the internal pride and commitment and so on.” – Øystein Neerland (quote #11)

The second finding was towards the awareness of how the organisation works and its aims. AkerAkademiet as an organisation and the people working there has had to look at themselves and evaluate their processes. The classification works as a reality check in many ways, the club cannot lie to itself saying that “we are doing a great job” but in reality they might not have been doing all that great. If you are not honest as to where you stand it is very difficult to take things forward.

“The most important thing no matter what you are doing is being brutally honest as to where you stand, where does Molde Fotballklubb stand? What do we want with Molde Fotballklubb? Who are we supposed to be? Who are we here for? Who are supposed to be a part of Molde Fotballklubb? One must take a status report on oneself. What should we prioritise?” – Øystein Neerland (quote #12)

5.2.5 Convergent change

The changes being made in AkerAkademiet through this process are convergent changes. They have been doing good work but needed a push in order to take things forward, which the classification has given them. Molde Fotballklubb and the academy have already got a clear identity, which is absolutely essential in this industry. They know who they are, who they are for and what their work is. Dag Opjordsmoen, who has been working at TFS for many years, and one of two people conducting the final classification of AkerAkademiet said that they have a good balance of 80/20. 80 % set in their ways, stable and predictable, they have a culture and know how they want to do things. And then they have 20 % that gives room to innovation and change. This combination gives continuity but the ability to improve. More unstable clubs might be the other way around, giving enormous uncertainty and risk of frequent radical change.

There has been very little resistance to change during this process, it is clear that AkerAkademiet and its employees are very well aware of the dangers of stagnation and

falling behind, they want to keep developing. There have been some questioning and reluctance to why the classification needs to know all the things they ask for, and this was something TFS expected. Despite this there is an obvious trust in TFS and their competence, and the process and its aims have been thoroughly explained to the people working in the academy. TFS say themselves that this is a living system and by the next time they conduct a classification there will undoubtedly be changes. Questioning some of the criteria might be a natural reaction and something to listen to when doing the next classification. The reason some things have been questioned at AkerAkademiet seems to be down to lack of understanding about the implications of change. “What will sharing all our data to outsiders mean to us?”

“I am a bit sceptical to a couple of things like economy and other stuff, why should we share everything? We received a document where we were to inform of all our sales, both academy and senior players with price and everything. I do not see a reason for why we should be sharing this with others. This industry is competitive, and it is not a plus for us that everyone is able to look at what we have received for different players. That it not an advantage.” – Knut Hallvard Eikrem (quote #13)

With Molde Fotballklubb’s success in recent years it is understandable that they do not want to share the things that might give them a competitive advantage. And this is in line with what Slack and Parent (2006) tells us in the category of resistance to change; lack of trust and understanding about the implications of change. When the club is uncertain as to what the information is for, they become sceptical. So despite AkerAkademiet’s trust in TFS, they question the things that are not made completely clear to them.

6.0 Conclusion

For AkerAkademiet the academy classification process has been a positive influence on their operations. It has been a necessary push to take things forward. They have been forced to have a critical look at what they are doing and been given pointers as to what they can improve on or do differently. It has been important that the members of AkerAkademiet and Molde Fotballklubb in general have viewed this process as an opportunity to develop rather than a burden.

In some areas the implementation of the academy classification system might lead to institutional isomorphism, but slight isomorphism is not always a negative. If the clubs improve their academies and become better at developing football players does it really hurt that they are slightly more similar than previously? As long as AkerAkademiet are able to view the system as a helpful tool and not a blueprint of their operations there should be little harm. There is some room for contextual differences in the system, which is vital. Knowing what AkerAkademiet is and for whom it is for, is and will keep being paramount in order to succeed.

Since this study only covers the initial phases of the implementation process, there is no knowing of what AkerAkademiet's final score will be and if they get to the level they aspire. It is natural to think that an ideal outcome of a successful academy classification system would be a strong correlation between productivity and the classification score. If this is the case when the process is finished will be truly interesting to see.

In a competitive environment like the football industry, competing on who has the best operations through the classification system can help fuel development and innovation. This does not only go for the senior sides of the clubs, but also for academies. For AkerAkademiet, who is among the top academies in Norway the classification seems likely to bring more positive aspects than negative.

“I believe there has been done work that without a doubt would not have been done had it not been for the classification. Good things will come from this; structures, culture and more.” – Øystein Neerland (quote #14)

7.0 Strengths and weaknesses of the study

Due to this study being a bachelor thesis it had a deadline at the 29th of May 2017, I was not able to follow the entire classification process that will be finalised in November. Therefore this has just been a study of the initial phases.

The study gives good insight to the reaction pattern to Molde Fotballklubb and AkerAkademiet as they face both internal and external pressures. The study however does not justify generalisation of these pattern for Norwegian football clubs. As the clubs in Norway country are very different and have very different geographical, and to an extent cultural contexts, the clubs will react to pressures in different ways.

As I look back on the process I believe that the study would be even stronger had I interviewed one or two of the coaches as well. Then I would have got the opinions of the operational core of the organisation formally documented, compared to just having observed through participant observation as was the case now. Because of the time this would have taken and the process just covering in the initial phases I found it sufficient to do two interviews with more superior members of the club.

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9.0 Attachments

9.1 Interview guide

Part 1: Institutional isomorphism

What do you think of the academy classification?

What benefits do you believe a classification like this can bring?

Do you see any negative aspects with the classification?

Will it affect AkerAkademiets everyday work?

Do you believe the classification will have any influence in AkerAkademiets own distinctiveness?

Have you felt any pressures to take part in the academy classification? If so, positive or negative pressures?

Do you feel that Norwegian talent development is being standardised in any way? That there is becoming one correct way of doing things?

Molde is a big club by Norwegian standards, do you think that you experience this process differently compared to smaller clubs?

Part 2: Organisational change

You have decided to take part in the classification, do you have to make any changes in the organisation as a response to this? Organisational structures, work tasks and so on.

How have you experienced the implementation phase of the classification so far?

Will you have to make any changes in the way you work or organise AkerAkademiet because of the academy classification? If so, what changes?

Will the work you do out on the training field be changed in any way?

Do you think that being classified and put up against the other clubs will have any affect on your operations in the future?

Does AkerAkademiets mind-set in regards to talent development change in any way?

Skillrace is being implemented with the help of TFS simultaneously as the classification is being done, how do you think this will affect your organisation in the short and long run?

Have you got anything you want to say or add before we finish?

9.2 Interviewguide in Norwegian

Del 1: Institutional isomorphism

Hva synes du om akademiklassifiseringen?

Hvilken nytteverdi tror du en slik klassifisering bidrar med?

Ser du noen negative aspekter ved klassifiseringen?

Vil den påvirke AkerAkademiets hverdag?

Tror du klassifiseringen vil ha noen påvirkning på AkerAkademiets egenart?

Føler dere noe press for å være en del av akademiklassifiseringen? Er dette presset (om press) positivt eller negativt?

Føler du at norsk talentutvikling er i ferd med å bli standardisert på noen måte? At det blir én rett måte å jobbe på.

Molde er en stor klubb etter norsk standarder, tror du Akademiklassifiseringen oppleves annerledes for dere enn for mindre klubber?

Del 2: Organisational change

Dere har bestemt dere for å bli med i klassifiseringen. Må dere gjøre noen forandringer i organisasjonen som følge av dette? Organisasjonsstruktur, arbeidsoppgaver osv.

Hvordan synes du implementeringsfasen av Akademiklassifiseringen har vært så langt?

Vil dere måtte gjøre noen endringer i måten dere jobber på eller organiserer AkerAkademiet på grunn av klassifiseringen? I så fall, hva slags endringer?

Vil jobben dere gjør på treningsfeltet forandres på noen måte?

Tror du det at dere blir klassifisert og stilt opp mot de andre klubbene vil få noen påvirkning på driften deres i fremtiden?

Forandres AkerAkademiets tanke sett rundt talentutvikling på noen måte?

Skillrace innføres gjennom Toppfotballsenteret samtidig som klassifiseringen, hvordan tror du dette vil påvirke organisasjonen på kort og lang sikt?

Har du noe du ønsker å si eller legge til før vi avslutter?

9.3 The used quotes in Norwegian

Quote #1 (Neerland):

Vi ønsker jo å være en del av toppfotballen i Norge og vi ønsker å være av de beste klubbene i Norge. Topp 3 er målsettingen som du vet om og det gjelder jo akkurat det samme for akademiet, vi skal være blant de beste akademiene i Norge. Og det å ha på en måte, noe å strekke seg etter. På den tiden vi har hatt så har vi jo hatt den blå tråden og alt dette her, men jeg tror at det å få tilbakemeldinger fra eksterne revisorer det blir litt mer sånn, ”ja nå er vi på det nivået, vi skal opp et nivå”. Da blir det litt mer sånn, det blir mye mer målbart å se hva du skal gjøre for å flytte et nivå da. Det tror jeg er veldig bra, det å måle. Hvis du mister målene av syne så vet du ikke hvor du skal hen tilslutt, det er hvert fall jeg opptatt av. Målene må være kjent også må du vite om du er på vei mot målet og det tror jeg akademiklassifiseringen veldig bra er en bekreftelse, en slags revisjon på det der.

Quote #2 (Eikrem):

Ja det vil jo gi utfordringer for oss på en del områder. Fordi at klubbene i Norge er veldig ulike. I klassifiseringen sier de at de skal prøve å ta vare på den ulikheten, slik at ikke alle klubbene blir like, men vi ser vel fort at klubbene kan bli mer like enn tidligere, vil jeg tro. Mange vil jo nå jobbe opp mot klassifiseringen og å tilfredsstille den. Det blir nok en flere akademier som er mer like i fremtiden enn slik det har vært. Om det er bra eller ikke, det vet vi ikke enda.

Quote #3 (Eikrem):

Hovedårsaken er at vi ønsker å bli bedre, og vi mener at dette er noe som kan gjøre oss bedre på mange områder, det er hovedårsaken. At vi kan gjøre den jobben vi har holdt på med enda litt bedre og få frem enda flere spillere som kan være aktuelle for Molde Fotballklubb, det må være hovedårsaken.

Quote #4 (Eikrem):

For oss så er det veldig positivt å høre hvordan andre klubber jobber, både i Norge og i utlandet, vi får tips som vi kan bruke i vår klubb. Noen få ting kan vi kanskje kopiere og bruke, men på de fleste ting får vi idéer som vi kan bruke og utvikle slik at det passer for vår del. Det er en utrolig viktig måte å utvikle seg på. Vi er utrolig avhengige av åpenhet

og å gi fra oss opplysninger slik at andre kan lære, og det har vi gjort i mange sammenhenger.

Quote #5 (Neerland):

Men vi tenker at det er, man må jo ha sin egenart til måten man tenker på i klubben. Det er jo en globalisering, stadig globalisering i verden om det gjelder å konsolidere bransjer, dette er jo en bransje, den blir også konsolidert på mange måter. Men det lureste vil nok være å finne en lur måte å gjøre ting på uansett selv om rammen rundt blir mer og mer lik. Vi tror vi, fotballedere og fotballtrenere er mye mer i dag enn for noen år siden snakker mye sammen og deler informasjon, det tror jeg bare vi må bli enda flinkere på i Norge hvis vi skal bli bedre internasjonalt.

Quote #6 (Eikrem):

Vi kommer nok til å bli forandret, gjøre ting på en annen måte og slik at vi er mer inn mot klassifiseringen, det må vi gjøre om vi skal oppnå poeng og dermed penger som ligger i dette. Så må vi gjøre en del ting opp mot klassifiseringen selv om vi har en del ting som er klar og som vi har fra før så må vi helt sikkert forandre på ting.

Quote #7 (Eikrem)

I stor grad så tror jeg at vi vil fortette, i hvert fall i nær fremtid slik vi har gjort. Det kan hende ting dreier seg litt, men jeg tror ikke det blir dramatiske forandringer. Det modereres nok bare litt den ene eller andre veien, små justeringer. Jeg tror ikke vi kommer til å oppleve veldig store forandringer. For vi er fortsatt avhengige av at vi har med lokale klubber rundt her og hvis vi ikke greier å samarbeide med de lokale klubben rundt her så er vi ute og kjører.

Quote #8 (Eikrem):

Det vil jeg tro at kan være positivt. Positiv tilgang for oss å begynne med det og prøve å utvikle og bruke det mer, det tror jeg kan være veldig positivt. Spesielt, som jeg sa i starten med logistikkføring og å ta vare på ting. Kanskje kan vi begynne å bygge opp dette med testing av spillere og se det tilbake i tid. Fysiske tester har vi lagra mye av, men ikke felleslagret. Vi kan begynne å lage treninger, ta vare på de og legge inn, lage øvelsesbanker og sånn. Hvis vi får det til å gå og til å bli effektivt. Det er en stor jobb nå i starten men på sikt vil det være positivt.

Quote #9 (Neerland):

Jeg kjenner jo litt for lite til systemet og innholdet men det har jo vært et tema i et års tid tror jeg. Jeg tror det er viktig at vi tar i bruk naturlige hjelpemidler for å registrere og ha kontroll på ting. Fotballen generelt, fotballindustrien er en litt ung industri i industritermer, jeg synes jo at vi ligger milevis bak det ordinære næringslivet med teknologi, type struktur og dokumentasjon. Det tror jeg vi har en utfordring i fotballen, mange spillere som fortsetter som trenere. Du mangler den næringslivsdimensjonen med dokumentere og ha orden på saker, planlegging osv. Noen har det men altfor mange, en del av ei stor gruppe som får beskjed om at du skal møte opp kl. 9 for da er det trening, så skal du møte på kamp osv. Det at vi begynner i akademiet, begynner langt nede nå og dokumenterer, skriver, noterer, lager rapporter og målsettinger, også spillerne med bevisstgjøring. Det var noe annet system her også som vi snakket om, å strukturere hele medisinske apparatet sin dokumenter/dokumentasjoner, vi er jo 20 år bak sammenlignet med andre bransjer. Vi har jo ikke dette på plass. Ingen av klubbene i Norge har dette 100 % på plass, det er permer og det er notater og... Dette tror jeg er med å løfter. Noen må jo skrive og noen må lese etterpå, det er det det handler om til slutt.

Quote #10 (Eikrem):

Ja, vi har allerede forandret litt i forhold til både de ansatte, hele og halve stillinger som kreves i organisasjonen, og vi har ønske om å utvikle trenerens trener, som er en del av akademiklassifiseringen. I den sammenheng har vi forandret og prøver å tilpasse akademiklassifiseringen. Det også mener jeg at er positivt for oss på sikt, selv om det nå er nytt og vi må innarbeide ting.

Quote #11 (Neerland):

Jeg synes det som har vært gledelig og det kan du sikkert spørre styret også om, vi har jo alltid i Molde Fotballklubb hatt AkerAkademiet som har hatt tydelig merkevare. Det som har skjedd det siste halvåret er at dette har blitt en styresak, dette har blitt orientert om i styret, det blir orientert om i internmøter her på huset også. Jeg tror vi har løftet statusen på akademiet. Jeg tror at når ting er på plass og stjerner blir delt ut at tanken å løfte det i omgivelsene her og markedsføre. Jeg tror det gjør noe med folk som jobber der . AkerAkademiet skinner litt bedre så det gjør noe med stoltheten, engasjementet osv.

Quote #12 (Neerland):

Og det viktigste uansett hva du driver med er å stikke fingeren i jorden og si hvor er vi hen eller hvor er Molde fotballklubb hen, hva vil vi med Molde Fotballklubb, hvem skal vi være, hvem skal vi være til for, hvem skal være en del av Molde Fotballklubb? Man må heller ta en status på seg selv, hva har man mulighet til å prioritere riktig.

Quote #13 (Eikrem):

Jeg er litt skeptisk til en del ting som økonomi og andre ting, hvorfor skal vi dele alt? Nå fikk vi jo et skriv der vi skulle fortelle om alle salgene våre, unge- og A-spillere, pris osv. det ser jeg ikke noen grunn til at vi skal dele med alle andre. Det er jo konkurranse, ikke noe fortrinn for oss, at alle skal kunne kikke på hva vi har fått for forskjellige spillere, det er jo ikke noen fordel.

Quote #14 (Neerland):

Og jeg tror at dere, inklusiv deg har gjort et stykke arbeid her som garantert ikke hadde blitt gjort hvis det ikke var for klassifiseringsmodellen som vil gi frukter, struktur, kultur og alt dette her.