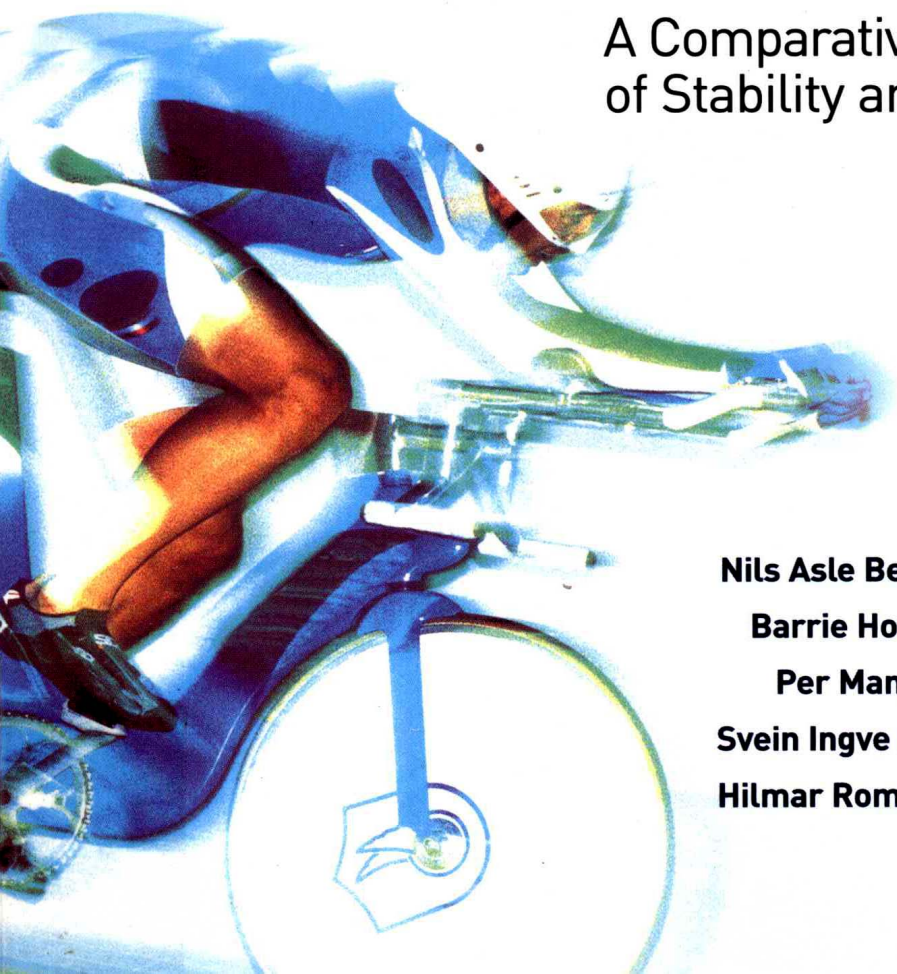




# SPORTPOLICY

A Comparative Analysis  
of Stability and Change



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**Svein Ingve Nødland**

**Hilmar Rommetvedt**



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# Preface

In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of books that deal with aspects of sport politics and policy. In large part the increased output is a reflection of the growth in interest from governments in sport both as a focus for public policy in its own right and as an instrument that can support the achievement of other non-sport policy objectives in areas such as social welfare, economic development and international relations. The growth in academic interest in sport has produced a number of valuable single country studies of sport policy and politics or studies of particular aspects of sport policy such as elite development or mass participation. There have been significantly fewer studies which seek to compare across national boundaries. Indeed, in contrast to areas such as education, welfare and housing comparative studies in the area of sport policy are thin on the ground.

The rationale for our study is that comparative analysis offers insights into sport policy that are not available from the conduct of individual country studies. The purpose of this study is to analyse sport policies in four economically developed countries: Anglo-American Canada and England, and Continental/North European Germany and Norway. The special merit of this book is that it compares sport policies with the application of typologies and dimensions of analysis developed for comparative politics in general. The book discusses the relevance and implications for sport policies of welfare regimes and state systems, executive-legislative and government-interest group relations, and general late modern social transformation processes. This study is intended to provide an insight into the sport policy of the four countries and also to stimulate and contribute to the debate about the practice of comparative policy analysis.

# Acknowledgements

The book is based primarily on a comparative research project sponsored by the Research Council of Norway. The project has been coordinated administratively by Telemark Research Institute, Bø, Norway, in cooperation with the International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS), Norway, and the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy at Loughborough University, UK. The book has also benefited from earlier and ongoing research projects about Norwegian sports policy, conducted by the two Norwegian research institutes.

The book is the product of collective authorship, but there has been a certain division of labour. Bergsgard was centrally involved in the fieldwork in England and Germany and wrote the first draft of Chapter 5; Houlihan and Rommetvedt had the major responsibility for the first draft of Chapter 1 and Houlihan prepared the first draft of Chapter 3. Houlihan also undertook substantial editorial work on all chapters; Mangset and Nødland undertook the fieldwork in Canada and Mangset wrote the first draft of Chapter 6; Nødland was heavily involved in the fieldwork not only in Canada, but also in England and Germany and wrote the first drafts of Chapters 4 and 7; and finally, Rommetvedt participated in some of the fieldwork in Germany, had the major responsibility for the first drafts of Chapters 2 (with Houlihan) and 8, and completed editorial work on several chapters.

We are indebted to many persons and institutions in several countries for their help in providing the information and analytical perspectives that are reflected in this book. We are particularly grateful to about 50 anonymous interviewees in the sports fields of Canada, England and Germany. We are also indebted to several contacts in public institutions and sport institutions in Norway that have provided information in connection with earlier studies. We are finally indebted to about 20 sports policy researchers who attended a seminar about comparative sport

policy research in Bø, Norway in February 2006. We have special reasons to thank warmly seven international sport policy researchers, who offered extensive and rigorous comments and criticisms on drafts of chapters of the book during the seminar, namely, Fred Coalter, the University of Sterling, Scotland; Peter Donnelly, the University of Toronto, Canada; Mick Green, Loughborough University, England; Ilse Hartman-Tews, the German Sport University, Cologne, Germany; Bjarne Ibsen, the University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark; Ørnulf Seippel, the Institute for Social Research, Oslo, Norway; and Jan Ove Tangen, Telemark University College, Bø, Norway.

Despite all this valuable assistance, comment and criticism it is, of course, the authors that are responsible for the final content of the book.

# List of abbreviations

ACF	Advocacy coalition framework
ASAA	Alberta School Athletics Association
BMI	<i>Bundesministerium des Innern</i> (Ministry of Interior)
BOA	British Olympic Association
BRD/FRG	<i>Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i> /Federal Republic of Germany (former West Germany)
CAC	Coaching Association of Canada
CCPR	Central Council of Physical Recreation
CMSSC	Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee
COC	Canadian Olympic Committee
CODA	Calgary Olympic Development Association
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DDR/GDR	<i>Deutsche Demokratische Republik</i> /German Democratic Republic (former East Germany)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DSB	<i>Deutscher Sportbund</i> (the German Sports Confederation)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KKD	<i>Kultur- og kirke departementet</i> (the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs); before 2001 <i>Kulturdepartementet</i> (KD, Ministry for Culture Affairs)
LSB	<i>Land Sportbund</i> (the Land Sports Confederation)
MSO	Multi-sport/service organisations
NGB	National Governing Body (Britain)
NGO	Non-government organisation
NIF	<i>Norges Idrettsforbund</i> (before 1996) (the Norwegian Confederation of Sports)

NIF/NOC	<i>Norges Idrettsforbund og Olympiske komité</i> (from 1996) (the Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sports)
NOC	National Olympic Committee
NOK	<i>Nationales Olympisches Komitee</i> (National Olympic Committee in Germany)
	Norwegian Kroner
NRW	Nordrhein-Westfalen
NSO	National Sports Organisation (Norwegian: <i>Særforbund</i> ; German: <i>Spitzenverbände</i> )
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PE	Physical Education
PESSCL	PE, School Sport and Club Links
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
SDO	Sport development officer
SEEM	Sport England East Midlands
STUI	<i>Statens ungdoms- og idrettskontor</i> (the State Office for Youth and Sport)
TASS	Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme
UKSI	UK Sport Institute
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

## German names and English translations

<i>Deutscher Bundestag</i>	German Parliament
<i>Sportausschuss der Bundestages</i>	Standing Committee for Sport of the Bundestag
<i>Länder</i>	Land/region/provinces/state
<i>Olympiastützpunkte</i>	Olympic training centres



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CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

In recent years a number of studies have been published which have charted the extensive changes in the nature and context of sport that have taken place over the last 50 years or so. Studies have variously examined the interconnection between sport and internationalisation and globalisation (e.g. Maguire, 1999; Houlihan, 2003), commercialisation (Amis and Cornwell, 2005; Slack, 2004), the growth of state involvement (Riordan, 1978; Goksøyr, 1992; Houlihan, 1992, 1997; Mangset and Rommetvedt, 2002; Bergsgard, 2005) and the expansion of media interest in sport (Bernstein and Blain, 2003; Rowe, 2003). Although focusing on different aspects of the contemporary context they collectively attest to the dynamism of that context for sport and sport policy. The pace of change has prompted debate and expressions of concern in many countries and regions about the place of sport in the spectrum of public policy and the vulnerability of distinctive national models of sport to erosion by powerful global forces or particularly dominant countries. For example, in Canada the impact of the US on the domestic sports system is viewed by many as undermining the distinctiveness of Canadian sport and weakening the relationship between sport and broader welfare and diplomatic policy objectives. In Germany following reunification there was considerable concern to ensure that the highly centralised, highly politicised, corrupt and elite-focused sports system of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) should be dismantled in favour of the more decentralised, club-based and welfare-oriented system established in the Federal Republic. The European Union has attempted to define a European model of sport (European Commission, 1998) in contradistinction to the heavily commercialised model typified by the US and, to a lesser extent, by England. Finally, the concern with the impact of commercialisation on sport in the European Union is one that is substantially shared by many sports administrators and politicians in Norway where there is a long tradition of sport being a decommodified practice deeply rooted in the every-day culture of the community.

## **Sport and sport policy**

The range of interpretations of sport across the four countries we have selected for our study, Canada, England, Germany and Norway, reflects not only the adaptability of sport as a policy resource, but also the problems in identifying the essence of the practice and its boundaries with related practices such as recreation, games and physical activity. There has been a number of practitioner and academic attempts to define the scope of the

policy field. The Council of Europe's European Sports Charter, as revised in 2001, defines sport as 'all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels'. Among the many academic attempts at definition is that by Jay Coakley who views sport as 'institutionalised competitive activities that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic rewards' (2003, p. 21). While both these definitions are useful reference points our primary concern is to explore how policy-makers in each of the four countries operationalise the concept of sport and translate it into policy outputs and outcomes.

The increased salience of sport to governments reflects: first, its strong cultural significance; second, its malleability as a resource to help deliver non-sport government objectives; and third, its multi-dimensional character. The increasing cultural significance of sport is indicated not only by the growth in evidence that the public see sports opportunities and facilities to be significant aspects of their quality of life, but also by the intense attention given to sporting success or failure by national teams and athletes, and by clubs in international competitions (see e.g. DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002). The malleability of sport was most dramatically and systematically demonstrated by the former communist governments in Europe who used sport, and international sporting success in particular, as a lever to make progress towards recognition of sovereignty (former East Germany, GDR), to generate a sense of national identity in culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse states (former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia), and to demonstrate the ideological superiority of socialism over capitalism (Soviet Union and GDR). While the richer capitalist governments were initially reluctant to emulate communism they soon began to invest in the preparation of their elite athletes, especially for the Olympic Games, and to acknowledge and utilise the capacity of sport to address a range of social problems (such as social exclusion, juvenile delinquency, childhood obesity and community fragmentation), economic problems (including urban and rural regeneration) and diplomatic issues (such as the indication of approval or disapproval of the actions of other countries in ways that were highly visible, low cost and low risk). The final factor explaining increased government interest in sport is its multi-dimensional character insofar as sport is not only a distinct public service and, in many countries, an important aspect of overall welfare provision, but is also an important element of the economy in terms of

job creation, capital investment and balance of payments. The malleability of sport and the range of different policy objectives to which it contributes further reinforce the problematic nature of defining the scope of the policy area. As such sport has the potential to stimulate interest across a wide range of policy sectors.

Exploring the contemporary context and dynamics of sport policy<sup>1</sup> has generally been approached through analyses which focus on the extent to which the policy of individual countries has been insulated from, or permeated by, exogenous influences, or which focus on the dynamics of globalisation, the extent of its reach into individual countries and cultures, and the response that it generated. By contrast there are relatively few studies that adopt an explicitly comparative approach to explaining the stimulus for, and character of, policy change. This is surprising as comparison is at the heart of all social science whether it is comparison over time, across countries, between policy areas or with other cases. But comparison, especially in the field of social policy, is challenging and problematic at both the theoretical and methodological levels. At the theoretical level too many multi-country studies are simply parallel single country reviews of policy which, though insightful, fail to take advantage of the opportunities that comparison offers. Theoretically informed research design is, unfortunately, all too often conspicuous by its absence. Ironically, the neglect of theory has resulted in an over concentration on the debates concerning comparative methodology consequently giving matters of *research process* precedence over questions of *research purpose*. Thus, while acknowledging that methodological questions are important in comparative analysis there is the risk that, as Keman notes, 'the domain of [the] discipline is defined by its method, rather than by its substance' (2002: p. 33).

## The selected countries and their socio-economic profiles

The aims of the present study are to identify the characteristics of sport policy in four countries, namely Canada, England,<sup>2</sup> Germany and Norway, to determine whether, and to what extent, sport policy reflects the characteristics of the broader welfare regime and whether, and in what ways, sport policy is affected by key attributes of the domestic political system and transnational influences such as globalisation and commercialisation. The associated objectives are to review and analyse changes in the role of government and public agencies in sport and to suggest the causes of any changes; to examine the development of public policy in relation to *sport for all* (mass participation) and high-performance sport (both non-commercial/publicly subsidised and commercial) and to identify the extent to which changes in



public policy represent shifts in more deeply embedded values in relation to sport.

In selecting the four countries we have followed Lijphart who recommends the selection of countries that are similar 'in a large number of important characteristics (variables) which one wants to treat as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables are concerned which one wants to relate to each other. If such comparable cases can be found they offer particularly good opportunities for the application of the comparative method because they allow the establishment of relationships among a few variables while many other variables are controlled' (Lijphart, 1971, p. 687).

All four countries are broadly similar in terms of economic development, per capita wealth and the proportion of the population in higher education (see Table 1.1). However, where they differ, in addition to size and population, is in the pattern of values and policies that define and shape their welfare regimes.

**Table 1.1** Socio-economic profile of the four case study countries

Variable	Canada	England*	Germany	Norway
Population (m) 2005	31.6	50.1	82.5	4.6
Life expectancy (years, male/female) UN 2005	77/84	76/81	76/81	77/82
Average annual per capita income (US\$) World Bank 2004	31,930	29,600	28,700	40,000
Gross domestic product (GDP) composition 2004 (%):				
Agriculture	2.3	1.0	1.0	2.2
Industry	26.4	26.3	31.0	36.3
Services	71.3	72.7	68.0	61.6
Household income or consumption by percentage of share:	(1994)	(1999)	(1997)	(1995)
Poorest 10%	2.8%	2.1%	3.6%	4.1%
Richest 10%	23.8%	28.5%	25.1%	21.8%
GINI index <sup>3</sup>	33.1	36.0	28.3	25.8
Higher education participation (%) (1992):				
18–21 year olds	23.9	14.2	7.4	8.4
22–25 year olds	13.9	4.7	15.2	15.3
26–29 year olds	5.6	1.8	9.6	6.5

Sources: OECD Factbook 2005; UN ([http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi\\_series\\_quick.asp](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_series_quick.asp)); Human Development Reports (UNDP) <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=148&y=1&z=1>

\*Note that apart from the figures for population and life expectancy all figures refer to the UK