



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

Exploring the short- and long-term effects of the Norwegian Academy Classification: A Head of Youth Development Perspective

Gøran Askim and Magnus Ellevold Strand

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Preface

This thesis is the final project equivalent to 30 ECTS for the completion of a Master of Science degree in Sport Management at the Molde University College. This thesis could not have been written without the support, advice, guidance and encouragement from others.

First and foremost, we would like to express our gratitude towards our supervisor Birnir Egilsson for all his guidance, supervision, encouragement and dedication. Your support and knowledge has guided this thesis towards a result we are proud to present.

Those participating in the study has been essential for the composition of this thesis, thus we would like to thank all the participants who gave their time, shared their knowledge and experience, in the research for this study.

Finally, we would like to thank our families for all the support and encouragement during the process of writing this thesis.

Summary

Introduction and context: The purpose of this study was to explore the HYDs perspective of the short- and long-term effects of the recent implementation of the Norwegian AC system. The European and Norwegian football industry was presented to set the scene of the research.

Literature review: Previous research about football academies and quality assurance systems in football was presented to guide the reader closer to the core of the thesis, more specifically to generate an understanding of what these components of the research actually is about.

Theoretical framework: This study looked at how the Academy Classification affected selected clubs through the lens of institutional theory and resource dependency theory.

Method: This study used a qualitative research approach and a exploratory research design. Eight interviews with eight heads of youth development (HYD) that represented clubs from different ratings in the Academy Classification was interviewed using a semi-structured interview approach. Since the study covered a new and comprehensive concept in Norwegian football an exploratory approach seemed appropriate and interviews were conducted in order to generate nuanced meanings.

Results, discussion and conclusion: The findings of the study are related to isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and resource dependency theory (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Changes in the academies have mainly occurred as a result of coercive isomorphism imposed by Norsk Toppfotball. The findings of this study show that stereotypical roles in Norwegian football academies, such as the HYD and the coach, has changed due to the new requirements and demands. Another significant and relevant (in Norwegian context) finding were the relationship between elite and amateur, which after the classification seemed to be stronger in the majority of the clubs.

Contribution of the thesis: This study has contributed to provide an extensive understanding regarding the short- and long-terms effects following the introduction of the Academy Classification in Norwegian football.

Key words: Academy classification, quality assurance systems, professional football clubs, amateur clubs, isomorphism, resource dependency theory

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ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Academy classification
ECA	European Club Association
EPPP	Elite Player Performance Plan
FA	Football association
FFP	Financial fair play
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
HYD	Head of Youth Development
MD	Managing director
NFF	Norwegian football association
NTF	Norsk Toppfotball
PASS	Professional Academy Support System
PFC	Professional football club
QAS	Quality assurance system
SSI	Semi-structure interview
TFS	Norsk Toppfotball Senter
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations

1.0 Introduction

“I think the Academy Classification is very useful for Norwegian football, and I think it is beneficial to us as a club. Previously there hasn’t been any system or plan guiding the club, and I believe that has been in demand for a long time, from both the club, coaches, players and not at least parents wondering: why are you doing this and not this?”

- HYD-1

This statement sets the context of this study and as it implies, there has been a need for something new to raise the quality of Norwegian football. Football can be measured by looking at two interrelated levels, team performance (i.e. clubs and national teams) and players performance (i.e. level of playing). Poor team performance, or absence of international competitions (i.e. World Cup, Euros, Europa League and Champions League) represent the former level, while the latter can be seen through the lack of Norwegian professional footballers playing regularly in leagues abroad, especially the big five (i.e. England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France). The export of Norwegian players to foreign leagues has stagnated during the last 20 years. Players representing the national team squads from 1998 and 2018 represent an astonishing change of Norwegian players in the big five, where 64 percent of the former squad represented clubs in the big five, while 20 percent of the present squad plays in the big five. In the former period, Norway was ranked 11th in the FIFA ranking, the example may partially explain why the current team is ranked 49th, behind countries like Jamaica, Congo DR and IR Iran (FIFA, 2018). The problem is simple, Norwegian professional football clubs (PFCs) do not produce players who are able to perform at the international arena any more.

The contents described in the previous section have led to several debates and discussions about talent development in Norwegian football. On the contrary to other research, this study will not produce a list of areas that have been debated regarding talent development. Based on the section above, it means that the problem in Norwegian football is not a temporary one, but a structural one. The problem is simple, the current structure in PFCs in Norway does not produce players of the highest quality, or enough of them. Also, the increasing degree of commercialization and professionalization in professional football have made talent development, and transfers of young talents, a global industry (Lürssen, 2017). According to Gammelsæter (2011), this trend is expressed by the fact that attention is largely focused on

the commodities, which are the talented players. Similarly, the football industry has experienced the need for more efficient management of commodities, due to the associated professionalization and commercialization of the game, subsequently leading to higher demands of the management of the associated sports organization (Kaiser, 2004). From a talent development perspective, more efficient development of resources (i.e., players) signifies the need for PFCs and their youth academies to nurture the primary resource (Fløtnes, 2011).

Some football nations (e.g., Germany, Belgium, Finland, England) have already recognized the importance of talent development, subsequently increasing focus and investments, with the aim of creating a competitive advantage to rival football nations (Relvas et al. 2010; ECA, 2012). Such investments have led to the introduction of quality assurance systems (QAS) in football. The application of QASs was first present in business to meet increased customer demands, expectations, competitive pressures, regulatory environment and internal forces (Brown, Van Der Wiele & Loughton 1998). For most football nations that have implemented a QAS, the overall goal is to improve the competitive edge of the football industry by developing more and better players (TFS, 2017).

To address the issues presented in the sections above, and as a response to the pressure for change from internal stakeholders (e.g., the public, media) and the European football industry, the Norwegian PFCs' interest organization *Norsk Toppfotball* introduced in the autumn of 2016 a QAS, named the Academy Classification (AC). In short, the AC is a tool for setting clear standards for the work of talent development in PFCs in Norway. In Norwegian sports literature, only one study has been conducted about the AC (Terøy, 2017). This study explored how the AC affected the work of a Norwegian football academy. However, this study could not produce significant findings due to the fact that it was conducted simultaneously as when the club received the various criteria listed in the AC. In European sports literature, some research on the topic has been performed. Van Hoecke, Schoukens & De Knop (2007) studied "the impact of the quality management system Foot PASS on the structural dimensions of a professional football academy". The first author also studied "the classification of youth academies in German PFCs" (Van Hoecke et al. 2011). However, these studies were inaccessible, despite attempts to get in contact with the authors. Carlsson (2011) and Carlsson & Ring (2012) have produced some research about the QAS applied in Sweden.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The introduction of the QAS in professional football in Norway, the uncertainty of its effects and the lack of previous research about similar systems in European football constitutes a whole new field of research. Following this line of thought, the purpose of this study is to explore the HYDs perspective of the short- and long-term effects of the recent implementation of the Norwegian AC system. These insights would be valuable to both industry practice and research given the lack of previous research about QAS in football. As a mean to do so, we have put forward the following research question:

- *In what way has the first year of the Academy Classification affected the professional football clubs in Norway, and what are the HYDs considerations regarding the process and its immediate and long-term effects?*

The AC covers many areas, both within the club and outside the clubs. Associated with the research question, this study also aims to explore additional questions. Are the football academies becoming more similar? Do clubs and academies consider players more like a commodity now than before? What effects have occurred outside the club as a result of the implementation of the AC? How has the working environment of the staff changed? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed.

The lack of research about the AC made it important to explore a significant number of clubs (i.e., 30 percent of the enrolled clubs) at different levels (i.e., classified with 1 to 4 stars) to generate a wide range of findings, aiming to find patterns and particulars. Therefore, the study will explore eight youth academies in PFCs in Norway, each represented by their academy director or head of youth development (HYD).

1.2 Overview of the study

This paper follows a basic research paper structure and consists of six chapters presenting comprehensive topics relevant to this study. Chapter 1 is the *introductory chapter*, providing a short background to the research and also presenting the research question. This chapter also discusses both the necessity and the importance of such a research. Chapter 2 will

address the *context*, with the purpose of creating a platform of the overall topic. This chapter will begin by describing the professional football industry, to gradually narrowing it by describing the Norwegian football environment, the landscape of football academies and lastly, an overview of various quality assurance programs, including the AC. Chapter 3 deals with *previous research* relevant to the study, while Chapter 4 presents the *theoretical framework* using the theories institutional isomorphism and resource dependency theory which enables the reader to understand the topic explored. Chapter 5 provides a detailed overview of the *methodology* applied in this study. This chapter presents the chronological order of the research procedure and the intentions behind the research design. Chapter 6 presents and discusses the *findings* of the research in a structured manner consisting of statements and relevance to theory and previous literature. This part will also present findings that fall outside the theory. Chapter 7 sums up the *conclusions* from the research, along with the limitations, implications, and future research recommendations.

2.0 The Academy Classification

Since this study is exploring how Norwegian PFCs are affected by the AC and the effects this system brings, it is necessary to provide some general information about this QAS. In order to create a sense of understanding over what the AC is about, *TFS* is quoted below:

The goal is to significantly improve the football nations' achievements by developing more and better players at a high national and international level. The AC shall, therefore, set clear standards, give direction, motivate and simultaneously enhance the clubs' own distinctiveness and keep their competitive advantages in their regions [TFS 2017, p. 5]

It is voluntary for professional clubs in Norway to sign up for the AC. The clubs that sign up, and eventually submit and get evaluated their work, are rated from one to five stars through a complex system consisting of ten categories with 143 underlying criteria. Each rating (i.e. one, two, three, four and five stars) require that some absolute requirements are met, these requirements are referred to as threshold requirements (TR). In the AC, three out of the ten categories are threshold requirements and the seven are normal categories with maximum point limits (MPL). Every category is awarded unequally, where some categories generate more points than others. The categories are the following:

1. Anchoring in the board, management and employees (TR)
2. Player logistics (MPL: 20)
3. Strategic plans (MPL: 20)
4. Competence (TR)
5. Training process (MPL: 35)
6. Match platforms (MPL: 20)
7. School/football (MPL: 20)
8. Cooperation models (MPL: 20)
9. Productivity (MPL: 30)
10. Economy and facilities (TR)

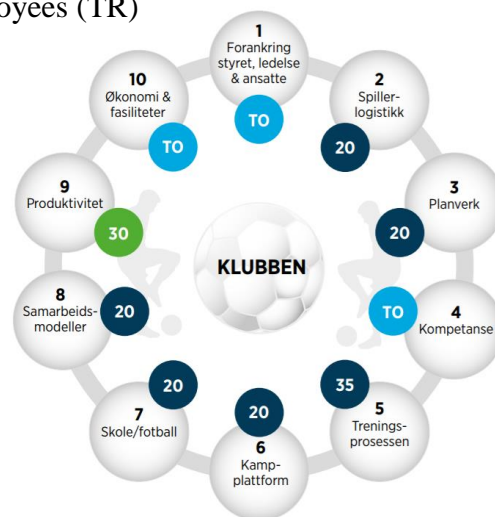


Figure 1: The Academy Classification Model (Adapted from TFS, 2017)

Figure 2: The Academy Classification Model (Adapted from TFS, 2017)

Tabell 1: The connection between the distribution of points, and stars (Adapted from TFS, 2017).

★	★ ★	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
40 points	74 points	108 points	121 points	135 points
+ (TR)	+ (TR)	+ (TR)	+ (TR)	+ (TR)

Interestingly, reaching five stars is actually 30 points less than the maximum amount of possible points (165 points). 135 points from the blue categories and 30 points from the green category (productivity). This is because some of the underlying blue criteria contradict each other, meaning that is impossible to meet every single one. This is purposely set up to ensure that each respective club can keep a certain amount of distinctiveness. The distribution of productivity points is based on playing time and match platforms (national teams, domestic leagues), but counted separately and added to the total score at the end (Terøy, 2017). Having produced a club developed player the club will receive points until the players are 24 years old or up till three years after the player left the club. It is also important to note that there will be re-classifications after the first classification.

The AC distributes money based on incentives. This means that the clubs receive uneven funding based on how they fulfill the criterions. Therefore, it will be interesting to explore how the HYDs perceive the evaluation process, where internal supervisors and sensors evaluate whether a criterion is fulfilled or not. Admittedly, NTF (2017) state that this is “a system where those who really prioritize and are committed to talent development are identified and classified correctly”.

3.0 Context

This chapter sets the scene for this research and will present important events and circumstances in the European and Norwegian football industry, which will offer a basis for a better understanding of how PFCs in Norway are affected by the AC. The section about the European football industry seeks to clarify the surrounding context and the occurrences that have shaped European football. Following this, various aspects of the Norwegian football industry will be presented, for example, the relationship between elite and football, which plays a central role regarding the AC. The last section intends to create understanding of the role of talent developments in relation to the environments described in the two previous sections.

3.1 The European football industry

The most critical event in the European football industry is indisputably the Bosman-ruling from December 1995. This gave professional football players within the European Union the right to move freely after their contract expired. This led to a concentration of sporting success to the big five leagues. According to Herskedal (2016), smaller nations like Norway, Netherlands and Scotland struggle in such a free-agent environment, because they are not able to keep their best players. Increased power to the players has resulted in a growth in the wage budget of clubs (Frick, 2007). Additionally, growth in player migration to the top European leagues has also been stated as a result of the Bosman-ruling (Flick, 2009).

Following this, and because of a general downturn of state-run broadcasting monopolies, private broadcasting and commercial companies established themselves in the football market. This led to a concentration of money to those nations, clubs, and players that were considered to have the highest market value, thus making football a global entertainment product (Gammelsæter & Ohr, 2002). The commercialization has influenced PFCs, especially in the big five, by giving them “opportunities to earn revenue from media rights, sponsorship and marketing contracts” (Relvas et al. 2010, p. 166), subsequently making football clubs to operate as service enterprises stressing business of performance, entertainment and financial profit.

Furthermore, the tradition of European football leagues entails open league systems, win maximization and financial challenges (Herskedal, 2016). According to Dejonghe & Van Opstal (2010), open leagues with promotion and relegations promotes a win maximization orientation. The combination of the increased supply of money in European football and a win maximization orientation has led to the fact that the frequency of managerial sackings has increased (Herskedal, 2016). The latter author argues that unrealistic aspirations among stakeholders (e.g. owners, investors, fans) and intense pressure from the public towards the manager (responsible for sporting success) will be intensified if the result objectives or key performance indicators are not met. The implications of managerial changes on football academies and talent development will be discussed in later chapters.

The combination of commercialization and a highly result- and performance-based environment, alongside higher concentration of money and sporting success in the big five leagues have undoubtedly shaped a new environment for European football leagues and clubs. Leagues in smaller markets, such as The Netherlands, Portugal and Belgium have gradually moved towards a secondary position in relation to the big leagues (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010, p. 50) and has “transformed themselves into stepping stone leagues where talented player are educated and sold to teams of the major leagues”. For leagues in a secondary position, such a focus would increase revenues to outcompete other leagues in countries with the same market size (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010). For the sake of having an inter-continental reference, Darby, Akindes & Kirwin (2007) write that there are small pockets of professionalism in the Northern parts of Africa (i.e. Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt) that encourage players to stay home longer in the earlier parts of their careers. Such a context may be adaptable for nations like Norway.

The essence to take from this chapter is that football academies and talent development are affected by specific characteristics in the European football industry; like the concentration of money and sporting success in the big five leagues, win maximization orientation among clubs and managerial pressure and changes, resulting in a competitive and complex environment for youth players.

3.2 The Norwegian football industry

Having established a contextual framework in the previous chapter, the purpose of this section is to create an understanding of how meaningful events, culture, and pressures for change have shaped the Norwegian football industry.

3.2.1 Structure

From the late 20th century, football in Scandinavian countries was organized by voluntary non-profit clubs, where many of them organized elite, youth and grassroots football, simultaneously as organizing other sports (Gammelsæter, Storm & Söderman, 2011). In Norway, the sport is organized so that autonomous special sports federations (*særforbund*) have the primary responsibility for coordinating and running the various sports. The Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) was founded in 1902 and currently holds the position of the largest special sports federation in Norway (Goksøyr, 2008). NFF's annual report from 2017 shows that there are approximately 370 000 active members, where 110 000 of them are women (NFF, 2018). The active members are distributed in 1818 clubs and 29 152 teams. Furthermore, the organization of the leagues consists of eight divisions, which chronologically starts from the local leagues (*kretsligaen*), Norsk Tipping-ligaen (*Regional leagues*), PostNord-ligaen (*2. Division*), Obos-ligaen (*1. Division*) and Eliteserien (*Premier League*). The latter two constitute the transition from amateur to the professional football. The clubs within these two leagues have their own interest organization, *Norsk Toppfotball*, which was founded in 1972. Their stated purpose is to promote the interests of PFCs and to be central in the work of developing Norwegian elite football, in the areas of sport, economy, and reputation (Eliteserien, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the selected clubs in this study play in these two leagues.

3.2.2 Sports culture

The Scandinavian and the Norwegian sports culture's distinctiveness is widely recognized in sports literature (Andersson & Carlsson 2009; Skille, 2011; Tuastad, 2017). Football in the Scandinavian countries is an amalgam of voluntarism, amateurism, and commercialism with historical roots in the development of the Welfare State (Andersson & Carlsson, 2009). In particular, the concept 'sports for all' is a common topic in Scandinavian countries. Based on an institutional perspective, Skille (2011) argue that sports for all is difficult to achieve and

identifies three dominant logics that clubs struggle to balance in order to achieve this goal; Sport for all logic, result-oriented logic and commercialization/professionalization logic. Under these circumstances, the institutional perspective implies a stronger ambivalence in Scandinavia towards elite sport (Tuastad, 2017). Despite there being an edgy relationship between elite (commercialized/professional) and amateur football (voluntary), ‘everyone’ acknowledges that they are mutually dependent on each other in order to produce and provide sufficient talents that can assert themselves internationally (Gammelsæter, Storm, and Söderman, 2011). This topic has significant relevance to the study since Norwegian PFCs are dependent on amateur clubs to supply them with sufficient talents.

3.2.3 Professionalization

As a response to pressure from international football where more nations established themselves and became stronger (i.e., financially, sporting wise), the Norwegian Football Federations saw the need to turn football into a professional industry in order to remain competitive, both at a club and national team level. Thus, to make the country able to produce good enough players who could compete internationally (Kucukovic, 2013). Consequently, the amateur rule was lifted in Norwegian football in 1991 and signaled the legalization of professional football (Gammelsæter, 2009). After that, throughout the 1990s, Norwegian clubs and the national team achieved good sporting results at the international level (i.e., Performances of Rosenborg Ballklub in Champions League and the national team in World Cup 1998 in Mexico). Alongside the Bosman-ruling and the emergence of commercial broadcasting companies, Norwegian football developed an entirely new financial status. From 1993 to 2015, Norwegian PFCs’ combined turnover increased from 150 million NOK to 1,450 billion NOK, equivalent to 162 million euros based on exchange rate from 2015 (Goksøyr, 2008; Eliteserien, 2016). The increasing commercialization is expressed by the fact that attention is focused on the commodities, which is the players (i.e. senior players and young talents) (Gammelsæter, 2011).

Some of the effects of the professionalization are evident in terms of increased number of employees, higher demands for education and improved facilities. Growth in the number of full-time employees in professional youth academies saw a rise from 71 to 150 in the period between 2011 to 2017 (Thoresen, 2017). In the post-professional era, Norwegian clubs also started to invest significantly in stadiums and training facilities detaching themselves from municipal facilities. (Gammelsæter, Storm & Söderman, 2011).

3.3 The Market for Talent Development

Due to the development of the professional club environment, players can no longer be considered solely as an employee or a member of the club. PFCs have become more homogeneous with businesses, some with multi-national corporations, stressing business performance, entertainment and financial profit (Relvas et al. 2010). In terms of a financial perspective, players are no different than other capital assets (Swiss Ramble, u.y). With help from theory and previous research (Slack & Parent, 2006; Lürssen, 2017), this study interprets players as a human resource which in the clubs' financial statements is defined as a commodity or asset to trade.

The re-transfer of Paul Pogba to Manchester United in August 2016 was reported to exceed a record-breaking 100 million €, only to be surpassed by Paris Saint-Germain 222 million € purchase of the Brazilian, Neymar from Barcelona FC in August 2017 (Transfermarkt, 2018). Speaking about buying and selling players, Sæther (2017) explains that talented youth players also are part of this vast industry. The transfers as mentioned above demonstrate a lot about the value of talent development. "Nowadays, developing professional football players is a clear priority and focus for all clubs, irrespective of their philosophy, country or size" (ECA, 2012, p. 8). This means that football clubs should stress the importance of having an efficient and productive youth academy. Indeed, ECA (2012) elucidate that UEFA financial fair play has partly dictated why PFCs have given more attention and investments in youth development. Additionally, successful stories about clubs (e.g. Manchester United FC 'Class of 92', FC Barcelona 'La Masia', FC Ajax 'De Toekomst') who have achieved sporting success out of their youth development philosophy also seems to be a trigger for PFCs to increase investments in youth development (ECA, 2012).

The recognition of talent development has intensified the competition for young talents due to several reasons (e.g., financial fair play, QASs, Bosman-ruling). Also, clubs exploit the area of talent identification and development for gaining a competitive advantage on rivaling clubs (Larkin & Reeves, 2018). The competition of having the most talented players has made clubs identify and recruit players from younger age categories than previously. In some countries (e.g., England and The Netherlands) players are recruited by the age of 8 (ECA, 2012), however, such a recruitment policy is highly controversial with the Norwegian values in football. Moreover, PFCs, concentrated in the 'big five' or 'stepping stone leagues' no

longer relate to borders as long as the players are old enough to sign professional contracts (Sæther, 2017). Therefore, clubs are pressured and depended on scouting to detect players early. This means that “a successful youth academy starts with the recruitment of talent” (ECA, 2012, p. 15).

4.0 Literature review

Having set the scene in the previous chapter, this chapter will comprehensively guide the reader closer to the core of this study, which is the two components; football academies and QASs in football. This chapter intends to provide and critically review the previous literature about various aspects of football academies (i.e., purpose, structure, competence, etc.) and QASs. This chapter aims to offer background material and context to the data this study has gathered.

4.1 Football academies

To understand how the AC has affected Norwegian PFCs, this chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of different aspects of youth academies. Premier League (2011, p. 5) states that a youth academy is “the training environment operated by a PFC for the development of youth players”, while Reilly et al. (2004, p. 201) explains that the role of the academy is “to develop players for the first team or (at least) generate income through the sale of marketable assets”. If a football academy manages to produce a player for the first team, ECA (2012) and Saify (2014) points to the following benefits that may occur; 1) *Increased competitiveness* by producing quality players to impact match results, 2) *Profits from players sales* by selling academy players, 3) *Reduction of financial risk* by avoiding substantial transfer fees on players, 4) *Potential fan engagement* as most fans will feel pride from seeing an academy product transition into the first team, 5) *Organizational benefits* because academy players have been taught the club’s values and what it means to play for the club, thus creating a successful and efficient development culture (Saify, 2014).

Reilly et al. (2004) argue that clubs producing one or two players (i.e., to be regular in the first team or sold for a substantial sum to another club) every six years has justified its investment in the academy because then they have managed to regenerate their investment in the academy. How clubs measure the success of their youth academy varies among the clubs. Mentioned further below, a challenge in the present football environment is to balance the club’s short-term and long-term goals, along with the first team managers priorities and focus (Larkin & Reeves, 2018). However, the success of the academy may for clubs be the number of players transitioning into becoming first team regulars, while others measure success by a certain amount of matches the academy product has played. For other clubs,

success may be that a player is transferred to another club to play professional football (Larkin & Reeves, 2018). In short, the overall success of academies can be measured by the ability to develop players for the first team or sell players equivalent or better compared to buying players, justifying the investment in the academy (Reilly et al. 2004).

4.1.1 Structure

To fully grasp the organization of football academies, it is essential to put forward how they are structured. Relvas et al. (2010) evidenced two types of structures in European football academies when they explored the specificity of 26 European youth department structures. Two structures differentiated between European (figure 1) and Scandinavian (figure 2) academy structures. 22 of the clubs favored an organizational structure that consisted of different departments (technical, medical, operations, socio-psychological, educational). This type of structure adopted a more traditional hierarchical organizational structure, where each department had a head of development who reported directly the HYD (Relvas et al. 2010). On the other hand, Swedish academies appeared to favor age group personnel teams (i.e., head coach, assistant coach, director of the team), where the academies usually had one goalkeeper coach for all age categories. During their research process (Relvas et al. 2010), it emerged that two out of the four Swedish academies were in the process of restructuring their academy to a department organization structure. Strand (2016) evidenced that Molde Football Clubs’ youth academy operated with a similar structure as the Swedish ones, however, there were also similarities to European academies concerning the number of different departments, for example medical (i.e., physiotherapist and physical coach) and operative department (i.e., project coordinator).

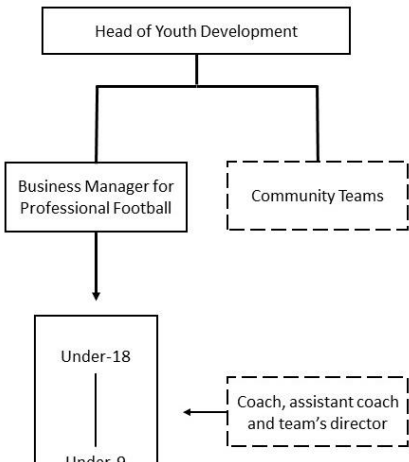


Figure 4: Organizational structure in Swedish Youth Academies (Adapted from Relvas et al. 2010)

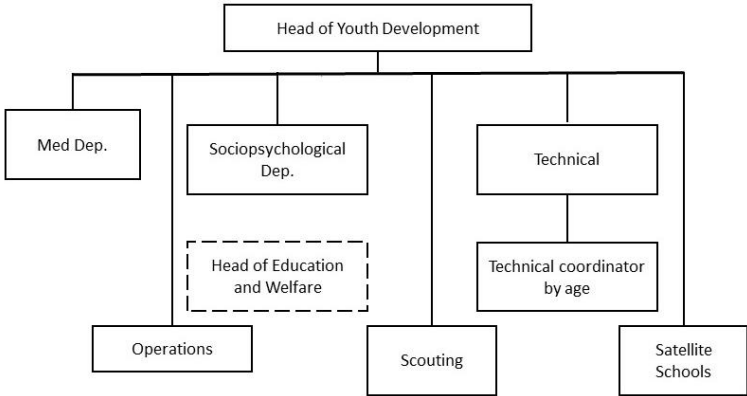


Figure 5: Organizational structure in European Youth Academies (Adapted from Relvas et al. 2010)

As to this study, it will be interesting to see if the AC drag Norwegian youth academies closer to the European academies' organizational structure.

4.1.2 Success factors

Through their comprehensive study, ECA (2012) identified critical success factors of a football academy. Their findings suggested that successful clubs have a clear transition strategy to the first team anchored in the board, qualified and experienced staff members, regular communication with first team, a vision for the football development and effective talent identification and recruitment, competitive environment for youth players, professional support services and lastly, that the youth academy is involved in the decision-making process of the club.

Additionally, based on ten expert development coaches' perspective, Mills et al. (2012, cited in Mills et al. 2014) examined factors considered to form optimal development environments in youth academies. Their key findings suggested that optimal youth systems hold a coherent philosophy with formulated and written values, expectations and behavioral standards. Moreover, the application of a holistic approach towards player development and the prioritization of players well-being was stated as important factors. Indeed, strong links to first team operations was also argued as an essential factor, alongside having clear and effective communication lines. Lastly, was the ability for the academy to be adaptable and committed to innovation. These findings suggest that, for football academies to develop optimal environments, dynamic organizational culture is needed (Mills et al. 2012, cited in Mills et al. 2014, p. 7).

4.1.3 Constraint factors

It is important also to add the challenges and constraint factors occurring in football academies. ECA (2012) refer to five critical constraint factors for youth academies. Firstly, the competition for talents and player agents is argued to be the most significant constraint factor alongside lack of vision and transition strategy anchored in the board, limited academy budget and insufficient working conditions. Even though their investigated clubs and academies had a formalized organizational structure, Relvas & colleagues (2010) found a

lack of communication, and distance existing between the academy and the professional environment (i.e., first team). However, some clubs believe in the separation of the academy because they want to protect the academy from the climate in the professional environment (e.g., managerial implications). Furthermore, the gap between the first team and academy acts as a barrier for academy players to transition to the first team. In Relvas & colleagues (2010, p. 183) research, a Portuguese HYD stated the following: "if the first team coach doesn't have the minimal worry in watching the kids, he will never know what he might have here."

On a more detailed level, Mills et al. (2014) present critical areas for improvement in English football academies, from a player's perspective. The first area is to establish a challenging and supportive environment with individual support from the school, experienced first team players and receiving "opportunities to train with players at a level they aspire to" (Mills et al. 2014, p. 30). The second area is about quality preparation, where the academy should provide clear guidelines for what the players need to do to progress and help with how to cope with adversity. Moreover, understanding the athlete is essential, and the interest shown in life outside of football and for the staff to care about the well-being of the individual is greatly appreciated by the players. Further, a long-term development perspective seems to be, to some extent, missing, where academies should provide playing opportunities despite dip in performance. Additional factors in this area are to discuss "how more experienced players handled the challenges they face" and engage parents in discussing development and ambitions (Mills et al. 2014, p. 30). Lastly, there seemed to be a lack of communication towards the player, where it was described that the players should be guided in "identifying the next big test before it happens" and that coaches should provide feedback directly to players' goals (Mills et al. 2014, p. 30).

4.1.4 Managerial implications

This section will elaborate on how managerial changes and implications affect the football academies. Looking at managerial changes in English football from 1949 to 2008, (Morrow & Howieson, 2014) found that football managers hired after the millennium are fired more frequently than previously. Football managers' success is constantly being measured by their sporting results, and managerial changes are closely linked with recent sporting results (Barros, Frick & Passos, 2009). More intensive pressure from stakeholders to achieve short-

term results, and thereby profits, have resulted in a series of short-term employment periods for football managers (d'Addona and Kind, 2014). Audas, Dobson and Goddard (1999) found that the results from the average nine previous matches were an indicator of the firing of a manager in English football.

This short-term focus can thus be contradictory, at least from the football academies perspective. This study has to be careful to affirm whether short-term employment periods of football managers result in less priority to youth academy matters or not. This study does recognize that managers characteristics (e.g., identity, football philosophy, working with youngsters) have a part to play. Even though managers' characteristics may be influential, previous research seems to agree on the former. Their measurement of success involves a higher risk of giving an inexperienced, self-developed player a chance on the first team (Larkin and Reeves, 2018). Sporting results and getting first-team opportunities for academy players are often contradictory, because the latter may conflict with short-term goals. In their research about playing time for Norwegian player under the age of 20 in Eliteserien, Sæther & Solberg (2015) found a correlation between using players under the age of 20 and negative performance. Additionally, their research evidenced that clubs with the more substantial number of foreign players in the first team gave fewer chances to players under the age of 20, although it also was evidenced that first teams with more international players did not necessarily achieve good sporting results.

4.2 Quality Assurance Systems

This chapter will provide previous research about QAS. The first section will provide information about the QASs origin and prior research from businesses applying it. The second section will present previous research from three types of QAS to create a sense of understanding of how they work in different countries.

4.2.1 Quality Assurance Systems in business

QAS extends back many years within business. Factories first started with the practice with inspectors monitoring the production processes, targeting to enhance the quality of the products they produced (Carlsson, 2011). In the late 1970s, The International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) introduced a QAS, called ISO 9000, that would apply to a broad

specter of companies. By 1990, over 100 000 organizations were applying the 'ISO 9000 program standards' for certifying their quality management systems (Brown, Van Der Wiele & Loughton, 1998). Brown, Van Der Wiele and Loughton (1998) explains the considerable growth in the appliance of QAS is because of the customer demands and expectations, competitive pressures, and regulatory environment and internal forces.

Studying smaller enterprises' experience with ISO 9000, Brown, Van Der Wiele & Loughton (1998) found that the implementation of a QAS based on external pressure leads to a more challenging process and less improvement, compared to if it is resulting from internal forces. Participants in the study also perceived that lack of time and expertise was a problem, that there was an increase in paperwork and costs, which resulted in a shift towards negative attitudes to the program, which in turn affected the program's effectiveness (Brown, Van Der Wiele & Loughton, 1998). The same authors also found that a positive perception of the QAS made it more likely that the participants perceived the result of the certification as positive since the participants wanted to see positive changes following measures they themselves had undertaken, but in reality, the differences were not as considerable or useful as they had perceived. Such a perception is also called the placebo effect (Moerman & Jonas, 2002).

4.2.2 Quality Assurance Systems in football

Research about QASs in football and other sports seems to have been conducted paralleled with the introduction of each respective system (Perck & Van Hoecke, 2011, Carlsson & Ring 2012). Drawn upon the findings from Brown, Van Der Wiele and Loughton (1998) research, football seems to mirror the reasons for implementing QAS. The increasing customer demands and expectations (i.e., fans) and competitive pressures (i.e., professionalization) are some of the reasons for implementing a QAS in football. Also, the recognition of talent development as a competitive tool has increasingly made it necessary to ensure football clubs to run more effectively and efficiently in terms of talent development (Nwankwo, 2000). This section will present three QASs implemented in European football.

4.2.2.1 Professional Academy Support System

Several national football associations and professional league associations (i.e., Germany, Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Denmark and Netherland) are using the services of the Belgium-

based company Double PASS which is specialized in assessing the quality of talent development in leagues and PFCs (Double PASS, u.y). Foot PASS (Professional Academy Support System) is one of their projects and is a “computerized framework to measure the actual and potential performance of a youth academy in a team sport club” (Van Hoecke et al. 2008, p. 2). According to Van Hoecke et al. (2009, p. 322, cited in Carlsson & Ring, 2012), the aim of the project is “getting associations to convey a stronger emphasis on developing a high-quality academy in the football clubs, where self-developed players will be educated more efficiently.” Since these studies (Van Hoecke, Schoukens & De Knop 2007; Van Hoecke et al. 2008) only are available in limited versions, it subsequently limits this study’s presentation of their findings.

In case of German football, the German FA (Deutscher Fußball-Bund) and interest organization of German PFCs (Deutsche Fußball-liga, similar to *Norsk Toppfotball*), implemented the PASS system in 2006. They aimed to professionalize clubs’ football academies along with regional football associations, with the hopes of developing high-quality systems producing better players and with more efficiency (Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2013). No findings from a club or organizational level have been found, but

On a national basis, the impact of the PASS system shows that German football has seen an increase in the number of academy players transition to professional football. From 2002 to 2011, former German academy players in the Bundesliga increased from 50 % to 57 %, while it was a growth from 63 % to 71 % in Bundesliga 2 in the same period (Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2013). However, these numbers must be looked critically, since they are obsolete. Nevertheless, the numbers presented tells this study that implementing a QAS may result in an increase of academy players in domestic leagues. Additionally, the German U19 national team won the European Championship in 2008, while U17 and U21 did the same in 2009. Following this, the German national team eventually won the World Cup in Brazil in 2014 and was characterized as one of the most exciting national teams of all times.

Perck & Van Hoecks (2011) research on PASS in Belgian football has also shown the positive implications the QAS can have for a club with external parties, such as schools and amateur clubs. This indicates that the QAS, by affecting a clubs’ internal structures, also affects their external relationships. In particular, two major reasons for PASS success have been identified. Firstly, there is an understanding and desire to make the national team and

football better in the country, rather than setting their club in the center (Carlsson & Ring, 2012; Whittaker, 2016). Secondly, there are apparent structures and requirements the clubs should relate to, where an independent company sets objectives based on the clubs' context and evaluates after that (Whittaker, 2016; Carlsson & Ring, 2012). Academics (Perck & Van Hoecke, 2011; Carlsson, 2012; Whittaker, 2016), seems to agree that the PASS system is successful in raising the standard of talent development, subsequently producing more and better players to those nations implementing the PASS system.

4.2.2.2 Elite Player Performance Plan

Implemented in the 2012/13 season, the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) was introduced in England with the aim of improving the quality and quantity of self-developed players, and by doing so, improving the national team (Premier League, 2011). The EPPP and the AC have some similarities, but the former more in detail regarding the players' training structure, quantity, and content, as well as dictating terms for transfers for academy players (see table 1).

Like PASS, EPPP remains briefly addressed in the literature. Previous research has recognized EPPPs presence but is yet to explore its impacts on various levels (Miller, Cronin and Baker, 2015). One research paper (Whittaker, 2016) investigated the EPPPs impact on elite youth football in England. However, the work has only been presented in the form of a poster and a 15-minute presentation. Therefore, the findings of this research must be considered critically.

Whittaker (2016) found that the PFCs perceived the intent behind the EPPP as beneficial. Whittaker's (2016) research suggested that English PFCs observed that the EPPP has beneficially led to the professionalization of the academies through more explicit demands and awareness about the academy and the roles within the academy. Additionally, the EPPP has entailed establishing a framework where a shared philosophy among the PFCs of best practices have been created, and it increased staff professionalization through setting requirements to the role of the HYD, and accountability and transparency through the reported changes and standards being followed up by the evaluators (Whittaker, 2016).

Despite the positive perceptions of the EPPP, these have largely been overshadowed by the perceived negative aspects. On a broader level, several clubs (e.g., Huddersfield Town, Brentford FC, Tranmere Rovers FC) has either closed or restructured their academies to only include players aged 16 and upwards (Huddersfield, 2017; Brentford, 2016; Tranmere Rovers FC, 2018). On a lower level, some resistance among HYDs was faced in the introduction of EPPP, as many opposed the removal of the old system and the introduction of a whole new system, mainly rooted in fear and uncertainty about the effect this implementation would have (Whittaker, 2016). One major factor contributing to weakening the efficiency of the EPPP is the governance in England, where PFCs felt that they got unclear and indistinct guidelines (Whittaker, 2016), as well as some clubs experiencing biased evaluation towards the most prominent clubs (Johnsen, 2017). This was a critical difference that separated the German PASS-model from the English EPPP. The German model focuses on the national team above the PFCs, while in England, the clubs are dictating the terms (Sulley & Nesti, 2014). Whittaker (2016) claim that as long as the EPPP don't act on the same agenda as the German-model, the EPPP will not fulfill its objective, and it won't be useful.

4.2.2.3 TIPSELIT

In Sweden, '*Tipselit*' was implemented in 2010, with the objective of increasing quality in talent development and evaluating the academies (Carlsson & Ring, 2012). Limited literature demonstrates the impact *Tipselit* has had on Swedish talent development (Carlsson, 2011; Carlsson & Ring, 2012). The latter investigated what affected the implementation process of QASs in Swedish PFCs, and what factors hindered and accumulated success.

Seven factors that accumulated successful implementation were found; support from board and managing director (MD), the staffs attitude towards the implementation, how the club was set in terms of staff, time and documentation before the implementation, involvement among staff, assistance, participation in the development of the criteria set, and where the club is located (Carlsson & Ring, 2012, p. 41). The seven factors that hindered success were; insufficient resources, club members resistance to change, documentation, the design of the classification, workload, where the club is located, and insufficient knowledge (Carlsson & Ring, 2012, p. 41). Carlsson (2011) analyzed the certification process in the Swedish PFC Gefle IF. The study showed that the certification process led to progression in several areas of the club. However, contrary to the previously mentioned Brown & colleagues (1998),

Carlsson (2011) found that despite correct (positive) attitudes above the program and in the implementation process, the lack of resources and the design of the QAS could slow the certification process.

To create some perspective, Perck & colleagues (2016) examined the impact of a QAS 'IKGym' in Flemish gymnastic clubs. Their findings suggested that all the clubs had progression towards professionalization, although at different speeds rooted in their structural design. Optimization of structures and systems mostly characterized the professionalization process in the clubs, that increased the probability for a consistent and quality service delivery, that may secure improvements in organizational and sporting performance. The study indicates that the newly installed structures, systems, and procedures in the clubs, increasingly, have similarities to characteristics in business, especially regarding formalized job descriptions and clear responsibilities of the employees. Further, in the same study, they also found signs of homogenization amongst the clubs, which they linked to coercive isomorphism due to the fact that there was a reduction of organizational diversity, especially regarding strategic planning. Interestingly, Perck and his colleagues' study concluded that the impact of IKGym resulted in a higher effect towards the professionalization process in the clubs than the homogenization process and that IKGym ultimately had influenced clubs to perform better (Perck et al. 2016).

5.0 Theoretical framework

The essence of a theory is to explain, predict, and understand empirical phenomena in the social world (Abend, 2008). With that in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to establish a conceptual and theoretical framework that can illuminate what the study seeks to answer. Therefore, two interrelated theories will be presented, neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory. Both sets of theories explain how organizations are affected and changed by external factors. In relation to this study, the theories will demonstrate how PFCs in Norway react to external pressure (i.e., isomorphism) and how dependence on legitimacy and recognition in the environment, as well as access to essential resources (e.g., money, young talents), will affect how the PFCs and their football academies operate (Lürssen, 2017). This will be highly relevant to explore, especially in a retrospective of the first AC.

5.1 Neo-institutionalism

According to Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis (2016, p. 495) institutional theory "*proposes that organizations have the structure that they do largely for cultural reasons.*" This signifies that institutional theory is largely based on the organization's external environment. The first authors explain that past institutional theorists stressed conflict and negotiation among various interest groups as influencers of formal structures and change, while neo-institutionalism has shifted the focus towards a direction where the organization rather tries to achieve legitimacy in society, making legitimacy the main concept in neo-institutional theory. Meyer & Rowan (1977), along with Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis (2016, p. 495) provide further understanding saying that organizations increasingly become more similar due to adaptations where certain "*designs and practices become regarded, for whatever reasons, as highly esteemed, that displays high cultural capital.*" This means that the quest for legitimacy in the environment drives organizations to change and become more similar. Meyer & Rowan (1977) stress that organizations are dependent on legitimacy in their environment to survive. Therefore, it becomes more critical for organizations to respond to external pressures instead of their strategies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organizations that achieve legitimacy in the environment have an increased chance of surviving, and if an organization has carried out an organizational change and successfully obtained legitimacy, other organizations within the same organizational field are likely to adopt the same changes (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Hence, organizations within the same industry generally have the

similar formal structures, but there may be significant differences in their practices (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This means that organizations can adopt, and display values expected of the environment, but in practice, they act according to other standards.

Modern societies consist of many institutionalized rules, also known as rationalized myths (in neo-institutional theory) shaping the formal structure of an organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Products, positions, policies, programs, and procedures of organizations can be viewed as institutionalized rules and may function as rationalized myths. Meyer & Rowan (1977, p. 341) argue that “*formal structures of many organizations reflect the myths of their institutional environment instead of the demands of their work activities,*” consequently leading to conflict with organizational efficiency principles. Conversely, if an organization were to coordinate its business activities ruthlessly to promote efficiency, it would according to Meyer & Rowan (1977) undermine ceremonial conformity and legitimacy. However, a total submission to institutionalized rules (*myths*) may be inefficient and impractical for the organization (Caldas & Vasconcelos 2002). Therefore, Meyer & Rowan (1977, p. 341) argue that to balance organizational efficiency and ceremonial conformity “*organizations that reflect institutional rules should buffer their formal structures from the uncertainties of technical activities by becoming loosely coupled, building gaps between their formal structures and actual work activities.*” When organizations become loosely coupled, Caldas & Vasconcelos (2002) explain that their structure is not coterminous with their business activities. This also coincides with organizations utilizing a variety of different tactics in response to institutional pressure (e.g., avoidance, cooperation, manipulation).

In short, neo-institutional theory deals with how rationalized myths affect organizational activities. These myths create legitimacy, so organizations can access resources and mobilize support from the society. Organizations become increasingly homogeneous in their structures and operations due to the value of the myths (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This homogenization process is called isomorphism.

5.1.1 Institutional isomorphism

Previous research in organizational theory has tended to study variation amongst organizations (Child & Kieser, 1981). However, DiMaggio & Powell (1983, p. 148) have instead asked the question of “*why there is such startling homogeneity of organizations forms*

and practices." Based on this question the theory of isomorphism sprung to life. With help from Hawley (1968), DiMaggio & Powell (1983, p. 149) state that "*isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions.*" DiMaggio & Powell (1983) have identified three ideal mechanisms of organizational change in institutional isomorphism; coercive-, mimetic- and normative isomorphism.

Per Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis (2016, p. 496) *coercive isomorphism* occurs when "*an organization is compelled to institutionalize a particular policy*" with the objective of access resources or achieve legitimacy in public. Furthermore, this mechanism can be understood as when an organization, on the threat of coercion, comply with specific practices and designs set by powerful institutions or large-scale organizations. By being a result from formal and informal pressure, DiMaggio & Powell (1983) write that coercive isomorphic pressure exerts from cultural expectations within the society of the organization or by other organizations, for example governing bodies in different industries. This means that external pressure coercively shapes organization by enforcing policies, programs or similar forms. This type of isomorphic change may be applied through various techniques, such as force or persuasion. Consequently, organizational change may occur to meet demands or requirements, such as hiring a person with a particular qualification or increasing the number of employees to a specific number (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The definition of the second mechanism, *mimetic isomorphism*, is put forward by Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis (2016, p. 497) who define it as "*organizational designs and practices that are seen to be successful are copied because they are associated with success*". DiMaggio & Powell (1983) explain it as copying or duplicating another organization regarded as successful or/and legitimate. However, the theory proposes that organizations' internal ability to innovate deliberate practices is neglected while applying isomorphic mechanism. This form of change often derives from uncertainty and lack of knowledge towards organizational technologies. Mimicry of first-rate organizations through best practice benchmarking is an example of mimetic isomorphism (Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis, 2016). Such a process can occur unintentionally, indirectly through employee transfer or turnover, or through advice and direction from consultancy firms.

DiMaggio & Powell (1983) describe that *normative isomorphic pressure* occurs due to professionalization, while Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis (2016, p. 496) provide a more comprehensive explanation stating that it “occurs when an organizations’ members are normatively disposed, perhaps through a period of professional training and socialization, to favour certain sorts of designs and practices”. With help from Larson (1977) and Collins (1979), DiMaggio & Powell (1983) understands professionalization as “the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, p. 152). Normative isomorphism can be transmitted through continuing professional development, for example when a football coach is attending a coaching seminar with the latest developments in a particular area of the sport (Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis, 2016). Another aspect is the filtering of personnel in organizations. According to DiMaggio & Powell (1983) filtering occurs when hiring individuals (e.g. coaches) from firms (e.g. clubs) in the same industry or from a narrow range of training institutions (e.g. Norwegian School of Sport Sciences or Molde University College) because they possess the requested skill-level requirements of particular jobs, assumingly in a football club. DiMaggio & Powell (1983) note that a prominent reason for normative pressure is the hiring and rehiring of personnel from the same industry, from similar positions and backgrounds. This, in turn, creates a homogeneous field. Furthermore, it is argued that professionalization projects rarely are achieved with overall success, because the organization must compromise with non-professional clients, regulators, etc.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) also offer a combination of the above-mentioned isomorphic forms. That is *institutional isomorphic change*, and this type of change can occur through a combination of the three mentioned mechanisms, but the background for their occurrence and their consequences are often unlike.

5.2 Resource dependency theory

While neo-institutional theory understands organizational change as adaptations because of dominant perceptions of best practices, key theorists (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2013) of resource dependency theory interprets organizational change as a result of organizations’ dependency on resources from the external environment, and how these resources become affiliated by the organization. One aspect of this theory is how managers secure continuously flow of

resources, which is vital for the organizations' survival. Aldrich & Pfeffer (1976) explains that the resource dependency model comes from that organizations single-handedly not being able to generate sufficient enough resources or functions to survive. Based on this, organizations try to act in accordance with the environment and enter into relationship's and cooperation's with external parties, so that the organization can acquire the necessary resources and services (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976). These collaborations can deal with funds in the form of money but are not limited to this, as it may also cover labour, information, and legitimacy (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976).

Slack & Parent (2006, p. 164) presents three factors below for the extent to which a sports organization depends on another organization for resources. Firstly, *"the extent to which the sport organization requires the resource for its continued operation and survival."* Secondly, *"the extent to which the organization providing the resource has discretion over its allocation and use"* and lastly, *"the extent to which there are alternative sources from which the dependent organization can obtain the resource."* Pfeffer & Salancik (2003) explains that the balance of power between organizations highly depends on those three factors. The more control the external actor has over these three factors, the more influence and power it has over the organization in question (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Hillman, Withers & Collins (2009, p. 2-3), with help from Aldrich & Pfeffer (1976, p. 39) applies resource dependency theory to explain why organizations engage in mergers, acquisitions, and formal cooperation agreements. They suggest that organization engage in certain arrangements to 1) *"reduce competition by absorbing an important competitor organization,"* 2) *"manage interdependence with either sources of input or purchasers of output by absorbing them,"* 3) *"diversify operations and thereby lessen dependence on the present organizations with which it exchanges."* The concepts mentioned in this paragraph are in fact shaping the organization's activities. The formal structure, strategies, and objectives of the organizations will thus change in line with the concepts to receive the necessary resources.

Thibault & Harvey (1997) explain that organizations depending on other organizations for resources, to achieve specific business objectives, often become too dependent on such organizations, resulting in loss of autonomy. Further, partners that offer resources have influence or control over the resource dependent organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Resources, such as subsidies, has an impact on the dependency on other organizations and creates the foundation for power since organizations are limited by demands and external

pressures (Vos et al. 2011). Although an organization may be dependent on another organization's resources, the rational will be not to be too over-dependent (Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis 2016). Organizations that are less dependent on a specific type of resource, or who have distributed their sources (i.e., organizations) of resources, will thus be less dependent on other organizations and have more power to trade *freely* compared if they have few sources of resources (Thibault & Harvey 1997).

Pfeffer & Salancik (2003) argue that the uncertainty of an organization increases in line with the competition for the same resources, meaning that the more organizations that are competing for the same resources, the higher the uncertainty will be for the organization. The latter share similarities with the football environment in Norway and abroad where there have been or is an ongoing change in the recruitment process of young talents, which now transfers to PFCs earlier, partly explained by increased commercialization and professionalization resulting in stronger competition amongst clubs regarding buying and selling players and identifying local talents early. Studying the 'organization of talent development in Norwegian PFCs' by investigating what PFCs with different prerequisites think and do in their efforts to develop talent, Lürssen (2017) found some significant differences related to geographical location and recruitment strategy. Clubs located in areas with strong competition (i.e., a short geographical distance between several PFCs) tended to recruit players at a young age (10-12 years old). Meanwhile, clubs that appear as monopolists in their environment (i.e., vast geographical distances between PFCs) tended to recruit players at the age of 15-16 years old.

In conjunction with this chapter, it's worth noting what requirements Norwegian PFCs must complete to access the resources (i.e., funding) the AC will provide. However, for many PFCs, their resource dependency is duplex. Clubs like Rosenborg Ballklub (RBK) and Odds Ballklubb (Odds) have a youth policy stating that players younger than 15 years old are to be developed in their respective amateur clubs, and not transferred before they reach the age of 15. Based on mentioned PFCs perspective and belief, developing players in amateur clubs increases the chance of success, implying that staying in a local club creates a stronger probability of first-team football or being sold to other clubs, generating revenue. This policy, from their perspective, help to increase the sporting level and the sporting interest in the amateur clubs, similarly creating legitimacy in the external environment. Set in the context of resource dependency theory, RBK and Odd have entered into cooperation with their

regional football association (FA), so that the club can acquire the necessary resources and services to survive, meaning staying competitive in accordance with their objectives (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976). A cooperation agreement between the PFC, the amateur clubs, and the local FA have led to an understanding that the PFC doesn't need to transfer players at younger ages because the PFCs are dependent on their resources, such as players or anchoring in the local community, coming from the amateur clubs.

6.0 Methodology

Qualitative research aims to focus on the particular ways in which people construct their meanings of a given phenomenon.

(Sparkes and Smith 2014, p. 12)

This study aimed to explore how PFCs in Norway have been affected by the AC and the internal and external effects emerging after its implementation. As stated in the chapters above, little research exists about the application of QASs in football. The evident lack of research paves the way for exploring the unfamiliar academic territory. Since the AC is a new concept and phenomenon in Norwegian football, this study found it reasonable to apply a qualitative research methodology with in-depth interviews to provide significant statements. Eight HYDs were interviewed to generate a rich and diverse understanding of the phenomenon explored. The details of the methods applied will be presented in the following chapter.

The structure of the chapter follows the stereotypical approach of most research papers. First, the exploratory research design will be put forward, before presenting the clubs and respondents of the study. The latter will explain how this study has selected clubs and the role of the respondent inside each club. Furthermore, the interview strategy will be outlined, starting with how the interview guide was constructed and tested, the trustworthiness of the method, and then how the interviews were executed. Following this, the data analysis will explain how the transcript interviews were coded and categorized. Lastly, the limitations of the chosen methodology will be outlined.

6.1 Exploratory Research Design

An exploratory research design was utilized to achieve the aim of this study. According to Hair et al. (2015, p. 147) exploratory research is “useful when the research questions are vague or when there is little theory available to guide the development of hypotheses”. Using an explorative research approach, the purpose was to find patterns (generalizations) and uniqueness (particulars). Moreover, since each club and respondent in this research was inhabited in different regional and demographic environments there was a necessity to treat the findings individually. This meant that a finding from one club was as valid as a finding

that emerged from all the eight clubs (Veal & Darcy, 2014). This design seemed relevant, especially when theory (Hair et al. 2015) suggested it was useful when exploring highly innovative industries, for example, the football industry that is constantly evolving. The potential outcome of such a research design is that it may "discover new technologies or technologies that address practical business or consumer needs" (Hair et al. 2015, p. 147).





6.2 Clubs and respondents

This sub-chapter will present the clubs and respondents, and why they were selected for this study.

6.2.1 Selection of clubs

A purposeful sample of eight PFCs in Norway was selected and recruited to this research. As presented in chapter 3, the clubs participating in the AC are rated from 1 to 5 stars. Since no club achieved the highest rating in the first classification report, this study was unable to explore any clubs on this level. However, the study recruited two clubs per rating, meaning that a total of eight clubs were explored in this research. This resulted in the following selection distribution; one-star academy (n = 2), two stars academy (n = 2), three stars academy (n = 2) and four stars academy (n = 2). It made sense to explore two clubs at each rating because it could have provided generalization patterns and different meanings. This correlates with qualitative selection whose aim is to ensure different types of experiences and meanings about the phenomenon explored (Jakobsen, 2013).

When the first classification report was published in December 2017, six clubs represented the Norwegian Premier League. At the end of 2017, one of the club promoted to the top league, while the last club remained in the second tier (OBOS-ligaen).

STAR(S)		HYDS
Four stars academy		HYD – 8, HYD – 7
Three stars academy		HYD – 6, HYD – 5
Two stars academy		HYD – 4, HYD – 3
One star academy		HYD – 2, HYD – 1

6.2.2 Selection of respondents

The respondents targeted in this research were each clubs' head of youth development (HYD). For the sake of clarity, respondents are persons within the phenomenon explored, and must not be confused with informants, who are on the outside (Jakobsen, 2013). Due to the suspense and uncertainty surrounding the AC, in addition to the lack of research, it made sense to conduct interviews with people inside the context, who have first-hand experience and knowledge about the phenomenon. Therefore, the rationale for selecting respondents was information. Previous research exploring youth academies (Relvas et al. 2010) and talent development (Lürssen, 2017) also used HYD role as the key respondent of the research.

6.3 Interview strategy

A semi-structured interview approach was used to collect data from the HYDs. The interviews were conducted with help from a constructed interview guide that contained a chronological list of questions and topics that was covered during the interview. Even though the interview guide served as a framework for the conversations, the researcher was able to improvise during the interview to get a further understanding on the topic, or if something unforeseen occurred with the potential to add value to the study (McNamara, 2009).

6.3.1 Construction of the interview guide

The interview guide was developed with the help of three references; Sparkes and Smiths (2014) guidelines, interview guides used in previous research about QAS in football (Carlsson, 2011; Whittaker, 2017; Terøy, 2017) and the authors' references from working experience inside a PFC. The questions in the interview were open-ended and carefully formulated, avoiding the use of academic terminology and difficult wording (Sparkes and Smith 2014). A few ice-breaker questions were positioned in the introductory stages of the interviews to form some relationship with the respondent, ensuring a relaxed setting. After that, the questions were organized concerning the AC chronological process, starting with questions about the clubs' initial phases of the working process up until the present day. Sensitive questions, for example, the HYDs opinion about NTF's role as the developer, assistant, and evaluator of the AC, were positioned in the middle or towards the end of the interview (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). To ensure a natural ending, the interviews ended with

free dialogue in case the respondents had more to talk about that could have added value to the interview.

6.3.2 Trustworthiness

Conducting research methods with humans involved, the researcher needs to take specific ethical implications into account. Regarding this study, every respondent participated voluntarily. They were informed digitally (i.e., email) in advance about the procedures of the interview along with the assurance of confidentiality. This process was repeated on sight before the interview was conducted. Additionally, the respondents were informed that the interview was to be tape-recorded. Lastly, an "informed consent" (see chapter 10.2) contract was presented and signed by every respondent. All these measures were either informed or presented for the respondents to receive sufficient knowledge and understanding of the research project, and the option to withdraw from the research at any time. Also, the respondents' names were replaced with the initials of their role in the club (HYD) and a serial number concerning the rating achieved (e.g., HYD-1 = Head of Youth Development - lowest ranking of those interviewed). This ensured trustworthiness, by ensuring credibility and dependability, which are two essential criteria in the pursuit of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

6.3.3 Interview process

The entire data collection period lasted for 37 days (from March 16 to April 21). Every interview, except one (HYD-5), was conducted in the premises of the HYDs' club. The length of the interviews varied between 38 minutes and 75 minutes. The variation of the lengths was due to the comprehensive schedules of some HYDs. Every respondent was very welcoming and eager to share information to this research. The interviews were recorded on an iPhone 7S using the app 'Voice Recorder'. After each interview, we immediately uploaded the audio-file to an external backup drive for safety reasons. These files will be deleted after they are no longer needed. To acquire as much information as possible the respondents were allowed to be in full control of the interview, only to be guided if the researcher felt the conversation was drifting too far away from the topic.

6.4 Data Analysis

In this study, ‘*data*’ is considered as the words generated from the semi-structured interviews, while analysis refers to interpretation and understanding of this data (Egilsson 2013). According to Veal and Darcy (2014), it is common for qualitative analysis to search for themes or categories in the transcripts. We were also aware of not adopting a quasi-quantitative approach, which means that the researcher only identifies recurring themes that emerge from the transcripts of the respondents. Veal and Darcy (2014, p. 431-433) state the importance of treating the findings individually:

A theme which emerges from just one subject is as valid as one which arises from ten subjects. The criterion for identification should be the extent to which the theme appears to be salient to the interviewee [...] If only one person or organization in the study is shown to behave in a certain way as a result of certain forces, this is a valid finding for qualitative research. (Veal and Darcy 2014, p. 431-433).

Based on this, a thematic approach was adapted to analyze the transcripts. The advantages of thematic analysis fit well with the nature of the study. It is a flexible and easy method which is easy to learn for researchers who have little experience of conducting qualitative research (Braun & Clarke 2006). It also has the potential of summarizing a large body of data, and/or to offer a significant description of it. Moreover, it can highlight similarities and differences, which is essential concerning this study since it seeking to present patterns and particulars of the ACs effect in Norwegian football. Braun & Clarke (2006) also state that a thematic analysis can generate unanticipated insights. The usefulness of such an analysis is said to be suited when informing policy development, for example, the AC (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As previously mentioned, a thematic analysis approach was adapted to analyze the transcripts. More specifically, this study adopted the framework of Braun & Clarke (2006, p, 87):

Table 1: Phases of thematic analysis (Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p, 87):

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
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1. FAMILIARIZING YOURSELF WITH YOUR DATA	→	Transcribing the data if necessary, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. GENERATING INITIAL CODES	→	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set. Collating data relevant to each code.
3. SEARCHING FOR THEMES	→	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. REVIEWING THEMES	→	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5. DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES	→	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. PRODUCING THE REPORT	→	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

This study applied the steps of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in the following way:

1. The interviews were transcribed into individual Word-documents and translated into English. Both authors transcribed and cross-checked four interviews each and re-read each other's transcripts thoroughly to measure the accuracy of the transcription. The transcripts in this study have been somewhat embellished to avoid a verbal character.
2. Each transcript was given equal attention in the coding process. Braun & Clarke (2006) stress the importance of not generating themes based on a few vivid examples. This was respected, and the coding process was thorough and comprehensive. Furthermore, significant statements for each theme was collated. According to the last authors (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 82), "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question". Lastly, this study argues that the themes are coherent, consistent and distinctive (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
3. The data generated in this study was analyzed, interpreted and formulated into meanings. Having done this, the authors cross-checked the relation between the analysis and data to assure the coherence between them. Moreover, an inductive direction was taken, and the themes identified were linked to the data. According to Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 83) "inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame".

4. The next step was to analyze the themes against each other and to identify the essence of what the respective theme concerned and decide what area of the research it captures. Braun & Clarke (2006) stresses the importance of making the themes fit into the overall story and what relation they have to the research question.
5. The last step of the analysis was to finalize the themes for the study and make sure that they were structured in a manner so that the study could present a “complicated story of the data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).
6. As the study was written, new ideas emerged and made some refinements to the analysis. This correlates with literature about thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith & Sparkes, 2014).

Table 2: Examples of significant statements

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
<i>We have not invested anything to participate. [...] My role has almost exclusively been about the AC. So, you can say one year's work. I've gone away from the field, I've worked in meetings and got the structures in place.</i>	4	101	AC costs a full-time position.	
<i>There is a financial risk to participate in the AC. The smallest clubs budget with small-scale development resources to get people at work, and if you do not get that status [you have budgeted with] you lose money, and that means people lose their jobs. Then there is a risk in everyday life for those who work here. [...] Smaller clubs have far fewer people to use.</i>	6	102	AC a financial risk. Positions dependent on the results in AC.	Res. dep.
<i>If we had gotten stars without it having any financial significance, I do not think it has had the same impact as it has had. I think the economic gain is an important reason why we have got our finger off and started working on it.</i>	7	103	Financial incentives have been essential for change having been made.	Res. dep.
<i>The money means something, but it means most to us that we are among the best [on talent development]. [...] Had there been an even distribution of money, then the clubs have not worked as hard to get better.</i>	8	104	Money not the driving factor. Money increases clubs focus and investment	
<i>Many of the clubs have fooled themselves a bit. Many have had combination positions where there has not been so much work on development. Now you have to document and have people on it [talent development].</i>	8	105	This model forces clubs to prioritize.	
<i>It is clear that if you do not get things up, if you cannot get more stars, then it will affect the economy [and the number of employees], because you get less money from NTF.</i>	1	106	Positions in the club depend on the results of the AC.	Nor. iso.
<i>The [AC] is a direct reason why we have more [employees] now. We had 2 or 2.5 full-time employees before the AC, now we have 6. So, we have prepared ourselves for three-stars because we want to get there. The sole reason for this is the AC. Had never happened without it.</i>	1	107	AC has led to more employees. More targeted, but because of?	Nor. iso.

7.0 Results and discussion

The topic under discussion is complex, where several aspects overlap or link with each other. Although the chapter is divided into topics, some elements of the discussion will thus address the same issues. The chapters are divided into eight central themes that emerged during the analysis: “AC and the initial phase”, “Change of the HYD role and formal structures”, “Economy”, “Coaches and players”, “Anchoring”, “Criteria”, “The role of NTF in the evaluation process” and “Affiliations with amateur clubs”. Each of the themes includes different relating subsections. The structure of this chapter follows the same order as the interview guide, as this was perceived as the most natural and logical way.

7.1 AC and the initial phase

The clubs’ views on the introduction and implementation of the AC, regarding their club, and in the national context, were good. All clubs were positive about such a change in Norwegian football. Most commonly, the clubs mentioned that it was positive to introduce a system that challenged the clubs on their current policies, and which challenged them to improve.

I think it [AC] is good for Norwegian football to get such a mutual ‘test’ in a way, a common measurement parameter, something we can stretch and measure ourselves on. Measure against each other and see the strengths and weaknesses of other clubs. And it gives the clubs a very nice opportunity to check how we do it compared to research, best practice abroad and in Norway. So, I think it’s a very good measure. (HYD-6)

I think the Academy Classification is very useful for Norwegian football, and I think it is beneficial to us as a club. Previously there hasn’t been any system or plan guiding the club, and I believe that has been in demand for a long time, from both the club, coaches, players and not at least parents wondering: why are you doing this and not this. (HYD-1)

I think that it [AC] is good. For me, there are more evaluations in my club. So, I think it’s positive. It is easier to reach the board, to get input there. You are being measured. It places higher demands on me as an HYD, and the academy. (HYD-5)

Carlsson (2011) argues that the HYD's attitude above the program is one of the most important factors for its impact and outcome. This is justified by the fact that the attitude is not only a decisive factor in itself, but the HYDs attitude above the program affects the colleagues’ attitude and all the processes that the club must work with (Carlsson, 2011). The

HYDs statements indicate that there is not only a positive attitude towards the QAS, but more interestingly, it has been clamored. The PFCs describe that there has been a lack of systematization and documentation, resulting in a lack of structure and clarity of roles and vision among players, coaches, and parents. Additionally, the HYDs highlight that the AC will lead to more evaluation of the academy, giving them the opportunity to compare and adjust according to what is perceived to be the best practices. This shows that the HYDs have recognized the need for a program, such as the AC, and that they initially were positive towards its introduction.

Three of the clubs also explicitly mentioned that this would improve Norwegian football, and not only their clubs. One aspect that separated the perceived successful German PASS-model from the criticised EPPP-model was its focus on the national team above clubs (Sulley & Nesti, 2014). Without putting too much emphasis on this point, it seems that the positive attitude is partly due to the fact the perceived effects this will have on Norwegian football in general. If this, in fact, is the case, then it may indicate that the attitude of the program corresponds more with the German PASS-model above the English EPPP-model, which would be a positive indication. The HYDs recognition and understanding of how this can affect Norwegian football, beyond their club, testifies to a holistic understanding of player development. HYDs have significant influence and power over the direction and focus on talent development on a club level, but also, in a national context. These indications could thus be positive indications for player development in Norwegian football

Similar as with the English EPPP-model, the Norwegian PFCs seems to positively view the professionalization-process the academies have been experiencing through more specific demands and measurements, explaining that this will facilitate and assist PFCs to take further steps to improve. Like with the EPPP-model, the PFCs seem to appreciate and be motivated by the establishment of a framework with a shared philosophy of best practice (Whittaker, 2016).

7.1.1 Speed of growth

A concern that emerged among three of the clubs, however, was the speed of growth the AC entailed. The clubs are chasing after reaching the desired result and may, therefore, find themselves in a situation where the investment exceeds the outcome.

I think maybe we have grown a bit too fast [...] There are always new things you need to get started. Those who work here work incredibly much and you are a little scared of people burning out and will resign, meaning that we don't get the continuity of the process. (HYD-3)

What is a bit dangerous with the AC is that the clubs grow a bit too fast. In total. I think we are doing well because of our history, but for the clubs who have not had anything [employees] and go to many employees and do not take it step by step, that can be a challenge. (HYD-5)

We must hurry to improve the situation. It's almost the case that we, as an organization, are unable to cope. Employees can hardly cope with all the changes in the organization. We got two stars, and we would very much like three. So, we have hurried to get it. We have pushed the organization here a little extra, people hang extra by the ropes, got a little unnecessary additional workload to get it to that point. (HYD-4)

Carlsson (2011) found that inadequate planning could hinder the implementation process of a QAS, emphasizing the importance that PFCs must understand and accept the time-perspective and complexity when implementing such a program. Additionally, Perck et al. (2016) found that a club's structural design before the implementation of a QAS affects the speed in which the organization progress towards professionalization.

The quotes mentioned above demonstrate two essential aspects associated with inadequate planning. Firstly, too much workload over a short period can lead to significant wear and tear among the employees, which in the worst case could result in them resigning. As HYD-3 stated, this causes lack of continuity in the process, and hence lack of quality. This has similarities with the findings of Carlsson (2011), which showed that increased workload in connection with the introduction of QAS could cause the tasks, concerning the QAS or daily tasks, to not be executed appropriately. Consequently, this could cause a lack of commitment or a negatively shift in attitude towards its implementation, found to be of a hindrance for its outcome and success in previous research (Carlsson, 2011; Carlsson and Ring, 2012).

Secondly, inadequate planning and completion may lead PFCs in economic challenges. PFCs who budget, and employ based on the desired result in AC, but who fail to achieve this result, will incur expenses that do not match the revenue they have calculated. PFCs that are more financially reliant on the money acquired from the AC will be affected to a greater extent by inadequate planning or implementation (Slack and Parent, 2006). The balance of power for

these PFCs are thus shifted away from the club, and over towards NTF, as they need to comply with the requirements introduced by them to acquire necessary funds (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003).

These points clarify that the position of a PFC ahead of the introduction of QAS not only has but also should have, an impact on the performance of a club, to ensure that the process is economically viable and methodically good. It is thus essential, and partly crucial, how the prerequisites for PFCs are for the implementation of the program. This is evident from the following statements:

If you have people in place, then the other points of the criteria will automatically be fulfilled. (HYD-7)

I think we have had a steady growth. We've been ready for the changes, it's just the documentation that has been missing. (HYD-6)

I started well half a year before other clubs, and if I had not done so, we would not have come where we are now. (HYD-5)

These results are in line with findings from previous research, stating that PFCs prerequisites concerning staff, time and documentation was significant for the outcome of the work with the QAS (Carlsson and Ring, 2012). According to resource dependency theory, PFCs who in advance of the implementation have a sufficient number of employees in place, will also be less dependent on the financial incentives the AC entails (Pfeffer and Salancik (2003), and hence, in less risk of being negatively affected of its result.

From the results, it is also clear that having processes or measures in place before implementation is also of considerable significance (Carlsson, 2011). This makes the workload more manageable and allows the clubs to spend more time and resources on measures they wish or must implement, while the measures already in place can be optimized. The results also indicate that inadequate conditions, or a PFC's attempt to satisfy too many measures in relation to their prerequisites, can be devastating to the club in the long run.

Considering this, the clubs should begin to work on future goals, e.g., going from three to four stars, before that is their goal. By doing this, the PFC will gain an understanding of their financial and methodological dependence ahead of setting it as a goal, thus clarifying the capacity of the club.

7.1.2 Assistance from NTF

The AC is a new concept that is both complex and comprehensive. Information and support from NTF are therefore vital for the clubs to understand the logic behind the criteria and what is needed to get them approved. The clubs are assigned supervisors who assist the clubs during the process of implementing and conducting the tasks in the criteria. Since the clubs have different supervisors, it is interesting to see which similarities or inequalities HYD perceives as it has been since NTF's guidance will have consequences for AC's impact. HYD-4 and HYD-8 state the following:

The frequency of meetings between us and NTF has been good. They have been on a couple of club visits, and I have met NTF several times [...]. If you want to succeed with AC, I think it is wise that you work in process with NTF and use the skills they have. (HYD-4)

We are very pleased [with NTF]. We have an excellent relationship with NTF [...] Very nice and helpful. We are very pleased with the follow-up. (HYD-8)

Both statements indicate that the HYDs are satisfied with both the frequency of meetings with NTF and the assistance and follow-up they received. HYD-4 also emphasizes the knowledge and expertise the NTF possesses, and indicate that there could be a relation between exploiting these qualities and success in the AC. However, some clubs were not as pleased with NTF. HYD-5 and HYD-1 explained as follows:

It has not been very much assistance from NTF [...] They have come up with such a brief report that says, 'this has to be fixed and that you may want to contact other clubs about what they have done and see their plan or how they screen players'. (HYD-5)

We were told that we were the club that used NTF the least, but at the same time, I do not feel we have been told that we could use them more. [...] If anyone has used them more than us, why is that? Is it because they want to help them more? [...] Perhaps it is more fun to work with teams that have come the furthest, or maybe they have ties with them. (HYD-1)

This may indicate two things. First, that the assistance from NTF has been skewed between the clubs. If clubs feel they are down-prioritized by NTF, this may lead to an adverse change

in the clubs' attitude and commitment towards the program. Since the NTF both assists and evaluates the clubs, this can mean that clubs who feel they are not getting adequate with assistance or being overlooked by NTF, feel their actions are useless.

Carlsson and Ring (2012) found that external assistance was a success factor, but that too much assistance would result in less involvement among the employees and the loss of valuable knowledge when the process ended, thus negatively affecting the outcome of the program. This means that it is essential that NTF and the PFCs find a balance of assistance that facilitates and educate the PFCs to ensure their progression.

Secondly, the quotes from HYD-5 and HYD-1 indicates that the information from NTF has been vague or unclear. Vague or ambiguous information may cause the clubs to move in a non-desired direction, investing time and resources in areas that will not lead to progression. This will primarily affect the clubs that depend mainly on the resource from NTF, as they are dependent on those resources (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976).

HYD-5 also explained that NTF advised the club to contact other PFCs and see how they have conducted the work. This could relate to mimetic isomorphism, explained by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) as coping or duplicating the work of other organizations. This may be due to lack of knowledge from NTF (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), or it may indicate an unwillingness to assist certain PFCs. This is thus very different experience than HYD-4 and HYD-8 had experienced.

7.1.3 Standardised or unique talent development

An essential question for this paper was whether Norwegian talent development was about to be standardized, the clubs becoming similar, as a result of AC. This topic can be related to the theory of coercive isomorphism (Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis, 2016). However, the only research this study can relate to is Perck et al. (2016) study about implementation of a QAS in Flemish gymnastics clubs. The findings in this study showed some degree of homogenization because the clubs had a reduction in organizational diversity, making them more similar in this area. The HYDs in this study provided different perspectives on whether the same would happen in Norway. Some of the clubs recognized the fear of the AC causing Norwegian football to become standardized, and if this were to happen, it would be something detrimental for the development of football. However, there was a consensus

amongst most of the clubs that the clubs were able to keep its distinctiveness within the framework of the AC.

You can make yourself unique and create your own identity within the framework that AC provides. To me, the categories in the AC is the frame, and then it is up to each club to paint its picture. I think I will be able to paint the picture of my club very differently to other clubs but within the same frame. I think it is very advantageous that we have the same framework to relate to in Norwegian football. (HYD-4)

We and other clubs discussed if the AC would lead the clubs to become standardized regarding talent development and if the clubs would manage to keep its peculiarity. We questioned this in the beginning, but we see now that the AC has managed to avoid it. (HYD-8)

I think it's possible for the clubs to go their own ways. (HYD-1)

This correlates with the various categories and criteria and awarding system forming the AC (TFS, 2017) that was purposely set up to ensure that each respective club can keep a certain amount of distinctiveness.

7.2 Change of the HYD role and formal structures

7.2.1 Changed of the HYD role

The HYD role has the overall responsibility of overseeing the sporting and administrative activities in the academy. This was the case in most of the clubs. However, the different categories in the AC have inflicted the HYD's with many time-consuming tasks. This is evident in HYD-2s statement below:

Big or small club, everyone is busy with their jobs, and this is a project that comes a little bit on top of the daily task too, so it has required that you invested a lot of extra time outside of your core tasks. (HYD-2)

The statements do not only indicate increased workload and change in tasks but also that HYD, who is responsible and has been delegated or committed to the work, has been pressured to take on responsibilities beyond their original functions. This relates to the theory of coercive isomorphism (Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis 2016) where a pressure is exerted from either cultural expectations within the society of the organization or by other organizations,

which in this case is *Norsk Toppfotball*. Additionally, the HYD-5s statement below expresses a desire incompatible with the completion of the tasks, while HYD-2 describes the tasks related to AC as additional tasks. This could indicate a lack of commitment and negative attitude towards the AC, found to be two significant barriers to the implementation and success of a QAS by Carlsson and Ring (2012). Consequently, due to the increased workload and change in working tasks, the role of the HYD has changed. The clubs seem to be aware of this and explain the change as follows:

The HYDs job has become more like a system monitor, a person who is less active on the pitch, more behind the desk, works hard with strategic plans, works hard with cooperation agreements and economics [...] There has been a relatively large replacement of HYDs in 2017. I think many have thought that it has been a tough process, and many may have set too high goals that are tough to achieve. [...] I think the AC will lead to a greater emphasis on academic competence in future recruitments of HYD in top clubs. (HYD-2)

My task must be on sports, what's happening on the field, in training, in matches and have the overall control over what's going on [...] But my role has almost exclusively been about the AC. I've moved away from the field, I've attended a lot of meetings and got the structures in place. [...] Like now, [...] I have attended meetings with the purpose of setting meetings. (HYD-5)

Perhaps there should be a more definite role description for this role [HYD]. Now the clubs can choose how this role should look. [...] When I got this role, the club wanted me to oversee all development processes in the club, but this is so much. (HYD-1)

These statements indicate that there have been significant changes in the requirements and the role of the HYDs. The AC has led them further away from the sporting activity of the club. Following the AC, HYDs have more of an office job and are less involvement with players and coaches. Also, HYD-2 state that the AC leads to a more significant requirement of academic competence.

Seen in relation to the frequent managerial changes in today's football industry (Poli, Besson and Ravenel, 2016; Morrow and Howieson 2014; d'Addona and Kind, 2014; Audas, Dobson and Goddard, 1999), and HYDs increased workload and focus away from the sporting activities, this may result in a detached focus regarding some of the key features of an optimal academy. Three of the findings presented in Mills et al. et al. 2012, (cited in Mills

et al. 2014, p. 7) suggested that an optimal youth structure have “a coherent philosophy with defined values, expectations, and behavioral standards”, “well-integrated personnel with strong links to senior team operations”, and “clear and effective lines of communication”. Traditionally, it used to be the football managers and the HYD that oversaw these key features. However, due to the impact of the football industry and the AC, this research proposes that clubs provide more organizational consistency to maintain these features by splitting the HYD role in two, one for overseeing administrative activities and one for sporting activities.

7.2.2 Formal communication in the academy

From the data, it emerged that the HYDs had the primary responsibility for the work regarding the AC. However, other roles in the clubs also contributed in specific categories, for example, sporting directors, MDs, and coaches.

It was me and a coach who did the most. Then the sporting director, MD, and board were involved in some things, in addition to bringing with us the ones we felt we should have with us. (HYD-1)

Carlsson and Ring (2012) found that the more people inside the clubs that were involved in the work with the QAS, the employees’ commitment and attitude towards the program would be positively affected, and hence the clubs would experience a greater impact of its implementation. There are some variations in the involvement of employees among the PFCs, however, in all of the PFCs, the majority of the work has been carried out by the HYD. Additionally, many clubs seem to have adopted more formal structures in relation to the workload of the AC. The statements below suggest more formal communication structures:

We have had weekly meetings with the entire academy where every coach has participated. We’ve been seated in groups and worked with plans [...] We have had many good discussions. [...] Although the academy has worked very well with this, the whole club has been involved and has been familiar with it. Then the job has been done by coaches and the leaders in the academy. (HYD-2)

We had gatherings with many in the club - coaches, players and everything. (HYD-1)

We have had joint meetings with the entire club, the first team, the whole academy and the administration have participated. [...] So, although not everyone has worked with it, everyone has seen the work and been involved. From the board and down. (HYD-8)

This means that the AC has led to more formal structures, regarding weekly meeting with employees (i.e., coaches, physios and others) and involvement of various departments inside the club. Even though these findings are in accordance with the findings reported in Carlsson and Ring (2012), one needs to raise the question whether the smaller clubs need to allocate work to their employees in larger extent to reach desired targets (in the AC) than the big clubs. This can be seen concerning the HYD-3s statement in the previous chapter who feared burnout and resignations among his academy staff.

7.3 Economy

7.3.1 Economic importance - different motivations and club sizes

One of the trademarks of AC is that it is incentive-based. Approximately 320 million NOK is allocated to the program over a six-year period, 60 of which goes to TFS for implementation and administration of the project (Johnsen, 2017). Annually, this corresponds to 42 million NOK. These funds are distributed among the clubs based on the results they achieve in the classification. However, the financial incentives are perceived to be of differing importance among HYDs. HYD-8 stated the following

We were only interested in the process itself [and not the financial part of it]. We put the academy very high. So, it was first and foremost being a part of this process. This has been done abroad, so we saw the value of going through the same. Then it's a bonus for us with the distribution model since we have scored high. But there was no triggering factor. (HYD-8)

HYD-6 and 4, however, describes the financial part of AC as a catalyst for the job that needed to be done:

The money means something, but it means most to us that we are among the best [on talent development]. [...] Had there been an even distribution of money, then the clubs have not worked as hard to get better. (HYD-6)

If we had gotten stars without it having any financial significance, I do not think it has had the same impact as it has had. I think the economic gain is an important reason why we have got our finger off and started working on it. (HYD-4)

From the results, it is clear that there are contradictory perceptions of the economic importance inside the club. HYD-1 and HYD-7 explain:

I feel that for us that are working daily with it [the AC], it is not a focus [the financial incentives], but for the MD and the board, it is a focus. [It seems] that we do it almost because of the money. Or, for them, it is the most important. (HYD-1)

It makes it easier for me as an HYD to motivate the board to hire a full-time coach [...], as it causes us to get 10 points more on that part, which gets us to a higher level and more money. (HYD-7)

HYD-1 describes that the importance of the economic benefits is valued differently within the club, where the board and MD value the economic benefits, while for HYD it is not in focus. HYD-7 builds on this point by saying that the financial benefits the program provides make it easier to persuade the board and MD to hire desired coaches.

This is not a surprising result, but it can have significant consequences for the board and MD's investment in the academy. The results, i.e., the economy, in AC is dynamic, which means that the results of a PFC are dependent on the results of another club. The results are thus in constant change, where a club will never have full control over its financial gain. This can be seen as uncertainty among boards and MDs in clubs where the economic benefit of the program is the most important or where the economy is governing their actions. Unsatisfying results can thus lead to less investment in academies since it can be viewed as an uncertain economic factor.

One of the smaller clubs interviewed explained that the financial incentives were crucial for the club's focus and investment in talent development.

Since we are not the biggest club, it means that the money we receive means quite a bit, and we clearly have the ambition to maintain the development work in the club and in order to manage it, we must have access to more money and therefore it is an important thing to reach that level as quickly as possible. (HYD-3)

These six different quotes show the varying influence and importance of the economical part of the AC for the clubs, being described as a bonus in the first, and a necessity in the last. This is also a good illustration of the extent to which a PFC depends on another organization for resources (Slack and Parent, 2006). As HYD-8 explains, the economic incentives is not a decisive factor for that PFC, since the club as alternative sources from which it can obtain is resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). HYD-3, however, explains that the resources obtained from the AC are a necessity for their focus and investment in talent development. That operations of the club, and survival of the extent of its focus and investment in talent development is thus dependent on the results from the AC (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003).

7.3.2 Incentive-based

Having heard the importance of the economy for HYD, the board and MD, it is also interesting to see what perceptions HYDs have concerning the incentive-based solution.

It is perfectly fine that there is a skew distribution. Those who focus on development, I think they should get that money, while those who really do not care so much should not get the development money. [...] I believe that is quite reasonable. (HYD-5)

I think those clubs who invest more should also get more money. I think it's getting fairer. (HYD-7)

We are certainly better off with this model. We think it's positive. [...] I think it stimulates to invest. (HYD-8)

All HYDs agreed that the incentive-based model was good and that it was better than the previous solution. The reason for this was two-fold. On the one hand, the clubs agreed that those who focused and invested most in talent development should get the most financial support.

Secondly, the model stimulates to invest through economic incentives. As explained earlier, the financial uncertainty surrounding the model may cause the board and MDs in clubs to refrain from focusing and investing in the academy. These incentives, on the other hand, provide the possibility that PFCs can increase the financial profit, and then their player development. In the short term, clubs can avoid investing in player transfers, avoiding costs

related to salaries, transfer fees, agent remuneration and signing bonuses (ECA, 2012; Saify, 2014), while they can gain long-term profit from player sales Reilly et al. (2004).

The economic profit the model presents can be seen as a form of persuasion technique from an external organization, applied to achieve organizational change in the desired direction (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The external organization, NTF, want to stimulate the PFCs to invest, focus and improve their work on talent development, and, as put forward by HYD-8, this is also the perception among the HYDs. Since the HYDs views the model as positive and fair and recognizes its intended purpose, it also appears as they genuinely are interested and care about talent development, not only in their club but in a national context.

Although not model specific, these findings are different from the experiences of EPPP model, where the focus was on the individual PFC, and favourably more similar to the German PASS model, whose focus was the national (Whittaker, 2016). This does not seem to be rooted in the criteria but in the mindset of the HYDs. This is important since HYDs and MDs represent clubs in forums where national development measures are discussed, and HYDs are in contact with NTF and can influence how the criteria in AC evolve. Hence, the mindset and values of HYDs are an essential factor for Norwegian talent development, both in short- and long-term.

7.3.3 Cheating

The other reason why the current model is considered better than the former is that the clubs perceived the previous solution as untidy and unfair. Untidy in the sense that the clubs recognized that there was a lot of cheating by clubs when reporting on how many and which positions a club had, and hence unfair to those clubs who reported correct information.

With the old model, [...] were you got money based on what you reported, there was a lot of cheating and nonsense. [...] When clubs submitted the documentation, they even reported players as coaches [...] everybody did it to get the most money. And people who were not A-license coaches were reported as player developers so that they would get more money. (HYD-5)

Many of the clubs have fooled themselves a bit. Many have had combination positions where there has not been much work on development. Now you must document and have people on it [talent development]. (HYD-6)

A club also mentioned the challenge of having an incentive-based model. The previous model was predictable in the sense that the clubs knew what expenses they had regarding the number of employees and they had quite good control over how much financial support they received from NTF since they applied for support based on the number of positions they had. Now, however, the financial support is based on the result of the classification, and its relation to the results of other clubs. This may be somewhat more unpredictable, compared to the previous solution. HYD-1 stated:

[...] we have budgeted the same, but we do not know how many stars that is equivalent to. [...] The initial phase could be clearer, where it should have been assured that everyone really understood what this is, and what it gives you financially. (HYD-1)

Seen in relation to some of the clubs' concerns about uncontrolled or too rapid growth, this is an important point. As previously highlighted, the PFCs dependency on the financial return from the AC demonstrated the importance of being aware of the amount of work the process entails, planning its implementation (Carlsson, 2011) and setting realistic goals. PFCs with fewer or no alternative sources of resources will be particularly exposed to this (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). PFCs that rely on a specific financial return from their investment in AC will strive to meet the above points since the clubs in advance do not know 1) what result they will achieve, 2) what results other clubs will reach and 3) which result corresponds to which economic return. Although all the clubs agreed that the new incentive-based model was better than the old, the HYDs experienced that there are continued problems with cheating.

Some of the best environments cheat like hell now. It is so annoying when you see what is reported, and then you go to the website of some clubs and see that he is going to be a coach, but [in reality] he is a physical coach of the first team. Such things destroy the credibility of the system. (HYD-5)

I mean, for our part, getting a full-time physiotherapist who works at 13-19 [would be valuable], but it does not matter. But we can call it an assistant trainer on the U13. This is where I think, or I know [clubs cheat], we've been careful about it, but this is a grey area, how much can they [NTF] check? [...] It is ridiculous that the system is such. (HYD-1)

This weakness of the model causes incorrect information to be reported to NTF, causing the results, and the clubs' financial return, to be wrong. For those PFCs most reliant on the resources obtained from the AC, this may cause considerable consequences for their investment and output from their talent development (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Some clubs apparently pretend that they have focused and invested considerably in the academy and talent development when they, in reality, exploit a weakness in the system. This may cause PFCs who report correct information also begin to exploit this to gain more significant financial profit. This should be addressed, since payments on false premises can demotivate clubs focusing on talent development.

7.3.4 Employees

One of the threshold requirements within the classification concerns the number of employees each club has regarding coaches, from one to five stars in order, the clubs need one, two, five, seven and nine, coaches in 100% positions (TFS, 2017). In addition, from three to five stars, the clubs need a coach developer, and for five stars, a sports director.

All clubs (that have three stars or more) have hired a coach developer, as that is a threshold requirement for acquiring that result.

The [AC] is a direct reason why we have more [employees] now. We had 2 or 2.5 full-time employees before the AC, and now we have 6. So, we have prepared ourselves for three-stars because we want to get there. The sole reason for this is the AC. It had never happened without it. (HYD-1)

We have gotten full-time employees on the U14 and U16 teams [because of AC]. (HYD-6)

HYDs also said that there is an increasing number of positions that have gone from being part-time positions to full-time positions.

We have previously had a large number of part-time employees who have been forced to quit because of the employment of full-time employees. Firstly, this is something that is very positive for our club, but it comes in the context of extra paid funds from NTF. We have previously been organized in such a way that we have received minimal funding from NTF because we have previously focused on limiting costs by having many small positions. Now we notice that through full-time employees we get a higher quality of work internally in the club and that we can also contribute to a

greater extent in the local areas around the club. This had not been possible with part-time employees. (HYD-2)

Because of AC, more employees have been demanded, which has meant that we have gained more continuity. Previously we had several part-time and fewer full-time. Part-time employees have often disappeared after 1-2 years since they have been offered full-time jobs elsewhere. Now we manage to keep these. If we do this for a couple of years, I think we can get better results. (HYD-7)

As one of HYD describes, the appointment of full-time employees over part-time employees is the direct cause of funding received from NTF. While the change in the role of HYDs can lead to less consistency in the academy and clubs, the clubs' employment strategy of coaches can partly counteract this. Increased number of employees enables the coaches to support and be available to the players to a greater extent, recognized as a key point in successful youth development (Mills et al., 2014).

However, the change from part-time employees to full-time employees is described as performance-related. HYD-3 and HYD-1 said:

There is a financial risk to participate in the AC. The smallest clubs budget with small-scale development resources to get people at work, and if you do not get that status [you have budgeted with] you lose money, and that means people lose their jobs. Then there is a risk in everyday life for those who work here. [...] Smaller clubs have far fewer people to use. (HYD-3)

It is clear that if you do not get things up, if you cannot get more stars, then it will affect the economy [and the number of employees], because you get less money from NTF. (HYD-1)

It is evident that the number of employees and fulltime positions is dependent on the resources acquired through the AC. Smaller clubs, or those with less alternative sources of resources, is particularly dependent on this funding. PFCs, such as HYD-3 is working in, must either comply with the requirements of AC to access the resources or get rid of employees. This indicates that the external organization has great power over the PFC since the PFC is dependent on these resources to have the number of employees they have and since they do not currently have any alternative sources of resources (Slack and Parent, 2006). Indirectly, it can also be said that the external organization decides how the resource should be used, since the resources the PFC receives is conditional on the use of employees, through

the threshold requirement of the number of employees. The external organization thus has significant control over the three mentioned factors, and hence considerable influence and power over the PFC (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Conversely, it can be said for bigger PFCs, which are better financed, that the external organization has less control over the three factors since the PFC is not so dependent on these resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003).

7.4 Coaches and players

7.4.1 Coach implications

The final product, i.e., players, and those closest to the final product, i.e., coaches, constitute a significant part of the criteria on which AC is based. It is therefore interesting to see how these roles have been influenced, and what short- and long-term effect this will have. It is apparent that changes have occurred for the coaches. HYD-1, HYD-3, HYD8, and HYD-4 explained:

It has become a completely different everyday life [for the coaches] because more people work here. [...] We sit together from 10 o'clock every day, we are working together. We work with plans, sessions, and analysis. We are looking at matches and evaluating the players. (HYD-1)

They must submit plans of trainings, and they must have a standard on monitoring the players in a cycle. The coaches must have much more focus on the individual player than the team. (HYD-3)

We work a lot more systematically and have more precise guidelines when conducting player conversations, and such processes. First and foremost, the work with the curriculum is the one that has the most significant impact on them, then weekly meetings, working with themes and exercises. (HYD-8)

[...] there is a focus on monitoring and documenting things, getting it on data, getting numbers on things. (HYD-4)

The PFCs statements indicate that there are relatively significant changes regarding the theme about the work tasks of the coaches, and it seems that the PFCs has experienced quite similar changes. The statements indicate that there is greater transparency and cooperation between the coaches for the various teams inside the PFCs. The changes can lead to a clarification of the club's vision for talent development, through increased discussion, cooperation,

openness, and, eventually, a coherent vision among the coaches, described to be key features of a successful academy (ECA, 2012)

7.4.2 Player implications

Like the coaches, HYDs perceive that players also noticed a difference after the introduction of AC. HYD-7, HYD-1, and HYD-2 explained:

[...] they notice that they get more feedback. They have more input in other areas. We have now started mental training. We may work more intensively with more analysis, individuals and the team. (HYD-7)

I think they [the players] notice in particular that we put much more demands on them. But it may be the case with reporting among themselves and using ERP systems, apps, and such things. They think much more than before, and they must report on their current state daily. (HYD-1)

[...] what players have noticed is that through new digital tools, we have higher monitoring of the training process, we have more individual follow-up and more video analysis. (HYD-2)

These findings indicate that players, in general, receive closer individual follow-up through feedback and monitoring, face stricter demands and that the players themselves are more involved in their development. It is also evident that there are, not only more but also more precise and more effective communication between players and coaches. These changes in the PFCs correlates with what Mills et al. (2012) described as features of an optimal youth system. From these statements, it is also clear that the clubs, at least to some extent, have managed to adapt to the use of new processing tools. This is, according to Mills et al. (2012), a key feature in a successful academy.

7.4.3 A new breed of coaches

The changes in work and work processes for coaches have, as seen, led to what the HYDs perceives as a better development environment for their players. In addition, these changes have also reformed the requirements the coaches have to fulfil to manage the job properly. All HYDs stated that the workdays and tasks, and thus the requirements, to the coaches, have changed after the classification. The changes have been difficult to cope with for the older coaches. HYD-2 and HYD-5 stated the following:

The most significant impact for the coaches has been to familiarize themselves with the club's game model, curriculum, school-plan for the players and the digital systems. For some coaches who have worked here a long time, it has been hard for them to adapt. (HYD-2)

The old school is more critical to having more data and reporting and plotting playtime and training session and having to do the things there. Some think it's a struggle and a little waste of time, and they believe the most important thing is on the field. (HYD-5)

Increased documentation and use of data have made it difficult for coaches of the 'old school' to cope with the development of working practices. Consequently, the HYDs are looking for coaches who can cope with this working method. HYD-1, HYD-8, HYD-2, and HYD-3 stated:

We now want coaches who are not among the 'old school'. We want coaches who see the value of working together, working in a team, work the way that the set of criteria is put together. The way they should work individually with players and the thoroughness around it. (HYD-1)

You may need people who have better knowledge within PCs, databases and such kinds of things, compared to before, where there might have been more in a way that you showed your skill on the pitch and so on. (HYD-8)

We have those who have been here over time who see that it's a more significant challenge digitally. I want to say that the AC leads to a new type of coaches because the criteria set make you look for coaches who may be younger and fit more into the new agenda. (HYD-2)

[...] the coaches must be good at data tools because it has almost become a prerequisite. It becomes a real burden if you cannot [use it]. (HYD-3)

Some of the changes may have come as a natural development of football and technology. However, it is evident that this is a change that is apparent from AC, and most clearly this emerges from HYD-1's explanation, saying that they want coaches who work in the way the criteria require. This could be viewed as an external pressure that coercively has changed the PFCs (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), rooted in their dependence of resources (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976), and/or the quest for successful talent development. This is a significant change for PFCs, which affects them to the extent that they have got rid of current employees to hire new people with other qualifications.

Interestingly, one HYD expressed that the increased requirements have helped him, as an HYD, since the requirements of previous were unclear and made it challenging to set requirements above coaches regarding education and experience.

[...] the AC pushes in the direction to formalize that education [coaching] and make it a profession. And for me, it may help me to get it nailed to the wall that everyone who is going to work here must have these qualifications. (HYD-5)

A downside to this change is the knowledge and experience that disappears when substituting the coaches from the `old school`. This is also recognized among the HYDs. HYD-1 and HYD-8 state:

When we now hire new people, with this new way of working, they [the experienced coaches] will be the victims of it. Because they are not coaches, who are ready to work that way. In my opinion, personally, we are losing something, losing something in the short run because it's coaches [...] which has been in the game for 30 years. [...] You feel a little bit forced to phase out the older and experienced coaches because you must have coaches who are competent in that way [AC] of working. (HYD-1)

[You have] to make sure that you do not get too hung up in plans, you must see each player, the game types, the way you communicate. It will depend on which individuals you are working with. It is in a way perhaps fear, that one end up with office rats. (HYD-8)

These implications have traits from normative pressure (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The criteria in the AC favours certain sorts of design and practices, similarly to the description of normative pressure put forward by Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis (2016), occurring from a process of professionalization (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Through AC, there is an increase in guidelines, systematization, documentation, and, not least, increased use of process tools and data in the coaches' work. These implications are similar to those observed following the implementation of the EPPP in English football (Whittaker, 2016). The findings, however, are partly contradictory regarding the managements' view of this change. Younger coaches with an academic background were seen as incompetent to drive the development of the academy (Whittaker, 2016), while it seems to be more valued among PFCs in Norway. However, the clubs in AC and EPPP seem to agree on the value and importance of not losing all the coaches from the `old school`.

The PFCs actions and adjustments following the introduction of the AC align with the findings from the Swedish QAS, where it was found that resistance to change, and lack of education and knowledge, were significant barriers for positive results following the implementation of the QAS (Carlsson, 2011). Similarly, the HYDs statements indicate their willingness to adapt and commit in accordance with the innovation, identified as a critical feature of an optimal youth system by Mills et al. (2012, cited in Mills et al. 2014).

The short-term implications of substituting the coaches from the `old school` are, as pointed out by HYDs, the loss of valuable knowledge and experience. The appointment of younger coaches with an academic background and knowledge of process tools and data makes the process more efficient. These measures will, or are expected, to improve talent development in the longer term. Increased documentation, systematization and use of data will eventually lead to closer monitoring of the players, with increased attention to detail. This will be beneficial for club and player. However, as pointed out by HYDs, it is likely that the clubs will be served by employing a combination of `old school` coaches with knowledge and experience from football, and younger coaches with academic backgrounds and understanding of data and process tools.

7.5 Anchoring

One aspect of the AC that clubs unanimously perceive as positive is its effect on relationships between the people and the departments within the clubs. Several HYDs also mentioned that the club's academy had gained a more significant and more critical role internally because other parts of the club have become aware of the job being done and `accepted` the academy's role in the club.

Many in the club have increased awareness and understanding of what we are working on, and why we do it. (HYD-1)

Previously, the academy has been set aside [from the rest of the club], but now there has become more interest and focus overall in the club on development and cooperation in this area. (HYD-7)

[...] everyone has become a little more conscious, such as the administration, the first team and the board, which is not so close to the academy, have got a little more eye for the job that is being done [in the

academy]. [...] They have gained more insight. [...] everyone is more aware of the work being done. I think that, as an HYD, it is very important that everyone sees the value of what is being done in the academy. (HYD-8)

One has gained insight and been through a process, such a comprehensive process, which has made us very united. Especially in the academy, but also with the other parts of the club. (HYD-8)

From these statements, it is clear that the academies have become more important for the clubs. Previous research (ECA, 2012) have mentioned increased competitiveness, profits from players sales, reduction of financial risk, potential fan engagement as benefits of having an efficient football academy. Based on these benefits, one would think the academies had an essential role in the club. Even though this study didn't replicate the previously reported findings regarding the benefits of having an efficient football academy (ECA, 2012), the results show that some academies appear to have become more important to the club due to financial incentives. This is evident in the statements below:

The board can see we are doing well and they see that we are getting money from it, but now they have also gained insight into the actual job done - seen the curriculum, seen the sports plan and plan, guidelines, and understands how much work that is being done. (HYD-8)

For us, I think the most important thing about AC is that the club and board look at the academy in a slightly different way. I don't think the board thought the academy was important before. So, now, when there are added millions each year, I think they want to see more about the academy. They will follow it up more clearly. It becomes more important for the club to follow. (HYD-1)

This result ties well with the findings in chapter 5.3.1 that evidenced that the board and MD value the economic benefits from the AC. It also correlates with Relvas et al. 2010) This can also be seen in the context of the increasing professionalization and commercialization in the football industry, where Relvas et al. (2010) argued that the opportunities to earn more revenue resulted in clubs becoming more like service enterprises stressing business of performance, entertainment, and financial profit.

7.6 Criteria

The criteria that underlie the evaluation of clubs are naturally of great importance. In this chapter, specific topics highlighted by HYDs, which are in the criteria or in their opinion should have been there, will be discussed

7.6.1 Special competence

In the AC report, it is stated, "special competence in areas such as medicine, physiology, psychology or education is important, but is not given weight in this first classification." (Norsk Toppfotball Senter, 2017, p. 28,).

We have a pretty big group on each training group, but now we may be talking about getting more specialists. We are really satisfied with the coaches and their qualities, but if we grow more, we may need recruit specialists within physical, mentality, etc. instead of coaches. (HYD-7)

At the next round [of classification] we want to hire physical trainers in the academy. We want competence in the mental bit, not necessarily full-time, but we have access to it. (HYD-3)

They must do something about it, I feel, but I really think they have realized it. (HYD-1)

A potential problem with this, recognizing, but not giving points to special competencies, is that clubs who are already under economic pressure must choose between hiring a coach or a person with special skills, or, in worse cases, getting rid of those with special skills to be able to hire an adequate number of coaches. This was evident from the answer from HYD-5:

They say they should take into account the local context [but it doesn't], and then we are pushed in one direction, a direction that they [NTF] mean is the best direction. [...] If I want to have a social worker, which I think is an extremely important thing, [...] we will not get a reward for it. That is also a part of the professionalization. When we do not get rewarded for having those persons employed, it will also be difficult to spend money on it. (HYD-5)

This statement has traits from normative pressure, where the club is indirectly pressured to hire a specific type of employee (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The club had identified a way to develop itself, but due to their dependence on resources, it would be difficult to implement these changes. The statements from the clubs clearly show that they consider the employment

of people with special skills as very important, as this is seen as one of the most significant differences between Norwegian and foreign PFCs.

It is clear that you should get some points if you have a good medical team. It does not matter much if you are watching a U14 or U16 training, compared to a big club in Europe in terms of content, training density, etc. What separates us is when the players leave the pitch. It is a big difference there. On the physical team, injuries etc. There they are a lot further ahead. (HYD-7)

We have good training methods on football, but we have little training methodology for injuries, and reversal and strain problems after injuries. When you start with these things [AC], then the total load increases, and then the chance of injuries increases. Especially in puberty time, where there may be almost three to four years difference in growth. (HYD-6)

From the statements from the clubs, it seems that there is a consensus and understanding of the importance of special competence, and it is clear that the PFCs want to focus on this. However, AC appears to be an obstacle for the clubs in bringing through their desired changes. The criteria in the AC thus contradict the findings of ECA (2012), which identified having qualified and experienced staff members in all operations of the club as a success factor for a PFCs academy. Interestingly, several HYDs mentioned that it is special competencies that separate Norwegian PFCs with European PFCs. Considering this, it is notable that NTF has decided to leave it out of the criteria.

7.6.2 Productivity

One point that all HYDs agreed that should be weighted was productivity. Productivity measures how many club-developed players the club has developed, and how much playing time they are given across different match-platforms. HYD-7, HYD-8, and HYD-1 stated the following:

I think productivity should be higher since this is the end-product. You can have a very good plan, but you will not get any players. I also think that productivity, including the last three years only, in principle, we should really put all the money from 16 upwards and recruit the best players to get points. Then we do not take responsibility for further down. Here is a shortcoming. (HYD-7)

[...] we think productivity should be weighted more since it is the end product of player development. That's our purpose. (HYD-8)

We want more points on productivity, and maybe more on the training process. Now I feel that the heavy plans, i.e., the curriculum, strategy, and sports plan, should be underlying, and tone them down now. Or, give more points to what is essential, it's [what happens] on the field. (HYD-1)

This is interesting since a higher valuation of the final result, i.e., "finished" developed players, rather than the process that led there, do not put any guidelines for how the club operates regarding player development. More points on productivity mean that clubs are freer to choose the methodology they think is best for the development of players. This will enable the PFCs to retain, or at least give them the opportunity retain their uniqueness.

Valuing productivity higher makes sense, since it is, as HYD's describes, the end product. At the same time, it is well thought that many PFCs will benefit from having standards in different areas of the organization and, as previously explained by HYD-8, make use of the knowledge and experience NTF possesses. This may especially be relevant to those clubs with the least resources, since they have fewer employees, have fewer resources to gain inspiration, education, and experience from the outside, and to quality assure the work they do.

7.7 The role of NTF in the evaluation process

7.7.1 NTF – creator, assistant and evaluator

In terms of the actual classification process, the majority of the clubs expressed the benefits of having a domestic evaluation-party (NTF) familiar with the context of Norwegian clubs and Norwegian football. The geographical and demographical differences, alongside the distinct culture in Norway (Andersson & Carlsson 2009) makes the context very special, where some PFCs located in big cities and others in small cities or communities. Because of this, some HYDs (7, 5, 4) state that it would be difficult for a third party to come in and evaluate the clubs.

I think that the Scandinavian community is a bit different from the rest of Europe. I think you must know the Norwegian context in order to evaluate it, so I think it will be hard for a non-Scandinavian to go in to evaluate the clubs, especially those from a smaller population. [...] I think that clubs

from big cities can be measured fairly similar [to European clubs], with the same conditions, but not the small clubs. Therefore, I think it's good that there is one evaluation party who knows the Norwegian context. (HYD-7)

I think those who are here and evaluate understand the local context better than if it had been a third party. (HYD-5)

With the professional environment in NTF and their professionalism, I think we should be proud of having such an organ in Norway. So, I'm positive that NTF has conducted well-thought evaluation processes. (HYD-4)

Despite this, concern was raised over the evaluation being subject of a subjective opinion by the supervisors. This can lead to clubs being evaluated on different grounds, and hence, being unfairly treated compared to other clubs.

[...] those who evaluate are very different persons, and there are also a lot of subjective opinions. For example, we have been awarded for a certain criterion, and then another club has does exactly the same, but they have not been awarded. It may indicate that there is either something about the relationships or that NTF are not completely synchronous about what is good and bad. (HYD-5)

I am quite clear that I have a lot of confidence in NTF, but we are a small country. We are a small elite football community. Many people know each other. I think part of the evaluation will be characterized and stained by having the same supervisor as the sensor. (HYD-2)

What's interesting for us is that we have two supervisors [with different opinions]. When they were visiting us when we were to be reclassified. [...], those two disagreed if we should receive two or three stars [...] This shows me that the criteria set is based very much on discretion. (HYD-1)

One HYD was very concrete in the concerns about an unfair evaluation of one club to another. These concerns centred around the relationship between specific clubs and NTF or people in NTF leading to better results for these clubs, implying that NTF or people within NTF are biased in their evaluation of individual clubs. HYD-1 states the following:

Take 'club X', for example, there are rumours that they have managed to classify themselves to four stars, but when I talk to people who work in this club and they say they are not even close to be three stars, then you start to wonder. I'm not saying that it's wrong, but there are questions about

these things. Because of this, it might have been nice with a third party. A third party that has no affiliations to anyone. (HYD-1)

Other clubs also indicated that a third party could have been a better solution.

Had we had a Norwegian independent third party, who really knew Norwegian football and who had come in and worked on this kind of classification work, maybe that would have been good. (HYD-4)

I am quite clear that I have a lot of confidence in NTF, but we are a small elite football community. Many people know each other [...] I assume they (NTF) have good processes on how to evaluate the different criteria in the clubs, but I think it would be far better if we had an external company that had gone through and classified the clubs. It seems like it is very much up to personal discretion. (HYD-2)

All HYDs expressed that it was positive, and partly necessary that the party who evaluated the clubs was familiar with the Norwegian context. Hence, this study proposes an alternative solution. A third party with affiliation to Scandinavian countries who would have been familiar with the context in terms of geographical environments, club size, economy, culture, and the sporting level of clubs and players. A third party from Scandinavia would have been familiar with the context in Norway since the Scandinavian countries share similarities in these areas (Andersson & Carlsson 2009; Skille, 2011; Tuastad, 2017). This study speculates that this solution would not only be fairer regarding more correct results in accordance with the criteria set but would also have set stricter and more objective requirements for the clubs and hence, challenged the clubs to a greater extent with the current model. As some HYDs have stated, some clubs get approved criteria based on their relationship with the supervisors. This may facilitate a false sense of achievement and improvement of talent development that is not existent. A third party with no affiliation to such a club will thus demand and evaluate in accordance with the criteria set, that is, more stringent requirements, but necessary in accordance with the criteria set.

However, the study does not suggest removing the NTF from the process. The majority of HYDs pointed out the knowledge NTF possesses and the value they bring into the project. The study suggests that NTF could have been developing and adjusting the criterion set in collaboration with a third party and they could assist the clubs during the work process as an

intermediary between the clubs and the third party. The actual evaluation would then be the responsibility of the third party.

7.8 Affiliations with amateur clubs

A significant part of the criteria in the AC deals, directly or indirectly, with PFC's relationship with the amateur clubs in the region. The following chapter deals with this topic and discusses its implications.

7.8.1 Recruitment strategy

Through the criteria, the AC now incentivises recruitment of young players, and some PFCs are critical of this. HYD-4, HYD-6, and HYD-5 states:

I am afraid that it is to clear standards that can point in a direction, such as school/football, that you have control over the children in the 6-12 year segment. The may cause you to recruit them early and destroy the local club environment. I fear that it may be the way Norwegian football is going, and I think the overall development of Norwegian football will then be weakened. (HYD-4)

I believe in a rich Norwegian football, where you have many local clubs that work well in the children's football and take care of many and include many. I do not believe in an academy model where you pick up players from the age of 6 and drive them as if they are a farmed salmon. I fear that AC can lead clubs in that direction. (HYD-6)

We have recruited a great deal of players, and then the clubs are punished because they are good [at talent development]. (HYD-5)

As mentioned in chapter 2.2.2, a characteristic of football in Norway is the mixture of volunteering, amateurism, and commercialization (Andersson & Carlsson 2009), and the recognition that the PFCs and amateur club's dependent on each other (Gammelsæter, Storm, and Söderman, 2011). The incentives PFCs are presented, challenges these values and standards. As one club states:

Some have indirectly said that we should shut down [the academy], because it has become so fiercely. [...] There are clubs who have come and said indirectly that can 'you find something else to do, or recruit players when they are 19-20 years old'. There are environments that have really

fell apart because of us. [...] if I come soon and say that we are going to recruit from the age of eight. Then the alarm bells start to ring. (HYD-5)

This theme has been the subject of major debate and disagreement in Norwegian football, which HYD-5's statement clearly illustrates. The fact that the AC now provides incentives to recruit young-age players can make clubs use this as an excuse and/or opportunity to actually recruit at a young age. The clubs can now justify this because their interest organization, NTF, has incentivised it through the criteria. As argued by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003), an organizations uncertainty increases in line with the competition for a resource. Through incentivising earlier recruitment, the competition for talented players, i.e., resources, increases, and thus may lead to uncertainty. This is also indicated through the statement of HYD-1 and HYD-2:

We have top clubs close to us who recruit players from the age of 13 years. We do not do that. [But] if we notice that the clubs are in our area and take the best 13-year-olds, it's completely wrong for everyone. (HYD-1)

It will be interesting to see how the relationship between the top clubs in our region develops, with greater competition for the biggest talents. We have previously had a fair and gentleman agreement on how we recruit, but there may be conflicts in the future. (HYD-2)

The effect of this incentivisation may be that clubs that initially oppose recruitment of players at a young age fear to lose talented players to competitors (Larkin & Reeves 2018), thus feeling pressured to recruit at a young age. As emphasized by HYD-2, this may lead to conflicts, as PFCs start to challenge the existing understanding and agreements they initially have with the amateur clubs.

An essential differentiation for recruitment and collaboration with amateur clubs is the geographical location of PFCs. PFCs alone in a large area have more often chosen to recruit players from older age categories (15-16-year-old), while PFCs in regions with more PFCs recruit more often in younger age (10-12-year-old) (Lürssen, 2017).

I think that in Norway, how we are geographically, where the big city clubs compete in the same areas, one is compelled to think differently, and perhaps recruit players at a younger age. Then you have clubs that are more monopolists in their own area, and most likely will be in the future. (HYD-8)

As previous research has shown, Norwegian sports culture stands out by high volunteerism (Andersson & Carlsson 2009; Skille, 2011; Tuastad, 2017), and the acknowledgment by PFCs and amateur clubs on their dependence to each other (Gammelsæter, Storm and Söderman, 2011). The HYDs statement above shows a correlation with the previous research regarding the PFCs awareness of this. Simultaneously, there is evident that for many PFCs, especially those in highly competitive areas, the temptation to acquire the greatest talents, and the economic gain through AC, is so great that these values and collaborations are put under pressure.

What NTF is doing, by incentivising PFCs to recruit players from an earlier age, is that they are indicating that this is the correct and/or the best way to conduct player development. However, they, as an interest organization for the top clubs, does not take a firm stance publicly in what is the best way, and they do not educate the PFCs or the amateur clubs on why this is preferable. PFCs who have previously recruited players of older age will thus be pressured through financial incentives to recruit players earlier, while PFCs who recruit players early will be excused to do this through a directive from NTF. NTF justifies none of the parts. The point is not that NTF should have all the answers on player development. The point is that NTF financially incentives recruitment of younger players, and should thus make PFCs and the public, including amateur clubs, informed why this is a better solution compared to developing players in the amateur clubs. NTF should be able to justify all the criteria in the AC since PFCs rely on these to get financial assistance, and because this, to a varying degree, contributes to shaping talent development in PFCs, and consistently in amateur clubs. NTF should, therefore, adjust the criteria in AC or clarify why this is the right direction for Norwegian football. Initially, by omitting or avoiding disclosing this information, AC will contribute to disagreements and conflicts between PFCs and amateur clubs.

7.8.2 Alternative methods of influence

Several clubs seem to be conscious of improving or maintaining good cooperation with the amateur clubs through greater information exchange about talent recruitment. Through such arrangements, PFCs can influence the training of the most talented players, through secondments and measures, while the players still belong to the amateur club.

We have entered into an agreement that we should not pick up players before they are 15 years old. We can have them on secondments 1-3 times a week for example [before that]. As long as the player continues in his own local environment but gets a differentiated training through trainings with an elite club I think that's okay. (HYD-3)

[...] we started a sporting forum where I meet with all the SDs in the local clubs once a month, and it has been a very good start because then we can introduce some of the measures we want. In addition, we visit local clubs weekly and then we run extra measures for players who are not good enough for the academy yet. (HYD-2)

We are out locally to run sessions and follow up players, train coaches and invite them to matches and invite them to seminars and the kind of things. So, I think the relationship has improved. (HYD-3)

I think it's dangerous to distinguish the elite football from the amateur football [...] Because, it's so extremely much interest, so much will, so much diligence, so much volunteering, so lots of people who want to contribute around the football in different roles, are found in amateur football. We would not have had these with us if we were to emphasize elite football above all. (HYD-4)

This seems to be an alternative to recruiting players, which improves the clubs' relationships with the amateur clubs, enabling them to influence the players' training and consolidate their position for later recruitment. The HYDs explain that such measures create understanding among the amateur clubs on how the PFCs operate and that this contributes to creating a basis for cooperation. Interestingly, HYD-2 explains that the club not only has measures to facilitate for the most talented players but also those that are perceived not to be good enough for the academy. It is reasonable to assume that such measures will help to improve the quality of the players while increasing the interests and participation in the amateur clubs.

Clubs who recruit at an early age will benefit from this in the short term. However, it is reasonable to assume that a good relationship with the amateur clubs, while affecting the training in those clubs, will in the long term be beneficial to PFCs. PFCs depend on the voluntarism in the region they operate (Andersson & Carlsson, 2009; Skille, 2011; Tuastad, 2017), and on the resources, i.e., the interest, development, and players, that the amateur clubs generate (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976). This alternative method of influence seems to be beneficial both for the amateur club and the PFC.

8.0 Summary of key findings and conclusive remarks

The purpose of this study was to explore the HYDs perspective of the short- and long-term effects of the recent implementation of the Norwegian AC system. To our knowledge, this is the first research in Norway that has explored the effects of the AC. This chapter will summarize the study's most important findings.

This study has evidenced changes in the work tasks of the coaches, and hence the requirements that accompany the role. Consequently, all HYD's modified have their perspective towards the role of the coaches, which has resulted in a change in the recruitment process of coaches. The HYDs now have a clearer policy on what kind of coaches they hire. Firstly, HYDs are now seeking coaches who are extremely good at individual follow-ups. This seems to be a requirement that is more important than the coaches' ability to follow up the entire team and can also be seen in relation with the growing importance of producing players to the first team. Interestingly, every HYD stated the importance of having young coaches with an academic background, especially since there are greater demands of documentation and the use of data (e.g., process tools such as SoccerLAB, SkillRace, Kit). In this finding, coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) is present since the HYDs are externally pressured to recruit coaches required to work in relation to the criteria in the AC. This is also rooted in their dependence of resources (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976), and consequently successful talent development.

A significant finding was the change of, and additional working requirements for the HYD in the PFCs, consequently pressuring them further away from the on-field and sporting activities in the academy. Like the coaches, the HYDs have also been drawn towards the 'office job', which in turn has led to greater demands for academic competence. This may also be part of the explanation of why there has been a major replacement of HYDs after the AC. This study has argued that PFCs should consider dividing up the position of HYD in sporting and administrative tasks. In this way, the clubs will provide clear lines of communication, a clear methodology and vision for the academy, which consequently will lead to better structure and follow-up of players, and eventually better players.

This study found that Norwegian sports values are put under pressure because of the AC. This is evident through the incentives of recruiting younger players. Some of the clubs argued

that there is a greater competition for recruiting talents and that the value of talent development has grown, mainly due to the incentive-based model from NTF. This has led to a growth of interest towards the raw materials (i.e. young talents), both internally and externally. Most clubs have taken action in amateur clubs in the region, in terms of talent and coach development initiatives. None of the clubs attributed these actions as a direct cause of AC. However, it seems that AC has led to increased awareness about the importance of good relationships with the amateur clubs. The clubs do this for maintaining or increasing the interest in football in the region, creating legitimacy and interest in the club in the local community, and, to later recruit the most talented players (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976).

It is difficult to provide an accurate status report on the relationship between elite and amateur football on the basis of the AC, especially when amateur side is not directly involved in this study. However, this study shows that several of PFCs have initiated different measures in amateur clubs that can be viewed positively regarding the relationship between the elite and amateur football. On this basis, this study concludes that the PFCs growing involvement in the amateur clubs is due to increased awareness of the resources in the amateur clubs. However, the actual effects of the initiatives remain to be seen, and AC's incentives for recruiting in earlier age threaten the relationship between the parties. This study argues that the clubs recruiting from earlier age categories will benefit in the short-term, while clubs that have good relationships with the amateur clubs and the region through recruitment and cooperation agreements will benefit from this over time.

Through the AC, every HYD experienced a growing awareness and recognition for the academy from different departments in the club (i.e., the board, administration, first team). This can be seen in conjunction with the benefits of operating a successful youth academy ECA (2012). However, some HYDs (1, 8) explained that the recognition of the academy was partly due to the financial incentives AC represents. However, this is a major step in the right direction for talent development in Norwegian PFCs, as some of the academies were described as “unimportant” and being “set aside” before the AC.

Overall, the results demonstrate a strong agreement that having a domestic evaluation-party (NTF) is useful given that they know the demographic and geographical context of Norwegian football. However, amongst some clubs, it was evidenced a dissatisfaction in the way that NTF had evaluated the clubs. The dissatisfaction concerned some HYDs perceiving

the classification as subjective, where one HYD experienced contradicting feedback due to disagreements between the clubs' supervisors. Another HYD stated that the evaluation was mirrored if the club had the same supervisor as sensor. Several HYDs also questioned the supervisors' ties with certain clubs (i.e., former player, coach of the club), indicating, to varying degree, biased and unfair evaluation. Some of the HYDs indicated that an independent third-party could be a better solution for evaluating and certifying the clubs. Such a practice is common in European football nations (i.e., Germany, Belgium, Finland) who have installed QASs (i.e., Foot PASS). The rationale for having a third-party evaluator is not only a fairer and unbiased evaluation, but it also results in a stricter and more objective assessment of the clubs' fulfillments of the criteria in the AC model. This study has argued that an independent third party who knows similar contexts (i.e., Scandinavian countries) should be considered as an evaluator in future classifications.

Findings from this research argue that there has been a change in the Norwegian football context, both inside and outside the PFCs, resulting in a greater awareness and recognition around talent development. The ACs requirements and the stated goal of producing more and better players has undoubtedly affected the clubs in various ways.

8.1 Implications and future research

The study found that there were conflicting interests among HYD and MD regarding the PFCs focus and investment in talent development, and to participate in AC. This study has argued that it is crucial for the further progress of talent development in Norway, that a coherent vision of talent development between the HYD and MD is established. Future research should explore these arguments in the perspective of the MD and see where these challenges and contradictions originate and how these can be solved.

The study has revealed that the AC has led PFCs to employ other types of coaches. The new kind of coaches is typically younger, have more academic backgrounds, and have a good knowledge of process tools and data. This has meant that coaches from the `old school` have been pressured out of the clubs. HYDs have noted that the clubs lose valuable practical knowledge and experience with this change, but this has nevertheless been a necessity. Future research should explore the value Norwegian football gets from the introduction of the new type of coach, and what value is lost when replacing `old school` coaches.

An ongoing change that has been further enhanced by AC is the change of the role HYD. Previously, HYD has been a significant part of the sporting activity of PFCs, and been available to coaches in discussions and planning, with control and influence over the methodology. However, increased workload and responsibility have led HYD's position has become an office job increasingly. Most HYD has expressed dissatisfaction with this, and this study has argued that this change of role will weaken talent development in PFCs and the Norwegian context. This study has suggested that a division of the HYD role, in sporting and administrative tasks, could be a good solution to the challenge. This suggestion should further be addressed and explored.

This study has revealed indications that there are significant differences between PFCs of different economic capacity regarding their potential within AC, and what implications this may have for their implementation of the program, and further the effect of it. Future investigation is necessary to validate whether the requirements put above PFCs with less financial capacity face unjustified stricter requirements and if these can lead the clubs to financial risk.

This study was conducted shortly after the first classification of the clubs. It is reasonable to assume that many effects are thus not visible yet and that these will become clearer over time. Likewise, HYD's views may change when they have gained further experience about the system and have seen more of the impact it has had. Lastly, it will also be interesting to see how the effect of AC has been for the intended goal of its introduction. Future research should, therefore, address the intended goals with AC, i.e., develop more and better players at a national and international level, to explore whether the program has achieved its intended purposes.

8.2 Limitations

The purpose of this study was to explore the HYDs perspective of the short- and long-term effects of the recent implementation of the Norwegian AC system. This study argues that HYD's attitude and view of AC are relevant and will affect the impact of its application. The ACs recent introduction means, however, that all short- and long-term effects of the program

are not given. Thus, the study does not offer definitive answers, but a merely a statement of probability.

Two clubs from each performance level, that is, stars, are represented in this study. However, the majority (6) of these were in the top division when the results from the first classification were released. The clubs in the second division and those with the most significant financial constraints are thus poorly represented in this study. For more areas of the research, it would be reasonable to assume that those clubs would have generated a different response compared to the top-level PFCs. Indeed, this was seen in the study, but due to the limitations in the number of clubs with significant financial constraints, and data regarding the PFCs finances, it would be difficult and unreasonable to draw definitive relations. Similarly, the PFCs who chose not to participate (3), and those clubs who decided to withdraw (3) from the AC, are not represented in the study.

Although the study has gone into specific criteria and the value setting of these, this has not been carried out consistently. One weakness is that the study has not taken into account the values of each criterion and how this will affect the choices of clubs and the effect of these. Interestingly, this study has revealed there is a conflict between the board, HYD and MD regarding their incentives to focus and invest in AC. However, the study has only taken into account HYD's considerations and experiences regarding AC. The board and MD's perspective are therefore not included, and this limits the study somewhat.

9.0 References

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10.0 Appendix

10.1 Interview guide

INTRODUCTION

- Tell briefly about me, the purpose of the study and information regarding confidentiality
- Sign the consent form

GENERAL INFORMATION

- How long have you been part of this club?
- What kind of education do you have?
- What is your background in football?

- Can you tell briefly about your view of the AC?

- What was your role in the AC process?
 - In what ways has your working day changed after the AC?

CLUB'S INTRODUCTORY WORK WITH ACADEMIC CLASSIFICATION

- Have you felt any pressure to be part of the AC?
 - If yes, in what ways?

- When did the club first hear about the AC?

- How has the help from NTF been during the process?
 - How was (and how many) the meetings between you and NTF through AC?
 - Is there anything in this process that should have been done differently?
 - Hvordan har hjelpen fra NTF vært under prosessen?

- How was the job of the academic classification carried out in the club?
 - How many in the club participated in the implementation of the AC?
 - Was there resistance internally?

- Have you had to make any changes to the way you work or organize the club because of the AC?
 - Has there been any changes in positions internally or in employment in the academy as a result of the AC?
 - How many employees had the academy before and what is this number now?
 - Are you looking for other types of employees now than before?

- The AC encourages clubs to recruit more foreign coaches. What is the club's view on this?

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- What is the club's view that the classification is incentive-based and affects this affected way the club is working on?

- Is the club better served by the old model or model?

CRITERIA SET AND THE ROLE OF NTF

- What are the club's considerations about the criteria that underlie the evaluation of the club?
 - Which criteria in the classification have led to the most changes in the club?
- The AC states that it recognizes the value of other specialist competencies than coaches (such as medicine, physiology, psychology), but they do not give points to clubs that have people specialized in such positions. What is the club's view on this?
- How does the club consider that the NTF has developed the criteria, assisted the clubs during the work process and evaluated the clubs where other countries (Belgium, Germany, Finland, etc.) have a third party who evaluate the clubs?
- In what ways/areas can the AC make Norwegian football more competitive, and will the distance between Norway and European clubs remain the same?
- Is Norwegian talent development becoming standardized so that it becomes one "correct" way of working?
 - If yes, in what ways?
 - Does the academic classification make the theory and practice in Norwegian clubs more similar?
 - Do you think the academic classification will affect the club's distinctive character?

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 - If yes, in what ways?
 - Does the academic classification make the theory and practice in Norwegian clubs more similar?
 - Do you think the academic classification will affect the club's distinctive character?

OPEN – END QUESTIONS

- What do you think about the way forward with the AC and the club?
- Free dialogu

10.2 Informed consent form

We, Magnus Ellevold Strand and Gøran Askim, are from the spring of 2018 writing a master thesis at Molde University College. We aim to interview academy directors for four of the participating clubs, one club that is not participating, a club that has withdrawn from participating, and a representative from Norwegian Top Football (NTF). The thesis research question is; *“In what way has the first year of the Academy Classification affected the professional football clubs in Norway, and what are the HYDs considerations regarding the process and its immediate and long-term effects?”*

You are being asked to participate in a study investigating the effects following the implementation of the Norwegian AC. The intention with this study is to create understanding and awareness of what implications the classification may and have cause(d).

If you agree to participate, you will complete a semi-structured interview (SSI). SSI is generally organized with prearranged open-ended questions, with other questions developing from the interchange between the interviewer and the interviewee. The characteristics of SSI are; the interviewer and the participant participate in a formal interview.

Although all studies have some degree of risk, the potential in this investigation is minimal. The interview will be recorded on tape recorder. The recorded data will be sent to participant after the interview and will be carefully guarded by researcher. When analysis is complete the recording will be destroyed. Alternatively, will all participants be anonymous in the research.

Your participation is voluntary and if at any time during this study you wish to withdraw your participation, you are free to do so without prejudice. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The study has not been reported to the “Personvernombudet” for Research, “Norsk samfunnsvidenskabelig datatjeneste AS”, since personal identification information will not be saved/used in the study

AUTHORISATION: I have read the above and understand the nature of this study. I agree to participate in this study and I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. Also, I am aware that this research is confidential, where my name cannot be mentioned in the research.

Participant’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s signature: _____ Date: _____

10.3 Significant statements and formulated meanings

<i>Significant Statements</i>	Tr. No.	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
Thoughts about the AC				
<i>Basically, [it has been] very useful, I think it is very useful for Norwegian football, [and] I think it is very useful to us as a club. In view of the fact that there has been no system or any plan here as we have been working after before. We are perhaps the club that have been furthest behind on this point. Although we have worked well without the plans, there has been little structure, and I believe that in a way that has been in demand for a long time. Both from club, coaches, players, and not least parents wondering, "why are you doing this and not this?"</i>	1	1	AC very useful for club and Norwegian football. No system or plan in the club previously Pressure from stakeholders (club, coaches, players and parents) regarding talent development in club	Org. change
<i>I think it [the AC] is very good. Very good for Norwegian football. Very good for us as a club, we have a great focus on talent development. We appreciate that very much here. Our whole model is about developing our own players. So, we think it's fun. We also have a much better anchoring for development, through the whole board and administration and down to academy, first team trainers and everything. So, we are very pleased.</i>	2	2	AC very useful for club and Norwegian football.	Org. change
<i>I think that it [AC] is good. For me, there are more evaluations in my own club. So I think it's positive. It is easier to reach the board, to get input there. You are being measured. It places greater demands on me as a HYD, and the academy.</i>	3	3	AC leads to more evaluations and stricter requirements.	??

<i>It's certainly a positive thing, but there is a lot [of work]. [...] Fortunately, I saw right from TFS so I knew what I had to start with and I knew how long it would take to get it in place. So, I started well half a year before other clubs, and if I had not done so, we would not have come where we are now. We were close to getting four stars. [...] It's a useful tool in terms of systematics and organisation.</i>	4	4	AC is positive. A lot of work.	
<i>I think it's good for Norwegian football to get such a common "test", a common measurement parameter, something we can stretch and measure ourselves on. Measure against each other and see the strengths and weaknesses of other clubs. And it gives a very nice opportunity for the clubs to check how we do it compared to research, best practice abroad and Norway. So I think it's a very good measure.</i>	7	5	Good for the club and for Norwegian football. Measurement against others.	Coe. iso.
<i>In one way you do [feel pressured to participate], because we are in the top division, you "should" join. But there was never any doubt that we should participate. We really just looked at it as something positive. Completely voluntary.</i>	2	6	Pressure to join, but this coincided with the club's interests.	Coe. iso.
<i>It fell quite natural for us to join it since we are one of the bigger clubs. It would have been unnatural to not join.</i>	3	7	No pressure to join AC.	
<i>When I took over this role, the club had a good history, but because of finances it was downsizing and you did not know if the club was going to survive. Then we have grown for each year. Now we take it step by step. What is a bit dangerous with the AC is that the clubs grow a bit too fast. In total. I think we are doing well because of our history, but for the clubs who have not had anything [employees] and go to many employees and do not take it step by step, that can be a challenge.</i>	3	8	AC may lead clubs to take to big steps to fast.	Coe. Iso. Res. dep.
<i>We must hurry to improve the situation. It's almost the case that we, as an organization, are unable to cope. Employees can hardly cope with all the changes in the organization. We got two stars, we would very much like three. So we have hurried to get it. We have pushed the organization here a little extra, people hang extra by the ropes, got a little unnecessary additional workload to get it to that point. At the same time, we will get better in the long run. So, I will look at it as a positive investment over time, but we have some hurried up a little bit.</i>	7	9	AC may lead clubs to take to big steps to fast.	Coe. Iso. Res. dep.

<i>I think we have had a steady growth. We've been ready for the changes, it's just the documentation that has been missing. We have grown fast but controlled.</i>	8	10	Grown fast but was prepared.	
<i>If we were to be a club that did not want to spend any emphasis on talent development, that's not something I'd like to be responsible for. So the pressure has been there internally. And now that we have completed the process, we do not regret it. There are many in the club who have increased awareness and understanding of what we are working on, and why we do it. There has certainly not been pressure from NTF. I think maybe the opposite, that they would have liked that fewer clubs had been classified for then there had been more money available on each club.</i>	5	11	No pressure from NTF More emphasis on talent development internally	Org. change
<i>I think maybe we have grown a bit too fast, seen in retrospect. There are always new things you need to get started. Those who work here work incredibly much and you are a little scared of people burning out and resigns, meaning that we don't get the continuity of the process.</i>	6	12	Grown to fast - may lead to people resigning and burnouts, this hinders continuity	
<i>Those we compete with have been more concerned with writing things down on the paper compared to us. [...] AC has made us have to work on this. This has given us a boost.</i>	8	13	AC positively made the club work on documentation.	

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
Changes in coach qualifications				
<i>We now want coaches who are not among the 'old school'. We want coaches who see the value of working together, working in a team, work the way that the set of criteria is put together. The way they should work individually with players and the thoroughness around it. We have had very good coaches in our teams, especially from 15 and upwards, experienced coaches, that have been in the game maybe 20-30 years in our area. Some of them have UEFA A license, some don't, but they have a lot</i>	1	14	AC sets higher technological requirements for coaches, elderly coaches are phased out The club loses a lot of experience and	Nor. iso. Coe. iso.

<p><i>of experience about the different age-categories, or who have produced a national team player in the past. When we now hire new people, with this new way of working, they [the experienced coaches] will be the victims of it. Because they are not coaches who are ready to work that way. In my opinion, personally, we are losing something, losing something in the short run because it's coaches [...] which has been in the game for 30 years. [...] You feel a little bit forced to phase out the older and experienced coaches, because you must have coaches who are competent in that way (AC) of working.</i></p>			<p>knowledge in the short run.</p> <p>Greater demands on coaches to adapt to new tasks.</p>	
<p><i>You may need people who have better knowledge within PCs, databases and such kinds of things, compared to before, where there might have been more in a way that you showed your skill on the pitch and so on. That's what I think. [You have] to make sure that you do not get too hung up in plans, you must see each player, the game types, the way you communicate. It will depend on which individuals you are working with. It is in a way perhaps fear, that one end up with office rats.</i></p>	2	15	<p>AC sets other requirements for coaches, and fear that the coaches get dragged too much away from the field.</p>	Coe. iso.
<p><i>I've probably done it [looking for other types of qualifications], but the club has not been there. Through the AC, I see that there are more people who might have been out because there are some demands for competence, for example. Those who sit with a bachelor's degree in training or those who do not have it, those who have just been playing and get a UEFA B license and those who have always been there. This region is a bit special, it is a county where there are not so many who are highly educated. Not the way it is in Oslo, where there are more people with a bachelor degree. Here it is really strange. I think the education level here is low, so I have two who do not have any education but who are very nice people, and the AC pushes in the direction to formalize that education and make it a profession. And for me, it may help me to get it nailed to the wall that everyone who is going to work here must have these qualifications, while the club has been there that 'it's a nice type' and then we must let him be.</i></p>	4	16	<p>Different qualifications for coaches.</p> <p>Easier for HYD to remove people.</p>	Nor. iso.
<p><i>You have those who are from the old school, and you have those who is from the new school. The old school is more critical to having more data and reporting and plotting playtime and training session and having to do the things there. Some think it's a struggle and a little and waste of time, and they think</i></p>	4	17	<p>Requirements for coaches have changed.</p>	Nor. iso.

<i>the most important thing is on the field. We agree that the most important thing happens in the field, but then it is the preparation phase. Many people think that's terrible. To me, that's what's going to be normal, so it's mixed feelings, it is.</i>				
<i>Yes, I'm there that "if you do not agree with this, you have nothing to do here." You must be up to the level that you can complete the actions that are: you must be able to schedule, you have to spend time on getting things onto the server, time to map. You are using video analysis, but there are still people who use, just like that, not white board, but like amrikka.</i>	4	18	Clearer and harder requirements are made to the coaches.	Nor. iso.
<i>There are increased requirements for the coaches. We want coaches who understand the club and the context. We are looking for coaches with the skills to be able to do a job over time, and who do not hurry further. We do not want a person who comes to the club only to work up to the top job as a first team coach. So now we look for coaches who will give us continuity, new ideas, and be interested in working with talent development over time. We do not want coaches who look at work in our academy as a career-springboard.</i>	5	19	Increased requirement for coaches Club want age category experts Coaches with contextual understanding Coaches with continuity	Nor. iso.
<i>The biggest impact for the coaches has been to familiarize themselves with the club's game model, curriculum, school-plan for the players and the digital systems. For some coaches who have worked here a long time, it has been hard for them to adapt. The new coaches are not familiar with the working methods from before, so they get it very easy. We have those who have been here over time who see that it's a bigger challenge digitally. I want to say that the AC leads to a new type of coaches because the criteria set make you look for coaches who may be younger and fit more into the new agenda.</i>	5	20	Different requirement for coaches	Org. change Nor. iso.
<i>We are looking for other types of employees now than before. The type of coaches who are concerned that the team is going to do well, we challenge to a much greater degree of individual focus, thus more concerned with developing individual players. Coaches who enjoy getting players up in the system, instead of keeping them in order for the team to do the best. And then the coaches must be good at data tools, because it has almost become a prerequisite. It becomes a real burden if you cannot [use it]. If</i>	6	21	Different requirements for coaches.	Nor. iso.

<i>you're not good at it becomes much supplementary work and delays. It does not reach the player if you do not know about apps and data tools.</i>				
<i>This is especially true with the process tool with the coach process and that there is a focus on monitoring and documenting things, getting it on data, getting numbers of things, making sure that there is some kind of data direction on the coach role. The estate culture is very interpersonal. There are very many coaches here who stand for the patch on the shoulder, the hug you sit down to talk to. There I think ... I'm not afraid we will become a data club with the first one to say that.</i>	7	22	AC sets other requirements for the coaches.	Nor. iso.
<i>I do not think the classification has led to a cultural change. But perhaps that we now emphasize individual follow-up in the training process very strongly may have meant that the coaches are very focused on the individual and that the players are more aware and present in their own development. There may have been a cultural change, as people take greater ownership in relation to their own development.</i>	7	23	Coaches with greater focus on individual players, and players more aware of their own development.	Nor. iso.
<i>It has become a completely different everyday life [for the coaches], because there are more people who work here. I think they have a completely different workday now, and I think they like the workday we have now. We sit together from 10 o'clock every day, we are working together. We work with plans, sessions and analysis. We are looking at matches and evaluating the players. I think they are very happy with it.</i>	1	24	More structure in the coaches' daily life. More coaches at work at the same time	Org. change
<i>We have become more professional, we have taken steps for each year. We work with more coaches, e.g. 6 coaches on 25 players for U16, with different specialists. So they notice that they get more feedback. They have more input in other areas. We have now started mental training. We may work more intensively with more analysis, individuals and the team.</i>	3	25	More individual follow-up with players-	
<i>I am very concerned that the coaches should have an ownership of their own working day. They will be allowed to decide what to do in the field, how to work with the players, but they must have an overall curriculum at the bottom. They must submit plans of trainings and they must have a standard on monitoring the players in a cycle. The coaches must have much more focus on the individual player than the team.</i>	6	26	Trainings still affected by the coaches, but much more structure and individual focus.	Nor. iso.

<p><i>I think the daily life [of the coaches] has become better, because one has challenged each other, become much more aware of what one wants to do and have started many good discussions, which in turn will have a positive effect on what is happening in the field. We work a lot more systematically, and have clearer guidelines when conducting player conversations, and such processes. First and foremost, the work with the curriculum is the one that has the greatest impact on them, then weekly meetings, working with themes and exercises. We have started very good discussions on that internally.</i></p>	2	27	Better daily life for coaches.	
<p><i>They must work closer with individuals. That's the big difference. Then they are used to the fact that our club is a club that works with the local clubs around. Are you a trainer in our club, then you are an advertising poster for the club. You are not just training here, but you are a trainer in the entire local area. That means wherever you go with that logo, you're a face out for the club. This is a change that several people notice.</i></p>	7	28	AC leads to closer follow-up of individual players and more awareness about cooperation with local football.	Nor. iso. Res. dep.
<p><i>In our academy we feel that we have received a boost in the quality of what we're doing. The skills of the coaches have increased, the structure of the way we work is better, but the distance to the rest of the club, such as the children's department, has increased.</i></p>	6	29	AC has increased the skills of coaches and structures of working are better.	
<p><i>In the biggest clubs that have between 5-9 full-time employees, I would say it's good if 20% of the employees have international background, but in a small club like us, who until January had only one full-time employee, if we would have employed a foreign coach it would have constituted 50% of the employees in the academy. That was a great question for us given that we are a small club, because we have a first team staff that is local and we have a MD who also is local. Local anchorage is very important to this club. Over the next two years, we aim to reach level three, that will add extra funds, and thus make it compulsory with a full time coach-developer. Then we can look after employees with foreign impulses or background.</i></p>	5	30	Open to foreign coaches and employees Important with local anchorage for smaller clubs	

<i>We have a foreign coach on the recruit team who has brought us exciting things and new thoughts. There is no doubt that it is enriching and valuable. But we are there that we think it's exciting to develop our local boys to become good coaches. Being able to give a national U14 job to the hungry young local trainer who is studying sports and wants to be really skilled, we think is important. It is important for us to have good coach development with local coaches who can become good resource staff for clubs around us. Rather than bring in a foreign coach who will enrich us a little time before he disappears again. So we have a more localized policy there.</i>	7	31	Foreign coaches is valuable. Focus on local development of coaches	
<i>We should make sure that we have an academic approach because there will be more systematics. In a team it is important to complimentary skills.</i>	8	32	Need for academic education among coaches. Complimentary skills important	
<i>Instead of hiring a mental trainer, we want to educate the trainers we have.</i>	8	33	Expand the knowledge of the coaches.	
<i>We should make sure that we have an academic approach because there will be more systematics. In a team it is important to complimentary skills.</i>	8	34	Should have academic competence in the staff.	

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
<i>Earlier recruitment relationship with amateur clubs</i>				
<i>We have top clubs close to us who recruit players from the age of 13 years. We do not do that. [but] if we notice that the clubs are in our area and take the best 13-year-olds, it's completely wrong for everyone. Today, it's not like that, not more than before. [...] It's a kind of competition, but it's not very hard for us, not yet.</i>	1	35	Recruitment Indicates competition for local talents between the big clubs.	
<i>I think that in Norway, how we are geographically, where the Oslo clubs compete in the same areas, one is compelled to think differently, and perhaps recruit players at a younger age. Then you have clubs that are more monopolists in their own area, and most likely will be in the future, so I do not think you will</i>	2	36	The competition between clubs makes it necessary to	??

<p><i>get in the situation where it is completely standardized. So, I'm not worried about it. [...] I think you can keep your identity through the criteria set.</i></p>		<p>recruit at a younger age.</p> <p>Won't get standardized.</p>	
<p><i>I come from a club that selects [players] when they are 7-8 years, I think it's early. I think Norwegian football is recruiting up too late, generally. So I think you should work together earlier. For our part, I do not think that's a big difference. What's the difference now, I think we are working closer to the clubs around us, we are trying to build up with various measures to fill the stadium, but also sporting measures. We contribute with our professionals towards cooperation environments. We make plans, work more and put the players in the center. There are short distances. It is natural in a big city that many players wants to go to the big club. But maybe it has become a bit more like because of the fact that we are more people and work more long-term, we do not take a player in March and sell him in October because he is not good enough. We try to give the players a longer time, to get better at it. It may be because of AC that there is greater continuity.</i></p>	3	<p>Should recruit players earlier, but not as early as 7-8-year-olds.</p> <p>Closer collaboration with amateur clubs.</p> <p>37</p>	
<p><i>It is individual [when we recruit players], but everything from 12-17 years. Then there is a little difference in how the environment looks. If the player is in a good club environment, we try to influence through measures such that he is well developed and that it becomes natural for the player and coming here. However, if there is a player we see that has a bad environment, maybe we will try to pick him up, but we are not actively trying to pick up players. The coaches will certainly have better players, this is always an internal discussion, but it's very hard to say who's getting the best in puberty. One might say who does not get the best but not the one who gets the best. So, it's a question of serving in a smaller club to play a big role, rather than having a smaller role in a big club. It is difficult, and individually. So we try to see it, but we are not very active. But we are attractive as a club, so players come to us. 90/95% coming from us comes from our own initiative and contacts us. It's rare we take in players we actively collect.</i></p>	3	<p>The club try to influence the environment in the amateur club, rather than recruiting early.</p> <p>Coaches want to recruit earlier.</p> <p>38</p>	
<p><i>I am afraid that it is to clear standards that can point in a direction, such as school/football, that you have control over the children in the 6-12 year segment. The latter may cause you to pick them up early and</i></p>	7	<p>AC incentivises earlier recruitment. This may</p> <p>39</p>	<p>Res. dep.</p> <p>Coe. iso.</p>

<i>destroy the local club environment. I fear that it may be the way Norwegian football is going, and I think the overall development of Norwegian football will then be weakened. I believe in a rich Norwegian football, where you have many local clubs that work well in the children's football and take care of many and bring many. I do not believe in an academy model where you pick up players from the age of 6 and drive them as if they are a farmed salmon. I fear that AC can lead clubs in that direction, but at the same time it is about interpretation of the criteria. So yes, there is a danger that AC can lead to standardization of Norwegian football, but it is not necessarily that it must happen because of AC.</i>			destroy the local club environment and weaken the development of Norwegian football. AC may lead to standardization.	
<i>The model is annoying to me because we pick up players when they are 14-15 years old and then they become club-evolved when they have been here for three years, and then the points begin to run in when they play. So, if they've been here for four years, you'll get three times for the four years because it's a model that makes you score for how many years the player has been in the club. That rule is very annoying to me when we are going to compete against other clubs [that recruit players at an earlier age].</i>	4	40	Model incentives early recruitment.	Coe. iso.
<i>The strategy has become clearer in terms of recruitment. It has gotten some standards, it has, more work for me in terms of recruitment. One could say that it becomes a gold standard, or that it is our standard on how to do it with recruitment. We spend a lot of time getting to know the player. We can actually say that we recruit from the age of 12. They come in to us, start exercising with us when they are 12 years old and then the process begins for the boy's team. Now we have started recruiting 14-year-olds. We have never done that before. Just here now, we have one player, or two. One who recruited by the club and one that should have been recruited. It pushes us to bring in the best players earlier. If you look at the collaboration out there, all that we have done here has irritated the clubs around.</i>	4	41	Clarity regarding the player logistics process. AC incentivises earlier recruitment Earlier recruitment negatively affects relationship with amateur clubs.	Coe. iso.
<i>Some have indirectly said that we shut down [the academy]. Because it has become so fiercely. And we are in competition with them. There are clubs who have come and said indirectly that 'can you find something else to do' or recruit players when they are 19-20 years old. There are environments that have really fell apart because of us. We have recruited a great deal of players, and then the clubs are punished</i>	4	42	Earlier recruitment negatively affects relationship with amateur clubs.	

<i>because they are good [at talent development]. The clubs seem to think that this may be a bit fierce what we do, that we have gone down to the age of 12. There are collaboration clubs who have thought this has been special, and more specifically, if I come soon, and say that we are going to recruit from the age of eight. Then the alarm bells begin to ring.</i>				
<i>It will be interesting to see how the relationship between the top clubs in our region develops, with greater competition for the biggest talents. We have previously had a fair and gentleman agreement on how we recruit, but there may be conflicts in the future.</i>	5	43	Stronger competition for talents	Res. dep.
<i>We have never picked up players who have been 14 years old before. We get points based on different match arenas. We recruit younger and then we also have to participate in national tournaments (arranged by NTF) at the younger level. We have never participated in tournaments like this before. We have not yet started the football academy for children, but we have initiated a project with the collaboration clubs where we have measures at the younger levels. So that's the stuff that has changed.</i>	5	44	Recruiting earlier to get points in the AC	Res. dep. Coercive isomorf.
<i>I am afraid that it is to clear standards that can point in a direction, such as with school/football, and that you have control over the children in the 6-12 year segment. The latter may cause you to pick them up early and destroy the local club environment. I fear that it may be the way to go for Norwegian football, and I think the overall development of Norwegian football will then be weakened. I believe in a rich Norwegian football, where you have many local clubs that work well in the children's football and take care of many and bring many. I do not believe in an academy model where you pick up players from the age of 6 and drive them as if they are a farmed salmon. I fear that AC can lead clubs in that direction, but at the same time it is about interpretation of the criteria. So yes, there is a danger that AC can lead to standardization of Norwegian football, but it is not necessarily that it must happen because of AC.</i>	7	45	AC incentivises earlier recruitment. This may destroy the local club environment and weaken the development of Norwegian football. AC may lead to standardization.	Res. dep. Coe. iso.
<i>We have changed the way we get talent. We have become much more structured and now we have the coaches who control fixed areas in the district. We are starting to get a network of people who follow players in the close by regions, and we have not been here before. One and two years ago it was random</i>	6	46	More structure, scouting and measures to recruit players.	Res. dep.

<i>how we recruited. [...] Now we are constantly mapping and having them on try-outs and secondments. We have become more cynical in terms of selection.</i>				
<i>We recruit relatively early compared to other clubs. We have something called FFO, where we get players from other clubs so they are not club members. We have our best trainers at the youngest, from 5-6 years. Eventually it is natural that the best players from the immediate area come to our club, then from older ages from slightly distant distances. But we have a policy that we only want to take the 1-2 of the best, we will not take a whole team. But there have been no changes there, except that we've got more systematics on it. Got a little more systematics that everything will go through me before we recruit a player.</i>	2	47	Early recruitment	
<i>The amateur clubs are very glad and pleased with the model we have now. We are not actively trying to recruit players under the age of 15 and 16. Of course, they are glad that we do not recruit their players.</i>	1	48	Late recruitment creates a good relationship with amateur clubs.	??
<i>We have entered into an agreement that we should not pick up players before they are 15 years old. We can have them on secondments 1-3 times a week for example [before that]. We associate relationships with players in the 10-11 years of age, even with players who live very far away. As long as the player continues in his own local environment, but gets a differentiated training through top football action, I think that's okay.</i>	6	49	Agreement with amateur clubs not to recruit before 15 years old.	Res. dep.
<i>It has become tougher to join the academy. We have had to say no to many, we must exclude many. We have had a really tough process on it in winter. There are players who have been here as we have had to say goodbye and said "thank you for the effort". This is a process that is a bit new, probably for many clubs. For example, we have had players who have been in the club for two years and then new players come in to take the place and it's tough to get that kind of a 14-15 year old.</i>	6	50	Harder to get recruited to the academy due to later recruitment	Res. dep.
<i>In December 2017 we recruited 18 players from 9 different clubs in our region. Pretty wide. But from February 2018 we started a sporting forum where I meet with all the SDs in the local clubs once a month, and it has been a very good start because then we can introduce some of the measures we want. In addition,</i>	5	51	Created a sporting forum with local clubs.	Res. dep.

<i>we visit local clubs weekly and then we run extra measures for players who are not good enough for the academy yet.</i>				
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Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
NTF				
<i>Take 'club X', for example, there are rumours that they have managed to classify themselves to four stars, but when I talk to people who work in this club and they say they are not even close to be three stars, then you start to wonder. I'm not saying that it's wrong, but there are questions about these things. Because of this, it might have been nice with a third party. A third party that has no affiliations to anyone.</i>	1	52	Indicates that NTF could be biased in its assessment of some clubs. Involving 3rd party in evaluation process	??
<i>What's interesting for us is that we have two supervisors [with different opinions]. When they were visiting us when we were to be reclassified. [...], those two disagreed on whether we should get two or three stars. One of them is an optimistic type and believes we can get three stars. But, when I talk to the other supervisor straight after, he says he does not think we can do it. [...] This shows me that the criteria set is based very much on discretion, and again, [this may be affected] by knowing the clubs, maybe [the supervisor] has been in the club before - as a player / not playing, knows the coach [...]. Why is it that one supervisor thinks one thing and the other something else? The problem is that when one supervisor says [that we can reach three stars], the management of the club is consuming what he says. Because then it's easy to budget with.</i>	1	53	Inconsistent feedback from NTF. Indicates that NTF could be biased in its assessment of some clubs. Inconsistent feedback leading to financial decisions	??
<i>We were told that we were the club that used NTF the least, but at the same time, I do not feel we have been told that we could use them more. How much could we have used them? Then the information needs to be clearer, where can I get help? Could we have had more club visits? If anyone has used them more than us, why is that? Is it because they want to help them more? [...] In such an important question, with money</i>	1	54	Indicates that NTF could be biased in its assessment of some clubs.	Res. dep.

<i>involved, [...] it should it be the same to everyone, I think.</i>				
<i>I have no opinion about it [if other clubs have been prioritized by NTF]. When they [NTF] say we have been the club that used them least, maybe we haven't used them enough. Maybe we are the problem? Perhaps it is more fun to work with teams that have come the furthest, or maybe they have ties with them.</i>	1	55	Indicates that NTF could be biased in its assessment of some clubs.	Res. dep.
<i>It has not been very much assistance from NTF. It has probably been more a discussion of what we have done and not done, reported and approved or not approved. They have come up with such a temporary report that says "this has to be fixed and that you may want to contact other clubs about what they have done and see their plan or how they screen players". In addition, there have been three to four meetings I have had. But I do not think there has been a lot of help.</i>	4	56	Not much assistance from NTF. NTF recommended the club to learn from other clubs.	Mim. iso.
<i>I feel we will get there where NTF says "this is the right way", and that's something I've asked for too. Can NTF tell what the correct way is or come up with a clear recommendation on what is the best way to develop players. What is the template, and then the club can decide whether to have teams from the age of 6 upwards or whether you are to be faithful to their model and or, like us and also have 16,19, B and A. And if they say that the best model is that you are working with player development from the age of six, twice a week, it's like [...] There should be even clearer guidelines on what's the best way, because I think it would help the clubs to a greater extent, through research and what the best player development environments are doing.</i>	4	57	Should be clearer guidelines from NTF on what is correct.	Mim. iso.
<i>The frequency of meetings between us and NTF has been good. They have been on a couple of club visits and I have met NTF several times since I started working a few months ago. If you want to succeed with AC, I think it is wise that you work in process with NTF and use the skills they have</i>	7	58	Frequent meetings with NTF. Essential for a good result.	
<i>Yes, we did [asked for changes to the criteria set], but you can discuss how important the points are. Should there be more points on</i>	1	59	Disagreement among the NTF and the clubs regarding the	??

<i>productivity, there are probably many that have mentioned that, and it was a topic at La Manga as well. So, how important are the different ten criterions then, in the big picture. Perhaps the points can be divided differently. We reported in some changes, but in general that there was to many criterions. Can the number of criterions be reduced, with the same content?</i>			importance of the criteria, and the amount of criterias. Productivity should valued more.	
<i>Perhaps there should be a clearer role description for this role (HYD). Now the club can choose how this role should look. I think that, with the requirements with the criteria set and with the economy in the picture, but still I do tasks that have nothing to do with it. When I got this role, the club wanted the role to be in charge of all sports development, but development is so much. It is not only the best. Development also include 6-year olds. But is that correct? Is that specialized enough? Or should I have had only responsibility for 15-19, 13-16 or 13-19? What is the optimal? I think that NTF have an opinion on this, but they might not have dared to be clear enough.</i>	1	60	NTF should create role requirements for the role as HYD.	Nor. iso. Res. dep.
<i>We are very pleased [with NTF]. We have a very good relationship with NTF, Olafsen and Dag, and I have friends who work there too. Very nice and helpful. We are very pleased with the follow-up.</i>	2	61	NTF very helpful.	Res. dep.
<i>We fully trust NTF. There are very good people in that system. Very competent, skilled football people, and not least people. So, we have full confidence in them, and I think it's unnecessary to have a third party since it might cost a lot of money. We are very pleased with the way it has been implemented.</i>	2	62	Should not include a third party.	??
<i>I think those who are here and evaluate understand the local context better than if it had been a third party. But those who evaluate are very different as types, and there are also a lot of subjective reviews, I feel, whenever I talk to the others (clubs). That we have been approved for something that we do, and then another club does exactly the same, but they have not been approved. And it may indicate that there is either something about the relationships or that they are not completely synchronous about what is good and bad.</i>	4	63	NTF understands the local context. Indicates that NTF might be biased. Inconsistent feedback from NTF.	

<p><i>AC has been such an unknown phenomenon for Norwegian clubs and I think if you only had an external supervisor who came here and cynically had gone through an evaluation form, I do not think it would give competency in the clubs. I feel rather we've had someone we've been able to discuss with and who has claimed us, but I feel that NTF could spend even longer on the evaluation process.</i></p>	6	64	<p>Evaluator should know the Norwegian context, as NTF do.</p> <p>NTF should have used more time on the evaluation process.</p>	
<p><i>You get a little caught by having to document as much of what you do in your club. You spend a lot of time documenting what you do, instead of working to do things that make the club better. But the NTF process seems to have been good at the reclassification. They have demanded and made clear what they think should be better and be clear about what we are going to work with.</i></p>	7	65	<p>To much bureaucratization.</p> <p>Clear requirements from NTF.</p>	
<p><i>The advantage of a third party is that they come entirely objectively to consider. The advantage of NTF is that they know Norwegian football. Had we had a Norwegian independent third party, who really knew Norwegian football and who had come in and worked on this kind of classification work, maybe that would have been good. But Norway is a small country, and the people who had worked there would also have affiliations and relationships with different environments. The professional environment in NTF and their professionalism I think we should be proud to have in Norway and are pleased to use. So I'm positive that NTF has owned that process.</i></p>	7	66	<p>Evaluator should know the Norwegian context, as NTF do.</p> <p>Not the best solution, but the best solution available.</p>	Res. dep.
<p><i>I am quite clear that I have a lot of confidence in NTF, but we are a small country. We are a small elite football community. Many people know each other. I think part of the assessment will be characterized and stained by having the same supervisor as the sensor. I assume they have good processes on how to evaluate the different criteria in the clubs, but I think it would be far more lucky if we had an external company that has gone through and censored. It seems like it is very much up to personal discretion.</i></p>	5	67	<p>Indicates that the evaluation could be biased</p> <p>Subjective discretion of criterias.</p> <p>Want third party involvement</p>	Res. dep.
<p><i>I think that the Scandinavian community is a bit different from the rest of Europe. I think that you must know the Norwegian context [to evaluate it]. So I think it's hard for a non-Scandinavian to go in and evaluate in the clubs. Above all, in</i></p>		68	<p>Third party evaluator would not work.</p>	

<i>the clubs from a smaller population. To understand cooperation models, the geographical distances. I think that big city clubs can be measured fairly similar [to European clubs], with the same conditions, but [not the small clubs]. Therefore, I think it's good that there is one who knows the Norwegian context.</i>				
<i>I think youth players in Norway see that if you come early into an academy system then you have a greater chance of success than if you wait too long in local clubs. That's where I think the distance between the academy and the amateur clubs must be less, or at least not bigger. So quality work in amateur clubs is incredibly important to be followed up by NFF.</i>	6	69	More focus from NFF on quality work in amateur clubs.	
<i>We have been rewarded for the things we have, and follow-up has been good. They have been a fine and objective party. NTF is not an opponent, they are part of us. There have been discussions about the weighting of the criteria and criteria set [...], but they have taken it up in plenary and handled it well.</i>	8	70	NTF reasonable and objective.	

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
HYD, work done				
<i>It was me and a coach, who has been in the club as a coach for many years, who worked on the AC. I wanted to bring him, because it's nice to be two. We had to start right from the start. There was not a plan here. Not a sports plan, not a strategy plan. It was nothing. [...] We had gatherings with many in the club - coaches, players and everything. [...] We worked a lot. What we got done in the few months, I think really was very, very good, since there is much else that should be done too. It was me and a coach who did the most. Then the sporting director, MD and board were involved in something, in addition to bringing with us the ones we felt we should have with us.</i>	1	71	The HYD and a coach did most of the job. Included those that needed to be included.	??
<i>My task must be on sports, and what's happening on the field and what's going on in</i>	4	72	HYD role changed	Nor. iso.

<p><i>the trainings, what's happening on matches, have the overall control over what's going on. Like now, I have agreed to put in place appointments with schools. I have to attend meetings to find time for a meeting. You have a meeting to have a meeting and to schedule the next meeting. There is a lot that I do that I don't want to do. One is the reporting four times a year now. Now we had the reporting on March 1st. It wasn't very cool to use a couple of days to check if everything was OK, although NTF only thinks it's a couple of hours of work. And then it's not that we need to retrieve information here and there, but we need to update, because we cannot send what we sent last time. We need to adapt to the system quite a lot when compared to how we work, for example, we need to have player talks four times a year, just before the submission, maybe two weeks before we are sure that we will have it in a box, but we would also like to have game talks three times a year.</i></p>			<p>A lot of work.</p>	
<p><i>First of all, we have initiated many processes. We have had weekly meetings with the entire academy where every trainer has participated, as well as Fysio and various others. Seated in groups and worked with plans and discussed. We have had technical-hearted meetings in overall areas. We have had many good discussions. I have been in the board and talked about it. We have addressed it on Monday-meetings with the administration. It is very well anchored. Although the academy has worked very well with this, the whole club has been involved and has been familiar with it. Then the job has been done by coaches and the leaders in the academy.</i></p>	2	73	<p>Job done by coaches and HYD, but the whole club involved.</p>	??
<p><i>We have had joint meetings with the entire club, the first team, the entire academy and the administration have participated. There we have gone through the entire system and presented the curriculum. So, although not everyone has worked with it, everyone has seen the work and been involved. From the board and down. We have also had a joint meeting with all the age groups, and with the parents of all the age groups in the academy.</i></p>	2	74	<p>Job done by coaches and HYD, but the whole club involved.</p>	??

<i>It was one of the coaches who led the club process. Then we have looked at the various ten areas. It has been a bit like we have taken it area for area. On player logistics we have had with people from the first team and myself. Regarding the planning and training process, I worked with the training staff at the academy, and they worked very intensively with it. For three years we have had weekly meetings, where we have discussed subjects, and a monthly meeting where we have been in 5-6 hours. So it has been a big process. There have been different groupings in different areas.</i>	3	75	Coaches in the academy and HYD did the work. Started before the AC.	
<i>As the HYD, I am the one who ran the whole process. Then this is a fairly big organization, which means that you need some help, but mostly I and a couple of who have worked with it. Then there are certain areas that I have had help with.</i>	3	76	HYD and a couple of coaches did most of the work.	
<i>The timing of the AC was not ideal for our part, and it became a project initiated by me and driven by me and through active engagement the board, we also attracted the management of the club and eventually the MD and sports director so that we got the AC process into the path we want.</i>	5	77	HYD did most of the work	
<i>The AC has been my project. I have worked extremely hard to connect other people, creating an securing of commitment both in the board and in the club. It would not have been possible to get started with the process without me being the main engine and making sure things have been done in the right order. Big or small club, everyone is busy with their jobs and this is a project that comes a little bit on top of the daily task too, so it has required that you invested a lot of extra time outside of your core tasks.</i>	5	78	HYD did most of the work. Creating a securing of commitment with stakeholders	
<i>The HYDs job has become more like a system monitor, a person who is less active on the pitch, more behind the desk, works hard with sports plan, works hard with cooperation agreements and economics.</i>	5	79	AC has changed the role of the HYD to work more administratively.	Org. change Nor. iso.
<i>There has been a relatively large replacement of HYDs in 2017. I think there are many who have thought that it has been a tough process and many may have set too high goals that are tough to achieve. Another reason may be that</i>	5	80	Change in recruitment processes of HYDs	Org. change

<p><i>there are many ex-players or coaches who (due to a long time in the club or moved away from the first team) have switched to the HYD role and finding themselves in a unfamiliar landscape. Perhaps they have less academic background, maybe they are more in need of being on the pitch and less need to be behind the desk. I think the AC will lead to a greater emphasis on academic competence in future recruitments of HYD in top clubs.</i></p>			<p>More need of academic competence</p>	<p>Nor. iso.</p>
<p><i>That process started by me doing everything. But then I have invited to meetings. I have delegated, okey, "you do this, you have to put it in here", and so I've really taken care of the whole, but I've also carried out almost all of what has been delivered, while the coaches have to show that it is being done. They have to show training plans, game profiles, mapping. I've made the template for how it should be, and they fill it out and deliver it to me. In order to initiate processes, I have used the MD, chairman and other people, but in some way, they have been pushing them to stay away from me, because I have had it alone.</i></p>	<p>4</p>	<p>81</p>	<p>A lot of work done by HYD.</p> <p>Other people involved were it has been necessary</p>	<p>Nor. iso.</p>
<p><i>There are 10 areas that you know and there are some things that are important, and then there are some things that should have gone outside the academy, because it is a tool for the academy, but it could also have been raised up a level, to the board, on some of the areas. You have the club policy anchoring that's one thing, but there are several of the other wheels that could be under there, such as player logistics, that it's the club that controls it to a greater extent than being the sports director, head coach or I, who controls how it should be. It's extremely much work to get started with it (AC).</i></p>	<p>4</p>	<p>82</p>	<p>MD, board and first team should be more involved.</p> <p>HYD not power to make all the required changes.</p>	
<p><i>I connected the MD and SD, and then they have delegated it to me and said that you own this process (AC) here and you do what you think is right for the club. We are a small organization with very high confidence in each other and perhaps one of this clubs' success factors is that you have defined working areas which means that we are very little in working day to each other, other than when things get across the different parts of the club. Ideally, I wish that the MD would be a much bigger driver for this process.</i></p>	<p>5</p>	<p>83</p>	<p>All responsibility of the AC delegated to the HYD.</p> <p>MD should be more involved</p>	

<i>For me these changes have given me a tremendous competence towards football, especially in terms of how football was in 80-90s.</i>	6	84	AC has led to increase in competence level for HYD	
<i>I held the whole process for the club. We started very wide. And then we assembled a large group internally in the club with all coaches and managers. Then we started making a new sports and strategy plan and we defined a strategy to achieve our goals. In the first three months there was a large group meeting every other week. And then there were 2-3 people who began to design a new sport and strategy plan that we got anchored in the board in the summer of 2017.</i>	6	85	Workload divided by many people.	
<i>I want to say that the academy has become more formalized. First and foremost, we make clearer responsibility and role distribution, ie who does what, who is responsible for what. We have established several communication platforms, technical hearts between the first team and academy, and a technical heart between academy and the children's and welfare department. The same applies to cooperation agreements between the football circuit and the club. And then we have regular communication sites that make us both more efficient and you avoid the random flow of information so that your everyday job becomes easier as a developer when you have regular locations where you can communicate about different things, whether it's on sports, or administration, or economics, or anything.</i>	6	86	AC leads to more structures and clearer roles for those in the academy. Everyday job becomes clearer and easier.	Nor. iso.
<i>When we work with AC, we try to bring everyone along, and everyone comes in with input to the different areas so we can use the expertise of the different people. Then it's the coach developer and I who have held it and collect it and delivered. With the classification work further now, in the future, there will be a working group that has the main responsibility for that bit, so we associate the various coaches in the club who are good at this.</i>	7	87	Several people involved with the work with AC. Clear strategy for the future work with AC.	
<i>We have put in place some guidelines and got things more in system. Sports plan and everything like that. We have got a lot more systematics on things. Then we have got new guidelines on e.g. player talks, liquidation of</i>	2	88	AC leads to clearer guidelines and systematizations	??

<i>players, when parents are going to join, etc. There are little things then.</i>				
<i>We introduced joint meetings with every coach every two weeks, taking stock of teams, players, tournaments, player logistics, and various themes. [...] The coaches have gathered once a week where they have discussed the curriculum and exercises. It comes as a result of the AC.</i>	2	89	AC has led to more gatherings and discussions.	??
<i>It may be a little too much time for system, documentation and work around the AC, compared to being able to sit down to talk with coaches and players and discuss with them and be the middle person. But all in all, it's about getting the basics in place. It's better to spend extra time on AC now, so you have a stronger foundation that the club can stand on, then spend more time on interpersonal things. I think that's a great way to do it. AC has taken a lot of space in the last five months, but I think that investment is worth it in the long run.</i>	7	90	To much bureaucratization. AC creates a lot of work now, but it is an investment in the future.	
<i>I think only that will first and foremost lead to even more systematization, procedures and guidelines, which hopefully will make everyday life easier. Now we are still there to embark or begin to follow the guidelines we prepared last year. That requires a lot. In the long run, we hope this will go a little better.</i>	2	91	A lot of work now, but that will be favourable in the future.	
<i>My responsibility was to make sure it got started and to finish it. [...] I was the main responsible. So, in such a process, there are more people involved along the way, but I was responsible for anchoring it on the board, making sure that they had an ambition for this and that they had to set aside the resources.</i>	8	92	HYD responsible and did the most of the work, but others involved.	

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
Finance				
<i>I think the club now sees the value of doing it, but they have done it a bit because they must. We have a chairman who in a way sits there saying we just must do it. I cannot mean</i>	1	93	AC presents a financial challenge.	Org. change

<p><i>something about what the consequences will be of it or not. They have afforded it. They think it should work. This club is in a slightly different situation today than it was three/four years ago, they have not had a chance at this then. But that is the case, even though we are in control of the economy, there is no good economy. [...] So, yes [it is a financial challenge].</i></p>				
<p><i>With the old model, [...] were you got money based on what you reported, there was a lot of cheating and nonsense. [...] When clubs submitted the documentation, they even reported players as coaches [...] everybody did it to get the most money. And people who were not A-license coaches were reported as player developers, so they would get more money.</i></p>	4	94	The old model led to cheating.	Res. dep.
<p><i>I think it's a little tricking and fixing with these employees, how they work out those roles they should have. We have a U16 coach who is a U16 coach, and has it as a job. He has no other tasks. But if there are other clubs that have a U16 coach with lots of other tasks, it gives just as many points, but I would think our coach is spending more time on the players. [...] I mean, for our part, getting a full-time physiotherapist who works at 13-19 [would be valuable], but it does not matter. But we can call it an assistant trainer on the U13. This is where I think, or I know [clubs cheat], we've been careful about it, but this is a grey area, how much can they [NTF] check? Now we have 50% position on U13, we could have had a one and a half position there, main coach 50%, an assistant 100%, we could do it, made that role, and in reality he would be a physical exerciser. It's not hard to do that. Just to get points. It is ridiculous that the system is such.</i></p>	1	95	Continued cheating with the new model regarding the reporting of employees.	Res. dep.
<p><i>It is perfectly fine that there is a skew distribution. Those who focus on development, I think they should get that money, while those who really do not care so much should not get the development money. Some of the best environments cheat like hell now. It is so annoying when you see what is reported, and then you go to the website of some clubs and see that he is going to be a coach, but [in reality] he is a physical coach of the first team. Such things destroy the credibility of the system. It must be a hard-tempered regime. People react</i></p>	4	96	Preferable with the new incentive model. Continued cheating with the new model.	Res. dep.

<i>to clubs reporting incorrectly. But that it is a distribution that is not even [between the clubs] I think that is quite reasonable.</i>				
<i>We are certainly better off with this model. We think it's positive.</i>	2	97	The incentive based model is favorable.	Res. dep.
<i>We were only interested in the process itself [and not the financial part of it]. We put the academy very high. So, it was first and foremost just being part of this. This has been done abroad, so we saw the value of going through the same. Then it's a bonus for us with the distribution model, since we have scored high. But there was no trigger factor. We believe ourselves that we are the best academy in Norway, and only that in itself is an impetus for us. "We want to make the best possible".</i>	2	98	The financial incentives are not a driving force.	Res. dep.
<i>This is always a discussion [incentive-based model]. But I think those clubs who invest more should also get more money. So I think it's getting fairer. So it is important that you are objective with the assessment. It is not easy to compare clubs with different prerequisites. It's quite a lot of money, so maybe it should not be that big difference, but it should be a difference. In Sweden, there is no difference between those who score the most, versus those who score lower. But I think it stimulates to invest, and it has paid off for us since we've got more positions to get that level.</i>	3	99	Those who invest in talent development should receive most funding. This stimulates to invest.	Res. dep.
<i>If you have people in place then the other points of the criteria will automatically be fulfilled, I think this is positive. It makes it easier for me as a HYD to motivate the board to hire a full-time coach on the team, or hire a physical coach, as it causes us to get 10 points more on that part, which gets us to a higher level and more money.</i>	3	100	Financial incentives motivates the board	
<i>We have not invested anything to participate. [...]My role has almost exclusively been about the AC. So, you can say one year's work. I've gone away from the field, I've worked in meetings and got the structures in place.</i>	4	101	AC costs a full time position.	
<i>There is a financial risk to participate in the AC. The smallest clubs budget with small-scale development resources to get people at work, and if you do not get that status [you have</i>	6	102	AC a financial risk.	Res. dep.

<i>budgeted with] you lose money, and that means people lose their jobs. Then there is a risk in everyday life for those who work here. [...] Smaller clubs have far fewer people to use.</i>			Positions dependent on the results in AC.	
<i>If we had gotten stars without it having any financial significance, I do not think it has had the same impact as it has had. I think the economic gain is an important reason why we have got our finger off and started working on it.</i>	7	103	Financial incentives have been essential for change having been made.	Res. dep.
<i>The money means something, but it means most to us that we are among the best [on talent development]. [...] Had there been an even distribution of money, then the clubs have not worked as hard to get better.</i>	8	104	Money not the driving factor. Money increases clubs focus and investment	
<i>Many of the clubs have fooled themselves a bit. Many have had combination positions where there has not been much work on development. Now you must document and have people on it [talent development].</i>	8	105	This model forces clubs to prioritize.	
<i>It is clear that if you do not get things up, if you cannot get more stars, then it will affect the economy [and the number of employees], because you get less money from NTF.</i>	1	106	Positions in the club depend on the results of the AC.	Nor. iso.
<i>The [AC] is a direct reason why we have more [employees] now. We had 2 or 2.5 full-time employees before the AC, now we have 6. So, we have prepared ourselves for three-stars because we want to get there. The sole reason for this is the AC. Had never happened without it.</i>	1	107	AC has led to more employees. More targeted, but because of?	Nor. iso.
<i>First and foremost, we have hired a coach developer.</i>	2	108	AC lead to hiring of coach developer.	Nor. iso.
<i>Since we are not the biggest club, it means that the money we receive means quite a bit and we clearly have an ambition to maintain the development work in the club and in order to manage it, we must have access to more money and therefore it is an important thing to reach that level as quickly as possible. It may not be the best motivation, but we should succeed in the development work that we have started, and</i>	6	109	Rapid organisational change due to money. Finance an important for the investment in talent development	

<i>to hang out with the foremost in Norway, we must only have that focus.</i>				
<i>We have previously had a large number of part-time employees who have been forced to quit because of the employment of full-time employees. Firstly, this is something that is very positive for our club, but it comes in the context of extra paid funds from NTF. We have previously been organized in such a way that we have received minimal funding from NTF, because we have previously focused on limiting costs by having many small positions. Now we notice that through full-time employees we get a higher quality of work internally in the club and that we can also contribute to a greater extent in the local areas around the club. This had not been possible with part-time employees.</i>	5	110	<p>Previous organization structure has led to poor funding</p> <p>More full-time employees</p> <p>More quality in the work internally and externally</p>	<p>Org. change</p> <p>Normative iso.</p>
<i>We have gotten full-time employees on the U14 and U16 teams [because of AC].</i>	8	111	More full-time employees	
<i>It really did not change that much [AC]. Perhaps we have worked more together and towards the same direction and have grown significantly. We grow every year with 1-2 full-time employees. That is probably the biggest difference. But we have not changed a working method. Because of AC, more employees have been demanded, which has meant that we have gained more continuity. Previously we had several part-time and fewer full-time. Part-time employees have often disappeared after 1-2 years since they have been offered full-time jobs elsewhere. Now we manage to keep these. If we do this for a couple of years, I think we can get better results.</i>	3	112	<p>AC haven't had much influence.</p> <p>AC lead to more continuity through full time employees.</p>	
<i>I think it's right that clubs that focus on talent development get paid what they invest, but I think clubs have different starting points. I think it's wrong for us to compare ourselves with bigger clubs because we're in a completely different context. There is a completely different recruitment basis and a completely different level in the big clubs. We must find a balance where we find our way in the criteria set where we get reimbursement for investments. It cannot be like that we are sitting with nine full-time employees only for the sake of having nine full-time employees, it would in my opinion have</i>	5	113	Clubs have different prerequisites	Res. dep.

<i>been far too many people for too few tasks, because we have a small structure with only three academy teams and no grassroots-department. I think it's good with incentives, but it's about finding yourself in the AC.</i>				
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Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
Player specific				
<i>I think they [the players] notice in particular that we put much more demands on them. But it may be the case with reporting among themselves, and using ERP systems, apps, and such things. They think much more than before and they must report on their current state daily. [...] There are more prepared trainings, there is more of a plan to it and more use of video. I'm pretty sure the players have noticed a difference.</i>	1	114	More structure in the players daily life. More information for players.	Org. change
<i>The training process has become more clear. There is a clearer framework ... "Okay, that's the way we train." Much more targeted training. We have a plan with learning objectives and what to do. That's probably what they notice.</i>	4	115	Players notice more systematization in in everyday life.	Norm.iso.
<i>I hope that there have been better trainings and quality in feedback.</i>	6	116	More structured trainings and content, and quality in individual feedback	Norm. iso.
<i>They feel more closely followed up. They feel they have closer relationships with the coaches. They are part of a system where things happen. I think so.</i>	7	117	Players notice a closer follow-up.	
<i>I do not think the word "AC" will say anything to the players, but what players have noticed is that through new digital tools, we have a greater monitoring of the training process, we have more individual follow-up and more video analysis. They have got better educated coaches on the pitch. There is a greater resource allocation, we have increased our budget from 2m last year to 3.5m this year. This is felt in terms of more staffing and thereby presence in the field, as well as the</i>	5	118	Greater quality in the talent development More professionalized (planning, execution)	Norm. Iso.

<i>planning process has improved so as to ensure well thought-out training sessions. There is no doubt that the training environment is better now than it was before.</i>				
<i>The players notice a difference in the closer dialogue with the coaches and that everyone is seen and heard. We train 1-2 times a week more than before, with greater variety. They also have to fill out different game forms where they must reflect and make up some thoughts about how and why things are related. I think that has developed us.</i>	8	119	More training with closer follow-up and self reflection.	

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
<i>Amateur clubs</i>				
<i>I would say that the relationship with the amateur clubs are better, and much of the reason is the coach development program, and the cooperation program. They have got an eye on the work we do, with the curriculum for example. We want to use our expertise and we received very positive feedback on that job. They think better about us, they do not just think we recruit players randomly, but we actually have something to contribute.</i>	2	120	Better relationship with amateur clubs.	
<i>We have now entered a new management, so it's hard to say whether it's because of AC, but we have gone from being a club that bought expensive and sold cheaply, to actually work more locally, in the region and more on our own club. Some of it may be AC, but it may have happened because of the management as well. So it's hard to say. New first team coach and MD. So it's hard to say if the same thing would have happened without AC. I think it could be the same direction, but it might have reinforced something.</i>	3	121	AC have reinforced their work with amateur clubs.	
<i>We started in January last year to get dialogue. Since then, we have invested more resources towards this year where we will be working on action against the clubs. So I feel positive. Then it is clear that the best players will always come to us, we know. It's about getting the smaller clubs on it too. So we must have a good dialogue</i>	3	122	More measures in amateur clubs.	

<i>and good timing. It is important to have a good dialogue with the clubs. This also applies to relationships.</i>				
<i>Cooperation with the local clubs has affected the most. Collaboration models and the training process, as we have gained more systematics.</i>	4	123	Cooperation models and training process most affected.	
<i>We need to have a forum where we talk about the processes that take place, so it does not feel like it's just a top club that just transfer players relentlessly and at their own wishes.</i>	5	124	Involving amateur clubs	Norm. Iso.
<i>AC can result in a boost for the top clubs and their academies, but we must be careful that we do not distance ourselves from amateur football in Norway. When we become more professional, more structured and with more people in full time, it becomes a bit more like business. So I often signal that we must try to ensure good communication and dialogue so that the AC is not going to be scary and dangerous for the amateur department or for the amateur clubs around us.</i>	6	125	AC may create distance between PFCs and amateur clubs	Res. dep.
<i>We have more actions in the amateur clubs, but it really comes a little beyond the classification. We have more player and coach development efforts.</i>	6	126	More work in amateur clubs, but not due to the AC.	
<i>There has been a slight change in our relationship with the amateur clubs. We primarily have a more systematic relationship now than before. We have more meetings and gatherings, and various measures. They look at us as a more professional club than they did before. I think we have a pretty good relationship now and that they appreciate much of what we do. We are out locally to run sessions and follow up players, train coaches and invite them to matches and invite them to seminars and the kind of things. So I think the relationship has improved.</i>	6	127	More contact with amateur clubs, and the relationship has improved.	Res. dep.
<i>The difference between elite and amateur is getting bigger if people choose not to emphasize on "collaborative models". If you want to emphasize "collaboration models" and it benefit the amateur clubs, I think we can create very good ties between the elite and amateur clubs.</i>	7	128	Emphasize collaboration models with amateur clubs	Res. dep.

<i>I think it's dangerous to distinguish the elite football from the amateur football and think we'll have a run for each of them in Norway. Because, it's so extremely much interest, so much will, so much diligence, so much volunteering, so lots of people who want to contribute around the football in different roles, found in the amateur football. We would not have had these with us if we were to emphasize elite football above all. I think we must integrate, create a common interest and a "go", which lifts the entirety of Norwegian football. So it will be up to us to create good enough sessions locally so that they get good follow-up when they are 8.9, 10 years.</i>	7	129	Include amateur football, not separate away from it.	Res. dep.
<i>We feel we are in a position where the local clubs feel a greater pride in being able to produce and deliver youth players to our club. I think that's the way to go, you have to give and take. Until now we have taken the most, but now it's a bit of our job (the resources we have gained) to give back. It will give us better reputation, better maneuverability in the local community and closer to training processes in the local clubs.</i>	5	130	More insight in the development process in grassroots clubs.	Coe. iso.
<i>In 2018, we are trying to create a greater understanding and insight by having a open door policy where we show what we do, so that it does not get mystified or that there is a big difference between the top and the local clubs. But it's a natural process that grassroots clubs work grassroots and elite clubs work with the elite. The grassroots clubs cannot handle absolutely every aspect of talent development and it has been a difficult thing to talk about because most grassroots clubs believe they are 100% right in everything they do.</i>	5	131	Want to create a understanding that elite club work with elite and grassroots clubs work with grassroots. Shift in Norwegian talent development?	Coe. iso.

Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
Criteria set and standardization				
<i>They must do something about it, I feel, but I really think they have realized it.</i>	1	132	They must give points for special competences	Nor. iso.

<p><i>We want more points on productivity, and maybe more on the training process. Now I feel that the heavy plans, i.e. the curriculum, strategy and sports plan, should be underlying, and tone them down now. Or actually give more points to what is actually important, it's [what happens] on the field. How do we work with individuals, productivity - which is an important factor were the clubs must prioritize individual players in the first team context. I think it's exciting, what I think is most exciting is that this, the AC, affects the first team as much as it does. It really affects a lot of it.</i></p>	1	133	<p>Documents are less important than productivity and the training process, weighting of criteria should reflect this at the next classification.</p>	??
<p><i>Yes [Norwegian talent development is becoming standardized], the criterion set wishes everything into a booth, I think so. But at the same time, it covers quite big subjects. So, you can say yes and no, but I feel within the criteria set you can be unique anyway. So, I do not feel there is any obstacle, but you get dragged into something you might not have done. I think that just to get some points we need to do some things we wouldn't have done by ourselves. But on the whole, I think it's possible [for the clubs] to go their own ways.</i></p>	1	134	<p>Some parts of Norwegian talent development is becoming standardized.</p> <p>Possible for clubs to be unique within criterions. .</p>	Coe. iso.
<p><i>We were a little afraid, not afraid, but we and other clubs discussed if this would lead the clubs to becoming standardized and if we managed to keep the clubs' peculiarity. We questioned this in the beginning, but we see that the AC has managed [to avoid] it.</i></p>	2	135	<p>Won't lead to standardization.</p>	??
<p><i>We have school/football bit, and very high on productivity. We get up many players through our system. RBK/ODD scores higher on collaborative models in the circuit. It captures our peculiarities - through the ten other areas. Then one could have wanted more [...] you could take even more consideration to identity. But it must be a set of criteria that should apply to everyone, so it's impossible to get down to every club's level.</i></p>	2	136	<p>There will have inequalities, but the clubs will be similar in several areas.</p>	Coe. iso.
<p><i>We are really pleased [with the criterias]. We think they [NTF] have done a good job. We know that there is a lot of work behind</i></p>	2	137	<p>Criterion set very good.</p>	Coe. iso.

<i>the criterion set and that they have been through a lot of discussion and that the methods they have used have been carefully evaluated. So we are really very pleased.</i>				
<i>We gave feedback that we think productivity should be weighted more, since it is the end product of player development. That's our purpose. In addition, we think there is no need for a criterion of joint cafeteria for the academy and first team. Also, regarding the age composition at the first team. It's a lot about identity. We want very many young players, while others may think they should have a little more of older players.</i>	2	138	Productivity should be valued more. Age composition of the first team is contradictory for different clubs	Coe. iso.
<i>For our part, it [special competences] could very well have been weighed more. We think continuity should have been weighed more, and maybe not so rigid on the number of positions, and look a little more on context.</i>	2	139	Special competences and continuity should have been included.	Nor. iso.
<i>We have a pretty big group on each training group, but now we may be talking about getting more specialists. We are really satisfied with the coaches and their qualities, but if we grow more, we may need recruit specialists within physical, mentality, etc. instead of coaches.</i>	3	140	Special competences the focus area. Should be valued.	Nor. iso.
<i>I do not think we need more football coaches. [...] We have good training methods on football, but we have little training methodology for injuries, and reversal and strain problems after injuries. When you start with these things [AC], then the total load increases, and then the chance of injuries increases. Especially in puberty time, where there may be almost three to four years difference in growth.</i>	8	141	Should be more of field focus – special competences	
<i>The system does not pick up coach density. Number of coaches per player. It says that you should have 5 trainers on X teams, but it does not take into account how many players you have. The system does not catch this. I think productivity should be higher, since this is the end product. You can have a very good plan, but you will not get any players. I also think that productivity, including the last 3 years only, in principle, we should really put all the money from 16 upwards and recruit the best players to get</i>	3	142	Coach density should be valued. Productivity should be valued more. AC doesn't measure anything other than plans. Could be better served with a third party.	

<p><i>points. Then we do not take responsibility for further down. Here is a shortcoming. The training process really measures only the plan, and that doesn't really matter. It's just about having someone who is good at writing, but the content can only be copied. What's going on in the field is important, but this is difficult since you need to follow up. Here I feel that it can be improved. So it is difficult to compare the big city clubs with completely different prerequisites, compared to a club like Songdal or Tromsø, where people move in and come in later. It is difficult to equate the criteria, since the conditions are so different in Norway. This was also a discussion when we started, if you had an external party on this.</i></p>				
<p><i>We discussed this, Physiotherapist, for example, is an important part. When you reach the end of puberty, 15-16 up to 19 years old. It is clear that you should get some points if you have a good medical team. It does not matter much if you are watching a U14 or U16 training, compared to a big club in Europe in terms of content, coach density, etc. What separates us [from European clubs] is when the players leave the pitch. It is a big difference there. On the physical team, injuries etc. There they [European clubs] are a lot further ahead.</i></p>	3	143	Special competences should be valued, that's what separates Norway from European clubs.	Nor. iso.
<p><i>The danger of the AC is that Norwegian football is standardized, that the clubs work equally. I think there might be a danger if this becomes too similar. Because everybody looks different and has different approaches. This could be the danger. If there are too many documents and everything becomes very similar. If you create an equal match-platform. So one should have an open input to this.</i></p>	3	144	Fear that Norwegian football will be standardized.	
<p><i>It pushes you in one direction, but at the same time it may be that weighting within the various parameters should be adjusted. Our club has only a boy's team, junior team, b and a. We influence the children's football. We have a person who only works with collaboration clubs, with 6-7-8-year olds. Say that he is in a club in week 1, he is not back there until in week 5. The work we do</i></p>	4	145	More standardization. Should have adjusted the weighting of criterias.	Coe. iso.

<i>cannot count as much as some other clubs does, for example, with 6 and 7 year olds. Therefore, there must be such weighting here. And then there are some little things you're wondering what the point of it really is, "why do I have to do this". So generally, it is a good thing that there has been created a framework that sets guidelines. What's scary is that it pushes the clubs in one direction.</i>				
<i>The criteria set does not take into account the local context here. They say they should take into account the local context [but it doesn't], and then we are pushed in one direction, a direction that they [NTF] mean is the best direction, but for us, maybe it would be more sensible to have a medical department, or that we have a full-time mental trainer [...] or that we perform visual training and have opticians in for example and are rewarded for it, but it does not matter in the criteria set. If I want to have a social worker, which I think is an extremely important thing, to follow up 14-15-year-olds up to the first team and make sure they are comfortable at home or to teach them to live alone, but we will not get reward for it. That is also a part of the professionalization. When we do not get rewarded for having those persons employed, it will also be difficult to spend money on it.</i>	4	146	AC does not reward special competences Criteria set steer the club.	Coe. iso. Nor. iso.
<i>We will build the club further, regardless of the criteria set. We go for what we want to get in place, which we think is important, we will not only follow the criteria set.</i>	4	147	The criteria set does not control the club's priorities.	
<i>We have long had a policy on how to recruit players or what we are looking for, so we have taken a grip lately, where we have fewer players in the club and more in the local community around. But it is not as a consequence of AC, it is something that was initiated before the process.</i>	7	148	The criterion in AC does not control the club.	Res. dep.
<i>We have not felt any pressure to sign up for the AC, but I think the criteria set is more demanding for smaller clubs than for big clubs because smaller clubs have far fewer resources, poorer finances and so we sign</i>	6	149	AC criteria's more demanding for smaller clubs.	

<i>and then we compete against big clubs that have far more employees.</i>				
<i>At the next round we want to hire physical trainers in the academy. We want competence in the mental bit, not necessarily full-time, but we have access to it.</i>	6	150	Special competences should be valued	
<i>I have been a bit frustrated when it comes to the work of the whole AC, because within the 10 areas of AC, the people who work in the club do not show in the report.</i>	7	151	AC doesn't measure who is employed	Nor. iso.
<i>You will find the number of coaches, the education they have, how long they have worked here, but not "who" work in the club. It's incredibly difficult to measure, and maybe therefore they do not. But having an area that says something about the people, who they are and who work with the players?</i>	7	152	AC doesn't measure who is employed	Nor. iso.
<i>I think our club has been fortunate and capable of acquiring quite good people for several years. So, even though we have had poor structure, planning, system of development and poor system of individual follow-up, we have had many talented persons in the club who have been good at seeing each player. This may not be caught well in AC.</i>	7	153	AC doesn't measure the skill of people.	Nor. iso.
<i>We really think the weighting has been quite straightforward. It is certainly something that may have been discussed, but most of it is included. Some of the criteria, such as the canteen, are unimportant.</i>	8	154	The criterias covers the most important aspects. Some unimportant criterias.	
<i>I think you can be very unique about how to organize school/football, the collaboration models - especially from 6-14, the teamwork between the region/top club 12-16 years, how to work with individual follow-up in the training process, unique through the plan, which game model is it that you have? the training methodology emphasized most? What mentality program is run in the club? What physical aspects are emphasized in the club? What culture do you want? What are the rules that apply? What values, vision apply? Here you can stand out to create your own identity within the framework that</i>	7	155	AC sets standards for Norwegian football, and this is good. Still possible to be "unique" within the framework of AC.	Nor. iso.

<i>AC provides. To me, AC is the frame, so it's up to every club to paint its picture. I will be able to paint the picture for our club very differently compared to other clubs, but within the same framework. I think it is very advantageous that we have the same framework to relate to Norwegian football.</i>				
<i>We have school/football bit, and very high on productivity. We get up many players through our system. RBK/ODD scores higher on collaborative models in the circuit. It captures our peculiarities - through the ten other areas. Then one could have wanted more [...] you could take even more consideration to identity. But it must be a set of criteria that should apply to everyone, so it's impossible to get down to every club's level.</i>	2	156	There will be inequalities, but the clubs will be similar in several areas.	Coe. iso.
<i>What I think is most exciting is that this, the AC, affects the first team as much as it does. It really affects a lot of it. [...] I think that is very positive. If one is ready to take this up further, it must hang together. So, I think it's good that it does. Now one has to say something about the squad, local players, say something about the bridge to the first team, and those things would not have been possible if the first team were not affected. [...] I think it's the most important.</i>	1	157	The first team is influenced by AC. A clearer plan on the way to the first team for players.	??
<i>I think we will get better at player development. More clubs become aware of what is international standard. I think more people will be aware of the international standard of planning, the training process, the training forces - how good should they be and what should they focus on? I think we will also get a lot out of it organisationally, that the clubs will be similar. The academy will have a bigger part in the Norwegian clubs. It does not matter what academy you are a part of. If you are part of a 3-star academy, then it's not very organizationally big difference in which club you are in.</i>	7	158	Professionalization of clubs. More standardization through similar organizational structure in the clubs.	
<i>We choose our method, while others choose their method. If you want to copy others, you can do it, but we stand for our model - that people will be out in the local club environments for as long as possible, and</i>	8	159	Clubs chose freely.	

<i>then they will train with us when it is natural.</i>				
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Significant Statements	Tr. No	St. No.	Formulated meanings	Theory
MD, board and HYD				
<i>The problem is there are managing directors (MD) approving this to be implemented, and perhaps not seeing the consequence of it. [...] But I do not think there was enough information on the extent of it, because it affects the economy here. You are budgeting with some numbers, and how much did they really know about this? Here we have budgeted with the figures we have obtained from NTF before, [because he think that] we can manage to get that, right, but did they [the MDs] possess sufficient enough of information to take that decision. Surely not. And then it is dropped down on us [the HYDs]. Yes, we have budgeted the same, but we do not know how many stars that is equivalent to. It was a bit like that with the information. The initial phase could be clearer, where it should have been assured that everyone really knew what this is, and what it gives you financially. Economy is important in the clubs, right, [previously] we have received 1.5 million a year, to cover positions, so we expect the same from this scheme. You think like that – if you do not completely follow the meetings and just “tick” off, thinking that this is probably fine. But, maybe those people [MD] have insufficient knowledge about how Stabæk does it, Bodø/Glimt does it, we do it, they just see that we often get a few players on the first-team. So, it is not sure that was the right place to start. I would've liked to have more of both sporting director (SD) and MD at La Manga, for example, last year. There, it was only me and another coach. While it is actually the club, which</i>	1		<p>Insufficient information in advance.</p> <p>Too few parties involved in the different stages in the initial process.</p> <p>MD insufficient knowledge to take the decision to participate in the AC.</p> <p>HYD not power to make all the required changes.</p> <p>Economic uncertainty.</p>	<p>Org. change</p> <p>Coe. iso. (MD to HYD)</p>
		160		

<i>is above me, that will in a way control me to work on it. [If they were at La Manga] it may be that they would have understood it more.</i>				
<i>I feel that for us that are working daily with it [the AC], it is not a focus [the financial incentives], but for the MD and the board it is a focus. [It seems] that we do it almost because of the money. Or, for them it is the most important. They think, of course, that more players will be developed, and they feel that we have worked well. They are thinking when we got one star, it cannot be correct, right? They are thinking that it must be possible to get some documentation here and we get the three stars, and we get the money we should have.</i>	1	161	Different reasons inside the club to take part in AC. MD and the board have insufficient knowledge about AC.	Res. dep.
<i>For us, I think [the most important thing about AC] is that the club and board look at the academy in a slightly different way. I do not think that they thought it was important before, they have not seen the consequences of what it means. So, now, when there are added millions each year, I think they want to see more about it. They will follow it up more clearly. It becomes more important for the club to follow. We are being measured all together. It puts everyone in the spotlight. It may be the most important.</i>	1	162	Board and MD care more about the academy. More emphasis on the academy due to money	Res. dep.
<i>I want to say that we have become much more gathered, about the road to the goal, and just because we have anchored it throughout the club. We have always had sports plans and [been aware of] how the academy is going to be. But I simply feel that everyone has become a little more conscious, such as the administration and the first team, which is not so close to the academy, and really everyone in the board, have got a little more eye for the job that is being done. That's how we've gotten more gathered. They have gained more insight. And for us who put the academy so high then this is very positive that you get more gathered. For example, through the way in which the joint meetings we have had</i>	2	163	Whole club have gotten more awareness for the importance and the job being done in the academy.	??

<i>and talked about it in various forums have made everyone more aware of the work being done. I think that, as a leader, this is very important. That everyone sees the value of what is being done in the academy.</i>				
<i>Our model is about bringing our own players up from the academy to the first team, before being sold. We have it in our goals, in the sports plan and in the values. It may have been anchored with us to a greater degree than other clubs from before. It has in some way always been anchored, but all of this process we have been through, all the work that has been put down, that everyone has been involved, that everyone has gained insight into what has been worked on, has made it become even better anchored. The board can see we are doing well and they see that we are getting money from it, but now they have also gained insight into the actual job done - seen the curriculum, seen the sports plan and plan, guidelines, and understands how much work that is being done. So, it's got a better anchoring. Although the academy always has had a big star with us.</i>	2	164	Better positioned for AC. The whole club have insight of the work, and increased awareness of the academy.	Res. dep.
<i>There have always been short lines in the club. The first team are together with the academy. One has gained insight and been through a process, such a comprehensive process, which has made us very united. Especially in the academy, but also with the other parts of the club.</i>	2	165	AC united the club.	
<i>Previously, the academy has been set aside [from the rest of the club], but now there has become more interest and focus overall in the club on development and cooperation in this area.</i>	3	166	More interest and awareness among the rest of the club for the academy.	
<i>I think that the reclassification has definitely tied the club closer together, and AC has led the board and the management team in the club to become more aware of the development work, which has led to more talk about development work at management</i>	7	167	AC united the club. More awareness of the academy among MD and board.	Res. dep.

<p><i>meetings and board meetings. It has done that talent work has become a more important thing for the club. It has always been important, but it may have become even more important to deliver on it now. Also because you have incentive because if you do well you can get more money. That has made it more interesting to work for the board and the management team in the club. So yes, I think that academy has come closer to the rest of the club and become part of the club.</i></p>				
<p><i>There have been some changes. We have employed a coach developer, based on clear recommendations from AC. The HYD has got a seat in the club's management team and is a permanent representative there. [...] Before that, the sports director represented both the first team and the academy. Now the sports director and the HYD are represented there, along with the market-, media-, arrangements leader. And it makes the development work get a clearer voice in the club</i></p>	7	168	<p>Coach developer employed because of AC.</p> <p>Awareness and recognition of the Academy at a higher level in the club.</p>	
<p><i>Meetings have been conducted at different levels, some have been with the MD, and some have been through club visits. Overall, we had one visit where they [NTF] were here for half a day. It was at the very beginning, otherwise I have travelled to those who are my club supervisors. There has been a lot [work] on me and not on a higher level. There should have been more, when I think about it, they [MD and the Board] should have been involved more. They have been a little involved, but NTF should have pushed even more on them or the people there to get it anchored even more because it's become something like it's common around, "Okay, you're the HYD so you take it."</i></p>	4	169	<p>MD, board and first team should be more involved.</p> <p>A lot of work done by HYD.</p>	Nor. iso.
<p><i>We have established a sporting forum (technical heart). There we have monthly meetings, I think it works fine, but last time at La Manga (February) it was clear that most clubs wished that NTF would push MDs to have greater ownership to</i></p>	5	170	<p>Establish technical heart (More formalised communication)</p> <p>Several clubs want more involvement from MD</p>	<p>Org. change</p> <p>Normative change</p>

<i>the technical heart where the important questions appear, such as player logistics or other academy matters.</i>				
<i>We have a sports director who is very active and who is also in the board of NTF so the dialogue between me (development department) and the sports director has been very close. I've got the daily work around the classification, so I have not had such a need from the club board. The involvement of the board has been quite good.</i>	6	171	MD and board has been involved.	
<i>The AC has not tied the club closer together yet.</i>	6	172	AC has not tied the club closer together.	
<i>Anchoring and awareness about how we operate, who we want to be, how do we want to train, play and communicate. It is primarily the biggest influence [of AC]. And systematics, absolutely. We have been forced to systematize. The most important thing is happening on the pitch, but it can be done by having good documents and plans that will have a positive effect on what is happening in on the pitch.</i>	2	173	AC has created anchoring, awareness and clearer guidelines.	
<i>I attended every board meeting in 2017 and had to inform about the processes that took place in the academy.</i>	5	174	HYD attended every board meeting	?
<i>The biggest challenge is to communicate everything that the AC entails, meaning what it means to the club, for those who work here, for the coaches and for the players. We are still on the rise, so that's the biggest challenge.</i>	6	175	AC is very comprehensive.	
<i>I feel that the reclassification process has led to many people having an ownership that we are working on something here together. We are working to achieve something together.</i>	7	176	Several people involved with the work and process.	
<i>AC has made the club to realize that the club is or has been bad at individual follow-up in the training process. It has got the club to realize the importance of planning. It has got the club to realize that anchoring in the board, and common values and the academy's position in the</i>	7	177	AC have created awareness and improved the training process, planning, anchoring, and the importance of the academy.	

<i>club is important. The three things I think are the most important AC has done with us.</i>				
<i>I believe that through the resolutions in the board, I am sure that there is greater expectation and demand, while it is a greater ownership and pride in being able to be good at talent development. We hope to get even more national team players. We have a goal of being present on every single national team.</i>	5	178	More internal pressure to produce players to first team.	
<i>The [anchoring] has gone very well with us. We have had an ambition to be good at player development over time. [...] This was not a difficult process. We are a "small" club, so the lines in the club are short.</i>	8	179	Well prepared through common goals.	