

# Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis

Studia Sociologica V (2013), vol. 1, p. 115–128

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## Do the Media Dominate the Sport – and Does Anyone Care?

### Abstract

Research into the media and sport has been rather poor over the years. At least, that has been the case until recently, when the field suddenly saw a rapid growth in importance. One reason for this increased interest is the financial impact sport has on society and the impact the media have on society: this is indisputable. The market for sport media is gigantic and an active component of the financial situation of sport related to society. Sport and the media depend on each other. Even if the academic field of media and sport is growing, the main focus is usually on how the media present sport from different perspectives – for example, the gender perspective. One focus of this article is the interrelation between the media and a social or cultural phenomenon, in this case the media and sport. The term mediatization as a conceptual tool in analyzing such processes will be tested and discussed. I will discuss the problems with the concept and provide an overview of previous research on the relation between the media and sport. I will further discuss the possible effects if the field of Sport Communication was to be neglected by the academic world. My main study will be of the literature about what has been done and what will be done. I will also look at how the field is addressed in Sweden and Norway and then compare the results with examples from Germany, the USA and Great Britain.

**Key words:** mediatization, media and sport, sport communication

### Do the media dominate the sport – and does anyone care?

Research into the media and sport has been rather poor over the years. At least, that has been the case until recently, when the field suddenly saw a growth in importance. One reason for this increased interest is the impact sport has on society and the impact the media have on society: this is indisputable. The market for sport media is gigantic and an active component of the financial situation of sport related to society. What are the possible effects if the field of Sport Communication was to be neglected by the academic world? One focus in the article is the interrelation between the media and sport, which I demonstrate by giving examples of previous research and by showing how some researchers have analyzed the interrelation.

But I believe that there remains much research to be done if we want to cover all aspects. To understand how Sport Communication is addressed and in what subjects the research can be conducted, I first must investigate in what subject the field has a given place.

## Method

There is a field called Sport Communication. To study how Sport Communication is addressed in Sweden, I studied what Sport Studies, and Media and Communication Studies are in Sweden. They are the subjects where most research into Sport Communication is being conducted, since in Sweden Sport Communication is not a subject in its own right. I analyzed the homepages of different universities to see how they interpret Sport Studies in their website presentation of the subject. To compare with other countries, I analyzed three university websites in Norway, where Sport Studies exist. As well, I analysed the German website for Deutschen Vereinigung für Sportwissenschaft (DVS). Also, a comparison was made between three British university websites. The same method was used to analyze how Media and Communication Studies is interpreted on different university websites in Sweden. In my comparison with other European countries, I studied the websites in Norway at the three universities where Media and Communication Studies exist, as well as two websites of universities in Germany.

To find out how Sport Communication is addressed in Sweden and how this compares with other countries in Europe, I also searched for courses in Sport Communication in Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and Norway, as well as courses close to or part of the field. To find courses and programmes within the field in Great Britain, I used [www.studyin-uk.com](http://www.studyin-uk.com) and in Sweden [www.studera.nu](http://www.studera.nu). Each presents all courses and programmes offered in the respective country. In Norway I searched the different university websites, whereas in Germany I used [www.studieren.de](http://www.studieren.de). I also reviewed published research within Sport Communication. The USA treats the field very differently. Therefore I ran a comparison with the USA, using examples from both Sweden, the rest of Europe and the USA. Included in the research material are articles and books published in the field of Media and Communication Studies and Sport Studies. Sport Studies can have many perspectives in the field of Sport Communication.

## Sweden and Sport Studies

In Sweden, we have a problem understanding Sport Studies, one subject where Sport Communication could fit in. Of ten universities, only two concretize how they interpret Sport Studies. Herein lies a problem. Some institutes of higher education place focus on Pedagogy, whereas others place it on Psychology or Physiology. Saying that, some place no focus on Physiology and others place no focus on the Social Sciences. Instead of providing information about how the universities interpret Sport Studies, the different universities provide information only about those programmes that include sport. The Sport Studies scholars Joakim Åkesson and Anna

Maria Drake have produced a report on the higher education programmes that exist in Sweden in the field of sport (Åkesson, Drake 2010). The report confirms my results. Many universities have Sport Management as an option, but very few teach the same content. One consequence of the vague interpretation of Sport Studies, I believe, is that Sport Management sometimes gets confused with Sport Communication. In the USA, the same problem does not exist in terms of the differences between Sport Management and Sport Communication, since both are established fields<sup>1</sup>.

### Sport Studies: Norway and Great Britain

The history of Sport Studies in Germany (*Sport Wissenschaft*) is similar to that in Sweden. Not until the late 1960s was Sport Studies acknowledged as an academic subject and at first only at some universities in Germany. In the 1970s, the subject grew. The content of the subject was very much focused on Pedagogy and Physiology. Over recent decades, a need has arisen for other sport-related subjects such as *Sportpsychologie*, *Sportsoziologie*, *Sportgeschichte*, *Sportökonomie*, *Sportpublizistik*, *Sportpädagogik*, *Sportdidaktik*, *Bewegungslehre*, *Trainingslehre*, *Sportphilosophie* and *Sportethik*. The problem has been to unite them all under one subject. According to DVS there is no agreed content for the subject Sport Studies<sup>2</sup>. The public statement from DVS is that institutes throughout Germany face a huge challenge in making sure that sport today is acknowledged as being part of the cultural sphere<sup>3</sup>. In Norway Sport Studies (*idrettsvitenskap*) is like a big umbrella encompassing different subjects, even if Pedagogy, Physiology and Sport Medicine seem to have their major focus from a historical and contemporary perspective<sup>4</sup>. There has recently been an evaluation of the research within Sport Studies in Norway and the results show that although the research is excellent, it is not innovative. The subjects within the field of Sport Studies that received the highest evaluations are Sport Medicine, Sport Biology and Social Science<sup>5</sup>. Similarities exist between Sweden, Norway, Germany and Great Britain in the way that their universities present the subject Sport Studies. In Great Britain, just as in Sweden, the subject Sport Studies was not always presented; instead, the programmes were presented. To understand what the students were studying, you had to look at the content of the programme. The two websites in focus in this research both presented Sport Studies in a similar way to the universities of Norway and DVS in Germany. One

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<sup>1</sup> Homepage of Ashland University, <http://www.ashland.edu/departments/communication-studies>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Homepage of DVS, <http://www.sportwissenschaft.de/index.php?id=33>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Homepage of DVS, <http://www.sportwissenschaft.de/index.php?id=86>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Homepage of Norwegian School of Sport Science, <http://www.nih.no/forskningsprosjekter-ved-nih/>, <http://test.nih.no/studier-2012/Bachelorprogrammer/basisar-i-idrett/?id=45>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Homepage of Research Council of Norway, [http://www.forskningsradet.no/no/Nyheter/Forsker\\_mindre\\_pa\\_eliteidrett/1253976582430?WT.ac=forside\\_nyhet](http://www.forskningsradet.no/no/Nyheter/Forsker_mindre_pa_eliteidrett/1253976582430?WT.ac=forside_nyhet), accessed August 26, 2012.

feature of the subject is that it includes a variety of other subjects. When analyzing the different British university websites, I found the way in which Stirling University presented Sport Studies to be very interesting: 'Sports Studies is a multi-disciplinary subject area – grounded in theory but with a strong emphasis on practical application'<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, Aberdeen University presented the subject in this way: 'Sports Studies (Exercise and Health) is an inter-disciplinary degree delivered by specialists in psychology, exercise sciences, basic biomedical sciences and public health'<sup>7</sup>. Here may lie one of the reasons why there is confusion with the interpretation of the term Sport Studies. Is it a multi-disciplinary or an interdisciplinary subject?

## Sport Management vs. Sport Communication

As I wrote earlier, there is sometimes confusion in Sweden about what Sport Management is and what Sport Communication is. In the USA, there are programmes for both Sport Management and Sport Communication. In Sport Management the content of the programme varies highly, but it usually involves courses in the legal aspect of sport management, management and organization of sport, sport governance, sport facility planning and management, event management and a variety of other courses (Pedersen, Miloch, Laucella 2007, p. 100). Sport Communication has grown to such a level today that it can now be taken as a major<sup>8</sup>. It is important to make the distinction between communication from a Sport Communication perspective and a Sport Management perspective. For instance, if a programme in Sport Management has a major in Economics, the communication focus is economics and the market. This is not the focus of a programme in Sport Communication – or at least it should not be. Sport Communication works mainly with PR, information, media and journalism. These two perspectives are often mixed up in sport organizations. Sport Management perspective is very important; however, the risk with research conducted from only the management field of study and economics field of study is that sport and its organizations do not have knowledge about Sport Communication and will adapt completely to the media in the hope of increasing financing and sponsorship, and will lose the chance to develop the sport in cooperation with the media.

## Media and Communication

Media and Communication Studies is a rather young field and an interdisciplinary subject that has struggled to find its academic relevance. Universities in Sweden are generally agreed as to the content of the subject today. Within the

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<sup>6</sup> Homepage of Stirling University, <http://www.stir.ac.uk/undergraduate-study/course-information/courses-a-to-z/school-of-sport/sports-studies/>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Homepage of Aberdeen University, [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/ugrad/study/subject.php?code=sports\\_studies&prog=science](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/ugrad/study/subject.php?code=sports_studies&prog=science), accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Homepage of Bradley University, <http://com.bradley.edu/sportscom/ourprogram/>, <http://www.ashland.edu/programs/sport-communication>, accessed August 28, 2012.

subject, mediated communication and non-mediated communication in society are studied, as are their importance and functions. The differentials between the universities seem to be the level of focus they give to non-mediated communication. The websites of the University of Bergen, the University of Oslo and the University of Trondheim – the only universities in Norway where Media and Communication can be studied – show that the focus is on mass media<sup>9</sup>. The subject in Norway is also called *Medievitenskap* – Media Studies – and not Media and Communication Studies. The similarities, meanwhile, between Scandinavia and Germany are obvious. In Great Britain, the interpretation of the subject is similar to that in Sweden and Germany, and to a certain degree to that in Norway as well. Different universities seem to have chosen to focus on either communication in different fields or the media from a different perspective. There seems to be a general agreement about the subject in Europe.

### **Does Sport Communication have academic relevance? What is its position in Sweden?**

What is Sport Communication? Sport Communication is, as I see it, Media and Communication Studies but with a sport study perspective. Sport Communication is, according to the Sport Communication scholars Paul M. Pedersen, Pamela C. Laucella and the Sport Management scholar Kimberly S. Miloch, 'defined as a process by which people in sport, in sport settings or through a sport endeavor share symbols as they create meanings through interaction' (Pedersen, Miloch, Laucella 2007, p. 100). In 2013, SAGE Publications, in alliance with the International Association for Communication and Sport, will release a new scientific journal called *Communication and Sport*. The scholar in Ethics and Communication as well as the editor of the journal Lawrence Wenner of Loyola Marymount University describes the first focus of the journal as follows: 'C&S publishes research and critical analysis from diverse disciplinary and theoretical perspectives to advance understanding of communication phenomena in the varied contexts through which sport touches individuals, society, and culture. C&S examines both communication in sport and the communication of sport by considering sport in light of communication processes, strategies, industries, texts, and reception'<sup>10</sup>.

This quotation I find especially significant for Sport Communication. The prerequisites for study and research about communication *in* sport are knowledge of sport organizations, sport organization cultures and sport environment perspectives, where sport has very significant traits. The prerequisites for the study of communication *of* sport are not as strict, as I believe they depend on the character of the research. Sport organizations are different in structure from other organizations

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<sup>9</sup> Homepage of Oslo University, <http://www.uio.no/studier/program/medievitenskap/index.html>, accessed August 26, 2012; Homepage of University of Trondheim, <http://www.ntnu.no/studier/bmv>, accessed August 26, 2012; Homepage of University of Bergen, <http://www.uib.no/studieprogram/BASV-MEVI>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Homepage of SAGE, <http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal202136>, accessed August 26, 2012.

mainly because of the combination of professionalism, amateurism and idealism. In these terms, sport organizations are similar to cultural organizations.

In Sweden and Norway, there is no translation of the term Sport Communication. The field does not exist in its own right. This does not mean that there is no research about the media and sport. Within the field of Media and Communication Studies, sport has been ignored for a long time; however, over the last ten years, an increasing amount of research has been conducted into sport within the field of Media and Communication Studies. The main object of study, meanwhile, is the media with sport as an example and secondary object. The research focus is on the communication about sport or elements related to sport. One question that is often asked is how a sport is represented in the media. There are also questions with a gender perspective and questions about the symbolic context of a sport through the media. These are just some examples. My point is that the focus has been on the media and not on internal aspects of the sport. There are similarities in Sport Studies. Research has been conducted into the media and sport within the field, but mostly it is with the media as the main object and sport as the secondary object.

In Sweden, Sport Management programmes are very popular. The market, as well as the academic world, has seen the need for academic education for sport organizations and the need for academic skills for work with sport-related management. What is more, they have found the academic relevance of Sport Management. Although the media have a huge impact on society and although there is a dual need existing between the media and sport, it is not possible to major in Sport Communication in Sweden because the subject does not exist. This demonstrates how the academic world in Sweden values Sport Communication. In Sweden, there is currently only one programme that includes Sport Communication, but plans are to discontinue it. At some universities you can find courses with 7.5 ECTS with Sport Communication – or at least a Sport Communication related content. The situation is more or less the same in Great Britain. In Germany you can study Sport Communication at both the Bachelor and Master levels, but there are very few places. In the USA, the situation is different. There you can major in Sport Communication and the field itself is much more developed than it is in Europe. One proof of this is the amount of academic literature about Sport Communication and related fields that is being published. Sport and media networks in the USA are another such proof, as well as the number of academic journals that publish articles about Sport Communication and related fields.

Gradually, we are seeing how Sport Communication is finding more of a place in some European countries. At the German Sport University in Cologne, for example, they have a Master programme in Sport, Media and Communication Research. The masterportal.eu presents the programme as being ‘one of the few programmes combining communication sciences with sport and geared to research and practice’<sup>11</sup>. At the Hochschule of Fresenius, students can register for a B.A. in *Medien-, Sport- und Eventmanagement*. This shows that the field is rare but at least starting to become acknowledged, which is in contrast to the situation in Sweden and Norway.

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<sup>11</sup> Homepage of Masterportal.eu, <http://de.mastersportal.eu/students/browse/programme/12335/sport-media-and-communication-research.html>, accessed August 26, 2012.

## Why we need to acknowledge Sport Communication

The media require knowledge about sport and sport requires knowledge about the media. The current impact of the media on sport is huge. Sport is, from different perspectives, seen as a popular culture, not only because of the sporting act itself and the narrative structure of sport, but also because of sport media. Sport is televised and broadcast on the radio. The market for books related to sport (be they about sport and sporting heroes, or be they written by sportsmen and sportswomen) is huge. According to the Sport Studies scholar Mathew A. Masucci, there are 700 000 hours of radio sport coverage in the USA despite the dominance of TV since the 1950s. Masucci also states that some newspapers in the USA today devote 50% of their space to sport; further, the sport sections are read by five times more readers than any other newspaper section<sup>12</sup>. With new media, digitalisation and social media, sport is being allocated even more space.

The media/cultural scholars are mostly interested in the central role that the media have in producing, reproducing and amplifying many of the discourses that are associated with sport in the modern world. The Sociology scholar John B. Thomson argues that the media do not only have a role in the process with existing cultural forms, but they also have a role in the transformation of these forms (Boyle & Haynes 2009, p. 16). In the book *Power Play*, the writers provide examples of how the media influence society in many ways and how the media use sport to demonstrate processes and tendencies in society. One example describes how the media can run a political story about right-wing extremism, noting how football has become a recruitment area for those with such political leanings; a second example describes how newspapers in the UK use football in their travel sections (Boyle, Haynes 2009, p. 21).

Sport media fit perfectly into modern society. As technology began to evolve at an ever-increasing pace and as capitalism grew, so did linguistic diversity. This was the perfect combination for sport media to be introduced and to grow (Boyle, Haynes 2009, p. 21). What is not stated in *Power Play* is the importance of nationalization in the world at the same time and the way in which sport became a battlefield between nations and ideologies throughout the years. The competition between capitalism and communism is maybe the best example. We have also been able to see the importance of sport for new countries and countries with difficulties. During the 2012 European Football Championship, there were discussions in the media about the importance of success for nations in financial crisis. This blog from the University of Navarra in Spain exemplifies this: <http://reputation-metrics.org/><sup>13</sup>.

Sport has always had an impact on society. Mediated sport increases this impact. The scholar David Rowe discusses whether or not sport has cannibalized much of media culture. He uses reality shows as examples where contestants compete with one another: here, television has become sport. Reality shows might be seen as one side of the spectrum of culture; on another, there is the Nobel Prize ceremony.

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<sup>12</sup> PDF made by Mathew A. Masucci, <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/masucci/SportMass-Media251.pdf>, accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Blog by MRI Universidad de Navarra, <http://reputation-metrics.org/>, accessed August 26, 2012.

The prize was established in 1901, five years after the first modern Olympic Games, where also a cultural Olympiad was included. Rowe argues that echoes of sport can be heard in the 'prize culture'. With the television broadcast of the Nobel Prize ceremony, there is a sense that the Nobel Prize winners are in some kind of sporting contest (Billings 2011, p. 100).

The Communication scholars Daniel Beck and Louis Bosshart write in their article *Sports and Media* that 'in themselves, sports provide reliable mirrors of societies. They reflect social values that can extend from individual values like discipline, asceticism, and self-control to collective values like sportsmanship and fairness, and generally accepted values like the belief in effort and productivity, the advantage of competition, and – following the logic of capitalism – the survival of the fittest. [...] Sports, to a certain degree, can even replace a function of religions by defining a specific set and hierarchy of values. [...] Sports can also support social and cultural identities and the construction of national identities' (Beck, Bosshart 2003).

### Other research in Sport Communication with the media as the main object

Even if Sport Communication is not acknowledged as a subject in its own right, research is still being conducted in the field, mainly with the media as the main object and sport as the secondary object.

That the media often are the main object and sport the secondary object is apparent from the following examples.

When Marianne Kleberg, a scholar in Media and Communication Studies, analyses the gender perspective within her field, she uses sport to exemplify the presentation and representation of genders, and the power relations between the genders and between who decides the content of the media<sup>14</sup>.

Ulf Wallin, a scholar in Media and Communication Studies, has focused on the history of sport journalism in the daily press (Wallin 1998).

One article by Göran Eriksson, a scholar in Media and Communication Studies, discusses the meaning of the media in structural discrimination, using sport as an example<sup>15</sup>.

The Sport Studies scholar Aage Radmann has written articles about the media and hooliganism both in the traditional and new media. He recently published the article *Att äga en (huligan-)berättelse, Mediers konstruktion av fotbollsvåld (To own a (huligan-) story, The construction of football violence by the media)*. An analysis of how the media construct football violence<sup>16</sup>.

In her doctoral thesis entitled *Nationen på spel (The nation at games)* the Sport Studies scholar Helena Tolvhed investigates how men and women are presented during Olympic years (Tolvhed 2008).

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<sup>14</sup> PDF by Swedish National Agency of Higher Education, [http://www.hsv.se/download/18.539a949110f3d5914ec800083398/isbn\\_41-3.pdf](http://www.hsv.se/download/18.539a949110f3d5914ec800083398/isbn_41-3.pdf) accessed August 26, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Sou 2006, p. 21, <http://books.google.se>, accessed August 28, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Peer review online forum Sport Studies, [http://www.sportstudies.org/content/vol\\_3\\_2012/097-120\\_vol\\_3\\_2012\\_radmann.pdf](http://www.sportstudies.org/content/vol_3_2012/097-120_vol_3_2012_radmann.pdf), accessed August 28, 2012.

Peter Dahlén, a scholar in Media and Communication Studies, has carried out research about the media and sport. He has the media as the main object, but also discusses the interrelation between the media and sport in his book *Sport och medier (Sport and the Media)* (Dahlén 2008). He has also written the articles *An Exemplary Model: The Religious Significance of the Brann 2007 Norwegian Football Championship as Told by the Media* (Krövel, Roksvold 2012, p. 171); *The 'Nordic Latinos' meet the 'Mountain Primates': The Press Coverage of Football Matches between Norway and Denmark, 2002 and 2003*<sup>17</sup>.

### **Will the printed book conquer other media?**

As a result of digital media, we now have a new media landscape. It is no longer only the owners and producers of newspapers, television channels and radio stations who can produce media. Today the user of media can produce media too. Radmann calls the phenomenon 'prod-users' (Krövel, Roksvold 2012, p. 171). This is very important research and since development is extremely rapid, it is important that the academic world follow the development and take risks. Risks are important, but maybe too rare in the research of new media. What will happen tomorrow? Will we use Facebook? What about all the other social media – Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, Blogg, Viddy, Pinterest: will they grow and exist side-by-side? Or will the printed book conquer them all? No one knows and therefore it is important that the academic world dare take risks and conduct research into social and new media that it does not know will either exist tomorrow or leave any impact on the future. Since sport has a huge impact on society, it is important from several perspectives that there be research like Radmann's.

### **Research with sport as the main object**

Scholars who study the media and communication *in* and *within* sport need a background in both Sport Studies, and Media and Communication Studies or at least a relevant background. Such an approach might sound bold. However, the reason for requiring this of researchers who are studying the media and communication *in* and *within* sport is that they must know both the significance of the prerequisites of the media and the criteria that characterize sport organizations and the media. You cannot study sport organizations with the same expectations as you do other organizations.

There are some examples of research about communication in sport where sport is the main object, but more is required, especially in Europe. One example is the article by the American Media and Communication scholar Wade Nelson: *The Mediatization of BMX-Freestyle Cycling*. He describes how the success of the BMX-bicycle sport came initially as a result of the media; however, the media also brought about its decline. One of his points is that a dual need exists and that there is a dual

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<sup>17</sup> Homepage of the scientific forum idrottsforum.org, <http://idrottsforum.org/site/researchers/dahpet.html>, accessed August 28, 2012.

relation between sport and the media – a co-dependent relationship between the two (Nelson 2010).

The American scholar in Communication and Management John Fortunato wrote an article about how the American government allows the NBA to be on the media's daily agenda at the expense of individual teams (Fortunato 2001).

In 2002 Knut Helland, a scholar in Media and Communication Studies, Norway, researched how the Norwegian national football team worked with the media. His research led to questions such as whether it was because of how the team handled the media that they were removed early from the tournament (Helland 2002). In 2007 in his article *Changing Sports, Changing Mass Media Appeal, the Sports/Media Complex and TV Sports Rights*, Helland focuses on the co-dependent relationship between the media and sport by analyzing both the development of the media in relation to sport and the development of sport in relation to the media, while pointing out the importance of commercialisation in this case (Helland 2007).

There should, I believe, be more research about the media and communication with sport as the main object; yet consider the many possibilities that exist for research into new media where sport is the main object. If the field of Sport Communication was established in Sweden and all other European countries more research projects with sport as the main object would probably be initiated.

### **Mediatization and medialization: are they sustainable terms in the research field of Sport Communication, and how can these terms be conceptualised?**

In relatively young fields such as Media and Communication Studies and Sport Studies, there are often new terms that become popular to use. In recent academic articles and books, the term *mediatization* is used. The term was very popular in the academic world throughout the last decade, and there are discussions about how it should be translated and how it should be used – indeed, even if it should be used at all. In his article *Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics*, the Swedish Media and Communication scholar Jesper Strömbäck writes as follows: 'Two concepts that have been used to describe the changes with regards to media and politics during the last fifty years are the concepts of mediation and mediatization. However, both these concepts are used more often than they are properly defined'<sup>18</sup>. Some scholars hesitate to use the terms due to linguistic issues. Other scholars prefer to avoid them because of problems with interpretation. The question is, will the terms survive or are they simply a passing fad? In an email dialogue with Dahlén, one of the most experienced scholars in Scandinavia in the field of Sport Communication, we interpreted the term *mediatization* as follows: 'Mediatization is about how the logic of the media controls different social activities'<sup>19</sup>. It is an analytical term meaning the investigation of the relationship between the media on the one hand and social and cultural differences over a period

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<sup>18</sup> Homepage of SAGE, <http://hij.sagepub.com/content/13/3/228.abstract>, accessed August 28, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Email from March 9, 2011.

of time on the other<sup>20</sup>. This is an interpretation that many scholars agree upon. Simone Rödger, a scholar of Science, writes in one of her papers that the theory and concept *medialisation* explain the changing relationship between the media and science. She argues that there should be a more profound conceptualization of the terms and that focus should be put on the differences: '[...] an increasing media attention for scientific issues on the one hand and an increasing orientation of science towards the media on the other hand'<sup>21</sup>. Nelson writes in his article *The Mediatization of BMX-Freestyle Cycling* how the sport was dependent on the media in the process of *mediatization*. He argues that there is a co-dependent relationship. The uses and translations of the terms are confusing. The terms are both used and differently interpreted. Which term describes the dependency of cultural and social institutions on the media, and which term reveals the co-dependent relationship? My aim is to find the term that analyzes the co-dependent relationship. These terms are mostly used within the field of Media and Communication Studies. The question from a Swedish perspective is whether both *mediatization* and *medialisation* are translated as processes where cultural or social phenomena are dependent on the media and adjusted to the logic of media. Or is it the case that one of the terms is sometimes mistranslated and that one means the adjustment to the logic of the media and the other illustrates the double dependency? Or are the concepts of *medialisation* when compared with *mediatization* totally clear? Further, does the problem exist only in Sweden? Is it simply a translation problem – or is it both a translation problem and a problem with the concept of the terms? According to the Swedish Media and Communication scholar Kent Asp, it was he who founded the theory of *medialisering* (*mediatization*, *medialisation*) in his doctoral thesis in the 1980s. However, he wants to make clear that the idea that society adjusts to the media is not his original idea: that it likely comes from Harold A. Hinnis. Asp explains that the foundation of the *medialisation* process is like the face of Janus. It is both the obvious power the media have through their impact on politics and society and the invisible power where the adjustment is the operating mechanism. Asp admits a problem with the term and states it is 'lost in translation'. Asp himself translates the term *medialisering* as *medialization*, but he notes that scholars translate the term as *mediatization*, *mediation* and *medialisation* (Asp 2011). Here lies the biggest problem. Therefore, the ultimate question in this article is as follows: is it relevant in Sport Communication to use the terms *mediatization*, *mediation* and *medialisation*, or is the ultimate way to work with these terms simply to neglect them? Helland succeeds in writing the article *Changing Sports, Changing Media Mass Appeal, the Sports/Media Complex and TV Sports Rights* for Nordicom (Helland 2007) without once using any of them.

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<sup>20</sup> Email from November 11, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Homepage of SAGE, <http://pus.sagepub.com/content/18/4/452.abstract>, accessed August 28, 2012.

## Discussion

The result of my investigation is that the field of Sport Communication is very poorly treated and not yet acknowledged. One question of the article is if the field has academic relevance and the other is: Why do we need more research in Sport Communication with sport as the main object? The answer is because sport has such a huge impact on society and is at least financially very important to the media; also, the media have a huge impact on society. It is therefore important that we research what processes are involved within sport and the processes between sport and the media. Another aspect is that sport has a huge impact on society and therefore an impact on the health of people in society. Here, important research needs to be done. One example of research would be to investigate *how* sport can work itself into the media space without becoming totally dependent on the logic of the media. Some scholars argue that the media have the power and that sport must adapt to the logic of the media. Is the battle for power already over? Have the media already taken charge and is the thought of a dual-need relationship between the media and sport only a utopia? That is not my opinion. At least as long as the media need sport for financial reasons, then sport will have an impact on the media. What consequences would there be if the media had all the power? One of the news criteria is that of the sensational (Weibull 2008, p. 305). If the media want more and more sensation, one result would be that sport might become more and more dangerous to the athletes. Another criteria is negativity (Weibull 2008, p. 305). The two criteria: negativity and sensation are combined in all TV programmes and movies on Youtube showing car crashes in Formula I and other motor sports. And since the athletes are role models for others, mostly younger people, we can imagine what health problems may occur. And here the academic field of Sport Communication becomes important. Within the field, you can investigate both *how* sport has an impact on the media and *if* sport has an impact on the media and its consequences. The academic world has the moral duty to investigate this and to communicate the result to the sporting world and the world at large for reasons of social development. What would happen to sport if the media had all the power and what would the result for society be? Here lie the difficulties. The academic world has to acknowledge the whole field of Sport Communication and make it visible. Today this is hard. Where is the field? And how do you make it visible when much of the research is being done within Sport Studies, a field that has its own interpretations and visibility problems? And how do you make the whole field visible within Media and Communication Studies when the researchers prefer to study the media as the main subject? First of all people within Sport Studies are working together internationally to find an agreed interpretation of the subject. Secondly, Sport Communication needs to be fully acknowledged by the people within the field of Media and Communication Studies and the field must be established in Europe and the rest of the world as it is in the USA. The next problem is knowing which theories and terms to use within Sport Communication research. This was just one of the reasons why I wrote this article – it gave me the chance to discuss the terms mediatization and medialisation, terms that are interpreted and translated by many. There is much important research still to be done within the field of Sport Communication, and maybe the answer to what terms to use is to conduct research to find new concepts and specific terms for the field of Sport Communication.

In my research, I have seen how sport organizations have adjusted sport arts to the logic of the media in the aim of increasing popularity. In my work as a sports commentator, I have further seen how the media allow sport or sporting persons to decide the terms of a broadcast or interview. These are just two examples of this co-dependent relationship that is constantly changing and therefore always a relevant research object within the field of Sport Communication.

Finally, do the media dominate sport and does anyone care? I believe that if no one cares in the future, then there could be financial and health consequences for society, which is why it is so essential that the academic world shows this important area more interest.

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## Czy media zdominowały sport – i czy kogoś to obchodzi?

### Streszczenie

Do tej pory badania związków mediów i sportu były raczej niewielkie. Ale od niedawna można zauważyć wzrost ich znaczenia. Jednym z powodów tego zainteresowania jest wpływ finansowy sportu na społeczeństwa i skutki wpływu mediów na społeczeństwo: to od dawna jest niepodważalne. Rynek mediów sportowych jest gigantyczny i stanowi aktywny składnik sytuacji finansowej sportu. Nawet jeśli pole badań akademickich mediów i sportu rośnie, główny nacisk jest zwykle położony na media; w jaki sposób przedstawiają sport z różnych perspektyw – na przykład perspektywy płci. Tematem tego artykułu są wzajemne powiązania między mediami a sportem. Termin mediatyzacja został wykorzystany do analizy tych związków. W tekście omówione są koncepcje i podane informacje o dotychczasowym stanie badań związków mediów i sportu, a także wskazane są skutki zaniedbań badawczych w tym zakresie przez świat akademicki. Podstawą badań jest dostępna literatura na temat tego co zostało osiągnięte i co będzie zrobione w Szwecji i Norwegii. Autorka porównuje uzyskane wyniki z przykładami z Niemiec, USA i Wielkiej Brytanii.