Purpose & Questions

The purpose of the thesis is to understand the academization of sport in Sweden, from a perspective of knowledge. I.e. the process by which an area of knowledge has come to be viewed as scientific. Research questions:

- What knowledge is being produced through sport research (social science) in Sweden, and why?
- How does the three bodies of knowledge above relate to each other?

Theory

The thesis is based on, and departs from, a perspective of knowledge, as formulated by Berger & Luckmann in *The Social Construction of reality (1966)*. Where as knowledge is viewed as a social construction, and emphasizes the importance of the social context in which knowledge is produced, communicated, renegotiated and so forth.

Institutional- (Powell & DiMaggio 1991) and organizational theory (Slack & Parent 2006) is adopted when interpreting the results and trying to understand why the results appear as they do. I.e. in order to understand the academization process of sport in Sweden at a deeper level. Key concepts are: institutionalization, path dependency and organizational ideal types and complexity.

Method

Multiple methods are adopted, such as: document and content analysis, analysis of existing public statistics and informal interviews (Bryman 2002). Both archetypical and genealogical methods (Ritzer 1996) are utilized in order to uncover and understand the academization of sport in Sweden. Data sources are:

- Part 1, Sport research: Sport dissertations, journal articles, research reports, and interviews with key-informants.
- Part 2, Sport Education: Admittance statistics, curricula, political propositions and education websites.

Results

Sport Research

Sport research within the social sciences first kicked off in Sweden during the 1970:s, and has increased significantly ever since. Historically the production of knowledge has been dominated by the disciplines of psychology, sociology, history and sociology. They still dominate although other disciplines have become more and more engaged in sport research over time. During the first decade of the new millennium one fifth of the sport research was produced outside the four dominant disciplines. As research is in other words becoming more and more differentiated.

In 2009 the number of sport educations had risen to 13, admitting close to 800 students annually. In order to better understand the educations, and what kind of knowledge they mediate, the literature within every education, and every one of its orientations, was analyzed. The goal was to identify different types of sport educations. Every orientation within every education was also treated as a separate education due to their varying content. Through the analysis, 22 separate educations, within six different types of higher sport educations could be identified, see table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Sport educations, and students 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>275 48,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71 12,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32 14,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26 3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25 4,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sport Labor Market

There have been employees within sport organizations for a long time in Sweden. However, there have never been as many as today. The number of employees within sport organizations in Sweden have increased dramatically in later decades, more than doubling in amount between 1993 and 2011. The number of sport organizations with employees have increased even more rapidly, tripling the number of organizations with employees during the same time period.

When analyzing employment ads issued by sport organizations, a number of professional roles, for which knowledge demand looked remarkably multifarious, could be identified. Examples of the most common ones are: sports coach, sports coach, general manager, finance manager, fitness instructor, personal trainer and communications officer. The professional roles operates within different organizational areas (see figure 3.1), and can be divided in to four groups depending on (a) if specific sport knowledge or education is required, (b) if the role is connected to the organization’s core business, and (c) if the professional role is on strategic or operative level.

Conclusion

Sport organizations have existed for a 100 years, sport research within social science has been conducted for 40 years, and higher sport educations have been conducted for around 20 years. Following the different lines of history the bodies of knowledge within research, education, and sport organizations inevitably develop differently. The different bodies of knowledge within a vacuum, they are established, developed and reproduced in social and ideological contexts. There is very little movement going on within the academization in Sweden today, even though there are many sport management educations, and professional roles, demanding such knowledge. There has been a development within sport research in later years, but the expansion is mainly seen in areas irrelevant to Sport management. Sport research in Sweden is highly institutionalized, and is to a large extent reproducing itself. The path dependency research seems to be experiencing ought to be addressed in order to forward the development of sport research, to better fit the needs and demands of sport educations and sport organizations. How? That’s a political issue...

References