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Philosophy of Sport in the Nordic Countries

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In 1972 I attended the Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress in Munich. For the first time science and sport were brought together in connection with the Olympic Games. The organizers presented a book *Sport in Blickpunkt der Wissenschaften (Sport from a Scientific Point of View)* that summarized history and state of the art of the main sport scientific approaches (41). The German philosopher Hans Lenk gave a presentation of a broad array of past and present interpretations of sport from a philosophic viewpoint (49). The congress in Munich and Hans Lenk's presentation of sport as a suitable philosophic topic became decisive for my own lifelong interest in philosophy of sport. Soon after the Munich conference some American philosophers convened to launch the Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport. In 1973 the first issue of *Journal of Philosophy of Sport* was published (35). In several ways 1972 was a turning point for philosophy of sport as a serious academic discipline and for my own interest in sport philosophy. From here sport philosophy found its way to Norway and through this and along several other roads to other Nordic countries.

In the following I will present an overview of philosophy of sport in the Nordic countries. The main focus will be on Norway. I think this is suitable, or at least defensible, since Norway arguably has the strongest position in sport philosophy among the Nordic countries. In addition I know the philosophy and the sport terrain best on my home ground. I have received valuable input from scholars both in Norway and the other Nordic countries that made it possible for me to write this article¹. I will start with a short presentation of the cultural and historical context and the general philosophical background before I move to philosophy of sport and present the main themes and developments, the leading figures, the institutional anchoring; courses and programs. I then discuss the size and health of the discipline, its international relations and challenges for the future. The presentation of the other Nordic countries is much shorter. I end by summing up some main lines in the picture.

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The Cultural and Historical Context of Norwegian Sport

In the middle of the 19th century Norway was one of the poorest countries in Europe. Today Norway is one of the richest countries in the world. It is regularly on top of lists of standard of living and life quality. Until around 1970 the population consisted of white Lutherans with a social democratic postwar history and a strong 'quest for equality'. Since then the population has increased due to heavy influx of immigrants and has now reached 4.8 million. Multiculturalism with its challenges and benefits is now on the top of the political and cultural agenda (104).

The Norwegian sport heritage goes back to the Viking era in the 9th to 12th century. Norwegian has two words for sport, 'idrett' and 'sport'. The first is the Old Norwegian word used by the Vikings. It meant 'strong deeds' and included not only activities like running, swimming and sailing but also the ability to ride a horse, make a poem and use a sword. It contained all the sides of a full-blown hero of the Viking era, similar to Homer's Bronze Age heroes (38; 111). Today the word 'idrett' can be taken in a narrow sense with a content similar to the word 'sport', but it can also be taken in a wide sense including play, games, dance, and outdoor activities. I will often in the following use 'idrett' in a wide sense since several philosophical studies in Norway have presupposed the wide sense and some interesting studies have focused on the special Norwegian form of outdoor activity called 'friluftsliv' (84; 107).

In the 19th century The Norwegian Military developed special ski companies. Skiing is probably the activity most closely connected with Norwegian identity. In the last part of the 19th century, English sport was introduced in Norway. Football ("soccer" to North Americans) spread very fast and is together with skiing the most popular sport in Norway, both as mass sport and elite sport (22; 38; 39). After World War II, three paradigms have dominated Norwegian physical culture:

1. *Olympic sports*. Norway has since the 1990s had a lot of success in elite sport and is according to some studies the most successful country in the world measured in Olympic medals per inhabitant (45). Success in winter sports contributes most but also in summer sports some Norwegians excel, like Vebjørn Rodahl who won 800 meter in the Olympic Games in Atlanta 1996. The Norwegian sports ideology is loaded with high ideals (if not always realities). Consequently Norway has been at the forefront in antidoping work (37).
2. *Mass sport*. This was developed as state policy shortly after World War II. Sport was seen as a suitable way of improving health and social welfare. Norwegians like to think of themselves as especially active. Recent studies and comparison with other countries show that even if Norwegians train and take part in sports more than other Europeans they have inactive jobs and transport patterns. Obesity is a growing problem also in Norway (22; 114).
3. *Friluftsliv*. The Norwegian word for being outdoors is 'friluftsliv' which literally means 'life in the open air'. People have access to a rich and diversified nature with woods, lakes, high mountains and a long coastline.

Hunting and fishing have long traditions and in the 19th century modern friluftsliv with hiking and climbing in the mountains was introduced. Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen explored extreme forms of friluftsliv in arctic regions. They were later followed by Kagge, Ousdal, Arnesen, Skog and many others. Friluftsliv is the most popular physical activity in Norway. More than 70 percent of the population hike regularly in the woods and 20 percent in the mountains. Friluftsliv and closeness to nature are important parts of Norwegian identity (84).

During the last 30 years a richer and more diversified sport culture has emerged. Commercial training centers, individual jogging, and the new extreme sports have challenged the traditional competitive sports that are organized in the umbrella organization Norwegian Sport Federation (22).

The Philosophical Context—Norwegian Philosophy

After the glorious Viking era Norway was for 400 years part of Demark. It gained its freedom and own constitution in 1814 but went into union with Sweden until the split of the union in 1905. For Norwegians Copenhagen was the academic and intellectual capital far into the 19th century even if the university of Oslo was established in 1811. Norwegian philosophy was during the 19th century dominated by Romantic and idealistic philosophy, especially of the Hegelian type. This changed in the 20th century with the empirically oriented philosopher Anathon Aall who was professor in philosophy at University of Oslo from 1908 to 1937. The young Arne Næss (1912–2009) became professor of philosophy at the University of Oslo in 1939. He came to dominate Norwegian philosophy in the next decades (82; 86).

- a. Næss introduced philosophy (history and theory of science) as an obligatory first part of all curricula at the University of Oslo and other Norwegian universities. All Norwegian academics read Næss' famous history of philosophy books.
- b. Næss introduced new international philosophy in continuing new waves. As a former associated member of the Vienna circle in the early 1930s he introduced logical empiricism in Norway. He then developed the Oslo school in empirical semantics that studied how ordinary people used words like 'truth'. He became internationally known for his studies in communicative behavior and logical analysis of meaning. He then developed his own version of skepticism, inspired by the pyrrhoic school and wrote on possibilism and pluralism in scientific endeavors. He finally turned to his favorite philosopher Spinoza and developed a new environmental philosophy called 'deep ecology' (79; 80; 99)). He thought of deep ecology as a common base for different approaches. His own version was later called ecosophy T (The T standing for Tvergastein, the name of his mountain cottage where he wrote his later works). Næss advocated that in principle there should be egalitarianism in the biosphere. All living beings have the same value as knots in the huge web of life (80).
- c. Næss developed views that inspired specific social practices and forms of political action. His studies of Gandhi led him to nonviolence as an

ideal. Together with others he protested heavily and nonviolently in the Mardøla demonstrations in 1970 against the taming of a famous waterfall for hydroelectric production. The picture of Arne Næss went all around the world as he was carried away by the police. Næss was a sport person. He was an expert climber, among the best in Europe in his young days, setting up new routes and developing new styles and techniques. He made two expeditions to Tirich Mir and also other trips to Himalayas and continued with climbing all his life. Climbing and philosophy was a combination not uncommon in Norway. Peter Wessel Zapffe and Sigmund Kvaløy Setereng also combined enthusiasm for climbing with environmental philosophy. There is also a strong philosophic undertone in Nils Faarlund's work as an educator and mountain guide in the Norwegian Mountain School (84; 103). Næss was not only interested in climbing but developed his own playful versions of skiing, boxing, and tennis and has in several ways been important for the development of Norwegian philosophy of sport (78; 81).

Næss was a dominant figure in Norwegian philosophy but other views emerged in the 1960s and onwards. Several philosophers were inspired by phenomenology and hermeneutics. A central figure was Hans Skjervheim with his criticism of the idea of objectivism in social science. Instead he advocated an interactive and reflective approach to 'the study of man' (82). Since the social scientist is not only a spectator but a participant in the society s/he studies it is impossible to use the same methods in social science as in natural science. The Neomarxists, inspired by critical theory and the Frankfurt School, similarly challenged the idea of a neutral social science. Science is always part of a web of power and serves the interests of the elite. The leftist philosopher Rune Slagstad consequently attacked Næss' ties to logical empiricism and his support of a quantitative social science modeled after the ideal of positivism (82). Næss answered by denying that he was a naïve positivist and took up debates on both phenomenology and neomarxist issues, even Maoism. Næss inspired many by his openmindedness that made it possible to combine analytical philosophy and Spinozistic deep ecology. The philosophical development in the last 30 years in Norway, at least at the universities, has been mainly inside the analytical tradition. The two leading philosophers have been Dagfinn Føllesdal and Jon Elster. For many years Føllesdal divided his time between the universities at Stanford and in Oslo. He is an expert on logic as well as Husserlian phenomenology (36). Elster is famous for his studies of rationality and irrationality in social science (30; 31). Presently he has a prestigious professorship at College de France in Paris. The leading philosophical milieu in Norway presently is the "centre of excellence" at University of Oslo with a program called "Mind in Nature" (102). It signals the Norwegian attachment to nature and combines the strength of modern neuroscience with analytical philosophy.

The Development of Philosophy of Sport in Norway

In 1975 I defended my master thesis in philosophy of sport at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences after having finished undergraduate studies in philosophy in 1968 at University of Oslo and graduate studies in theology in 1969 at Norwegian

School of Theology. I then went on with doctoral studies in Tübingen. In 1971 I decided to turn to sport sciences and took a masters degree in 1975 at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. Arne Næss had been one of my teachers at University of Oslo. He was a member of my master degree committee in 1975 and later became a life long friend and partner in sport as well as in philosophy. Through my master thesis sport philosophy was addressed as a suitable academic topic at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. Several students became interested. After some years of teaching outdoor education and risk sports I became professor of social sciences in 1985 with teaching responsibilities in philosophy of sport, ethics, and theory of science. My research interests went much wider including sociological and psychological empirical studies. Through the early 1980s, I supervised master students with interest in philosophy of sport. One of them pursued his interests further than the others. Sigmund Loland took his master degree in 1986 and finished his doctoral work in 1990. He was the first student who graduated from the new doctoral program at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. On the committee was Arne Næss, Knut Erik Tranøy and myself. This meant that sport philosophy was already tied to an international network. Tranøy was a student of Wittgenstein and had been his personal friend. Næss had many ties to international philosophy and I had contact to philosophy in Oslo, Tübingen and Berkeley. Sport philosophy continued to grow. Loland went on to teach alpine skiing at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences but after having finished postdoctoral work in philosophy of sport, his position was changed to a professorship in philosophy of sport in 1994. The consequence of this was that at a relatively small and specialized sport science institution with 800 full time students and 600 part-time we have two professorships in philosophy of sport. Few, if any other institutions in Europe, have anything like that.

Main Themes and Leading Works in Norwegian Sport Philosophy

It is fair to say that Loland and I have had the central positions in Norwegian philosophy of sport. I will give a presentation of each of us.

My own philosophical path was inspired by Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Næss. Wittgenstein's idea of language games inspired my studies of 'games' in sport. I later used formal game theoretical tools in the von Neumann/Morgenstern—tradition to analyze doping in sport as various forms of doping games. Heidegger's phenomenology was decisive for the idea of a holistic understanding of sports activities. From Næss I adopted the broad empirical interest, the analytic approach and the importance of environmental issues. My path has the following stations and bookmarks:

- a. My own experience as teacher and instructor in friluftsliv and risk sports invited me to ask philosophical and empirical questions like "Why do people take risks? Why are some people more willing than others? What is the motivation and background for risk sports? How are risk sports developed as part of social processes? Can taking risks be morally defended?" The questions resulted in development of a general model for explaining risk

- taking in sport (5) followed by empirical studies looking at personality profiles of elite athletes in risk sports compared with sports with lower risk levels. We studied personality profiles and risk taking patterns among Everest climbers (10). Together with researchers from different countries I studied physiological and psychological reactions among novices and expert skydivers during a jumping session (20). I also looked at the role of personality in relation to psychological and physiological reaction patterns. Risk sports grow and develop inside social and cultural patterns. Why do risk sports grow and extreme sports become popular in late modernity (17)? How can risk sports be understood philosophically? In one article I tried to defend the right to take risks, including the right to take up BASEjumping (14). In another recent article I use Heidegger's idea of Being-in-the-world to understand what is going on in the first skydive (18). I think this shows how empirical work and philosophical understanding can go well together when trying to understand the deeper aspects of sport.
- b. Another central area of interest is elite sport. Also here empirical studies of Norwegian Olympic athletes were followed up by analysis of philosophical aspects. We studied the very best Norwegian athletes in different sports to examine standard of living, life quality, career development and motivation (21). This led to philosophical analyses of the role of chance, the role of perfection and striving, the ethical limits in elite sport (12; 19).
 - c. Also mass sport has caught my attention. Empirical studies of activity patterns and value systems in different types of physical activity have been followed by philosophical analysis of the role of value in sport and different types of values in different sport forms (11).
 - d. One of the central problems in the ethics of sport is the use of doping means and other artificial means of performance enhancement. I started with several studies of 'doping games' where I used game theory to analyze the strategic interaction between athletes in 2-person and n-person situations and with varying externalities and constraints (6; 7; 8). This was followed by suggestions on how the doping problem could be handled. The game theoretical analyses suggested two solutions. Either doping should be accepted, but under medical control. Or doping should be banned but with much stricter controls, harder punishment and a revision of how sport competitions and tournaments were staged. Together with co-researchers I followed up with empirical studies to see if a theory of strict game theoretic preferences could predict actual use of doping (94). In a recent study we looked at the broader background for use of doping. We compared elite athletes with the general population to see if they were more likely to accept new genetic possibilities related to both performance enhancement and body modification techniques (23). The ethics of the new genetic technologies has been addressed also in more theoretical and ethical studies (13).
 - e. With background as teacher of friluftsliv and outdoor activities I have been interested in the philosophical aspects of friluftsliv and the human relation to and responsibility for nature. In several studies I used Arne Næss' idea of 'deep ecology' as framework for my analysis (9; 79). Whereas IOC and the international sport system tried to develop a more environmentally sound

sport Arne Næss wanted to go beyond this shallow ecological approach. With inspiration from Arne Næss I found that a more radical and deep ecological approach is needed to transform sport in a much deeper way and at all levels, in accordance with the idea of ‘simplicity in means and richness in ends’ (81).

- f. I was introduced to phenomenology at the University of Oslo and later in Tübingen (1970) and Berkeley (1981). Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger have been central reference points in studies of human movement in general and specific forms of sport like skydiving (15; 16; 18).

Let us then turn to my good friend Sigmund Loland and his sport philosophical story.

Loland studied pedagogy, Nordic language, history of ideas and ethics, and sport science in Stavanger and Oslo, and took his master’s degree at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences in 1986 in philosophy of sport. Loland then spent a year studying the philosophy of sport at Penn State University under guidance of Scott Kretchmar. In his doctoral work from 1990 Loland further pursued an interest for sport ethics and especially the idea of fair play, its historical roots and present condition. In his PhD thesis he presents a normative theory of fair play in contemporary sport (54). John Rawls is a central source of inspiration in addition to elements of preference utilitarianism within a deontological framework. Loland develops on the one hand a contractualist interpretation of ‘fairness’ and ‘justice’ in sport, and on the other hand a preference-utilitarian account of play indicating how experiential qualities can be maximized among the parties involved. In competitions at their best, there is a dialectical relationship between fairness and play constituting “the sweet tension of uncertainty of outcome” (Fraleigh) which is seen as the phenomenological structure of the good sport experience. Arne Næss and Knut-Erik Tranøy were together with me on the evaluation committee. During his postdoctoral studies Loland was a visiting scholar at Stanford University. In 1995 he became full professor in philosophy of sport. Loland has written extensively and has been member active in international sport scientific organizations. He has been president of IAPS and is the current President-Elect of European College of Sport Science. He is also a member of WADA’s Ethical Review Board. Loland has been on a series of editorial boards, doctoral committees and academic advisory boards. He has written text books and edited popular books in Norwegian (52; 64). Most of his production is in English, both in terms of books and in scholarly journals. His main scholarly interest has been in the following areas:

Loland’s work in fair play has an ambition to restore it and interpret the ideal in a systematic and critical way and make it viable also today (54). He has also been interested in testing the empirical consequences of the idea and defend it against objections (53; 59; 61; 63; 66). One of the serious problems related to fairness in sport is the doping issue. In several works Loland has looked at the doping problem, from various sides, and especially discussed the new genetic technologies that threaten future sports (57; 58; 65).

With inspiration from Næss and others Loland has presented a deep ecological view on sport and discussed how sports can become more ecologically sound by changing basic rules and presuppositions (56; 60). He has also maintained that what he calls a narrow interpretation of the Olympic motto *citius, altius, fortius* and focus on records threaten sport in various ways, making it more unhealthy and

extreme. The vulnerability thesis maintains that some sports are more likely to develop contraproductive outcomes. Attempts on restricting the hard core record logic with its focus on records seem difficult. The record logic seems deeply rooted in at least Western conceptions of sport and sporting excellence. An alternative and more constructive approach is to transform vulnerable sports, such as track and field sports, with more complex performance requirements where records and absolute measurements are less important (58). Fair play has also close connections to the history and ideology of the Olympic movement. In several works Loland has discussed the relevance of Olympism and looked into the basic ideas of Coubertin (51).

Another research interest of Loland's is the relationship between sport and technology. In several articles and conference presentations, he has examined the possibilities to distinguish on normative grounds between valuable, acceptable and non acceptable technologies in sport. Loland offers both an optimistic view of sport as a sphere for exploring the possibilities of the interaction and sometimes merging of the body and technology, but points also to dystopian views in which sport can become technologized and dehumanized (57; 67)

Loland has a background in alpine skiing as coach and teacher. He has used this background to raise phenomenological and epistemological issues, some of them of a more general kind. In an article in *Journal of Philosophy of Sport in 1992* and in a later article on snowboarding he uses the view from the outside and the view from *the* inside, biomechanical analysis and phenomenological description, to get closer to an understanding of movement (55; 62). In 2009, Loland received the IAPS Distinguished Scholar Award.

Breivik and Loland have a longstanding commitment to the dissemination of philosophical perspectives on sport and exercise and have taken part in numerous interviews and discussions in the public sphere, in newspapers and on radio and TV. In addition they have served and serve on various national and international committees (WADA, IOC, Norwegian Sport Federation) dealing with the ethics of sport, doping, and the development of performance cultures.

The Present Situation—The Emergence of New Scholars and Contributors

It has of course been important to have two full time positions in philosophy of sport at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. In a broader perspective several people in sociology and history of sport have also contributed to the growing interest in sport philosophical issues. Some of these have positions at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences but not all. Jan Ove Tangen has used a philosophical and sociological perspective inspired by Niklas Luhman to understand system theoretic aspect of sport participation. Kolbjørn Rafoss has used neomarxist approaches to study participation and class differences in the use of sport facilities and arenas. The historian Matti Goksøy has contributed to conceptualizing important aspects of modern sport and has studied the sportification process since the end of the 19th century (38). Bjørn Tordsson has tried to find the 'soul and heart' of Norwegian friluftsliv through the last hundred years using phenomenological and other approaches.

Also outside the sport scientific sphere some people approach sport with philosophical tools. Rune Slagstad is a leading Norwegian intellectual and specialist in history of ideas. His study of sport and its development in Norway from the 19th century to the present day uses several philosophical ideas to get a grip on sport as a social and cultural phenomenon (87).

Philosophers should be rulers according to Plato. At the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences philosophers become rectors (Breivik 1999–2005, Loland 2005–present). Nevertheless there has been time to attract talented young students at doctoral level. They have contributed with new philosophical studies of good quality.

Loland's doctoral student Klaus Bergander tested the idea of fair play from a system theoretical perspective (2). Ella Ursin Steen is finishing her doctoral work on dance and aesthetics this year building on Kant and Schiller. Knut Løndal has just finished his doctoral thesis about children's play using Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenological approaches. In 2009, Dag Vidar Hanstad defended his thesis on antidoping politics and globalization including an article on the ethics of the WADA whereabouts system coauthored with Loland. Several of my doctoral students through the years have included philosophical aspects in their studies like Bjørn Barland's study from 1997 of bodybuilding (1). Titus Tenga from 2001 about globalisation and Olympic sport in Tanzania (98), Gunnar Repp from 2001 about Nansen, his ideas and influence on Norwegian friluftsliv (85), and Dagmar Dahl 2008 about the understanding of body, movement and sport in Christianity, Buddhism and Islam (24). Other doctoral students have used more pure philosophical approaches in their work. Vegard Fusche Moe's doctoral study *Understanding Intentional Movement in Sport: A philosophical inquiry into skilled motor behavior* (2007) was breaking new ground using phenomenology to understand intentional movement in sport. Moe's critique of cognitivism and his use of both phenomenological (Dreyfus) and analytic (Searle) philosophy reveal the importance of background knowledge in intentional behavior in sport (69; 70). In a similar manner the doctoral work of Øivind, F. Standahl used insights from phenomenology, especially Merleau-Ponty, to understand the being-in-the-world of handicapped wheel chair users (88).

Presently I have weekly meetings with a strong group of young doctoral students that produce good papers. Jens Birch combines the new advances in neuroscience with philosophical analysis to understand phenomena like phenomenal consciousness, memory and intentionality in skilled human movement (3; 4). Jørgen Eriksen studies decision making in sport and military settings and uses Dreyfus' phenomenological theory to study the role of consciousness in the exercise of skill by elite athletes. The study includes the moral reasoning processes in stressful decision situations (33). The bodily performance aspect seems parallel in sport and the military. Eriksen uses the well-known skill-model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus and shows how elite athletes and expert soldiers operate at similar levels and under the same constraints morally and physically (34). Anders McDonald Sookermy uses a paradigm with focus on embodied, situated and nonscholastic learning to replace the traditional dualistic and scholastic paradigm. Leif Inge Magnussen's project looks at learning in sea kayaking (48) and Tommy Langseth studies the constitution of socialities in surfing and BASEjumping. The role of risk taking is central (67).

The open and good communication at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences between philosophers and people in social and cultural sciences has resulted in common book projects both about the problem of pain in sport and about disability (42; 68).

Philosophy of Sport—Size and Health of a New Academic Discipline

Philosophy is one of the smaller disciplines among the sport sciences. How small is it and how big can it become in number of courses, programs and scholars? As already mentioned, philosophy of sport was introduced to Norwegian School of Sport Sciences in the middle of the 1970s and this institution is still the core institution in sport philosophy in Norway. Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NSSS) has around 800 full time students and 600 part time students. We have about 60 doctoral students covering all, or most of, the various sport scientific disciplines. Even if NSSS is the leading and specialized sport science institution, altogether 18 general universities and colleges offer sport science courses at undergraduate level and five institutions offer sport science at masters level. At NSSS, courses in sport philosophy are mostly offered together with sociology and history as parts of social science courses. Sometimes the course presents common and integrated topics but more often the subdisciplines present their own special topics. Philosophy of sport is taught to all first year students and then the second and third year as part of undergraduate programs in cultural and social sciences. Philosophy of sport is a possible specialization at master and doctoral level. Philosophy of science is presented at bachelor level and then more fully as obligatory courses for all students at master and doctoral level. Research ethics is also part of the curricula. As well, sport philosophy, philosophy of science, and ethics are part of the curricula in sport science at other institutions in Norway even if in relatively small doses.

The activity and health of sport philosophy as a discipline is not bad. Since we have two full professors in philosophy of sport at NSSS the philosophy of sport as a subject area has been growing both at NSSS and other institutions. The number of course hours has remained stable the last 10 years. Whereas due to the course structure at undergraduate level, we have had some difficulties in attracting sport philosophy students at master level, the number of good doctoral students has increased. This is partly due to influx of students at doctoral level coming from other institutions. Therefore philosophy of sport is in relatively good health, but it will be a mandatory task in the near future to build a more coherent and attractive course program taking the students through undergraduate level and up to master level in higher numbers than now.

The research activity and the production of books and articles are in good shape and the total output from teachers and students is increasing. It is promising that scholars and researchers from general universities and colleges find sport philosophical questions interesting and worthy as academic topics. Young philosophers write books about the philosophy of goalkeeping (Kvalnes) (46) or long distance running (Gotaas) (40). The cultural elite is debating sport issues, especially related to football that reveal interests of a philosophical nature. Leading

novelists like Fløgstad, Solstad, and Michelet have ongoing debates about the heart and soul of football. It seems that the cultural elite and also the popular media increasingly dive beneath the surface to uncover sport issues with philosophical content. Typically debates of elite sport and its (lack of) ethic are attracting a lot attention. There are some good reasons for sport philosophers to be optimistic about the future.

Where is work in sport philosophy published? As a small country Norway has always looked abroad, to the international community. That is especially true for the academic world. Nevertheless there are good possibilities for publishing philosophy of sport articles in Norwegian journals, both in sport scientific journals (*Moving Bodies*), and general philosophical journals (*Norsk Filosofisk Tidsskrift (Norwegian Philosophical Journal)*, *Etikk i praksis (Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics)*). The website for sport sciences operated by the sport department at University of Malmö is also a good opportunity for publishing sport philosophical articles and reviews in Nordic languages as well as in English (113).

Most of the serious work in sport philosophy is published in international peer reviewed journals and books. *The Journal of Philosophy of Sport* and *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* are the two central journals. But other cultural and social science journals are possible publishing channels. That is especially true if we take sport philosophy in a wide sense.

The International Milieu and the Future

Philosophy of sport in Norway was triggered by the international sport scientific conference in Munich in 1972. The relation to the international milieu was important as a starting point and it was strengthened as I and later Loland started to attend the annual conferences of the Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport from the mid-80s and onwards. Both Loland and I became members and later presidents of PSSS/IAPS and we have both been members of the JPS board. PSSS had its annual meeting in Oslo in 1997. Norwegian sport philosophers now regularly attend sport philosophy conferences, publish in international journals, and are active members of international sport philosophy organizations. International scholars have been visiting NSSF as guest lecturers, members of committees and as visiting scholars. Also in writing there has been close collaboration with international milieus. Loland and I have been invited to write in books and journals and books have been produced with Norway as a base (42; 68).

Even if the sport philosophical milieu in Norway has developed positively the last 10 years there are challenges ahead. We need to keep the two positions in philosophy of sport when I retire in a few years. It is imperative that we at NSSF develop a better and more coherent program in social sciences with courses in philosophy of sport. We need to attract more talented doctoral students from sport sciences as well as from general philosophy. It is important to build strong groups and having regular seminars. We need to connect better with the other Nordic countries and keep up the strong ties to other international sport philosophy milieus. Talented students and scholars should spend more time abroad and profit from leading scholars and groups in the mother discipline and in philosophy of sport. We need to publish articles of high quality in international leading journals

and books. It seems that it is time to move outside philosophy of sport and also publish in general journals since there is a growing interest in studies of, for instance, neuroscience, consciousness and movement.

It may be a wise strategy to focus and concentrate our strengths in areas where we already are quite strong. One area is sport ethics where especially Loland has used much time to develop several exciting approaches. Another area is the study of movement where both phenomenological, analytical and neurophilosophical approaches have been used by the group lead by myself. In Norway we have, as mentioned earlier, a good tradition for combining philosophy with empirical work. Anathon Aall and Arne Næss were representatives of this approach. The philosophical studies and research projects at NSSS have also in many instances combined philosophy with empirical investigations. It seems that this is a fruitful strategy that should be followed up also in the future.

Denmark

Denmark has a population of 5.4 million people, half a million more than Norway. In contrast to Norway it is flat and covers a much smaller area (106). Denmark has to a much higher degree than Norway been influenced by gymnastics movements, both the German (Turnvater Jahn) and the Swedish version (Ling's gymnastic). Troup gymnastic is still a popular and important part of the Danish physical culture. Denmark has also a strong tradition in team sports, especially handball and football, both on the male and female side. Since Denmark has little or no winter sports it has concentrated on indoor sports and summer sports. It has had excellent tennis players, yachtsmen and runners (109).

Søren Kierkegaard was by far the most prominent Danish philosopher in the 19th century. Like the other Nordic countries Denmark had a strong influence from neo-positivism in the first part of the 20th century (82). Influences from French philosophy and radical political groups around the newspaper *Informationen* have made the picture more complex the last decades. Denmark is closer connected to Europe than the other Nordic countries and has in many ways been a gateway through which new ideas have spread to the North. Today there is an interesting and strong milieu around Dan Zahavi (100) and the Centre for Subjectivity Research in Copenhagen. The center is relevant and exciting also from a sport philosophical view (101). Other leading philosophers like David Favrholt, Steen Busck and Paul Ferland have also touched sport in their writings without giving encompassing presentations.

There are few sport philosophers, taken in a narrow sense, in Denmark. But in a wider sense philosophically relevant research in the humanities and social sciences has especially focused on folk sport and mass sport, like (Danish) gymnastic, play, outdoor activities (*friluftsliv*) and dance. Henning Eichberg is a central figure here with a huge production of historical and philosophical studies of folk sports. Two issues of *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* were recently devoted to his work (25; 26; 27; 28; 29). Dance is also a central area of study. Helle Rønholt, Lis Engel, Helle Winther and Charlotte Svendler Nielsen have presented an interesting study of dance from a phenomenological and body-centered perspective (32). Niels Kayser Nielsen and Søren Damkjær focus on problems around body,

movement and society (77). Ejgil Jespersen who is a specialist on Merleau-Ponty, has discussed various forms of situated and nonscholastic learning (28; 42). Jørn Møller has studied play from anthropological perspectives. Denmark has also developed a milieu that study doping from various perspectives. Verner Møller is a central figure here. He is well-known for his critical views of antidoping (74; 75; 76). Despite many interesting sport philosophical perspectives on sport and physical culture from various scholars and groups, Denmark has until now not developed any courses or programs in sport philosophy at university level. The future development of sport philosophy in Denmark will, in my view, depend on one of the central institutions (København, Århus, Odense, Ålborg) taking responsibility for developing courses inside relevant programs and with well-qualified teachers. A full time professor and some doctoral students could lead to a take-off.

Sweden

With 9 million people Sweden is the 'big brother' among the Nordic countries. It has a landscape that is similar to Norway with coastlines, woods and mountains. It is the only Nordic country that has had a vertical social ordering that accepted an upper class and nobility. During the last two world wars it stayed neutral and has a culture heavily influenced from the continent; Germany and France (105). In sport Sweden has performed very well. Like Denmark, it is excellent in handball and football but even more so in ice hockey where it has for a long time had one of the best teams in the world (108). They have had excellent runners and performers in athletics. They have done very well in winter sports, especially cross country skiing and alpine skiing (Ingemar Stenmark). They have produced several elite tennis players (Björn Borg, Mats Wilander, and Stefan Edberg, for example) and have been very good in yachting (Volvo ocean race) as well as golf (Annika Sorenstam). Even if they developed the Ling gymnastics in the 19th century it is now the modern sport and the outdoor life (*friluftsliv*) that dominates (112).

In philosophy Sweden went from idealism in the 19th century to logic and empiricism. Both Norway, Finland and Sweden were strong in logic. In Sweden the Uppsala School with Axel Hägerström as the leading figure developed conceptual analysis as the main tool. The value nihilism of Ingemar Hedenius and others implied a reduction of values to subjective preferences (82). This tradition lead to a strong focus on utilitarianism in ethics and social philosophy which we also find in Swedish sports philosophy. In contrast to Norway and Finland, Sweden has not had one strong institution concentrating on sport sciences. Instead sport philosophy and other sport sciences at master and doctoral levels are possible specializations inside general programs. This is changing now as several universities, like *Högskolan i Malmö*, develop strong programs in sport sciences.

In Sweden a handful group of people have been especially central in the development of philosophy of sport. Most of them come from general universities with philosophy programs. Torbjörn Tännsjö and Claudio Tamburrini have been teaching general philosophy in Gothenburg and are now at the University of Stockholm. Christian Munthe holds a position in Gothenburg and Kutte Jönsson is in the sport science program in Malmö. Swedish sport philosophy has had

ethics as the main focus. Tännsjö is a consequentialist utilitarian with interesting and provocative views on many questions, especially in the biomedical area. In sport philosophy he has criticized elite sport for forwarding fascistoid attitudes among the spectators and in the general public (95). Both Tamburrini and Ingemar Persson have responded with other views and to a certain extent defended modern mass spectator sport (83; 89). Tännsjö and Tamburrini have worked together on several occasions, starting debates, editing books and holding provocative views on several issues. They both argue for egalitarian and inclusive sport organizations and sport events (91; 96). Consequently sport competitions, even at elite level, should not have separate classes for men and women. Also Kutte Jönsson has been active in this debate and written about gender issues and the possible promises of cyborg athletes (43; 44).

Tännsjö and Tamburrini have played central roles in the debate about doping and the new genetic techniques (90; 93; 97). Both hold liberal views and, especially, Tamburrini has repeatedly argued for a liberalization of doping use, including new genetic techniques (90; 92). Munthe is also a leading expert on issues concerning genetic technologies and issues about doping tests (71; 72). Tännsjö, Tamburrini and Munthe have more and more discussed general biomedical issues and seen sport ethical issues in a broader ethical perspective (92; 97).

Sweden has sport science programs on several universities at undergraduate level but has only recently established special sport science programs at graduate and postgraduate levels. Sport studies at doctoral level were until now mostly located in the mother disciplines. For instance was sport pedagogy strong at the University of Gothenburg. Also sport philosophy had for some time a foothold in Gothenburg where Claudio Tamburrini had a course in Sport and Ethics. During the last 5–6 years the college in Malmö has taken a leading role in sport philosophy with Kutte Jönsson as a central person. Sport philosophy is part of the sport science program that has a social scientific profile. The milieu in Malmö is responsible for the website idrottsforum.org where Kjell Erikson is editor and plays a central role. It seems that the most promising place for further development of sport philosophy in Sweden is Malmö. The sport philosophy in the general philosophy programs is totally dependent on the interests of specific persons, like Tännsjö and Tamburrini, and therefore very vulnerable.

Finland

Finland has a population larger than Norway and a little smaller than Denmark with 5.2 million inhabitants. Finland is a country dominated by large woods and lakes. Whereas people in Norway, Denmark and Sweden can understand each other (sometimes with some difficulty) the people in Finland belong to the Finnish-Ugric language group with a language that is totally different from the other Nordic languages. Many people in Finland speak Swedish that is learnt in school. Finland has had Russia as its big neighbor and was for a long time part of Russia but gained its independence in 1917 after the Russian Revolution.

The popular image of Finns is one of *sisu*, of competitive spirit and drive. In sport they have excelled in skiing, especially ski jumping and cross country skiing. They have been excellent in athletics especially in javelin throwing and running.

They are almost at the same levels as the Swedes in ice hockey and have produced some of the best race car drivers in the world (110).

Finnish philosophy has a strong tradition in logic and empiricism with Eino Kaila as a central figure. In recent times Georg Henrik von Wright, who was friend of Wittgenstein, has been the most important philosopher. Von Wright has written on a broad array of topics. His books about humanism and about the idea of progress had influence in broader circles (82).

Finland has, like Norway, built one strong institution for sport sciences that is dominating the scene. The University in Jyväskylä is especially strong in health sciences, but has had strong programs and strong research groups in biomechanics as well as pedagogy and sociology of sport. But little focus has been directed toward sport philosophy. The most well-known sport philosopher in Finland is a theologian working at the theological academy in Åbo. Mikael Lindfelt has written a monograph about sport and ethics where he discusses both the historical roots and the present situation in sport ethics (50). This was followed up in a project where he interviewed 21 elite athletes about their views of career and life. A few other researchers have appeared on the sport philosophical scene like Timo Klemola from University of Tampere who has a background as instructor in Eastern martial arts and sports. He is interested in the role of and the phenomenology of the moving body (115). It seems to me that Finland has good possibilities of developing courses and programs in sport philosophy in Jyväskylä where it could thrive in good company with sociology and pedagogy.

Conclusion

Philosophy of sport has been developed around the world along two different lines. One line runs through general philosophical departments where single philosophers with an interest for sport have contributed generously. This started with Hans Lenk in Germany and with Paul Weiss in United States already before 1970. The other line runs through sport science departments where philosophically trained sport scientists develop programs and get chairs and positions in sport philosophy. Scott Kretchmar at Penn State is a typical representative of this development. Among the Nordic countries only Norway developed along the second line. In addition Norway concentrated its resources and built one strong school in sport sciences, like Jyväskylä in Finland. This opened the possibility for positions also in sport philosophy and it meant an institutional anchoring of sport philosophy that is lacking in the other Nordic countries. However in Sweden the group in Malmö with Kutte Jönsson and others, is developing courses, websites and publications in sport philosophy that are promising.

Language is a challenge for the Nordic sport philosophers. Even if English is learned in school one never develops the proficiency and elegance of expression of native English speakers. On the other hand, since the Nordic countries are small they are used to looking abroad in matters of economy, politics, sports and science. Whereas German or French sport philosophers have a large enough audience at home the Nordic philosophers need to turn to the international arena and use English. The development has definitely gone in this direction as can be seen on the list of Nordic authors in international books and journals during the last years.

Sport ethics has been the central thematic focus in the Nordic countries. That is true if we look at the list of publications of the leading sport philosophers in Norway and Sweden. Especially in Sweden ethics has been the main interest and with a utilitarian approach. In Norway we have seen combinations of sport philosophy with empirical sciences that have showed to be fruitful. In Denmark and also Norway, phenomenology, alone and in combination with other approaches (consciousness studies, neuroscience), has been quite strong and the interest is growing. It seems that the fundamental study of human movement both from an epistemological and phenomenological viewpoint will be strong in the near future.

I see at least two developments in general philosophy and ethics that will be beneficial for philosophy of sport in the future. One is the advances in neuroscience and the growing philosophical interest in embodiment and human movement both among phenomenologists and analytic philosophers. This has made philosophy of sport and the philosophy of human movement much more interesting and central. General philosophy journals like *Inquiry* now publish articles that could as well have been published in philosophy of sport journals. The other development is the new genetic sciences which make enhancements and body modifications of various types genetically possible in the near future. Sport is a testing ground and a tempting arena for first use of such enhancements. The ethics of sport is the place to discuss the various new enhancements and their ethical legitimacy. Both the phenomenology of the moving body and the ethics of enhancements have a closeness to empirical work that I think is very fruitful. As mentioned the Nordic countries, and especially Norway, has a good tradition for such closeness and cooperation between hard philosophical analysis and solid empirical work.

Note

1. I have received valuable information from my colleague Sigmund Loland. Claes Annerstedt, Claudio Tamburrini and Kjell Eriksson helped me with information about the sport philosophical situation in Sweden. Henning Eichberg and Ejgil Jespersen provided important input for my article from Denmark. I thank them all for their helpful information and suggestions.

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