



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

«Why is there so few female managers in the administration of top football in Norway?».

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Preface

Thanks to all that have contributed to this master thesis in any small or big way. None mentioned none forgotten as we say in Norway.

Some quotes that I used for inspiration and motivation during the process of writing this thesis;

“The harder you work for something the greater you will feel when you achieve it”

Unknown

“Sometimes I feel like giving up, then I remember I have a lot of motherfuckers to prove wrong”

Unknown

“You can always fix crap! What you can't fix is a blank page!”

Unknown

Summary

Gender equality in football is a topic with increased interest in later years. And leadership positions in football administrations are one place where the underrepresentation of women are highly apparent.

This master thesis takes a deeper look at female leaders in top Norwegian football administrations and their experience and reflections around the research question; «Why is there so few female managers in the administration of top football in Norway?». The master thesis aim is to answer the research question through in-dept interviews with five women in Norwegian top football administrations.

The data form the in-dept interviews makes it possible to identify several influential factors or barriers. The influential factors identified in this master thesis are; recruitment, competency, work-life balance, work terms, male dominance, power, champions or road creators, media, external influence, general interests and the image of football administrations. This influential factors corresponds with findings of researches related to the issue of gender representation in both international and Norwegian studies (Burton 2015) (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019) (Hancock og Hums 2016) (Hovden 2010) (Hovden 2012) (Langnes og Fasting 2017).

I hope that this master thesis can contribute and shed light on the gender issue. Important with all issues and problems and a big step on the way to addressing them is getting more facts and bringing the topic to the agenda.

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1.0 Introduction

Norway is one of the fairest and most equal societies in the world. But football and leadership are areas, also in Norway, that have an underrepresentation of women. As a topic for my master thesis I want to look into women leaders in football combining two areas where women are underrepresented, football and leadership.

There has been a strong increase in the interest for women in football lately. The 2019 women's World Cup had a massive increase in media and public interest. Also, Norwegian medias VG, NRK, Aftenposten have written about the topic especially in the past year.

In December 2018 Aftenposten wrote an article about the underrepresentation of women leaders in Norwegian top football. Looking at the two top men's divisions and the women's top division. In total there were eight women top leaders (CEOs) and 34 men top leaders in a total of 42 clubs. In the men's top division Eliteserien; there were two women CEOs, and 14 men. In the men's second- best division (Obosligaen), there were only one woman, and 15 men. But also, in the top division for women there were more men than women, 5 women and 7 men (Wikan 2018).

In June 2019, Norwegian largest tabloid VG had another article about women's underrepresentation in Eliteserien. The article looked into the sporting side of the organizations and found that 95.5% of the personnel in the sports departments in Eliteserien were men. That makes only 4,5% women, all found in less influential positions. Sports managers, head coaches and assistants are men, men, and men. The scouts, football analysts, goalkeeper coaches and player developers are also reserved for men. A small number of women work in medical support, with physical and mental training or with nutrition (Øgar 2019).

Women's underrepresentation has not only been in the news. The Norwegian broadcaster, NRK, recently made a fictional TV show called Heimebane (Home ground) around this topic. Heimebane is a Norwegian drama series that premiered on NRK1 on March 4, 2018. The series is about Helena Mikkelsen, the first female football coach in the Norwegian Eliteserien for the fictional team Varg IL (Imdb.com 2018).

All of this media and increased interest for women in Norwegian top football has woken my interest for the topic. Early on I understood that this had to be incorporated in my master thesis. When looking into it, I also felt that there where a gap in research on the area.

While there is written some good research articles about women as top and middle managers in sports in Norway. Where the research looks at football and other sports or into boards positions, coaches or players (Langnes og Fasting 2017), (Skogvang og Fasting 2013) (Hovden 2010) and (Hovden 2010). Internationally there are also some good research on the topic of underrepresentation women in leadership positions in sports and football (Hancock og Hums 2016) (Shaw og Frisby 2006) (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019) (Burton 2015).

So actually, it's hard to find research written on the administrative side of football in Norway and particular the focus on women leaders. Maybe it is due to the fact that there are very few leaders to study. But they exist and I want to know more about them. Even though there are not so much written about the administrative and organizational side that I would like to focus on the articles just mentioned are a good basis for my theoretical framework.

I want to look at the topic from a feminist and organizational perspective. I want to look at factors such as structure and culture and how this might explain why there are so few women in leadership positions. Another factor that might be interesting and influential is what barriers there are for women that want to have a career in football administrations. The article by (Hancock og Hums 2016) identifies several factor that influence women's career development. But I am also wondering if women don't see or don't want to pursue career opportunities in football or sports because of the masculine culture associated with football and many other sports. In this case, the masculine culture of sport and football might be a factor that alienates women. This make me wonder if this is accurate and something that can be changed? The article by (Burton 2015) create an overview on this issue and answer the question on why women are so underrepresented. It's a good basis for understanding the issue and factors that influence the issue but it's not looking at Norway and football organizations in particular. Even more relevant to my topic and angle is several articles written by Jorid Hovden (Hovden 2012) (Hovden 2010). They are all set in Norway and looks at gender, leadership and sports. They don't go into football specifically

and they do look more into the governance side (boards) of sport organizations but nevertheless they will give a good basis for my research.

So, in this thesis I want to look into women in leadership positions in Norwegian top football administrations as I feel that this is the one of the areas that are not researched enough. This is also an area with a high underrepresentation of women but still have some I can look into for my research. Many of the top clubs have women that are leaders of departments, two of the Eliteserien clubs have women as CEOs, there are women in leadership positions in the federation and organizations like NTF and TFK.

The goal of my research is to go in dept and get a better understanding of why there is so few female leaders in Norwegian top football administrations.

1.1 Background

Women have fought for human rights and equality for hundreds of years. Long before 1913 when women got the same right to vote as men in Norway, they fought and struggled. They fought again in the 1960-70s to change society's attitudes and norms to liberate women. In Norway today, equality between women and men is a central social value. Norwegians pride themselves of being one of the world's most equal countries where men and women have equal opportunities. But there are still inequalities.

To illustrate the differences; in Norway there are almost as many women and men in the workforce. However, the Norwegian labor market are divided when it comes to the sectors men and women works in. There are also almost twice as many women than men that works part-time. Mostly men work in the private sectors and women in the public sectors. In 2017 average income for men where NOK 533.900 and women NOK 369.600 (Statistisk Sentral Byrå 2017). I have not researched why this is the case, but possible reasons are that women work in sectors that are more appealing to them and less paid, have more responsibilities for home and children and therefore have a more demanding work-life balance.

When it comes to the proportion of leadership position there is also a big gap between men and women, 35.9% is the share of female leaders against 64.1% men. So just

above 1/3 of all leaders are women, while less than 1/4 of top leaders in Norway are women (Statistisk Sentral Byrå 2017).

The importance of sport in our daily life cannot be overstated. It contributes significantly to fitness, health, the economy and self-development, teaching us values and skills like discipline, teamwork, respect and perseverance (European Commission 2014). Sport is one big sector that regrettably still has a long way to go to achieve gender equality. That the big sports sector should still be plagued by inequalities between women and men is unfortunate (European Commission 2014).

“The lack of gender equality in sport could also be seen as a missed opportunity for the sport sector. Research and developments in sport have shown that better skilled and educated women and men could lead to interesting benefits on personal, organizational and societal levels. Instead of considering gender issues to be irrelevant, or even a hindrance to the core policy goals in sport, stakeholders in sport should develop a more comprehensive understanding of the value of gender equality as a condition of social and economic progress” (European Commission 2014, p. 7).

Football is by far the biggest girl sport in Norway (NFF 2020). In many contexts, The Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) has expressed the need for more active girls, more female coaches, referees, and leaders. It has been acknowledged that football is one area that has had and still has a long way to go before gender equality is realized (NFF 2020).

From my own experience; I have always loved to play football and I still play football for fun. When I was a kid I played mostly with the boys and we all dreamed of playing for Manchester United. It took me a while before I realized that this was never going to happen no matter how good I was (I wasn't really that good anyways but that's beside the point), because there was no Manchester United's women's team back then. So, I had to change my dream a little while growing up. But I always knew that I was passionate about football. As an adult I decided to take an education allowing me to gain competency to work with sports in the future. My new dream is becoming a leader in Norwegian football. But now I realize that there is not a lot of female leaders to look up to. That made me ask questions like why is this? What can be done to make it more gender

equal? And is it not equality and diversity improving football? It also, got me very interested and curious of the few women that that do work as top leaders in football organizations. This is part of the background for me choosing this topic for my master thesis.

I want to define and narrow down the task and at the same time look at a topic where I feel I have a good opportunity to gather data with quality. This is why I choose the administrative side of football organizations in Norway. Looking at Norway because its where I am from, live, have connections and understands both the culture and the overall industry. Looking at the administrative side both because it is a personal interest, I work in a club administration myself and have connections that might let me access people with knowledge of this topic, data are available, and I do not see that clear and apparent reason why there is this skewed gender distribution in the administrative side.

1.2 Research question

The purpose of this project is to gain better insight into why there are so few female leaders in administrative side of Norwegian top football. The project will have an organizational perspective and look at both organizational structure and organizational culture, but also other factors.

My research question is; «Why is there so few female managers in the administration of top football in Norway?»

With Norwegian top football I specifically mean the men and women's top divisions and also organizations that work with or around the top divisions. Like Norsk Toppfotball (NTF), Toppfotball kvinner (TFK) and Norges Fotballforbund (NFF).

With managers I mean both top managers and department managers. Initially, I wanted to only look at top managers but found that to get more data on the topic I should also include managers that are not at the very top, all the more because those women aspire to be in top leadership positions in the future and they may also bring an additional perspective to this issue.

1.3 Introduction to Norwegian sport and football organization

Norway is seen around the world as a champion of gender equality policy (Hovden, 2012). I will shortly explain how Norwegian sport and football is organized with some extra information connected to gender equity.

The Norwegian Sports Federation and Olympic and Paralympic Committee (NIF) consist of 55 special federations, 17 sports regions, 375 sports councils and 10 787 sports organizations or teams, and have just under 2,100,000 memberships where around 40% is women. This is the umbrella organization for both professional and grassroots sports in Norway (NIF 2020). NIF leadership structures have historically been male-dominated and still are. About 18% of the presidents are women, also in coaching 18% are women, but at the highest level only about 8%. This reveals a gender structure in which women in the most prestigious and powerful positions are the exception rather than the norm. In sport decision-making bodies, the board of directors, women are 37% represented. This indicates that the gender quota has an effect here and that the boards are better gender balanced than other areas of sports (Hovden, 2012).

During recent years and decades Norwegian sports has undergone massive and rapid changes. The increase in commercialization and professionalization of top sports have generated this. In the organizational form has transformed from a traditional structured voluntary form to a more professional and business-like forms (Hovden, 2010). So, the sport organizations are more often seeking corporate sponsorships and are more market orientated. This again have increased the number of professional staff and formal structures in sport organizations in Norway (Hovden, 2010).

Football has been and is the largest sport in Norway. For men football has a long history of being the largest sport. But now, it is also the largest organized female sport in Norway (Skogvang og Fasting 2013). One of the federations under NIF is the Norwegian football federation. The Norwegian football federation activities extend to every corner of the country and affecting people of all ages and levels, and their objective is creating more and better activity at all levels “Football for all” (NFF 2020).

The top and professional side of football also have their own interest organizations.

Norwegian Top Football (NTF) is an interest organization that consists of the football clubs that play in the Eliteserien and the OBOS-ligaen (the top two men's football divisions in Norway). The goal of NTF is to be a leader in the development of Norwegian top football at club level, both in sporting performance, economic performance, commercial and administrative (NTF 2020).

Top football woman (TFK) is the interest organization for the clubs in the top divisions in Norwegian women's football. The purpose of the association is to create good and trusting cooperation between the member associations in matters of common interest. Top football Women will be the foremost driver of the development of Norwegian women's football through a forward-looking and constructive collaboration with the association's members, NFF and other natural partners (Toppfotball Kvinner 2020).

Under these organizations and federations, we have all the professional clubs in Norway. Clubs like Molde FK, Rosenborg BK, Lillestrøm SK, Vålerenga IF, SK Brann, Kristiansund BK and so on. Most of these clubs has women's and men's teams today. This was not the case a few years ago, when the best women's teams were from other often more unknown clubs.

1.4 Thesis structure

This master thesis consists of five chapters; introduction, theory, methodology, data and discussion and conclusion. The introduction describes the background for the research topic and the purpose of the research. In the second chapter, theory, I will present a conceptual framework and literature on the topic. In the third chapter, methodology, I present the methods used in this research. While the fifth chapter comprises the data analysis and discussion. The last chapter, conclusion, is a summary with limitations and further research recommendations.

2.0 Theory

In this part of the master thesis I will present relevant theory. The theory will be used to understand the topic, angle the thesis, and analyze the collected data.

I will look into literature on women and management in sport organizations. This is the literature I am using to get a solid basis for answering my research question.

2.1 Gender and organizations

Gender is a category for organizing social life. It helps us structure and perceive the world around us and is important for self-identification. It is often defined as constructed meanings that shape what is expected behavior for male and females. Therefore, gender produces two complementary but unequal sets of people (Langnes og Fasting 2017).

Gender is above all a pattern of social relations that not only defines the positions of men and women, but also where the cultural meanings of being man and women are negotiated (Langnes og Fasting 2017). So, gender is not a given or static but is constantly re-negotiated through social interactions. (Langnes og Fasting 2017).

(Acker 2012) argued that there are 4 components to examine in order to conceptualize gender in organizations. The first is created in organizational processes. Where inequalities are built into rules, policies, and broader decision-making processes and contexts such as job design, distribution of decision-making and the physical design of the workplace. The second are the organizational culture (beliefs, images, attitudes, behavior, values, etc.). The third is through interactions between organizational members which is closely connected to the culture. This includes for example; when women act in ways that would allow them to fit in, during informal interactions between employees, when tasks that lead to gendered division of labor. The fourth component include individual gendered identities constructed in the workplace but also by the individual in the organization (Acker 2012).

The glass ceiling is a term that refers to the fact that in organizations there is a limit to how far a woman can advance in the hierarchy, but this limit is mostly invisible, hence the term. This glass ceiling may consist of unreasonable attitudes and norms or the organization have designed requirements for leader positions to suit women worse and men better (Jacobsen og Thorsvik 2013).

There are many perspectives and insights to diversity. Some emphasize the fact that people then to be attracted to similar others. Some focus attention on the role of task-related resources, such as skills and knowledge. What is alike with all the perspectives are that they all assume that the types and distribution of personal attribute among members partly determine how teams function and ultimately how well they perform (Jackson og Joshi 2011).

Diversity vs. Unit

The problem of more diversity is that the more divers or fragmented the organization becomes we also increase the difficult to coordinate what happens in specialized positions, groups or departments. Diversity can be good for effectiveness and efficiently due to specialization, but bad for communication and cooperation (Jacobsen og Thorsvik 2013).

Stability and predictability vs. Flexibility and innovation

While one wants to create stability and predictability (routines and guidelines) to be effective, the organization must also be open to change and be innovative (Jacobsen og Thorsvik 2013).

2.2 Gender and power in sport organizations

Sport organizations represent powerful symbolic institutions in society. This societal power is based in at least two aspects. One; Sport organizations represent important public arenas of activity for huge amount of people. Where they promote social integration, fitness and well-being, and socialization into democratic society. Two; the symbolic relationship between top-level sports and media instructions, which turns sporting events into global and national spectacles were societal values and key elements of identity constructions are reflected and contested (Hovden, 2012).

Research on gender in organizations teaches that socially constructed power relations are integrated into gender roles, that favor men. Such power relationships also reproduce over time, through a gender-based tradition of recruitment, division of labor, rewards and careers. (Jacobsen og Thorsvik 2013) Masculinity and femininity are defined as hierarchical opposites, and constitutes hegemonic gender structure. Which makes power an important dimension of gender. Male dominant power relations are continually reproduced in everyday life as people do gender and reinforce gender stereotypes (Langnes og Fasting 2017).

Gender involves possibilities, but also boundaries, limitations and inequalities. Since, power is a part of gender, practices that undo gender are an important means to create equality between man and women. (Langnes og Fasting 2017).

2.3 Women and management in sport organizations.

The first article I would like to present and draw knowledge from are (Burton 2015) A review of research on underrepresentation of women in sport leadership. This article looks at why there is so few women in leadership positions within sports. This is quite similar to my research question, but this article is a literature review on the topic.

So, when (Burton 2015) looks at this topic she divides it into three levels. The macro, meso and micro level. And this makes for a great overview of the whole topic and issue.

The macro level; Is the level of institutionalized practices of the sport society. It's a big picture and bird view of the whole institutionalized ways.

The meso level; is the level of the organization, looking at organizational operations, culture, stereotypes, access and treatment discrimination in organizations.

The micro level; is the level looking at individuals and their experiences and understandings. Looking at human and social capital and self-limiting behavior.

(Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019) Builds on this multilevel framework. This article looks at the role of the board in advancing gender equity policies in leadership positions in sport governance. This article is about board members and the governance side of sport.

Since this article also uses the multilevel framework it shows the individual (micro) level, organizational (meso) level and also the sport/industry (macro) level. The article shows that male equity champions pave the way for both challenging existing stereotypes at an organizational level and the sport level. These equity champions of change enable women to feel valued in leadership roles, and further encourage and promote the acceptance of women in the governance of sport organizations (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019).

Another article by (Hancock og Hums 2016) looks at factors that may influence women's career development in sport organizations (specifically the NCAA). Their result suggested that strong interpersonal relationships with supervisors and mentors and access to professional development activities aided in participants career advancement. As well as factors attributed to perceptions of gender and professional value incongruence affected women's career chooses and opportunities for advancement.

Perceptions of readiness, skill acquisition, gender stereotypes, organizational structure, interpersonal relationships and value congruence were identified as dominant themes affecting women's career development from the women's own perspectives (Hancock og Hums 2016).

An argument that is used when women are under-represented from higher positions in sport organizations is that they represent an under-utilized organizational resource (Hovden 2012).

2.4 Women and management in Norwegian sport organizations.

At the macro level; Norway is seen around the world as a champion of gender equality policy. The article by (Hovden, 2010) studied how Norwegian sport organizations frame and understand gender as a policy issue. The article describes and discusses how

women's inclusion in organized sports has been actualized, negotiated and promoted as a policy issue over the last decades (Hovden, 2010). The article shows that in more recent years Norwegian sport are shifting to a perspective on gender as a social diversity issue. This issue also includes other diversity and minority categories like ethnicity, religion, disabled, sexuality and so on.

At the meso level; (Hovden, 2010) article focuses on leadership selection in Norwegian sport organizations, and how meanings of gender are made relevant and how these processes may contribute to build and rebuild organizational gender structures. The analyses showed that selection processes and discourses were strongly influenced by a view of leadership skills that fits "heroic" masculine traits, but these traits were seen as gender neutral. Most female candidates were therefore regarded as unsuited or insufficient in regards to these skills. In the conclusion of the article it is also mentioned that the use of personal and obviously very male-dominated networks was a key strategy in their selection process. The overall organizational objectives to promote gender equity were relatively subordinated.

Another study on female top leaders highlights dominant leadership discourses in sport organizations and focuses on the conceptualization of female leadership, and in the ways in which these construct female leadership (Hovden, 2010). The article concludes that certain forms of masculinity and stereotyped notions of gender are an integrated part of the dominant leadership discourses in sport organizations. Because dominant leadership discourses are rooted in conceptualizations of female gender as making the gender difference, gender as a power relation is hidden or blurred, with the consequence that dominant leadership discourses make women prisoners of gender.

(Skogvang og Fasting 2013) Is an article about sexuality in Norwegian football and looks at both men and women elite players and coaches. The study shows that the heteronormativity is still strong in men's elite football. When you are a man that plays football it's taken for granted that you are heterosexual. For women, it's the other way around, its assumed that you are a lesbian. This article does not look into management, but it looks into football and tell a story about the culture in football clubs that I believe to be relevant. It highlights that the masculine culture and also the big differences between men's and women's clubs.

3.0 Methodology

In this chapter of the master thesis I will explain the what and why regarding the gathering and analyzing of data. The aim is to be well equipped to answer the research question.

“We can think of method as a tool. Such a tool is a procedure for answering questions and gaining new knowledge within a field. Method is about how we collect, organize and interpret information” (Larsen 2012)

After choosing my research topic, reviewing literature, developing a conceptual framework and defining the research question it is time to plan the research strategy. The research question will be the main basis for the strategy to follow. My research question, «Why is there so few female managers in the administration of top football in Norway?» will be the basis of my methodology.

3.1 Research design

We have different types of research designs like descriptive, explanatory and evaluative. Where descriptive is about finding out something or describing what is. Explanatory is about explaining how or why things are the way they are and can be used to predict. Evaluative is about evaluations and tests of policies or programs (Veal og Darcy 2014, 6-8)

I will make my research design explanatory. Because I choose and want to explain *why* there is so few women in top leadership positions. I will not try to predict a lot in my thesis, but the explanation can lead to some assumptions and new questions. I will try to describe only when its necessary for the explanation.

“Explaining the patterns in observed or reported data usually involves establishing that one phenomenon is caused by another, and the aim of research is to identify these causal relationships...This explanation can often provide the basis of prediction” (Veal og Darcy 2014)

3.2 Qualitative approach

As a researcher, you have to choose how you want to collect data for the project. Then it is important to know what kind of information you need. We have two main types of method, quantitative and qualitative. It is important to think about what you want with the project before choosing a method. Since both main types have different advantages and disadvantages. There is no clear and sharp distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods. You can use types of both methods in a project. That is called mixed methods. (Larsen, 2012).

Quantitative methods are research using numerical data. It relies on numerical evidence to draw conclusions or test hypothesis. To be sure of the reliability of the results it is often necessary to study relatively large number of people and use computers to analyze the data. The data can come from questionnaire surveys, observations or administrative sources (Veal og Darcy 2014, 39). Qualitative research uses primary words but can also use pictures or sounds. This method makes it possible to gather a relatively large amount of information on the research subjects, which can be individuals, groups, places, events or organizations. But the number of subject are often limited due to collection and analyzes processes. The method involves getting full and/or deep understanding of the behavior, attitudes, and situations of a few individuals. No claim can be made that the sample studied in a qualitative study is representative of a larger population. The data can come from observations, in-dept interviews, text analyzes (Veal og Darcy 2014, 39-40).

There are several factors in the project that lay down guidelines for method choices. The research question is the first. If you are looking for people's opinions, you can often use quantitative methods as a questionnaire. If one is looking for attitudes, qualitative methods may be best suited, such as in-depth interviews. (Larsen, 2012) The purpose of the project is the second. If you want a comprehensive understanding and overview, qualitative methods are best suited. If, on the other hand, you want to get an overview that are representative (that applies to more than those actually studied), you should use quantitative methods. (Larsen, 2012) Your own resources and conditions are another factor that can guide the method choices. Which methods are you strongest suited to do? What do you have the time and resources to conduct? This might affect the choice of method as some methods are more resource intensive than others (Larsen, 2012). A fourth factor are

the study objects, one must take into account the persons who will be informants. Whether they can make themselves understood verbally or in writing will be decisive for method choice. Here also comes the relationship with the informants. Should you have closeness or distance? Qualitative methods often require that we meet informants face to face. While quantitative methods will often have more distance between the informant and the data collector (Larsen, 2012). The last factor might be the approach. In inductive approach, the problem is often more unclear, and you want to try theories through hypotheses. The approach indicates that the goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of a topic. The researcher is flexible and does not latch on to the method in advance. In such projects, it is common to use qualitative methods. In deductive approach, the durability of theories is evaluated through hypothesis testing. In such cases, the researcher has a precise problem and quantitative methods are often used here (Larsen 2012).

After considering these factors I have chosen to go for a qualitative method in my thesis. This is based mostly on my research question and the purpose of the project. Of course, with some small adjustments my project could become quantitative as well. But my purpose with this project is to gain a comprehensive understanding and overview of the topic; Woman leaders in football administrations, to make me best suited and able to answer the research question; “Why is there so few female managers in the administration of top football in Norway?”

I also feel like I am a bit stronger in qualitative methods of research than in quantitative methods and this has naturally influenced my choice of topic, research question, purpose and method. I feel that I have more competency and recourses to do a good project with this method. With consideration to both time and abilities.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods, and these must be considered and known to the researcher. The benefits of qualitative methods from (Larsen, 2012):

- Benefit from meeting informants face to face. Smaller risk of informants backing out.
- Can go deeper and have better opportunities to gain a comprehensive understanding of something.
- Can ask follow-up questions. Then you can get complementary and in-depth answers, clear up misunderstandings and go deeper into the theme.
- Observation of the informants can make it easier to interpret the answers.

The disadvantages of qualitative methods from (Larsen, 2012):

- One cannot generalize through qualitative studies.
- Difficult and time consuming to process data. It is a lot of work to simplify the material, classify the material, get an overview, and compare the answers.
- Its more difficult for the informants to be honest.
- Interview effect. Means that the interviewers themselves or the method used, can influence the interview result.

3.3 Sample

When the goal of the research isn't to generalize but to gain as much or deep knowledge as possible about a field or topic, we don't need to use probability sampling. We can use other methods of sampling like judgement sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling or snowball sampling (Larsen 2012). Judgement sampling is also called purpose sampling or selective sampling. It is where the researcher includes participants in the sample based on particular and relevant criteria's like gender, age, geography, education, work etc.

“This method of sampling which particular settings, persons or events are selected with the purpose to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices” (Maxwell 1996)

In my case the sampling will be judgement sampling, informants will be chosen on the criteria of gender, and leadership position in Norwegian top football (or previous leadership position in Norwegian top football). This because I believe they are in a unique position and have a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. I am looking for their expert opinions, experiences and reflections to help me understand the topic and be able to answer my research question in the best possible manner. I have chosen seven female top leaders (or previous top leaders) in Norwegian top football I want to interview. Of this seven only three could contribute with an interview. So, I also contacted two female department leaders that I know form the Eliteserien clubs. That makes a total of five respondents.

3.4 In-dept interviews and the interview guide

A qualitative interview is characterized by the informant themselves formulating the answers and the interviews can be more or less structured. How structured will vary greatly and should be decided on in advance. The fact that it is structured means that you have a list of formulated questions that are asked in a fixed order. The interview may also be unstructured, meaning that there are no formulated questions that the researcher goes through in the interview. Ultimately, the degree of structuring depends on the problem, capacity and desires of the researchers (Larsen 2012).

A certain degree of structuring makes it easier to compare answers since everyone answers the same questions. Another advantage of structured interviews is that they reduce the amount of information and make it easier and less work to analyze it afterwards. But structured interviews can also cause you to lose information that may be relevant (Larsen 2012). Interview with interview guides are a structured interview method. It is important that the questions in the interview guide provide a good basis for covering the research question and the topics that are included in the research question (Larsen 2012).

In my interview guide I focused on asking the right question but also asking the questions in the right way. This is necessary to be able to get good and right information to be able to answer my research question.

I begin with asking about the informant's background. It's a good start because it's easy to answer and thus provides a soft opening to the interview. On the other hand, there is a danger that you spend too much time on this, and you should be aware of what is relevant and direct the interview in that direction.

Furthermore, the questions are more focused on answering the research question. The questions are to be formulated as clearly as possible. I use some academic terms that can be difficult to understand and therefore have with the definitions of both organizational culture and structure in the interview guide and will explain in the interview what the concepts mean so this is clear to the informants. I have chosen to divide the interview guide into various topics that I have chosen to call; background, organizational structure, organizational culture, other factors, and your point of view. I want to be as objective as possible and not ask leading questions so that I do not influence the informant to answer in any particular way. But get their own honest answers and opinions. That's why it is

important to create a safe environment, be professional, and open as an interviewer. I will not judge the informant in any way or make the informant feel uncomfortable.

I want to record the interview in addition to writing down follow-up questions and control questions for later in the interview. That way, I mean to get the best flow in the conversation, and I can observe and interpret at the same time. Body language and observations can be important in the interpretation later on.

3.5 Interview process

I wanted to do most of the interviews face-to-face but was open for some digital interviews or phone interviews with the respondents, depending on their locations and their busy time schedules. Due to the Covid-19 virus and the situation we are currently in I changed my approach and wanted only digital interviews or phone interviews. I also feel that some of my emails were declined due to the busy and chaotic situation for these managers.

The drawback of doing it digitally and over the phone can be that I lose some or most of the observations of body language, and I might not get to have the casual introduction and small talk before the interview starts. This can make the interviews a little less time-consuming, and I believe this can be both positive and negative for the informants and the interview. Some might be more comfortable doing the interview from their own office or home, others might need the small talk and slow introduction to be comfortable.

I started by contacting the informants by e-mail and then called. Ended up with five respondents. Two are current managers in organizations around or over the Norwegian top divisions; Norsk Topp Fotball and Toppfotball Kvinner. So, one on the women's side and one on the men's side of Norwegian football. One respondent was prior a top manager in Norwegian football. And the two last respondents are department managers in Eliteserien clubs. I feel like this gave me data from different perspectives. Both the perspective from organizations over-looking the clubs, and the club's own perspectives. The perspective of women working in football now and previously. The danger of only interviewing women

that have already made it to the top is that I miss the perspective of the ones that don't, also called survivor bias (Elton, Gruber og Blake 1996).

I also ended up doing all the interviews over the phone. This was the most practical solution for me and also easy for the respondents. Not all used the same video meeting apps and programs and doing the interviews over the phone became a good solution instead of using programs not all of the respondents or me as the interviewer were familiar with.

3.6 Analyzing the data

The interviews took between 30-45 minutes. I recorded the interviews and transcribed the interviews after it was done. That way I could be more attendant during the interviews and come with encouraging comments and follow up questions if something were unclear or I wanted the respondents to elaborate.

My research question is pretty open, and an inductive approach seems like the best way to analyze the data. An inductive approach is not being locked in one way of seeing things but more open and flexible. And it is often used when the goal is to get a deep understanding and better overview of the topic (Larsen 2012).

After the transcription, it was a great help to categorize and group the information I had collected. Then I could more easily see similarities and connections. Which in turn makes it possible to interpret and analyze the data.

I used analysis of meaning or content where the purpose is to identify patterns, contexts and similarities or differences (Larsen 2012).

3.7 Trustworthiness (validity and reliability)

“Validity is the extent to which the data collected truly reflects the phenomenon being studied” (Veal og Darcy 2014)

“Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date, or with different sample of subjects” (Veal og Darcy 2014) Often not so relevant for qualitative studies.

Trustworthiness is a term used in place of validity and reliability in qualitative research because validity and reliability cannot be assessed using rigorous quantified tests in qualitative methods. But the issue can be addressed by using an assessment of trustworthiness. This includes looking at components like credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Veal og Darcy 2014). This makes openness and transparency in the research process key to having a trustworthy research.

3.8 Ethics

Ethical dilemmas in research will always arise, and anyone conducting a research project must consider ethical principles. Such dilemmas occur at various stages in the process (Halvorsen 2003) It can occur in the first stages when deciding on research question and theme, it can occur in the stage of data collection, or it can occur in the last stages when we convey the research project (Larsen 2012, 15).

Ethical behavior is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. Ethical considerations concerned with matters like plagiarism and honesty in reporting of results, arise in all types of research but additional issues arises when the research involves humans (Veal og Darcy 2014).

Veal and Darcy (2014, 107) emphasizes six ethical principles:

- The research should be beneficial to society
- Researchers should be suitably qualified and/or supervised to conduct the research;
- Subjects should take part freely
- Subjects should take part only on the basis of informed consent
- No harm should befall the research subjects
- Data should be honestly and rigorously analyzed, interpreted and reported

To what extent in which it is important to be objective in research will vary. There are also different views on the extent to which it is possible to be objective. It is important to remember that behind all research there are people who have their experiences, values and attitudes. It is difficult to put this aside when doing research. Experience and values will have great impact on the approach, formulation of the research question, and it will also to some extent affect how we interpret the answers. To be completely objective will therefore be unattainable, but one should strive for it regardless (Larsen 2012, 16).

In my thesis the particular ethical dilemmas I have to consider is;

Interview effect; I am not an experienced interviewer and to not influence the respondents to answer in any particular way will be on my mind during the interview process. I will try to be objective but encouraging. It could be discussed where the line between encourage and influence is, but this is something that I will try to balance during all my interviews.

Anonymity *“As a precaution, research material should ideally not be labelled with real names of organizations or people”* (Veal og Darcy 2014). My respondents will not be named but could be recognized due to their positions and the fact that there are few women in these types of positions in Norway. This is cleared with the participants and they are all aware of this and consented to participate.

4.0 Data analysis

In this chapter I will present the findings from the conducted interviews and discuss them. I will pick out quotes from the interviews that is relevant for answering my research question. I will start with presenting some general observations from the interviews.

4.1 In general

In general, I see that there are some differences in the interviews based on their position and experiences. I have three informants how work or have worked in organizations like NFF, TFK and NTF, and two informants that work in top clubs. I also have two that have worked more with women's football and three that have work in men's football. This is reflected in the informant's responses. And there are greater similarities in the responses of those in the same type of position or from the same type of organization than those from different types of organization. The ones who has worked more on the women's side of Norwegian football do for example explain women's side better and they distinguish between the sides more than the ones who have only worked in the men's side of Norwegian football.

All the respondents were a little scared of stereotyping or tried to avoid it, but all seem to think that women in leadership positions brings some additional qualities, perspectives and skills that were desirable to have in top leadership positions or part of a leader group.

Some example of what they mentioned women had additional qualities or perspectives on was that in their experience women were often more structured, better at seeing their employees, better at processes, more empathic and understanding, better at communicating, better at socializing at the workplace, communicates better with different target audiences than men, more interested in activates outside the sport like CSR and environmental issues. So, the point they made was that having both men and women in management and leadership positions could bring positive effects due to the fact that they often had different qualities, perspectives and skills.

“Regardless of organization. I think there should be a certain balance. Or at least both genders represented. I think it may be that different genders look at things in slightly different ways.”-3

“It is well documented that they (organizations) perform better when there is balance. It does something about communication, it does something about culture, it does something about progress, with the bottom line, with the results. This of course also applies to football.» -1

4.2 Categories

More specifically, from the interviews I categorize the data findings in categories based on analysis of the answers from the respondents. This categories are based on similarities and connections between the respondent’s answers, and if this aligns or not with presented theory.

4.2.1 Recruitment

Recruitment and recruitment processes was something most of my respondents talked about in the regards to why there are so few women in football organizations and especially in clubs. They talked about recruitment as both a structural and cultural phenomenon. One respondent mentioned that the processes in top clubs weren’t always proper recruitment processes.

“There is a bit of informal hiring processes and position announcements. Not everything is according to the book. There should be more proper recruitment processes” –
2

Another one said;

“I think football rarely announces positions. You have a need for labor and then someone knows someone that is a good fit. And then he/she gets a little involved and then it becomes more and more, and suddenly he or she is hired. Without there being very formal application processes and then it is most likely, since there are most men in football from before and that they know most men, that they use their networks. This can perhaps exclude women a bit. If you do not know anyone who works in football, then you have less chance of getting a job. Since it is not always a public and formal application process.” -3

4.2.2 Competency

When talking about recruitment of women several of the respondents also talked about the unattainable experience of playing men's football. Since there is such a gap between men's and women's football the experience of being a top football player would give different experience and insights depending on you being man or woman. Both of the respondents working in Eliteserien clubs talked about it:

“I think it's a bit of a challenge... that there are a lot of former football players working in football. And in men's football, it is men. This can be a little limiting, because maybe a much less educated man gets the job before you because he has a name in football and has experience you can't have. Even if you have played at the top level as a woman you would not have had the same experience as a top football player who is a man. I think it has probably gotten better in administration, but not in some type of roles such as sports manager, etc. which is very dominated by former football players that has a name in football.” -3

“ The obvious is that the Eliteserien is a men's league. When we talk about work experience, it will be natural that there are more men who have worked or have work experience in Eliteserien from before. Because traditionally, clubs have recruited managers from previous players. And it is a structural feature that has been quite ordinary not only in Norwegian football but in most other sports as well. When you are finished as a player, the club feels a responsibility to employ you because perhaps you have not received education, you have just pursued your sport. Then you also have gained a lot of relevant experience from skiing or football or whatever sport it would be... -4

4.2.3 Career paths

Most of the respondents talked about the lack of opportunities and possible career paths in football organizations. At least in smaller clubs or organizations. Two of the respondents have worked on the women's side and three on the men's side. All except one talked of the lack of opportunities to advance. One respondent said that on the women's side where the organizations are smaller the lack of paid jobs were a big reason why former top women players rarely go into jobs in those clubs or organizations.

“ There is something about the fact that there are very few paid functions in women's football. Some has come in the last few years like paid general manager and market manager. You will find that some former top players have stepped into these roles. But the lack of paid jobs is some of the explanation why the big number of previous top players might be so low on the women’s side. I think this should be included as a bit of a social explanation, it is demanding to expect that you as a top player for the last 15 years, where you have spent your life on football without getting paid, taken up student loans in parallel (almost all female football players are studying), will then throw yourself into new unpaid volunteer work.” -1

4.2.4 Work time or work life balance

All of my respondents talked about working in football clubs and organizations as very demanding jobs. Especially in regards to time spent on the job. All emphasized that it was not an eight to four job, that you could leave at the office. Working in football organizations means working evenings, nights and weekends as well. They also said that this could be the same challenge for men as for women, but some argued that it was more of a challenge for women. Some of the comments on work time and work life balance follow below;

“Working hours, workload, there is of course a lot. If you work in a club, you work almost 24/7. It is weekend work, so it is unfavorable that way...That one must not be present every weekend is something leaders should make possible.” -2

“It is clear that club level football is not for all. It is not an 8-4 job. It is arrangement-based, and competitions are on a weekend, evenings, and the work is around the clock. Parts of football are definitely not adapted to classic square working life. With regard to family it can affect gender balance. This can definitely be seen in recruiting and influence recruitment”.-1

“...there is an expectation that you will spend a lot of your time at work. A lot of time beyond what is normal working hours... There doesn't have to be a difference between men and women here either, but it might limit some women. Especially with young children and whether you feel that you aren’t home enough. Which I think is a bit typical

for us women that we can quickly feel that we are not enough. Either you don't do enough at home, or you don't do enough at work. And then you have to make a choice..." -3

"...when you run a family in addition to being top manager in football, it is extremely demanding, and it is not for everyone. It's a lot of work and it's not like you leave the job when you go home at 4am. It's 24/7. It's lifestyle. Such a job is a lifestyle and I think that maybe many women do not want that, they may not want to give up so much for a job." -5

4.2.5 Work terms

Two of the respondent also mentioned work terms as a structural explanation on why there is so few women in football and football leadership in Norway. One talked about the form of work and the other about conditions that do not match the competition conditions (private sector and public sector). If we see this in connection to other factors the informants talked about like work-life balance, career paths, interest and image this can also be a factor that help explain why there is so few women in management positions in top football organizations.

"Form of work is one aspect I want to add...In boards, which often are jobs for periods of 2-4 years, this can be a very long-time commitment, especially for younger women. Then it is often easier to recruit women into project work or limited tasks...this is an opportunity... to let them try and see that it's not so scary. I think trainee or apprenticeships could be a good idea to increase the proportion of women at club level as well."-1

"There can be conditions, certainly there are conditions...In today's society, they are not the best paid jobs (working in football organizations and clubs). After all, you are concerned about the conditions and there are few of the clubs now that are competitive in comparison to other exciting managerial jobs in private and public industries...With the financial challenges the clubs have, it becomes difficult to match the competition..." -2

4.2.6 Male dominance

This is one of the themes that were mentioned most in my interviews and by all of the respondents. They all talked about football organizations being extremely male dominated

and that it has been this way since the beginning. That there are very few women and a lot of men in almost all top football organizations and clubs. And men almost always had the senior leadership positions. Most of the informants described this as a barrier in itself for women to wish to work and advance in careers in football organizations. Some of the respondents also connected this male dominance with power and image which I will go more into further on. This is some of the quotes on male dominance:

“Looking at the clubs, there are now two female CEOs at 32 clubs in Eliteserien and Obosligaen. We are in no way a role model in that way...I think one of the reasons why you also quit and that you don't keep the girls is that it is challenging environment and working in...It might be that women does not seek such a male-dominated culture. I think that is a limitation yes. That it is not attractive. It is male dominated and not all women seek that or want that.” -2

“As a woman in football, you can often be met with a little skepticism still, but I think that if you are a little patient and do a good job, then I think that the respect you can get as a woman in football can be high even maybe higher than the respect you get as a man. Because it is taken a little for granted that as a man you know football. So, you may have to work a little harder as a woman to get respect but when you first get respect then I see that one can often get almost more respect than men in the same type of position. It's a little cool to watch. -3

“I even felt skeptical. I did not apply for the job in ... I was asked if I would come for a conversation about that position. And the first thing I thought was that it was completely out of the question. Because it is historically very male-dominated and with what one has of stereotypes about how a male-dominated culture can be... so I was initially a little skeptical.” -4

“And I also find that in football you have a woman's view that is a little outside of what you have otherwise in society. I have been downplayed because I am a woman many times. It is a very large and widespread use of power... So, as a woman you have to show that you are capable, if you are to be respected and taken seriously on a general basis. Of course, lots of exceptions and great men and women working in football. But on a general basis, I've definitely experienced a greater degree of downgrading because you're a woman

in the football organizations I've been in. The higher in the hierarchy you get the worse it is. So, I can understand that women are reluctant to go into something like that. -5

4.2.7 Power

Power were also one of the most talked about themes in my interviews. And I feel like it could be a topic in its own. There were several of my respondents that had strong opinions on the power theme. All except one respondent talked at length about power in football organizations. They talked about power, power structures, gender, and their own experiences.

“If we look at football in the big picture, and this will probably be relevant also for Norwegian top football on the men's side. There are few positions in society that are perceived as so powerful and important. Football has a huge and strong position. It's an important backdrop that men's football is so much talked about, has so much media attention, and are perceived as so important.” -1

Another responded talked about her own experience during power struggles and politics in football;

“It was a very big change going from the professional working life into sports and football, an extreme amount of power struggles and politics. It was a man's world (gubbevelde)...Lots of power struggles and many situations that do not withstand the light of day. Many just look upwards, are concerned about sweeping for their own door and forgetting the unity of the organization. There were power struggle, politics and completely incomprehensible processes, that were possible somehow. Often, sports are their own greatest enemy. That you can create or have too many of those who do not adhere to rules. I think you also see it from the outside when you read things and read between the lines, in relation to reputation -2

Two of the respondent wanted to highlight that you must be tough to handle being a top leader in Norwegian top football, maybe even more so if you are a woman.

“Football is a complex world... I would guess that you have to be very tough as a woman to stand in all the power struggles around football clubs and organizations.” -4

“The boys club is an image that is definitely such a culture thing that should be mentioned when talking about culture in football clubs. Because I understand that it is like that in all the clubs! Everyone has that someone or several someone’s who manages the entire club even though he or them does not work there officially. Or at least someone that try to control the club from the side lines. ...So, if you are a top leader as a woman then one must be quite strong, or as a man, even then, you must be strong to control these external forces of power. - 4

“And I think that women are much more idealistically based, much greater extent than men, that is my experience. I wanted to sit on the board to make a difference, to be able to influence but I experienced that there were a lot more men who were concerned about positioning, who were concerned about the game and about climbing...They were much more trained on this corridor talk and lobbying game than I was at least, when I started. But it was something I learned, with a very steep learning curve, and that is exactly what I think scares women from taking leadership positions. This is because you know that what you go into is a lot of pointed elbows and positioning. In these environments at the top, I experience this, and I think that scares women a bit. -5

“And men have traditionally been a lot tougher than us ladies, so I have come to the realization that I have to learn this game. Girls need to learn this game and understand this game. And be much tougher and you actually have to go into it on the guys' premises to learn this game and to survive in it. I do.”. -5

4.2.8 Champions or role models.

This is a theme three of the respondents talk about as important for the future of women in football clubs and organizations. They all thought that seeing women in leadership positions within football would open the eyes of other women to that possibility

“The female leaders, within men's football, must somehow pave the way because there is no one in front of them on the men's side. It is still the first generation of women leaders at club level.” -1

“I think it is important both in football but also for those outside, that they can see that it is possible to get far as a female leader in football. And I believe we are in the

middle of a change from the old-fashioned mindset that women know nothing about football and have nothing there and do. You see less and less of those attitudes and I think probably women to a much greater extent now than just a few years ago have much more respect. It probably comes from the fact that there are many women who have shown that they do well in leader positions in football. Therefore, I think there will be far more women in football in the future, but I also think that there will be an uneven distribution for a long time to come.” -3

“We need good role models that allow girls to also think about making a career in sports, professionally, I think that has been lacking in the past. So, girls have not seen any possibility really. I think role models is important.” -5

4.2.9 Media

When asked what other factors that might influence why there is so few women working and being in leadership positions within football media was a factor that was mentioned several times. Media attention in especially the men’s side is huge and some of the respondents thought that women might have bigger reservations and not so much of a wish to be in the spotlight as men do, due to lower confidence and the greater inclination to not offend anyone.

“In relation to the media. There are many who seek to be in the spotlight. For women it is a bit ambivalent and but for men ... who often have higher self-esteem... I think that might scare women away. I hear about journalists who are struggling to find women who dare to speak out. And I think it's tough sometimes too. To speak up about things that I know people get pissed off about or feel threatened by. Especially when they feel threatened by my communication and I know when it happens, and it's tough to stand strong then. -5

4.2.10 External influence or external power

“There is a combination of openness towards the surroundings and thus also openings for external influence in football clubs. Like external power influencing decisions to be made. Which might be a challenge” -4

One of the respondents emphasizes that external influence is seen and must be seen very much in connection with power.

“This is one of the things that can be challenging when working in a football club, possibly especially for women. That there are so very-very many who think very strongly about the job you do and the job the club does. And because the job is a public institution, they have the right to criticize in public, to mean things. Everyone has an opinion on football, and they have an opinion on the marketing department, and an opinion on the children's and youth department, and opinion ticket prices, and so on ... -4

“You have so many people around you that somehow know better than you all the time. So, you are almost undressed before you get started in such a role. And especially if you are a woman, you have to perform almost twice as well as a man to survive, I think. There is so many strong personalities, so many emotions and so many that thinks, means and says things about you as a leader in sports. Then it's tough to have a leading role. But at the same time when things are going well, it's fantastic.-2

“And you have to endure some chaos in a way if you want to become a leader in a football organization, at least at the CEO level. Everyone has an opinion on what one is doing. And that there are many forces going in all directions. And you have to be able to stand it. For example, the board can go in one direction and your employees in another direction, then you have supporters, media, players and then you are stretched in all directions. It doesn't have to matter if you are a woman or a man, but you have to be able to stand in a storm.-3

Several respondents bring up all the stakeholders and that all have opinions that you as a leader have to handle and live with. Some also argued that in general this could be more challenging for women to handle than men due to the fact that women often don't want to offend and satisfy everyone.

“I think probably women feel more guilty and have more conscience than men. And that can be more challenging. Because one cannot satisfy everyone. You will always get someone who is unhappy and then you have to somehow deal with it. Dealing with dissatisfaction. And don't let that affect you too much. -3

4.2.11 Interests

One point that many of the respondents wanted to make was that it probably had a lot to do with the general interest the population in Norway. That in general there are a lot more men interested in football than women. They underlined both the point that you need a deep genuine interest to want to stay and do a career in football over time. And fewer women probably wish and see football as an interesting job.

“I think it has a natural connection with the general population, that there are more men who are interested in football a women. And then there are more men who apply for jobs in football and eventually get leadership positions. As a consequence, there will be more men than women who have leadership positions. -3

“I think the main reason, or I guess the main reason, lies in interest. There are more men than women who have an interest in football and think it to be an exciting field. As simple as that.” -4

“If you are genuinely interested in football and woman then I do not think there is any obstacle to go further in football. But if you do not have that interest, it may limit the desire to stay for many years in football. Then it will require a little too much in terms of what you do and get back” -3

The importance of passion and genuine interest was highlighted by several of the respondents. This can be connected to the structural way that football organizations are built and that they demand a lot. But also, the individual’s preferences.

“One has to have a passion at the bottom line, as it is a lifestyle. You have to have a very strong drive to be able to have such a job overtime. -5

“ I think what hinders more women in football, something goes on structure and something goes on individuals...Often our reservations about things are also subject to structure. Type of election-period length, type of recruitment processes, type of formalities also further. It is both a structure perspective and an individual perspective.-1

“It's a lifestyle and not a job. And it requires so much of you as a private person. In a way, you have to sacrifice so much of your privacy that if you do not have the genuine

football interest over time, it will probably affect whether you stay in football or go elsewhere.” -3

4.2.12 Image

Especially two of the respondents talked about football organizations and clubs having a bad reputation or image. That this might affect and prevent women more when applying, staying and careering in football. This bad image was connected strongly with male dominance and power but also the economic situation and possibly work terms.

In connection to power it was also mentioned that this is mostly hidden, but sometimes through media the reputation of the clubs and organizations were damaged. Through media this power structures and battles might get picked up by women and then they don't wish to apply or have a career in football because of it. It seems to be caused by women are being more idealistic and that there is more prestige in working in football for men than women.

“I think women read a lot more between the lines compared to men, and we are a little more concerned with such things ... such as a culture and we probably consider many more criteria before we change jobs possibly. I also think there are a little more prestige for guys to work in football than for women” -2

“Football has a stamp on them for being “the boys club”. And “the boys club” clearly refers to a culture where the decisions are not made according to the formal structures but that the decisions are made in the back rooms by board members or external forces. So, if you are aware of this (power struggles and bad image) beforehand then it can defiantly be an obstacle from applying” -4

“Football has a branding job, a recruiting job, an employee branding job to do to make women want to join the clubs.” -4

“You read about uncertain finances and there are major economic challenges in sports. It may be that women are more concerned with applying to the safe and there have unfortunately been major financial challenges in many clubs in recent years. Women may be more concerned about it than men and when it is between two jobs, priority is given to the safest.” -2

5.0 Discussion

If I connect this data with the multilevel framework from (Burton 2015), that were also used by (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019), I can categorize different influential factors form data analysis in different levels of the framework and base my discussion around this.

5.1 Using a multilevel framework

I can argue that several of the influencing factors identified in the data analysis can be both categorized as a macro mechanism of the industry and an individual micro mechanism that's a barrier for the individual. What makes it macro level is that this on a general basis affects women more than men, but it is also dependent on the individuals own reflections and decisions making. We might also include the organizations at the meso levels, they can make decisions that contradicts the industry norms and are relevant for the individuals. So, all levels are interconnected. But the multilevel framework makes a good model for discussion of the influential factors.

5.1.1 Influencing factors that can be categorized as macro level

The macro level is the institutionalized practices of the sport society.

Recruitment; the data on recruitment and network hiring aligns with the article (Hovden 2010) who concluded that the use of personal and obviously very male-dominated networks was a key strategy in their selection process. I think this is a systematic macro level factor that excludes women.

Competency; due to there being a system that makes women never able to have the same experience and competency as a man I football even if she is a previous professional player because of the big gap in professionalism and commercialization between men's and women's football.

Work-life balance; can also be defined as a macro level. The fact that women have more responsibility at home or feel more responsibility for home might be outdated notion, but it seems that this in some degree is still the case and norm in society. This can be both

a macro mechanism but also an individual micro mechanism that's a barrier for the individual.

Male dominance; the respondents' reflections and answers show the stereotypes that exist in society and football today. It goes both ways as well. Women have stereotypes about male dominated football organizations and males have stereotypes about women working in football. Both might negatively affect the number of women in football organizations. Men do not think women can handle the job and women do not want to work with so many men. (Hancock og Hums 2016) looked into senior-level female administrators in sport organizations and found that stereotypes were a relevant factor affecting the career development of the women they looked into.

General interests; One point that many of the respondents wanted to make was that it probably had a lot to do with the general interest in men and women in Norway. That in general there are a lot more men interested in football than women. They underlined both the point that you need a deep genuine interest to want to stay and do a career in football over time. And also, fewer women probably wish and see football as an interesting job in the first place. This might explain why there is so few women managers at top football organizations but one respondent that had another story. The respondent highlighted that there weren't many paid options for previous professional women players and that this is the reason many of the women did not stay to work in football organizations after they have played professional. As the numbers show today nearly as many girls and boys play football so if this is the case interest might explain why there is fewer women than men but not the fact that there are so few.

5.1.2 Influencing factors that can be categorized as meso level

The meso level is looking at organizational operations, culture, stereotypes, access and treatment discrimination in organizations.

Power and external power; is an important dimension of gender and culture. Male dominant power relations are continually reproduced in everyday life as people do gender and reinforce gender stereotypes (Langnes og Fasting 2017). One responded wanted to emphasize the power and standing that football and positions high in football have. This aligns with some of the points made by (Hovden, 2012) about recruitment in boards in Norwegian sports.

Champions or road creators; In connection with the (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019) article that shows that male equity champions pave the way for both challenging existing stereotypes at an organizational level and the sport level. These equity champions of change enable women to feel valued in leadership roles, and further encourage and promote the acceptance of women in the governance of sport organizations (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019). One might also consider that these equity champions will be women as well as men in the future. As women gain better and more leadership roles in football organization along men with a younger attitude towards stereotypes and gender equity there might be both male and female equity champions paving the way for the next generation football leaders.

5.1.3 Influencing factors that can be categorized as meso level

Micro level is looking at individuals and their experiences and understandings. Looking at human and social capital and self-limiting behavior.

Image of football organizations; As the informants explained women tend to care more about culture, wellbeing and be more idealistically inclined. So, when the image of football organizations is more macho, and the media covers cases of power struggles and bad processes this might also be a factor that turns women away from wanting to work as managers in football organizations.

Work terms; The terms are highly connected to other factors the informants talked about like work-life balance, career paths, interest and image. This in connection to one another can be seen as a micro level mechanism that the individual values and consider in their decisions to work in top football management.

Media; All the media attention and bad media reputation might scare some individuals and especially women away, my informants mentioned that women more often want please everyone and not offend. And also have lower self-confidence than men this might explain why women see media attention more as an influencing factor when deciding where to work.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Summary

Gender equality in football is a topic with increased interest in later years. And leadership positions in football administrations are one place where the underrepresentation of women are highly apparent.

This master thesis takes a deeper look at female leaders in top Norwegian football administrations and their experience and reflections around the research question; Why is it so few female leaders in the administrative side of top football in Norway? The master thesis aim is to answer the research question through in-dept interviews with five women in Norwegian top football administrations.

The data form the in-dept interviews makes it possible to identify several influential factors or barriers which corresponds with the latest findings of researches related to the issue of gender representation in both international and Norwegian studies (Burton 2015) (Sotiriadou og de Haan 2019) (Hancock og Hums 2016) (Hovden 2010) (Hovden 2012).

The influential factors identified in this master thesis are; recruitment, competency, work-life balance, work terms, male dominance, power, champions or road creators, media, external influence, general interests and the image of football administrations.

I hope that this master thesis can contribute and shed light on the gender issue. Important with all issues and problems and a big step on the way to addressing them is getting more facts and bringing the topic to the agenda.

6.2 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The results cannot be generalized. No claim is therefore made that the data form these informants studied in at this time is representative of a larger population or at another place or time.

6.3 Further research

This thesis only has data from the perspectives of women that have made it into leadership positions in the administrative side of Norwegian football. It could be just as interesting to capture the perspectives of women that do not. Maybe they could identify better and/or different influential factors than the women that have made it. This could be an interesting other perspective. And you would not have to worry about the survivor bias.

I would also be interesting to look deeper into the power dimension or the fact that this has damaged the reputation of football. Is it the case? Are women more likely to go other places for leader positions because of the reputation or experiences of bad processes and power dynamics in football organizations.

Like one of my respondents said; "Power is almost a separate concept in this. What culture is there in football clubs for formal and informal power distribution. It's pretty interesting. It is almost a thesis in itself"-1

Further research could also be done on cases in other sports and contexts.

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8.0 Appendix 1: Interview information letter

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet om

«Hvorfor det er så få kvinnelige ledere i administrasjonen i norsk topp fotball?»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se på hvorfor det er så få kvinnelige ledere i norsk topp fotball. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med dette prosjektet er å få bedre innsyn i hvorfor det er så få kvinnelige ledere i norsk topp fotball. Prosjektet vil ha et organisatorisk perspektiv og se på organisasjonsstruktur og organisasjonskultur men også andre faktorer.

Prosjektet er en masteroppgave og problemstillingen i oppgaven er «hvorfor er det så få kvinnelige ledere i administrasjonen i norsk toppfotball». Forsknings spørsmål knyttet til problemstillingen vil være om dette kan begrunnes i strukturen, kulturen eller ved andre faktorer.

Informasjonen som samles inn skal brukes i min masteroppgave.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Høgskolen i Molde er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget av informanter er basert på kriterier som kjønn og stilling (eller tidligere stilling) i norsk fotball.

I forbindelse med dette prosjektet ønsker jeg å intervju 7 kvinnelige ledere i forskjellige lederstillinger i norsk fotball.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Dersom du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer dette at du deltar på et intervju og svarer på spørsmål knyttet til prosjektet. Selve intervjuet tar ca. 45 minutter og vil være digitalt. Intervjuet omhandler dine synspunkt om hvorfor det er så få kvinnelige ledere i norsk topp fotball. Mer spesifikt blir det spørsmål rundt struktur, kultur, andre faktorer og egne erfaringer. Det vil bli tatt lydopptak og notater av intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er bare studenten og veileder som vil ha tilgang til dine opplysninger.

Data og mobile enheter brukt i forskningsprosjektet er kode beskyttet og navn og kontaktopplysninger vil bli erstattet med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data.

Databehandler: Karoline Almvik

Deltakere vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon om dette ikke er ønskelig.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er juni 2020. Etter prosjektets slutt vil alle personopplysninger og opptak slettes.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,

å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,

å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og

å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høyskolen i Molde har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Høyskolen i Molde ved Hallgeir Gammelsæter. Tlf.: 91553738 Epost:

hallgeir.gammelsater@himolde.no

Vårt personvernombud: Merete Ludviksen. Tlf.: 71214118 Epost:

merete.ludviksen@himolde.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med: NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig

Hallgeir Gammelsæter

Student

Karoline Almvik

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «hvorfor er det så få kvinnelige ledere i norsk topp fotball?» og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

å delta i intervju.

at opplysninger om meg publiseres slik at jeg kan gjenkjennes.

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

9.0 Appendix 2: Interview guide

INTERVJU GUIDE

Hensikten med dette intervjuet er å få en bedre forståelse og grunnlag til å svare på hvorfor det er så få kvinnelige ledere i administrasjonen i norsk toppfotball. I intervjuet ønsker jeg å få ditt perspektiv og ditt synspunkt rundt dette temaet.

Svarene på intervjuet vil være en del av masteroppgaven min. Personlig er jeg veldig takknemlig for at du også vil hjelpe meg i dette prosjektet.

RQ: Hvorfor er det så få kvinner i topplederstillinger innen norsk toppfotball?

INTRO

1. Kan du fortelle litt om deg selv og arbeidsbakgrunnen din?

ORG. STRUKTUR

Def. organisasjonsstruktur: Struktur er det som definerer hvordan oppgaver i organisasjoner skal fordeles, grupperes og koordineres, og hvordan beslutningsmyndighet skal fordeles mellom ledere og ansatte i organisasjonen. Strukturen er formell og ofte skrevet ned (Jacobsen og Thorsvik 2013).

2. Kan du gi meg en kort oversikt over organisasjonsstrukturen i toppfotball-administrasjoner der du har erfaring fra?

3. Er det noe i strukturen som kan påvirke kvinner fra å søke fotballorganisasjoner?

4. Er det noe i strukturen som kan påvirke kvinner fra å få jobb?

5. Er det noe i strukturen som kan påvirke kvinner fra å bli og gå videre i karrieren?

ORG. KULTUR

Def. Organisasjonskultur: Kultur er et mønster av grunnleggende antagelser utviklet av en gitt gruppe når den lærer å mestre sine problemer med ekstern tilpasning og intern

integrasjon. Kulturen er vanskelig å studere da den eksisterer "i hodet" av medlemmene og medlemmene er ofte uvitende om den selv. Kultur angår grunnleggende antakelser, verdier, normer og artefakter (Jacobsen og Thorsvik 2013).

1. Kan du gi meg en kort oversikt over organisasjonskultur i toppfotballadministrasjoner?
2. Er det noe i kulturen som kan påvirke kvinner fra å søke på fotballorganisasjoner?
6. Er det noe i kulturen som kan påvirke kvinner fra å få jobb?
7. Er det noe i kulturen som kan påvirke kvinner fra å bli og gå videre i karrieren?

ANDRE FAKTORER

8. Hvilke andre faktorer tror du kan være relevante for hvorfor det er få kvinner i lederposisjoner i fotballadministrasjoner?
9. Hva tror du er hovedårsaken eller årsakene til at så få kvinner er i topplederposisjoner i norsk toppfotball?

FRA DITT SYNSPUNKT

10. Tror du kjønnet til en leder for fotballadministrasjonen har innvirkning på organisasjonen?

Hvis ja:

- Hvis en mann, hvilke innvirkninger tenker du på?
- Hvis det er en kvinne, hvilke innvirkninger tenker du på?

11. kan du se noen fordeler ved å ha begge kjønn representert i lederposisjoner i fotballorganisasjoner?

12. Tror du denne skjeve kjønnsfordelingen i lederposisjoner i fotball vil endre seg eller ikke? Og hvorfor vil den endre seg eller ikke?