

Patrick Yandjou

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY SPORTS FEDERATIONS IN ENHANCING
STUDENT SPORTS – A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY BETWEEN PORTUGAL
AND FINLAND

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
Department of Sport Sciences/Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences

YANDJOU, PATRICK
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ABSTRACT

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The European Union has increasingly emphasized the sociological, physiological and psychological benefits of sport. Sport provision and participation trends have been measured throughout the member-states and, the gaps between Northern and Southern countries are widely acknowledged. These gaps are especially wide between young-adults and the elderly. The integration of sports into the education curriculum in most European pedagogic systems has resulted in high levels of sport practice among the youth. However as young people enter higher education, member-states face a problem with a natural withdrawal in participation. The universities and student sports federations can plan an important role in reversing this phenomenon. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the role of university sports federations.

This thesis describes and discusses what potential the Finnish and Portuguese student sport federation have to influence sport participation among the academic community in Portugal and Finland - two countries on the opposite ends of the spectrum. This study is based upon the EUROBAROMETER data. Using the sociological theory of distinction and briefly, of functionalism, as framework, it seeks to identify core factors for disparities between European regions in sport participation among young-adults. The data for this study was obtained primarily through secondary data analysis, but also using qualitative, empirical, thematic content analysis. This was supported by open-ended interviews with members of both OLL (2) and FADU (1). Via SWOT analysis was possible to identify crucial organizational and socio-economic aspects that distinguish the sport panorama in Finland and Portugal. In terms of results FADU and OLL have currently distinct policies and objectives, the macroeconomic, socio-cultural conditions for sport practice and organizational dynamics in Finland and consequently for OLL provide steadier conditions to influence and sustain a key role in student sport participation than in Portugal.

Key words: Sport Participation, University Sport, Portugal, Finland, Sports Federation

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FADU – Federação Portuguesa de Desporto Universitário

OLL – Opiskelijoiden Liikuntaliitto

HEI – Higher Education Institution

NSO – National Sport Organization

NGSB – National Governing Sports Body

AU – Athletic Union

NUSF – National University Sports Federation

WHO – World Health Organisation

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Europe, the past ten to twenty years have been marked by a wide range of research and analysis concerning the socio-economic, health and integration benefits of sport and physical activity. However, certain important fields have yet to be explored. One unfamiliar phenomenon deals with the value of sports at different stages of education, particularly at higher education (university and polytechnic) level. There is evidence that organized sport in universities is beneficial both to the students' life and surrounding local communities. Unfortunately the majority of European governments and the European Union itself focus on basic education and high school stages. Even within the 'White Paper' there are very few references to the importance of sport guidelines at a higher education level.

The public sector limitations are augmented by an overall lack of awareness regarding college sports or interest shown by a significant number of university students. Studies in Portugal and other European countries (Gomes 2009) conclude that the majority of college students prefer activities other than sports. It became fundamental to keep track of data concerning the number or percentage of students who exercise, the frequency, the accessibility to sports opportunities or the variety of programmes, the promotion, the support provided for physical activities and its final purpose. However, in many cases data emerging from national level studies on sport in higher education is limited when compared to high school or elementary.

Often the institutions able to collect information concerning sports in higher education are the National Sports Organizations (NSOs), such as the Portuguese University Sport Federation and the Finnish Student Sport Federation, responsible for coordinating, promoting, developing and defending the interests of college sport along with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

This study will provide a critical analysis of the university sports federations' management and internal policy structure, and whether these can eventually influence sport participation levels within the universities' communities. It will explore, for instance, the potential connections between, students' involvement or the demand for

physical activities, and the policies or solutions implemented by the national organizations promoting sports in higher education. To better understand this phenomenon and provide a broader perspective, the student sports federations of FADU and OLL will be compared, evaluating organizational aspects, as well as sport characteristics of Portugal and Finland. A comparative study between these two countries is useful because data is easily accessible and they lie at different ends of the sports spectrum, according to the EUROBAROMETER study published in 2010.

The study begins with a literary review. In this section it will explore sport participation in Portugal and Finland, current methodologies and practices in university sport development with special focus on the British system, and arguments for an active life style. This will be followed by a presentation of key debates and an explanation of the research methodology and theoretical framework used. Before reaching the study's conclusions and suggestions, the reader will have a good understanding of FADU and OLL, through the empirical analysis and comparison of results.

2. CORE LITERARY FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY

The following lines will explore the relevant secondary data, outline the various benefits of sport and physical activity, link these to actions and plans targeting sport development in universities, and provide a contextual background for this comparative study, between Finland and Portugal.

2.1. The Role of Sport in a Student life

Based upon independent and funded research, suggestions that active engagement in physical activity during the academic experience can provide multiple physical, psychological and social advantages to citizens in their future. According to Dias et al. (2008), many studies concerning the health and lifestyle of teenagers and young adults have focused on issues involving tobacco, alcohol and drugs consumption, risk behaviors, hygiene, and leisure. Recently however, with the acknowledgement of the psychological, physical and sociological benefits of sport, and the increasing promotion of healthier life styles, studies have shifted to look at educational policies that emphasize and support regular sports activity among students. This is especially relevant because there is evidence of a decline in regular sport activity during adolescence and beginning of adulthood, which is usually associated with the university period. (Dias et al. 2008, p 223-224)

Physical activity in a recreational or competitive context contributes greatly to several health, behavioral, mental and quality of life factors. Therefore, Dias et al. (2008) suggest that students and young-adults frequenting university should be encouraged to adopt an active life-style. (Dias et al. 2008, p 224)

Moreover university students with high physical-confidence practiced more sports than those with lower physical-confidence levels, though when they analyzed physical strength levels, self-confidence and physical-appearance the conclusions were that university students who did not practice any sport had higher rates of satisfaction with their condition within those factors. In other words, there was no significant correlation

between sport practice and physical strength, self-confidence and physical appearance levels. Though in the same study, Dias et al. (2008) suggest there is a certain level of significance between happiness and life satisfaction and sport practice, suggesting that physical activity can definitely bring positive mental and social aspects to university students and people in general. (Dias et al. 2008, p 229)

2.1.1. Risks of Physical Inactivity and Health Benefits of Sport

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), medical evidence and expert journals such as the *President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports*, physical inactivity causes millions of deaths and fatal diseases such as cancer, heart related conditions, obesity and diabetes (WHO 2003, p 1), especially among the western countries. Furthermore the World Health Organization states that physical inactivity is a growing worldwide phenomenon. It is responsible for 3.5 percent of diseases carried and 10 percent of deaths within Europe. (WHO Europe 2007, p 8)

In the report presented by the WHO, titled *Health and Development Through Physical Activity and Sport*, the organization listed 10 key benefits of exercising. Sport lowers the probability of premature death, heart failure and coronary heart disease, as well as certain types of cancer and diabetes. Exercising can also limit bone, muscles and joint issues decay, reduce stress and depression, generate improvements in well-being and keep children away from alcohol, drugs and crime. (WHO 2003, p 3)

In fact Rankinen and Bouchard (2002) provide a strong connection between exercising and decreasing mortality rates for the formerly mentioned diseases. They provide concrete evidence of cases where sports aided patients and citizens with chronic diseases for instance (Rankinen & Bouchard 2002, p 5). In support to this perspective, WHO also advises that citizens who for instance smoke or suffer from stress, obesity, high cholesterol or high blood pressure can benefit greatly directly or indirectly from regular (two to three times a week of at least 30 minutes) physical activity. (WHO 2003, p 2-3)

The biggest concerns on data presented by WHO are that more than half of the adult world population (60 percent) does not participate in physical activities at a recommended level, being the most affected groups are women, elders, disabled and unprivileged socio-economic classes. This phenomenon finds a correlation with two trends, one being the decline of sports activity during adolescence. With under a third of the young social group being sufficiently active to gain present and future health benefits. And the reduction of physical education programs in schools around the globe. (WHO 2003, p 2)

2.1.2. Socio-Economic Benefits of Sport from Independent Research Perspectives

As a result of greater participation in sports and physical activities, WHO argues that societies can benefit from reduced healthcare expenses, higher productivity, greater wealth and a better environment with a healthier, richer, physical and social atmosphere. This has been corroborated by statistical and micro-economic data concerning US and Canadian government expenses on healthcare. For instance, in the USA, companies with exercise programs are able to decrease short-term sick leave up to 32 percent in some cases, cut costs in healthcare between 20 to 55 percent and augment productivity up to 52 percent. In Canada companies that implement physical activity systems have a yearly average return of US\$ 513 per employee in form of productivity, reduced absenteeism and injury (WHO 2003, p 4). Hence, regular physical activity is a valuable form of maintaining a cost-effective healthcare system (WHO Europe 2007, p 8).

The WHO report also stresses the important role of schools in providing exercise programs to young people. 'Sports for all' or recreational sports is highlighted as a crucial area within educational establishments for community and policy development and the education of future generations. The three sport sectors should encourage this goal. (WHO 2003, p 5, 7, 10)

According to Coalter (2005), Etnier (1997) and Lindner (1999), there is a strong possibility of a direct relationship between sports activity and positive performance in higher education. Coalter states that physical benefits such as higher energy and

concentration levels, self-esteem, motor and mental skills development, and reduced stress, driven from physical activity could have a positive impact on the students' academic career. (Coalter 2005, p 15)

In 2009 Becker et al. presented a study covering 691 pupils to understand the correlation between the students' involvement with the Student Affairs programs (especially the sports programs, but incorporating other forms of free-time recreation), academic achievement and health condition. According to their research, in previous studies such as Pascarella & Terenzini (2005), concluded that a student's ability to succeed in university is closely related to their health status and those who neglect sports activities encounter more difficulties in their academic path. (Becker et al 2009, 140)

On a general social perspective, Coalter suggests that sports, for instance elite/competitive sports, can help undergraduates with lower academic performance or who are from lower social classes to improve academic achievement and social mobility. (Coalter 2005, p 16)

There is a positive and direct relationship between the practice of sports, health status and the average results in school. In contrast with the more active students, the authors identified, older students, higher-class individuals, and students with children and undergraduates with high Body Mass Index (BMI) as the less physically active individuals. (Becker et al 2009, p 145)

In conclusion, "(...) the more students are involved with Student Affairs programs, the more successful they are, when success is measured by GPA and health status." (Becker et al 2009, p 146) The authors also suggest that Student Affairs need to set up priorities and focus on promoting physical activity and nutritional programs, especially among women who are less confident with regards to their health. (Becker et al 2009, p 147)

Furthermore, many students might become more motivated to study and improve their performance so as to be able to access sport-related career opportunities as athletes or managers, if they regularly participates in the university's sports programs. (Coalter 2005, p 17)

2.1.3. Benefits of a Physically Active University Period After Graduation

The variety and context of sports and physical activities in which young-adults are involved in is very diverse, ranging from organized, competitive club sport, to spontaneous, free-time activities. This depends on the social class, gender and sex, cultural background and so forth. But two other variables are important: the degree to which they are involved with sports and how sport fulfills their life. Many young citizens might be elite athletes preparing for professional careers or be present in major events like the Olympics. However, for the majority younger social groups and within these the university student community the involvement tends for non-organized sporting activities, in most cases occurring after school or non-participation in sports.

The experiences and perceptions people have with sports at a young age will affect their attitudes and decisions towards sport. Some neglect regular activity, while others develop groups or individual routines to sustain an active sporting life-style (Girginov 2008, p 170, 171). Youth sports cultures and the environment they create, are valuable forms of identity construction, development and social aspiration. (Hills 2008, p 173)

A study conducted in the USA, to identify long-term impacts of recreational sports programs in youth and young-adults, analyzed the degree of correlation between the levels of involvement in recreational sports, satisfaction levels, the type of activities (group or individual) performed, health, well-being, academic benefits and lastly, the degree of importance and continuity of physical activities post-graduation. Universities and higher education institutes in USA have had the resources and potential to positively affect a student's career and life. Therefore, they offer a very suitable environment to create habits for sports practice. (Forrester *et al* 2006, 87, 88)

Recreational sports departments have the ability to attract and develop students' behaviors and perceptions of physical activity. It is up to them to analyze the requirements for student participation and create quality programs that can attract students towards more positive attitudes and behaviors regarding sports activities. (Forrester *et al* 2006, 88)

Student participation and capacity to obtain benefits from physical activity programs is closely dependent on the college experience, as well as involvement and dedication to the program (Forrester *et al* 2006, 97). Therefore, it is also important to ensure continuity and a sense of reward with regards to the various benefits of sports post-graduation. In many cases colleges' sports departments need to create sustainable conditions to incentive students in developing an identity and feeling of reward from being physically active during their university years. This would encourage students to maintain a sportive life. (Forrester *et al* 2006, 97)

2.2. University Sport Development Policies

Sports models and policies face multiple challenges and pressures. According to Girginov (2008) one of the primary difficulties is to integrate and harmonize the commercial, public and voluntary sectors and their distinct characteristics (Girginov 2008, p 45). The creation of international and national sports organizations, the globalization and commercialization of sport since the 1960s, lead to increased public interest in sport. Organized sport federations created policies and systems to develop, structure and regulate the industry. Today governments face various issues related to the guidelines and rules implemented by different global regulatory structures and political interests. (Houlihan 1997, p 1, 2)

Concerning youth sports, Hylton and Bramham argue that sport systems orientated to youngsters, independently of their structure and organization, are strongly attached to principles intended to channel and strengthen cultural values, promote a healthy life style and/or avoid the risks of exclusion and fragmentation among young citizens. (Hylton & Bramham 2008, p 47)

In addition, universities are a very particular setting where it is possible to endorse health and sport promotion plans to a wide range of people between 18 to 24 years old (Fabiano & Swinford 2004, p 6). In fact, independently of the involvement and goals (competitive or recreational) of a student or the university structure itself, sports activities and events should appeal to a range students and possibly the general

academic community, by providing a diverse range of choices and opportunities according to the abilities and tastes of the social group. (Albonico 1967, p 159)

Furthermore, successful university sports programmes can only contribute to the academic community by contemplating the aptitudes and characteristics of each member of the group, such as physical and psychological conditions. This can be done by involving professional and qualified personnel who can provide effective training and transmit both functional but as well emotional values of sport within the university community (Albonico 1967, p 159). Sport development at the university level needs be acknowledged and given importance by all entities (whether they are public authorities, universities, sports clubs or the university sports federation) directly and indirectly influencing policymaking. Figure 1 summarizes which institutions have significant influence in the development of a generic university sports system, and how they integrate and exchange relations towards the benefit of the overall academic community.

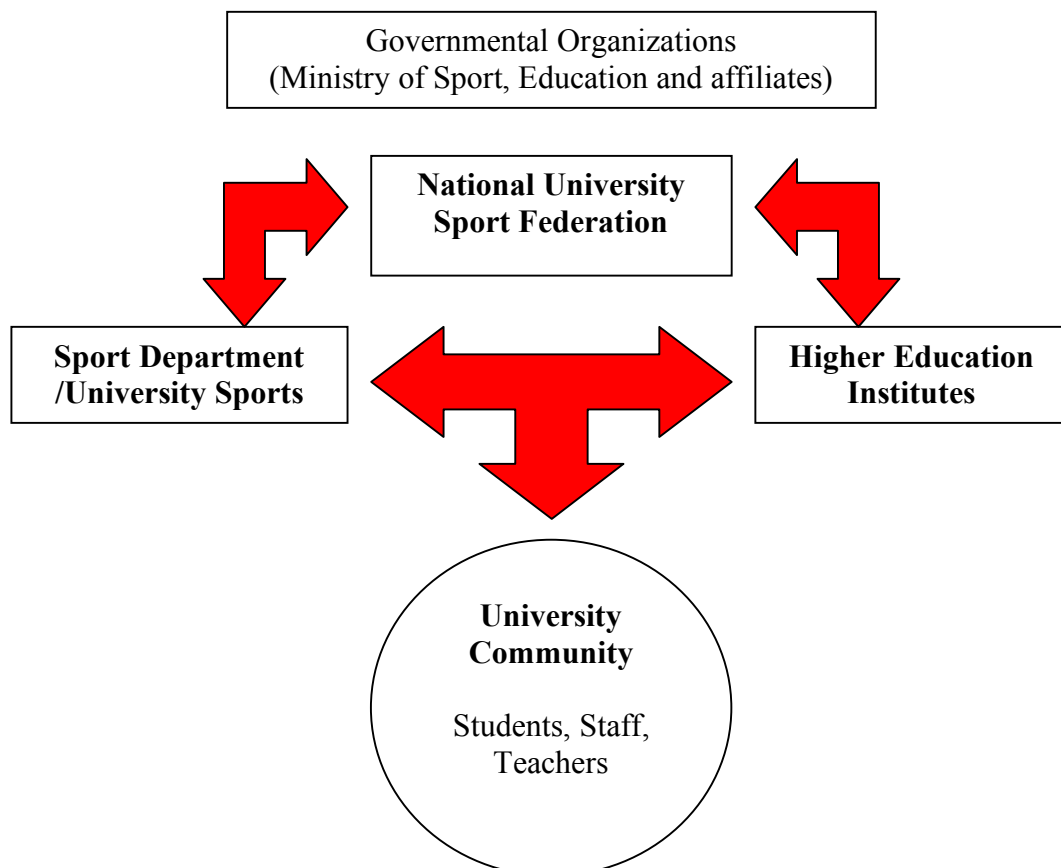


Fig. 1: The key influence groups in the university sports development system

In the United States there are certain studies that offer suggestions for developing university sport on a local level. In 1996 the “Task Force of Health Promotion in Higher Education” was founded in the United States to help establish a list of standards (published in 2001) and best practices to promote health mainly through “community-wide campaigns” throughout university campus and communities (Fabiano & Swinford 2004, p 6; Heath, et al. 2010, p 2). The key point from those standards is the perception of health as a community capital, meaning, more than just an individual benefit it became a shared, collective value. (Fabiano & Swinford 2004, p 7)

From that stand point Heath et al. (2010) launched a study focusing on how these standards could be applied in the context of sport and physical education development for the community of the University of Tennessee. The researchers were able to define a guide for university sports development based on three phases. The first focused on collecting data from the university community. This was completed using the “Participant-based Assessment and Counseling for Exercise” protocol (PACE +) to analyze the current activity levels of students and staff members, and questionnaires, to identify their preferences. Furthermore, respondents were classified into three groups depending on whether they were physically active, considering engaging in sports or not contemplating it at all. Each group received specific community-based and evidence-based (PACE +) counseling. The counseling program provided information on the benefits of sport, and further developed individual and group exercise plans and group to help people kick start or maintain a physically active life-style. (Heath et al. 2010, p 3, 4)

Finally, a second phase involved developing and implementing exercise and sport programmes based on the preferences and suggestions of community members. Finally, a semester a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the consequences of the overall university sport development plan. (Heath et al. 2010, p 5)

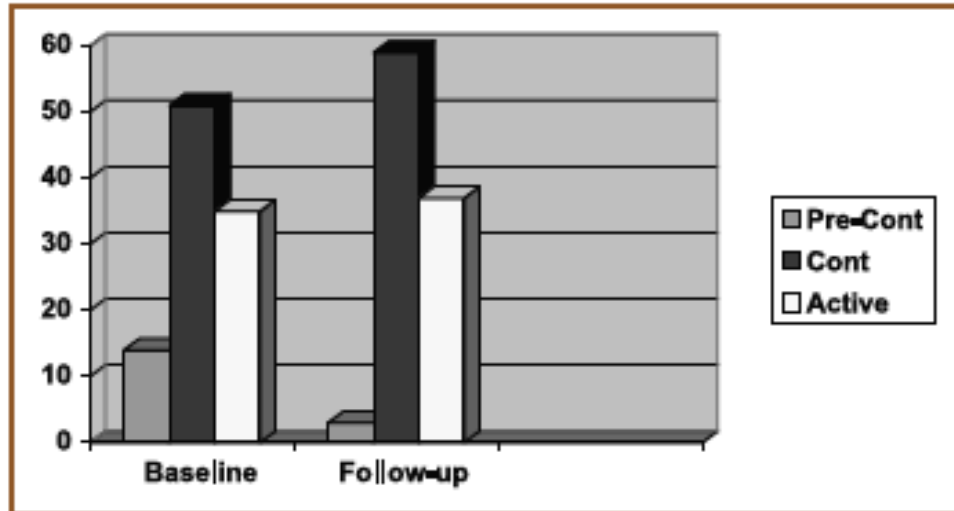


Fig. 2: Adopted from Heath et al. (2010), “Percent change in PA behavioral: baseline to follow-up. Cont indicates contemplative; Pre-Cont, pre-contemplative.”

Figure 2 illustrates how successful this programme was in the University of Tennessee. The bars referred to as “Baseline” represent the overall sport participation scenario. “Follow-up” refers to the impact assessment of the plan 6 months later. “Pre-cont” and “Cont” represents inactive students with no motivation for sport and those contemplating to start a program. There is evidence of dramatic changes, implying that many students disinterested in exercising at the university started contemplating or became active. As it is possible to notice “pre-cont” levels lowered while “cont” and active raised, suggesting inactive students started considering exercising. According to the authors, 50 percent of participants who exercised seldom increased their activity “frequency, duration or intensity”. (Heath et al. 2010, p 5)

2.3. Current Situation of Sport Participation in Portugal and Finland

The following pages will focus on sports participation characteristics of Portugal and Finland and will serve as a point of reference for the empirical study. Will drift around statistical and socio-economic data from both countries, to provide a sustainable ground for comparison. It will permit to examine the environmental and contextual aspects directly or indirectly affecting university sport and student participation in sport. These countries were selected do to the various differences they have across the sport industry sectors and social perception of sport activity.

2.3.1. Sport Culture and Participation Trends in Finland

Finland is a country well known for its remarkable efforts to provide sports to its population through a wide variety of programmes, services, facilities and methods, that are well supported by efficient public authorities and a strong and dynamic voluntary sector.

Finland's sport participation levels are highly supported by a welfare society, with fewer economic and cultural disparities in terms of income, welfare, gender, age and racial differences. The Finnish society has a stronger commitment to physical activities and investment of time dedicated to sports, and there's a better nutrition philosophy. In terms of administration and management Finland has a simplified organizational structure compared with most E.U. countries that have a top-down approach formed by umbrella organizations for each sport, and local authorities strongly supported by the central government. (Girginov 2008, p 80)

In Finland sport is the most common recreational or free-time activity in the country (Puistonen 2009). This is corroborated by the Eurobarometer study of 2009 where 1017 Finns were interviewed to determine their involvement in sport and physical activity. It concluded that nearly 93 percent of the respondents engaged in sports, with a 72 percent stating that they exercise regularly or at least once a week or more (Eurobarometer 2010, p 10).

According to Van Tuyckom, Eurobarometer study from 2004 compared 25 E.U. member states, including Portugal and Finland. In terms of regularity in sport participation, the study suggested that 74 percent of Finns over 18 years were involved in sport activities. Furthermore utilizing data from a research Van Tuyckom et al. (2010), it can be concluded that in Finland and most Scandinavian countries women are more likely to participate regularly in sports than in any other parts of Europe, often surpassing the involvement rates of men. This clearly indicates an effective implementation of sport policies focused on developing a physical activity culture

across the population that expresses the benefits of sport independently of gender or age. (Van Tuyckom et al. 2010, p 1080)

Organized sport activities are mostly provided by federations and clubs. In fact, Finland has a large percentage of national sports governing bodies and public, voluntary and private sports clubs. SLU estimates there are 7800 clubs and 130 federations. 97 percent are non-profit organizations and have the support of over 500 thousand volunteers. This clearly outlines the strong voluntary nature of the sport culture in the country. Another general characteristic of Finnish sports clubs is the increasing balance between men and women. For instance, 58 percent of men and 42 percent of women are members of a sport club. Furthermore, 12 percent of sports organizations' presidents, 20 percent of general secretaries and 25 percent of board members are women. (Puistonen 2009)

Sport consumption in Finland is relatively high in proportion to its population, according to the Sport Division of the Ministry of Education in 2005 the impact of sport in the economy represented 2.7 billion euro, although this value does not account for indirect consumption, multiplicative and substitution effects. In fact people consume relatively more than the government and municipalities collectively spend in the sports system. The Ministry states that household consumption was estimated at 1.8 billion euro whereas local and national government expenditure totaled less than 500 million euro, making sports activities a positive source of State income in Finland, through taxation. (Motion – Sport in Finland 2008, p 43)

This high consumption rate allows municipalities to sustain nearly 75 percent of the 30 thousand sport facilities spread throughout the country and although the Ministry of Education provides grants and invests 20 -25 percent of the national lottery profits into sport, municipalities are still the most important funding source in Finland. (Kokkonen 2009, p 26)

The Finnish Sports Federation predicts that by 2020 Finns will be at the top world rankings with regards to sport participation. At the national level and across sports governing bodies - public, voluntary and private authorities - there is a common understanding that sport is an important element in the life of many citizens independently of their age, sex or social status. Thus at this point the goal is to enable

the provision of higher quality services, structures and possibilities to be physically active throughout different stages of life. (Vuolle 2010, p 16, 17)

Moreover in Finland, experts identify clubs, schools, families, local authorities and private businesses as very important stimulating agents. Furthermore, there is a common conviction that sport is a strong tool to promote positive well-being. There is also a perception that the development and success of elite sports can enhance the desire to engage in sports events at recreational level. (Vuolle 2010, p 19)

While the sport culture and philosophy in Finland distinguishes between various levels and purposes of sport activity, cooperation and communication between agents from various sectors with diversified interests is seen as a relevant element to improve the overall quality of sport and physical activity provision, as well as the enthusiasm and importance people from all ages attribute to it.

In Finland the Department for Culture, Sport and Youth Policy of the Ministry of Education governs sport through the Sports Division although in matters related to education, specifically university policy, it is the Division for Higher Education that coordinates funding, budgeting and policy implementation. (Puistonen 2009)

Concerning participation trends, sport culture and value embedment in Finland involves the consideration of certain fundamental aspects. The Eurobarometer concluded that 93 percent of Finns engage in physical activities, though only 17 percent practice sport on a regular basis, which is defined 5 times a week. 21 percent seldom practice sport. A positive fact is that over half of the respondents do some form of sport at a degree capable of creating health benefits (Eurobarometer 2010, p 10). It is clearly difficult to reach a conclusion about social benefits since 82 percent of adults in Finland engage in non-organized sport (Stavropoulou 2008, p 12).

According to data from SLU from 2005-06 the sports with higher participation rates among people over 18 years are traditional outdoor activities such as walking, skiing, biking and jogging, and until 2010 these trends have not changed much (Kunto 2010, p 16). This clearly emphasizes the preference for individual sports. The team sport in Finland with the highest consumption rate is floorball followed by football (Puistonen

2009). In terms of purpose of the activity, in 2010 only 5 percent of physically active people are competition athletes. The majority of people engage in sport with fitness (38%) or health (15%) related purposes, and it is curious to find that a large percentage (19%) consider casual activities as well (Kunto 2010, p 13), which could be explored with more precision.

Furthermore, a study concerning sport participation continuity from youth to adulthood concluded that in Finland there is a tendency to develop and sustain a culture of sport participation from adolescence to adulthood, especially among people who have exercised at least once a week for females and twice for males. This is particularly true for those who were involved in endurance, ball games or track-and-field activities. Engagement in various sports from a young age has enduring outcomes in the physical activity levels of Finns. (Tammelin 2003, p 25, 27)

Nonetheless, in 1999 Telama and Yang suggested that in Finland there has been a decline in the frequency of physical activity, in correlation with other countries. The time dedicated to sports activities declines as an individual's age progresses, independently of gender. This trend is especially marked in the case of men where the percentage of sedentarity increases greatly after the age of 18. Further, and in contrast, in women, the frequency levels maintain very stable with a small decline after the age of 20 (Telama & Yang 1999, p 1619). Even though no reasons are mentioned for this apparent reduction in sport participation by a majority of people between youth to young adulthood (Telama & Yang 1999, p 1621), one can raise questions and motives ranging from physiological to sociological and political factors that lead to that decline.

On a higher education organizational context a total of 43 higher education institutions throughout Finland, around nine universities have a sports department and only four polytechnics have organized departments. That is the case of Aalto and Helsinki University where students can benefit from Unisport services, in addition to Joensuu, Kuopio, Jyväskylä, Tampere, Turku, Kymenlaakso, Lapland and Oulu which are other cities or regions where HEI's. (opiskelijaliikunta 2011)

Moreover, various universities promote sport through the student union or delegate the union to manage sport provision. In total about 15 institutes have university sport

services under the student union guidance. Interestingly this strategy is widely utilized by polytechnics. The universities of applied sciences of Hämeenlinna, Lahti, Mikkeli, Lappeenranta, Saima, Seinäjoki and Vaasa represent clear examples, besides many similar institutes in the Helsinki region. (opiskelijaliikunta 2011)

2.3.2. Relevant Characteristics of Sport Participation in Portugal

The overall sports structure in Portugal has been affected by major changes in the last twenty years. Nonetheless, there are certain that limit the system's ability to meet current goals. A series of modifications need to be formulated concerning material resources, a deficient sport infrastructure, and difficulties to reorganize the currently out-dated system, which limits integration between the public, private and voluntary sectors. (Sardanha 2006, p 2)

Other data suggests one of the major determinants of such a reduced interest in sport is the limited promotion of physical activity by the State during the fascist, "New-State" regime between 1926 and 1974. In fact, only after 1974 when Portugal became a democratic state, were the positive values, advantages, structures and systems for sport became acknowledged and implemented. Thus Portugal has in comparison with Nordic and Central-European countries a delay of around 20 years regarding public, private and voluntary systems of sport provision. In sociological terms it signifies that the older generations were not educated to believe and value sports as an important part of their daily routine, because even though physical education was already taught in schools, literacy and school frequency rates were limited before 1974. (Marivoet 2000, p 5)

Studies evaluating sports and physical activity trends in Portugal were first conducted in 1988. Amidst rising interest in the subject, another major comparative survey on participation was published in 1998 (Marivoet 2000, p 1). Recently there have been similar studies supported by the European Union, such as the Eurobarometer.

Concerning sport and physical activity in Portugal the study involved 1031 people (aeiou.expresso.pt), revealing that only about 45 percent of the individuals are physically active. This means that over 55 percent of the Portuguese population does not engage at

all in sports activities. This places the country in third place within the E.U.'s lowest overall sport participation rates, next only to Greece (33%) and Bulgaria (42%). When looking at regularity, only 9 percent practice sports regularly, defined as at least five times a week. 24 percent practice sport occasionally and 11 percent rarely engage in sport. (Eurobarometer 2010, p 10, 11)

The major issues proposed for the lack of engagement and participation in sports activities are strongly connected with socio-economic conditions. 37 percent of those who do not practice any sport attribute it to a limited amount of time, and 13 percent to the high cost of sport services and products, whereas 17 percent stated they do not exercise due to a lack of knowledge. (Eurobarometer 2010, p 37)

Although these results highlight the necessity to continue investing in solutions and programmes to develop a culture of sport practice, it is clear that there have been improvements in people's perceptions of physical activity and its benefits in the last decade.

Point being that when evaluating sports practice for 1998, Portuguese people aged between 15 to 74 years had an overall physical activity rate of 27 percent. Hence from 1998 to 2009 there has been a steady increase in engagement. Nearly 20 percent of the population developed an interest in physical activities for recreational and competitive reasons (Marivoet 2000, p 3). This suggests a positive correlation with the public policy and sport development efforts implemented by multiple governments during this period. Reflecting the growth of a sports culture and greater social awareness of the functional, social and psychological benefits of sport.

Public sports policies from the perspective of the education sector in Portugal are briefly analyzed by Costa Januário (2010). He argues that schools and public authorities are important agents in developing the social structures of sport, as well as promoting, stimulating and supporting a culture of sports participation and enjoyment. The author supports this idea by arguing that the value sport has acquired in the contemporary society is historically associated with its strong and effective relationship with the educational sector. (Costa Januário 2010, p 54)

Hence, the necessity for a productive and integrative cooperation between the State, the various educational levels, including universities, sports clubs and other institutions involved with sport, to enable the effective generalization of regular physical activity practice through the life cycle of a citizen. (Costa Januário 2010, p 55)

For Dias (2010) sports are part of the cultural and humanitarian patrimony of the future. Pointing to a greater role for schools, including higher education institutions, in the promotion and diffusion of knowledge, benefits, values and positive attitudes towards practicing sport regularly. Gonçalves (2008) defends a similar ideal saying that sport is a very powerful pedagogic tool contributing to the overall development of individuals.

In the beginning of the 90's a great majority of higher education institutions in Portugal were not interested in developing or even providing sports services to students and the overall academic community. With the exception of the universities of Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra there are very few institutions with infrastructures capable of supporting and providing sports practice to their students. The inexistence of sports facilities in the great majority of universities in Portugal creates extreme difficulties to any organization or institution willing to develop programs for sport promotion throughout the academic community. Do to this circumstance it is very important that student unions and FADU create the necessary conditions to be able to contribute for public policies sustaining university sport development. (Gonçalves 2008)

Economically and politically Portugal is far from the welfare system of nations like Finland and Sweden. The educational system also reflects the socio-economic differences from one country to another, especially at higher education levels. To be a university student in Portugal is still a sign of better social status not easily achievable by lower classes or social groups from rural areas. The middle class dominates the profile of students recruited by higher education institutions all around the country. The great majority of families sending their children to university have a high intellectual background or a middle level scientific career, like in management, education or engineering. (Gomes, 2009, p 175)

These social characteristics associated with a limited social welfare support system, results in economic difficulties by a great majority of families to financially support

higher education studies for their children. Consequently, this affects the leisure consumption, especially with regards to sport participation. (Gomes 2009, p 176)

The Eurobarometer study identified only 5 percent of respondents in Portugal as participants in school or university sports. Findings from a study of 2008 evaluating the participation levels of 2284 students, aged between 18 and 30 years old, from the University of Porto, concluded that most of the respondents (47%) did not practice any sport, around 13 percent were seldom involved in sports and about 40 percent participated in sports activities regularly. These conclusions are consistent with the Eurobarometer results. (Dias et al. 2008, p 226)

Although leisure is an important part of a student's life in Portugal, there are four groups of activities preferred during their free time. The major group involves students who engage in urban and social activities, for instance going to bars, sitting in cafes with friends or shopping. The second are students who prefer to socialize indoors or at home with friends. The third are students who engage in online activities, social networking and gaming for instance. Finally some enjoy walking or engaging in collective forms of sport. (Gomes 2009, p 176)

The great majority of students prefer to stay at home and perform most of their activities indoors, even physical activities. 9.3 percent of the respondents mentioned working out at home. Hence in Portugal home activities like gaming, online chatting, watching television or listening to music have a greater impact in the university community than frequent physical activity (Gomes 2009, p 176). Currently there is evidence of preference by university students for sedentary leisure activities. This creates barriers to developing a culture which values for sports practice. (Dias et al. 2008, p 228)

Corte-Real et al. also evaluated where students engaged in sports activities, which period of the year and for what purpose. The conclusions were that the majority (80%) of physically active students practiced sports with a recreational purpose. Only 11 percent had competitive objectives and around 8 percent were involved in a competitive university sport. Almost 15 percent of students utilized the university's facilities to practice sports whereas over one third (34%) preferred other places such as at home, gym or outdoors. (Corte-Real 2008, p 222, 223)

Apparently, although most active students practiced sports throughout the year (68%), some respondents clearly preferred summer (23%) instead of winter (8%) to engage in sports activities. This could be strongly associated with the longer holiday season during summer, favorable summer weather conditions and the media pressure to stay fit for the bathing season. Moreover, students clearly preferred group activities (53%), specifically with non-university friends (66%). (Corte-Real 2008, p 222, 223)

There were three negative factors of relevance in this research. One was concerning the closest relatives and friends of the respondents. A large percentage replied that their parents, father (44%) and mother (50%) never engaged in sports activities throughout the year, which also correlates with the findings by the Eurobarometer study of 2010. Since parents influence the habits of their children including their life-style and preferences, a low esteem for sports practice by parents and friends can demotivate and underrate the benefits of participation in physical activities. This can lead students to decrease or not engage in sport at all. (Corte-Real 2008, p 224, 226)

Age and gender are further factors which strongly influencing sports participation. There are clear signs that men (55%) exercise more than women (34%), within the young-adult social group. This can be attributed to the way society encourages more men to exercise than women. Moreover the older a male student is the less likely he is to be involved in physical activities. From the age of 18 to 30 men presented a decrease from 59 percent regular participation rate to 53 percent, enhancing further the results for non-participation from 27 to 32 percent. (Corte-Real 2008, p 225)

Concerning women who never participate in physical activities the change was insignificant, though here the age factor worked in opposition to what was observed in men as women tend to raise their levels of regular physical activity with time. Between 18 and 30 years the study registered an increase from 33 to 39 percent of respondents affirming to exercise regularly. This could be associated to increased awareness to health issues as women become older. (Corte-Real 2008, p 225)

At national level it seems there is no doubt that in academic sports the highest participation rates are attained by futsal in regards to collective sport and fitness courses

and martial arts as for instance taekwondo in individual sports (Gonçalves 2008). Although the consumption of sports media and direct products is relatively high, participation rates in major universities requires improvements. Gomes (2009) reports that only around 43 percent of the students at the University of Coimbra say they perform sports. From those, only 25 percent perform regular sports. Moreover students who take part in physical activities and sport games have a preference for team sports like football or volleyball and basketball. The participation in collective sports is nearly 18 percent. Other forms of sport recreation worth mentioning are fitness and bodybuilding, cycling and athletics. (Gomes 2009, p 176)

The author nevertheless concludes there is a very high potential and interest by the student community to engage in sports, but the range of activities performed is very limited, involving only very traditional types of physical activity. From an economic perspective when the demand is small there is no space to increase what is offered. Therefore, universities, local governments and clubs have little motivation to provide better and more services to students and the communities, which creates a vicious cycle of limited public and individual interest. (Gomes 2009, p 176)

The reasons why students participate in sports in Portugal are linked to the health, social and psychological benefits of sport, thus the functional aspects of sport seem to be more important motives. In contrast, the reasons presented for not participating in sports were related with lack of time, inexistent facilities and lack exciting opportunities. These factors strongly correlate with the Eurobarometer analysis. (Gomes 2009, p 178)

In conclusion, university sports services in Portugal have been redefined and expanded. Flexible programmes, not only incorporate alternative or highly requested activities, but go further by ameliorating and actively promoting the few but existing university sports facilities in an effort to attract inactive students to the university programmes. The authors also suggest the investment on better accesses and quality of the areas surrounding the campus, implementation of trained and qualified personnel, prices adjusted to students, better publicity and attractive schedules. (Corte-Real et al. 2008, p227)

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research emphasizes on distinct sociological, economic and organizational aspects influencing two contrasting university sport systems and the students affected by these during their academic period. Hence it is important to focus on certain aspects of the theories of Bourdieu (1984; 1986). In a secondary instance it is necessary to understand the function(s) sport might provide in a social context, thus the analysis of Frey (1986) on this subject on a college athletics perspective will be useful for that purpose, though without emphasizing deeply on functionalism theories. In addition, sport and integration by Albonico, will form the scope for this research's sociological framework.

Despite the ideological and contextual differences between the theories of distinction and functionalism, both present positions which are relevant to understand how sports practice is affected, but also influences multiple factors and aspects of life-style and society.

Moreover it seemed relevant to describe the social group (young-adults studying in university) being targeted by the study as well as the overall community (academic community) where the members of the group interact and spend a very important period of their lives.

3.1. The Forms of Capital Expressed in Sport

The forms of capital explored within the theory distinction by Bourdieu have been increasingly applied in studies of sport sociology (Delaney & Keaney 2005; Coalter 2005, 2007).

As this thesis focuses on present and future social benefits of sport participation in different university communities, where students are influenced by multiple cultures, values, life-styles and habits, a structured analysis of how the social phenomenon of sport is perceived within different social groups and countries is relevant.

Bourdieu (1984) suggests different societies, the various classes and hierarchies belonging to them have varied purposes and perceived profits from sport. Higher classes or wealthier societies might conceive sport activity as a form of health enhancement and wellbeing, whilst lower/medium classes will associate sport to practical goals, such as economic and social gain, or physical development. Nevertheless, he points that sport practice and participation is far from being a simple phenomenon sociologically depending on a wide variety of variables only understandable by exploring its social, cultural and economic limits. (Bourdieu 1984, p 211)

Bourdieu (1986) suggests that social capital is defined by the amount or richness a member of society possesses in terms of social relations, capacity to network with others and acknowledgement as part of a specific group. Social capital just like cultural, symbolic and economic capital can be expanded and exchanged. Therefore, the social capital of individuals varies in size, volume or profit just as the dynamics of an economy. (Bourdieu 1986, p. 51)

To produce social capital there must be an effort involved whether it is time, economic capital or energy, an individual will not achieve profit if the investment does not imply defined competences or regular practices that can develop his position within the network (Bourdieu 1986, p. 52). In the case of regular sport practice individuals not only gain a set of biological (health and physical) benefits they can also profit from social interaction and integration, cementing bounds with other members of the group and community in general, thus building social capital (Delaney & Keaney 2005, p.2).

Social capital in sport combines effortlessly with the assumption that a student has to integrate within the academic system through three variables, the university; the community where the university is located and the pre-existing targets. For Albonico, becoming part of the academic environment involves integrating with the student community, the institutional norms, rules and values, the infrastructure and employees. Integration with the community's environment meant assimilating the social aspects of the town and local residents. Whereas adapting objectives, signifies integrating past and present objectives and goals to new ones that arise from becoming a university student (Albonico 1967, p. 155-156).

This relation between both theories is evident since one of the primary principles of higher education institutions is to increase the social and societal value of people, a function perceived to sport as well. (Albonico 1967, p. 158)

Authors like Coalter (2007) advocate that the various policies and debates regarding the role of sport and sport clubs helping developing social capital has been limited, inconsistent and lack practical substance. Since the social relationships potentially created through sport are in fact an integral feature of social capital rather than an outcome. Second it is important to understand what type of social capital ('social inclusion, regeneration, bridging, linking') is produced within a specific community and to what extent different groups of people benefit distinctively from this form of human capital within, say a broad sample like the 'academic community'. Moreover, although there are many conflicting theories on social capital (Bourdieu, Putnam or Coleman) and its outcomes, most would agree that social capital cannot be build through policies since it is the result of activities and interactions freely undertaken by individuals. (Coalter 2007, p 66, 67)

Sport in the context of social regeneration, can help create possibilities to bond and regenerate on a marginal scale. Although, the work of Bourdieu has limited adaptation in policy-making, it can contribute strongly to understand individual motivations, particular traits of development, benefits and desired goals of participation. (Coalter 2007, p 67)

A deeper analysis suggests sport can be a contributor for cultural capital and is strongly influenced by economic and symbolic capital. Mehus (2005) basing on Bourdieu's framework states that the economic capacity of families or individuals affects dramatically their consumption of sport products from a recreational perspective. Meaning higher costs limit the opportunities for individuals from lower social groups to consume or participate in particular sports (Mehus 2005, p 322).

Taks et al (2005, p 140) agree that class and economic capital are decisive to sport participation. Sports like sailing, golf and tennis are occasionally associated to higher classes, whereas football, weight-lifting and martial arts are preferred by lower classes.

Hence, cultural and symbolic variations can dictate greatly why individuals practice certain types of recreational activities. Bourdieu defines cultural capital as the collection of skills, beliefs, knowledge, values, tastes, and experiences an individual acquires and produces throughout his life span. Usually through contact with a single or multiple social groups, self learning or assimilation of objects that provide cultural value, like books, pictures, buildings, language or information technologies. Cultural capital serves as an element of exchange, remark and distinction from other members (Bourdieu 1986, p 47).

For economically and culturally dominant social groups sport is a form of social network development and interchange of cultural capital, thus integrating various forms of capital in one activity (Mehus 2005, p 330). Green (2010, p 30) also links cultural capital and its representation through sport as a widely regarded form of social class expression.

In fact, individual socio-cultural traits are inherent characteristics that can be differentiated by certain social practices such as sport and education. Thus theoretically sport and other health enhancing factors are strongly dependent of the socio-cultural and economic status of the individuals, implying that citizens belonging to higher social classes have more possibilities to access healthier life-styles (Green 2010, p 30).

Different classes and cultures perceive sport from distinct perspectives, symbolism and benefits. Bourdieu (1984) recognized distinct social perceptions in rugby from one culture to another, for instance in England the game was highly elitist and associated with dominant classes with strong education and status whereas in France it was practiced and popular among the working class (Bourdieu 1984, p 206). Though also states that sometimes culturally rich groups can prefer to engage in less costly practices, such as walking that do not reflect their status. (Bourdieu 1984, p 267)

Manners, tastes, language, age, gender and habits also take an important role in individual and social decisions, providing a 'trademark' a 'symbolic manifestation' of values, perceived ideas and preferences and a vary greatly depending on social class, cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1984, p 65,66). Symbolic and cultural capital also reflects in indirect or passive sport consumption. Mehus supports that although, the

globalization and massification of sport allowed individuals with lower cultural capital to consume sport through widely available media sources. Simultaneously, individuals with higher cultural capital were able to extend their range of cultural stimulus in comparison to those with lower cultural capital at a faster pace. (Mehus 2005, p 322)

Bourdieu noticed that certain social groups attribute strong symbolisms to appearance and physical culture as the case of the middle-classes, having higher levels of regular sport activity (Bourdieu 1984, p 213, 214), though working-class women tended to give limited importance to physical appearance in comparison to their higher-class counterparts, meaning lesser economic, cultural and symbolic traits perceived lesser dedication to forms of personal care, including sport (Bourdieu 1984, p 380).

3.2. The Function of Sport for University Students from a Sociologic Perspective

The literature review described various benefits and functions of sport to society, concluding that today it is an activity perceived also as a tool with a utility to the individuals. James Frey (1986) in 'Sport and Social Theory' dedicates a chapter where he explores issues involving functional analysis in college sport.

In 1986, Frey using the functionalist theory characterized and summarized the effects of university sport in society into "Individual, Education, Community and Society" dimensions (systems). Within each group Frey evaluated functional aspects that create positive effects (benefits) and others that can disrupt (detriments) the system. (Frey 1986, p. 206) Although Frey clearly points to flaws by stating various anti-functionalists who criticize the standardized, 'mainstream' and conservative approach this social theory utilizes, the categorization utilized by this sociologist is relevant for this study. (Frey 1986, p. 207)

Following Frey's 'Summary of Functions and Dysfunctions of College Athletics, System Level', under the Individual system there are as benefits "character/identity development, acquisition of social skills, tension release, educational and occupational attainment, educational opportunity, physical fitness, prestige, affective association" as

detriments, “character detraction, negative aggression, educational detraction, role conflict and stress, value distortion”. (Frey 1986, p 206)

In the Education subsystem, he considered as “functions” the minimization of divergences and reduction of class differences, better reputation, local and university community promotion, increased applications, higher community attachment, has “dysfunctions” he considered deviation from the educational values and encouragement of violent or negative behaviors. (Frey 1986, p. 206)

Within the Community subsystem social integration expansion of interpersonal relations, stress release through leisure, economic productivity, community promotion and politico-economic development. Negative effects identified were possible creation of conflicts, strengthening of class differences, and distraction from social issues. (Frey 1986, p. 206)

In terms of Society the author attributed expressionism of norms and values, reduction of tensions between social classes, steadier socialization. As detriments Frye listed hostility among and inside classes, fortification of sexism, racism and other segregatory behaviors. (Frey 1986, p 207)

The adaptation of functionalism by James Frey in the college sport context is still current and a precise analysis of how sports serves or damages individuals and social groups. Moreover, with the acknowledgement of sport as a strong source of social engagement and development it was critical to assess both the Bourdieu’s ideas together with Frey’s to be able to analyze where university sport federations and the universities’ sports departments can increase the student community participation in sport and promote the development of the overall academic sport system.

3.3. Young-Adults as a Social Group

To be able to set a scope it is important to comprehend the social group primarily targeted by the research. Hence, notions of community and young-adults will be introduced here to provide a description of those mostly impacted, which eventually

will be important to allow the reader to outline and clearly understand the social relevance of the study.

According to Gomes (2009) the concept of youth is strictly associated with a biological human development process rather than a social evolution in human life. He states that the perception of youth as a social entity is a considerably new concept that marks the change from childhood to adulthood, originated from mutations in the associations between family, school and work. Moreover the importance and visibility of the youth social group has been emphasized by the extremely demanding and competitive educational process existing today, with strong requirements regarding compulsory school, wide access and democratization of universities and considerable obstacles for labor market entry. (Gomes 2009, p 172-173)

3.4. The Academic Community

In the research and literature available concerning communities was possible to structure a concept of academic community. According to Pöysä (2007) and based on Bruhn (2005), Shumar & Renninger (2002) and van den Besselaar et al. (2005) there is no clear standard definition of the expression 'community'. (Pöysä 2007, p 22)

'Community' originates from the combination of Latin words identical to 'communication' and 'common'. Moreover Mercer states that it is suitable to define groups of individuals who have similar experiences, values goals and interests and merge to achieve the latter (Mercer 2000, p 105). Although the members of a community are constantly changing, there is an established level of continuity, and strength in the relationships and sense of belonging, which is transmitted to new members. (Pöysä 2007, p 22)

Regarding the term 'academic community', Barnett (1994) states that this concept has been forgotten and teachers, students, employees and the local environment (Fabiano & Swinford 2004, p 6) have no longer commonalities drawing them together. Further on, he claims higher education institutions have changed into institutes specialized in producing professional competencies, but devoid of the vivid social aspects and

togetherness, much unlike what is perceived of an educational institution. (Barnett 1994, p 3)

Concluding, allowing the idea of academic community to disappear is a loss because, although the university cycle represents a limited period in a person's life and continues being accessible to a small number of people, the importance or impact of universities and their communities is unquestionable simply because it represents many crucial values of society. (Barnett 1994, p 5)

3.5. Framework Conclusions

Figure 4 summarizes how the definitions and theories applied in the framework integrate together within the context of university sport and student participation in sport programmes. Briefly and from a personal perspective, national university sport federations are a crucial medium together with universities and sports departments of both functional and social benefits of sport. These entities are essential to create and communicate effectively sports programmes towards the university community.

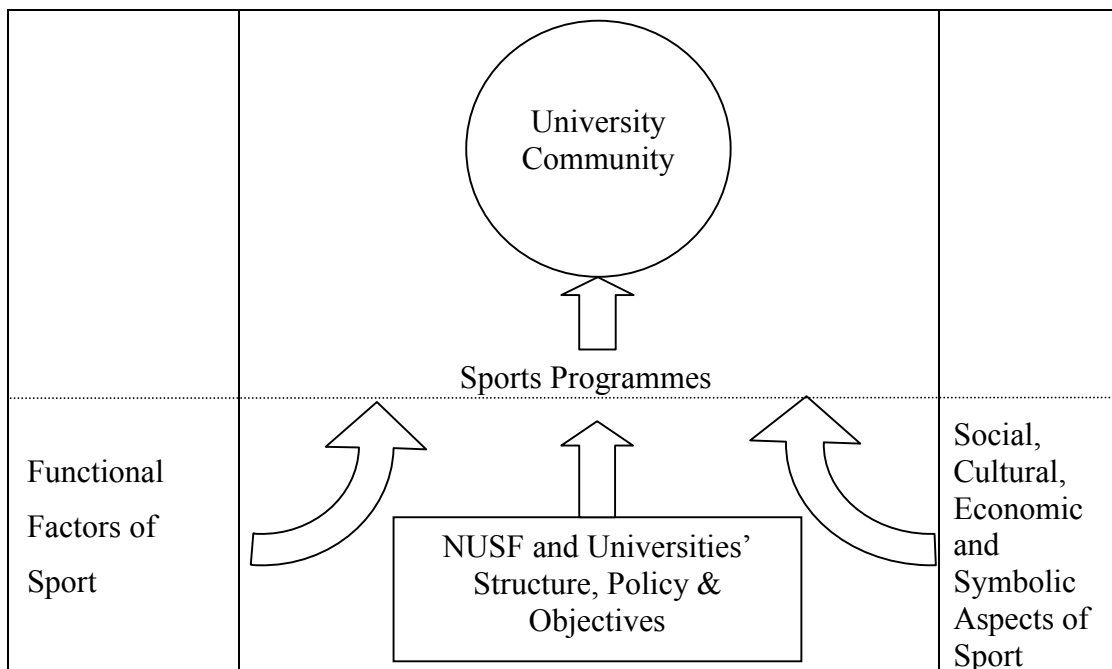


Fig. 3: Theoretical Framework

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

This research will approach concepts related to sport importance in society and sport development management within the context of university sports. Analyzing sport participation under the scope of university sports underlines not only important areas concerning the social and health benefits of sport and physical activity, but can also provide new perspectives that aid governing bodies, universities among other institutions responsible for sport services provision creating better policies and solutions that can attract the communities and social groups affected by the sports programmes available and ultimately increase participation.

The primary focus of the study and this theoretical framework is to respond the following issue; what is the potential of the university sports federations influencing student participation in sport? To answer the primary research question it is also necessary to understand the phenomenon from distinct perspectives. Therefore, through the comparison of two distinct sports federations it is possible to answer the following:

- What differences and similarities exist in the Portuguese and Finnish university sport structure and policies?
- What cultural and societal aspects influence the university sport system?
- What organizational aspects can be improved in FADU and OLL?

Consequently the study will be limited to the action plans, policies and strategies that OLL and FADU are applying from 2010 onwards that concern sport participation, specifically within recreational sport. To note that for this study most of the theoretical analysis instead of capitalizing on managerial and organizational theories will focus on relevant outcomes and consequences of university sports for the university community, hence what contributions can university sports federations provide through their eventual potential to help higher education institutions develop and motivate participation among students, employees and maybe even local residents.

4.1. Methodology of the Study

The following part of the thesis explains what methods and tools were utilized to retrieve secondary or empirical data, including which relevant experts who contributed for the research with complementary information, and how the data was analyzed to develop a conclusive empirical research project and theoretical framework.

To successfully obtain crucial information and create a valid and reliable research it was fundamental to proceed through a series of tasks outlined in the flow chart below. From planning to implementation the research process required various adaptations and changes throughout time, but nevertheless focuses on a topic that observes and describes a particular phenomenon part of an extremely complex and up-to-date issue in the fields of sport management and sociology.

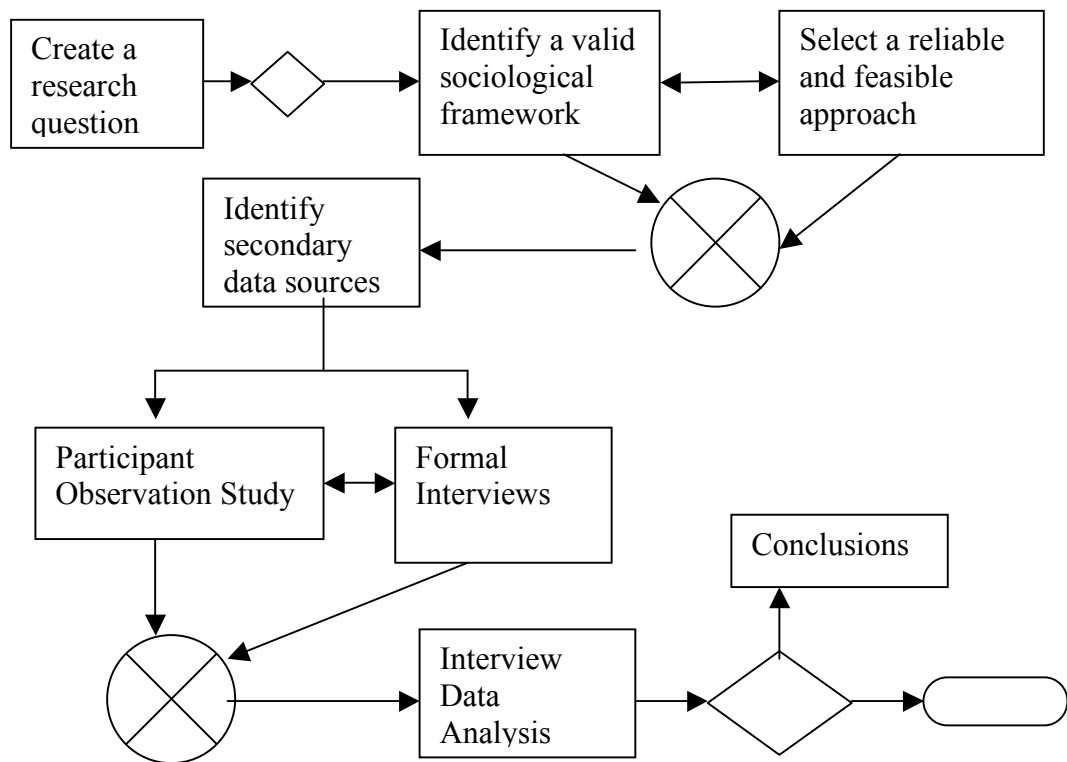


Fig. 4: Research project process relevant in this particular study

4.2. Data Collection Methodology

This thesis is based on a comparative study combining sociological and organizational themes applied in the field of sport and well-being of the members of the higher education system, with especial attention to men and women aged between 18 and 35. It adopts a broader perspective on student sport participation by analyzing the value and role of the structures, policies, organizational cultures and objectives of the national university sports federations in Portugal and Finland, in relation to the characteristics of sport in a sociological perspective.

To gather relevant data for this study qualitative research tools were utilized. Empirical data was collected through interviews, supported extensively by secondary data analysis. According to Amis (2005), when a researcher assembles his work based on sociological interpretative domains qualitative interviewing methods tend to be the best form of retrieving data in order to contextualize the findings (Amis 2005, p. 104). For Gratton and Jones (2004) theoretical research is the collection and analysis of information obtained from previous studies and theories (Gratton & Jones 2004, p 8). To collect secondary or theoretical data for this study it was necessary to analyze existing material related to the ‘Theories of Distinction’ by Pierre Bourdieu essentially. From another angle, was relevant to use the interpretations of James Frey of functionalism in sport.

The annual activity reports from 2010 of both FADU and OLL were fundamental to obtain data on the policies, structure, strategies and objectives. Various articles and books on health and social benefits of sport, on communities and young-adults, university sport development, sports policy and national sports governing bodies provided the necessary background data. Theoretical data collection started during mid 2010 and lasted until the conclusion of the study. Data on Portugal’s and Finland’s sport background, combined with sport development literature and university studies from Europe and North America sustain the secondary data.

In this research the most reliable empirical data collection method was a “standardized open-ended interview combined with informal conversational interviews” (Amis 2005, p. 106), the question set can be found under the appendixes.

A standardized open-ended interview enables to approach various complexities rather than a close-ended interview, this type of interview allowed richer and more profound responses from the participants and allowed to go beyond what the theoretical analysis could provide. Second, the limited availability of some of the informants implied that the interview process should be able to gather specific, but as well broad data effectively.

Thus, interviews were arranged with the technical staff of FADU on September 2010, where it was possible to digitally record 32 minutes of data with Paulo Oliveira concerning the activities of FADU, who was the only expert available. In the case of OLL using the same data retrieval method was possible to interview two members of the organization on February 2011, namely the President of the Board, Akseli Hakala and the Secretary for Sport Policy, Hanna Laakso, totaling 54 and 40 minutes of data respectively. From the interviews it was possible to obtain data concerning the organizational structure and roles of the staff, current challenges and issues, objectives and plans, and visions of university sport.

4.3. Data Analysis Methodology

To analyze the data for the study it was crucial to use a compatible and effective approach where the information retrieved from annual reports of both organizations could be synthesized and enhanced via the data collected in the interviews.

To proceed with the data examination, a thematic content analysis was the most suitable approach. This method is epistemologically primarily descriptive, and sustained on filtering similar themes across the various forms of data collection. Grouping common arguments that allow describing a phenomenon and express the findings encountered in interviews, secondary data or other methods (Anderson 2007, p 1-4). According to the definition by Patton (2002) with thematic content analysis the primary goal is to figure trends and recurring elements that can describe or categorize a certain scenario or issue. (Patton 2002, p 453)

On a final phase of the empirical research the data retrieved in the interviews was narrowed, and presented as a support for the data available in the activity reports and other formal documents such as organizational charts and presentations. To produce the results of the study using thematic content analysis the empirical analysis was divided in two parts, first a description of FADU/Portugal and OLL/Finland where the structure, objectives, and policies were evaluated to provide the necessary background and scope of the university sport federation in each country. Followed by relating the theoretical framework, secondary and empirical data through SWOT analysis and description of particular influential aspects and factors.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS OF OLL AND FADU

This chapter presents an analysis of both the Portuguese and Finnish university sports federations, through information retrieved from their annual reports. Other data like official presentations and the interviews conducted with members of both federations are also utilized. The chapter focuses greatly on the federations' structures, activities, policies and strategic objectives from a general internal perspective.

The formal interviews, with Dr. Paulo Oliveira of FADU on September 2010, Akseli Hakala and Hanna Laakso from OLL on February 2011 serve as the empirical basis. Only after it was possible to continue with further analysis and comparison between both systems, their policies and plans towards student participation in university sport programmes and identify how university sports federations are potentially generating and providing benefits for the overall academic community through sport. These last points will be presented in the topic covering the comparison and analysis of the results.

5.1. Empirical Analysis of the Federação Académica do Desporto Universitário

This section brings forth a description of the university sports system in Portugal and a detailed analysis of the Academic University Sport Federation (FADU) which is the main association responsible for planning, organizing and promoting competitive leagues and tournaments, meetings and activities in the ambit of university sports. A closer observation and description of external agents and the relationship with higher education institutions will be taken into consideration since it will help the reader fully understand the dynamics of FADU, the institution's mission, sport policy, vision, structural organization and strategic concept for university sport development as well as the current scenario of the Portuguese university sports panorama.



Fig 5: Logo of FADU, retrieved from their 2009 Annual Report.

FADU is known as one of the first members of FISU (fisu.net) and as been operating for over 20 years since it was funded in March 2nd 1990. It has been growing and renewed in the last few years to create an institution described in Portugal as a strong, professional, dynamic and best federations in the country, which has been able to develop and organize university sports at a competitive level bringing very good national and international results, especially given the fact that students compose its administration. (FADU 2010, p 6)

The organization is in regulation with the Portuguese sports federations' legislation, having the support of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education in national and international matters, and the Sports Institute of Portugal concerning the participation on international events and competitions. (FADU 2010, p 9)

5.1.1. Mission, Objectives and Organizational Structure

According to the former president of FADU, Luis Andre Couto (2010), the institution's mission is to promote and protect sports activities at the university level, providing student-athletes and the student community in general opportunities to develop and participate in sporting events during a crucial period of their lives in terms of sports career development, combined with their academic career. (FADU 2010, p 6,7)

As key organizational objectives, the Portuguese university sports federation aims to, represent the academic sports clubs, university sport and institutions linked to sports and higher education near the public administration at national level; Represent national academic sport in international environments; Promote, regulate and organize national and international university sports events and competitions; Develop and value de image of student-athletes in Portugal; Manage the national university teams; Contribute for the strengthening of the academic community and values through sport; Promote the training of sports agents within the context and interest of university and federally organized sport; Ensure the continuous improvement of the services provided by the organization; Acquire human resources adapted with the needs and expectations of the organization. (FADU 2010, p 10)

The organizational and management structure of FADU is composed by seven central subdivisions that work closely with each other with a mix of volunteers and paid personnel. The organisms to take into account are the President elected every 3rd year with executive and representative powers. The Executive Board, responsible for administrative functions. The General Assembly and its administrative board uncharged of orienting and supervising FADU and the three counsels, Legal, Fiscal and Disciplinary. (FADU 2010, p 10)

According to Paulo Oliveira, students compose the Board of FADU. Moreover, there are five people working within the professional structure responsible above all for guarantying the continuity and flow of activities, as the board members are replaced every two years. Since the organization focuses mostly on competitive events for university student-athletes there is personnel responsible for recreational or 'sports for all' policies. (Oliveira, Interview 16/09/2010)

Concerning the staffs' background at FADU the General-Secretary does not require an academic background in sport, although has athlete experience, though within the technical sports department, employees have professional, competitive and academic know-how in sport. (Oliveira, Interview 16/09/2010)

Moreover independent institutions of high importance in both the higher education and sports system have a significant role cooperating with FADU, these are the Portuguese Olympic Committee, the Sports Confederation of Portugal, the Rectors' Counsel of Portuguese Universities, the Polytechnics' Coordination Counsel and the Portuguese Association of Private Colleges. (FADU 2010, p 11)

The amount of personnel involved (both full-time and part-time) with FADU and representing the various independent organisms mentioned above and the regional student unions totals up to eighty-one delegates. (FADU 2010, p 11)

Below it is possible to see FADU's management structure in detail with the different organizational areas of activity, roles and functions, and direct hierarchies clearly displayed.

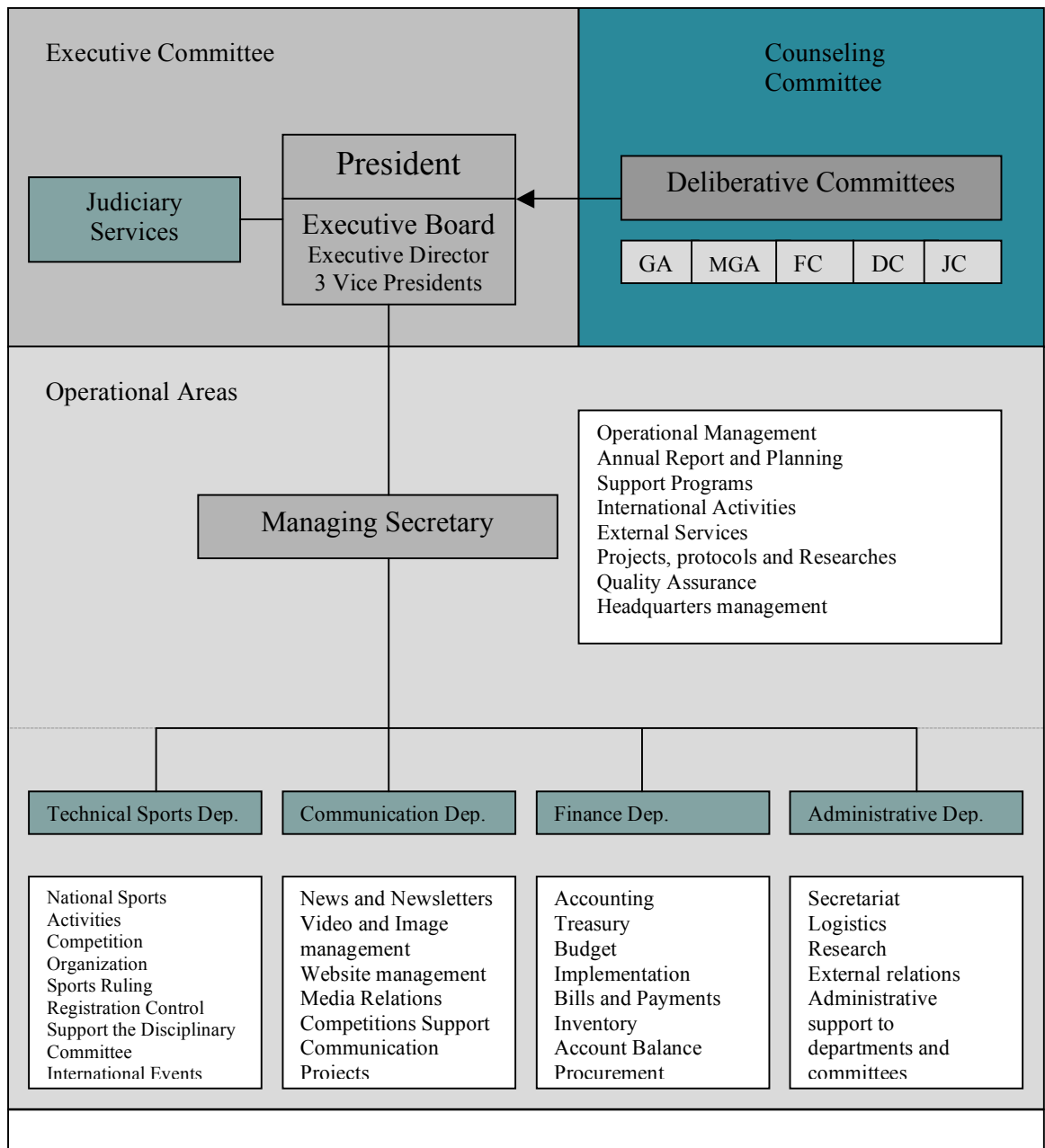


Fig 6: Organizational Structure of FADU, according to the Annual Plan and Report 2011 (FADU 2010, p 15).

5.1.2. Key Organizations with a Role in University Sports in Portugal

FADU seeks to meet with local sports entities and federations as often as possible partnering in multiple sport projects. As part of its cooperation and internal and external

communication policy FADU became a full member of various important national and international sports federations, namely the Portuguese Olympic and Paralympics Committee, the Sports Confederation of Portugal, the International University Sports Federation (FISU) and the European University Sports Association. (FADU 2010, p 13)

Moreover the federation cooperates closely with the IDP – Portuguese Institute of Sport, the State Secretary of Youth and Sport and the major higher education institutes concerning academic sports services, such as the Universities of Porto, Lisbon, Evora, Madeira, Tras-os-Montes and Minho. (Oliveira, Interview 16/09/2010)

According to Oliveira, in Portugal it is difficult for FADU to outline how many universities have sport services or programmes for students, though several institutions, especially those located in larger cities have their own sports department ran by professionals or voluntary staff and in others operated by the student unions who take charge of the university sports and recreation organizing for instance mountain hikes to Sierra Nevada in Spain or other activities such as intramural tournaments. The major HIE's in Porto, Lisbon, followed by the universities of Minho, Coimbra and Leiria are recognized for having very active and good quality academic sports services for both student-athletes and those who intend to simply maintain good levels of physical activity. (Oliveira, Interview 16/09/2010)

5.1.3. FADU Sports Policy and Vision on Sport Development

For FADU the major objectives and efforts are towards the elite/competitive scope of the academic sport system in Portugal. Much like NCAA in the United States of America, FADU dedicates a great part of its agenda organizing, promoting and lobbying near the National Sports Federations (NSF) and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) their competitions, with the goal of increasing the quality of the events and athletes participating as well as implementing the national university championships within the federative sports calendar. (Oliveira, Interview 16/09/2010)

Currently the federation began exploring opportunities to promote and increase the importance of university for sports development in general as well as within the

educational and social perspective of sport in higher education institutions throughout the Portugal. (FADU 2011, p 24)

Following this principle FADU has developed a plan composed of eight key points, which intends to combine the current and future university sport policy orientation. These objectives are deeply related with social and health benefits sports can provide, in addition to various training and educational requirements for professionals within the field of sports and physical activity. (FADU 2011, p 24)

Therefore, the objectives for university sports development include augmenting the practice and sporting habits within the academic community; provide sustainable support to the student-athlete, interconnecting the student life style with its sporting club demands; deepening of the a sporting and active culture based on the educational values of sport; widening the number of services and sport infrastructures within higher education institutions and encourage the increase of amount of qualified personnel, specifically those with a background in physical education and sport management; development of a voluntary sponsoring program capable of attracting students and qualified personnel towards university sport and sport development in general. (FADU 2011, p 24)

Moreover in its global sport policy FADU outlines that “A policy towards the increase in participation through the investment in general sport practices does not impede a continuous cooperation with National Sport Federations and elite sport, in fact both need to complement, creating a foundation for the development of well organized structures”. Although the federation keeps a strong focus on promoting competitive sport for people between 18 and 25 years old, attending a higher education institution, it also plans to emphasize its efforts towards generalized academic sport provision. Thus, FADU works to promote, and advertise academic sports, and establish the link between students seeking opportunities to do sports at their campus and the universities’ sports departments. Nevertheless, the main purpose is to increase participation levels in the competitions and championships organized by the federation. (FADU 2011, p 25)

According to FADU there are about 7,000 students involved in over 30 different sports in Portugal, ranging from handball, basketball, futsal, rugby, volleyball, martial arts,

water sports, extreme sports, in addition to the fitness and gym courses, such as aerobics, bodybuilding or step, distributed through 49 national and 16 regional level competitions. To be able to reach out to a wider range of students and capitalize on its potential, FADU as established clear goals for its sports development policies emphasizing greatly the implementation of services and systems focused on sport development in HEI. (FADU 2010, p 24)

Hence by 2013, they intend to motivate the creation of academic sport services or departments in 70 percent of the public universities, 50 percent in public polytechnics and 30 percent in private higher education institutions. To strengthen its national strategy FADU defined that by 2020 it intends to increase those numbers to 95 percent in public universities, 85 percent in polytechnics and 75 percent in private colleges. (FADU 2010, p 25)

2010 a study to evaluate the sport services and programmes provided by the universities and student unions throughout Portugal was initiated. This research dedicated a major section to recreational activities. Furthermore the federation intends to study measures, which can lead to increases in regular participation by students (30 percent) and the overall academic community (10 percent) by 2013. (FADU 2010, p 25)

5.2. Empirical Analysis of Opiskelijoiden Liikuntaliitto Oy (OLL)

After describing peculiarities of the structure and policy measures adopted by FADU for university sports in Portugal, a similar analysis will be implemented for OLL. Obviously the personal experience acquired while working in the organization provided valuable insights that were not possible to obtain from FADU, though the great majority of the results presented are based on similar secondary data supported by digitally recorded interviews.



Fig 7: Finnish Student Sports Federation logo with Finnish/Swedish designation

Similarly to FADU, empirical data using interviews involved the cooperation of Hanna Laakso a Sports Policy Secretary and Akseli Hakala, President of the Board who contributed with their knowledge and time.

5.2.1. Background of OLL and Main Activities

The Finnish Student Sports Federation or Opiskelijoiden Liikuntaliitto (OLL) is one of the oldest organized sports federation in Finland and Europe, founded in 1924, it as since then protected, promoted, supported and enabled the active participation among Finnish students in all kinds of sports and physical activities, with special emphasis in university sports. Today OLL has the potential to reach over 270,000 students in universities and polytechnics all around Finland. (OLL 2005)

OLL has a strong political involvement and progressive ideals based upon strategies and policies that cover various aspects of sport in a student's life-style, preferences and routine. Thus the federation promotes both competitive university sports championship at national and international levels, as well 'sport for all' by having an active engagement on the development of recreational sports within the academic communities spreaded throughout Finland. (OLL 2005)

According to Hakala "you cannot forget anyone who wants to do sports, everybody wants to enjoy at least some form of physical activity, and both elite and recreational sport can be compatible" (Hakala, Interview 2011), going further by providing the example of the development and enthusiasm generated around ice hockey in Finland after the world championships in 95, which created a strong increase at all levels and forms of participation in hockey. Laakso has a similar opinion stating that student-athletes competing in elite sports can definitely encourage participation in sports by regular students, since they prove to be an example of how an individual can combine education and sports activities. (Hakala & Laakso, Interview 16/02/2011)

According to Laakso, OLL is involved with the government to organize, improve and extend sports programmes throughout campuses in Finland, in addition to improve the

organization and quality of university sports, though it also works actively to encourage local and regional authorities, developing sports facilities and/or providing access to students to local sports infrastructures. OLL acts as the promoter and link between universities and the government transmitting the necessary ideas or solutions that governing authorities could implement in university areas. (Laakso, Interview 15/02/2011)

5.2.2. OLL's Organizational Structure

In terms of structure OLL is one of the few worldwide sport federations where board members are enrolled students possessing decision-making influence in the General Assembly and have a strong involvement with all activities developed at national and international level.

As many national sports governing bodies, OLL stands above all organizations (student unions and higher education institutes) in the scope of university sports. Therefore, OLL acts as the direct communicator and promoter of the students' interests concerning sports and physical activity.

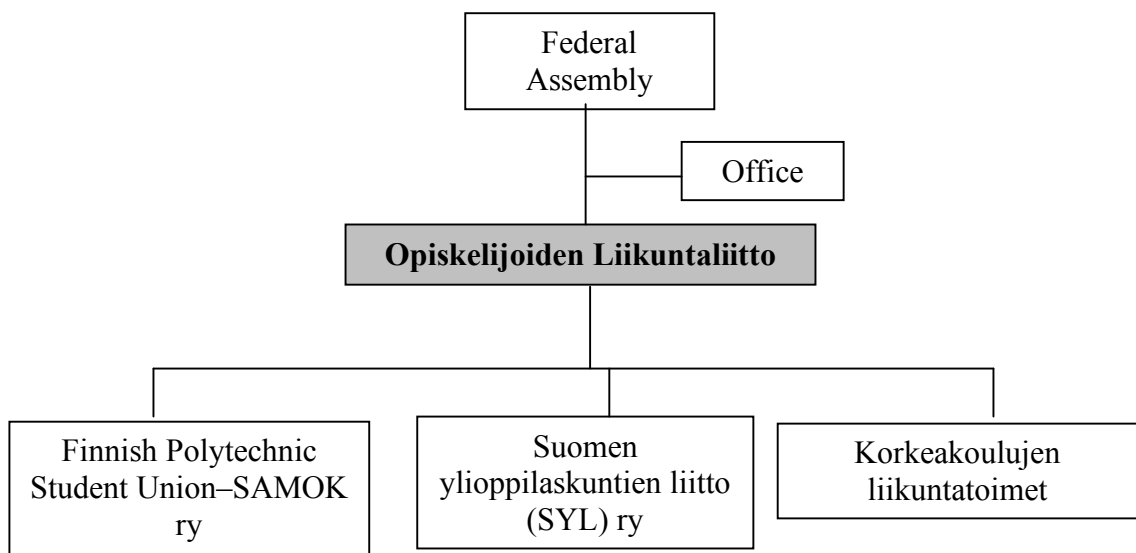


Fig 8: OLL's place in the hierarchy of higher education students' institutions (Hakala, Interview 2011)

The current administrative structure of OLL is organized by four board members, all students, and have been assigned and approved by the General Assembly furthermore have power to select priorities, plan and execute measures to achieve the organization's objectives. Each board member is assigned a different role and task(s). Often board members have a background in a student union or related with sport practice. (Hakala, Interview 16/02/2011)

Under the board members or executive committee, OLL has the Secretary General responsible for representative, financial and general management functions, below there are four secretaries, one responsible for elite sports and the remaining focusing on sport policy development, implementation and coordination with the government, universities, student unions, national sports governing bodies and local authorities. (Hakala, Interview 16/02/2011)

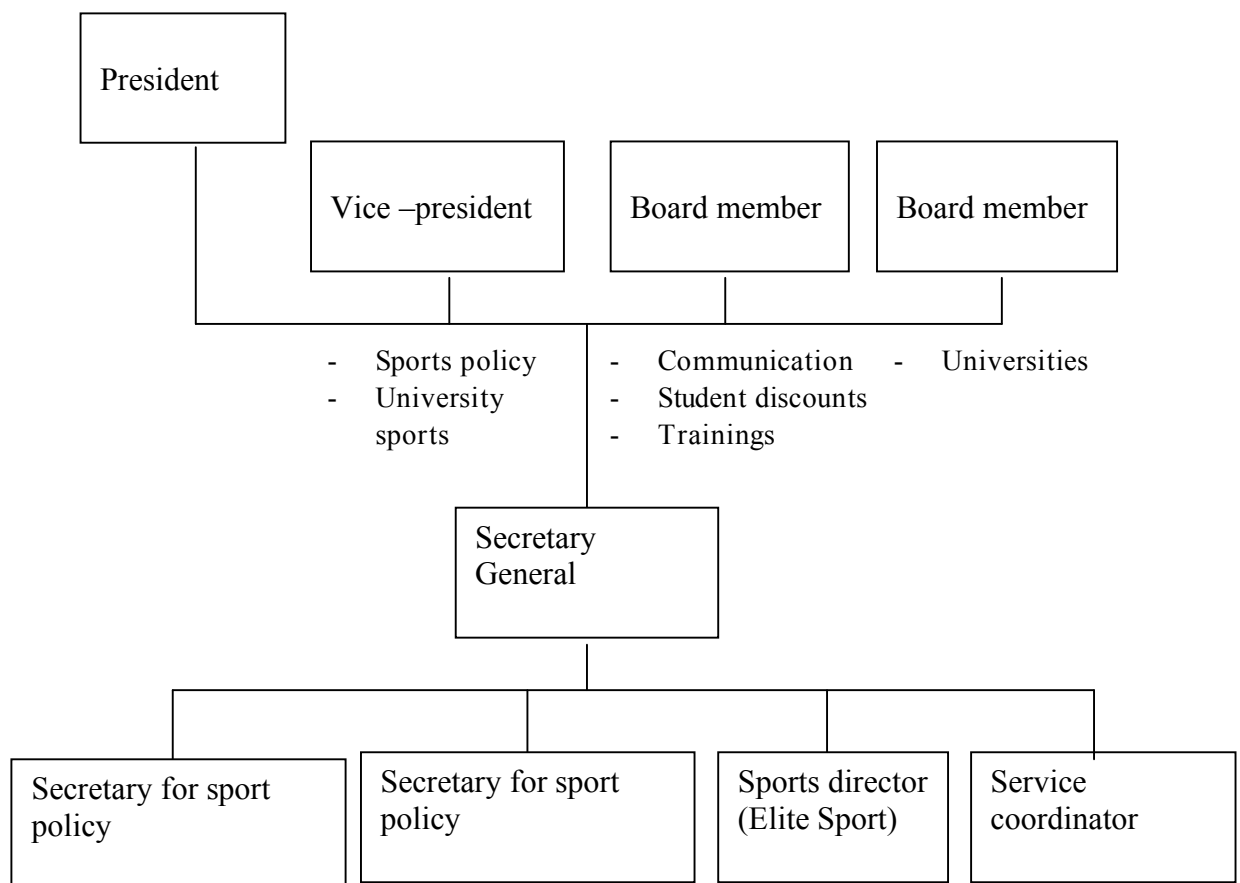


Fig 9: Internal organizational chart of OLL (Akseli Hakala 2011)

All the staff members are under contract with the organization besides in exceptional cases. Though the board members operate with a year mandate, whereas the Secretaries

are professionals employed permanently as the nature of their tasks and role is often related to long-term projects. (Hakala, Interview 16/02/2011)

5.2.3. Institutions with Influence in OLL

There are 6 universities who have direct membership agreements with OLL. The organization discusses matters concerning sport and physical activity with other higher education institutes through the national university (SYL) and polytechnic (SAMOK) student unions. This comprises thirty-four member unions responsible for university sports in higher education institutions around Finland. Other public institutions such as the Ministry of Education and the National Lottery (Veikkaus) strongly support the activities and actions of OLL. Private and voluntary organizations involved with sports, health and well-being also have an important role as sponsors and service providers to OLL, who in return serves as an active communication channel to students and young-adults. (OLL 2005)

OLL is very influential near the ministry of education and within other national sports governing-bodies. Akseli Hakala believes that OLL potential to influence decision-making concerning university sport is more effective when focusing on governing authorities rather than addressing HIE's individually, since communicating directly with the Ministries' departments of education, youth and sport, along with influential parliamentary leaders, OLL can affect policies implemented, funding and projects proposed for university sport. In addition OLL can aid deciding and recommend what incentives are given to higher education institutions with sports programmes. It is with this purpose that the secretary general and president of the board meet with the Ministry of Education and Sports and Culture few times a year to discuss OLL sport policies. (Hakala, Interview 16/02/2011)

To be able to transmit qualitative responses and solutions to national public authorities OLL meets twice a year with the staff from the sports departments, through seminars and focus groups where they discuss various topics related to university sport development, inform about new ideas and projects as well as provide information

concerning physical activity benefits and enhancing students' life within the academic communities. (Hakala & Laakso, Interview 16/02/2011)

5.2.4. OLL Sports Policy and Strategies

Concerning policies and guidelines OLL has a list of eleven key points from where its mission, objectives and goals are built upon. The most important goal of OLL's sports policy is to ease and encourage students to become or continuing being active in sports (OLL 2005). This idea is the main principle of the federation sustained by the long-term vision of creating a national system for university sports services. In other words a cooperation network involving college sports departments, public authorities, facilities, federations, voluntary institutions among other organizations linked with university sport. (OLL 2010, p 9)

OLL is often involved on both regional and national sport policy development conducted by local authorities and the department of sport and youth of the government. There are three people working in the sector of sports policy: one member of the board and two secretaries working full time. One of the secretaries is also responsible of meetings and cooperation with national governing sports organizations and the public sector. (Hakala & Laakso, Interview 16/02/2011)

In 2010 federation continued contributing to the government's platform for sport, by maintaining contact with members of the parliament and other experts involved within the government's platform, as well as with important interest groups in the fields of student, youth and sport organization. The program for sport policies as well as the goals set by OLL's board for the government platform will act as tools for policy development. (OLL 2010, p 9)

The preliminary debates concerning higher education funding projects for 2012 started this year 2011. A project proposition will be presented to the Ministry of Education and Culture, which will provide a grant for higher education sports, to establish new and improved sports services. OLL intends to input the project in the Ministry of Education budget, as well as increase cooperation with SLU. (OLL 2010, p 9)

5.2.5. Projects to Improve Student Access and Participation in Sport

Between 2009-2010 a project plan was created to support developments at regional level. Many cities with higher education institutions have been building up their university sports system e.g. Vaasa, Turku or Oulu. (OLL 2010, p 3)

In Finland, many universities offer sport services to their academic communities, whereas polytechnics have limited sport services available and in various cases neither the students nor the staff have access to the sports programmes of the universities. According to Hanna Laakso this is perhaps related to the differences in planning and incentives provided by distinct higher education systems (university and polytechnic) and internally by the planning of activities for the academic community put in practice by the higher education institutions themselves. (Laakso, Interview 15/02/2011)

From a total of 43 higher education institutions throughout Finland, around nine universities have a sports department and only four polytechnics have organized programs. Some universities fund student unions or delegate the union to manage sport provision. (Hakala & Laakso, Interview 16/02/2011)

Moreover, OLL's regional development plans involve continuous assessment, communication and support through know-how originating from best practices, as well as alternative fields other than those strictly related with sport. Certain ongoing or previously implemented projects will be utilized in the future when introducing best practices to HEI's willing to provide sports services to their academic community. (OLL 2010, p 3)

The development of university sports services and partnerships at regional and local level should be one of the main focus of the overall sports policy, since major discrepancies between sports services from region to region still prevail throughout the country, along with the fact that the potential benefits of partnerships between universities and polytechnics concerning sport provision are not being fully explored.

In addition, OLL is running various short-term projects with institutes around the country during the year of 2011. Lahti and Jyväskylä have been chosen as the campus of crucial focus, as well as the newly initiated projects of the HIE's located in Vaasa, Eastern Finland and metropolitan area of Helsinki. The areas of development for 2012 will be chosen during the regional meetings of this year's fall 2011. (OLL 2010, p 3)

The federation created an expert group with members of the various projects in place, and in 2011 depending on the projects' success, OLL desires to submit an application for funding of a long-term evaluation and implementation plan for new sports facilities despite the current modifications in the public sector, and government. The recommendations and suggestions of the expert working group to the field will be presented especially to higher education institutions and to the government in a close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Finnish Student Health Service (YTHS) and other important partners of cooperation. (OLL 2010, p 3)

Ideally one crucial implementation step of the recommendations will focus on the development of a model for continuous/sustainable funding of higher education sports. A work group formed by OSS experts has been discussing potential funding models for higher education sports during 2010. Working on the funding models will continue in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Unif and the Rector's Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (ARENE) as well as with higher education institutions. The goal is to find a consensus between OLL, the universities and the Ministry on a reliable funding model of the higher education sports. (OLL 2010, p 3)

OLL is active when it comes to cooperation with HIE's and developing solutions to incorporate sport activity in the students' life. From the partnership with the Oulu University of Applied Sciences (OAMK) emerged a project designated 'Lähtenyt Liikkumaan' in development since 2009 by Ismo Miettinen a researcher and project manager for OAMK. (OLL 2010, p 3)

The goal of Lähtenyt Liikkumaan is to develop and utilize operation models that aim to permanent changes in sports and health as well as prevention of alienation from sports. The model is based on a decision instated by the Finnish Council of State made on

health and healthy nutrition promotion. In the third year of the project the main focus will be to shift from testing and developing action models to distribution of the models that were found successful and fruitful throughout the Finnish HIE's interested in following its guidelines. Distribution of the ideas and operation models will be controlled and coordinated in cooperation with the higher education sports services of OAMK. (OLL 2010, p 3)

In 2010 the main focus of the operational model was to improve and increase sports tutoring and health counseling service chains between student health services and university sports organizations. For sports tutoring the most important associates are the student organizations. Regarding student health services the sports services of the HIE's will be the most important target group to consider when improving the service chains of sports & health counseling. (OLL 2010, p 3)

6. COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The theoretical evidence grounded on determinants based on the relevance of sports practice by young-adults during their academic period, combined with various sources of information including the EUROBAROMETER enabled the evaluation of sport practice and its current state in both Portugal and Finland.

This was fundamental to create an outline of certain crucial constraints and advantages affecting OLL and FADU in their respective environments. The empirical background analysis of both national university sport federations allowed retrieving information which allowed to create an evaluation of their potential to influence and sustain a role in enhancing student participation in regular sport as a top recreational activity.

A summary of external and internal variables that shape the role of the university sport federations in Portugal and Finland from a strategic perspective was obtained through background analysis and assembled utilizing a SWOT analysis. This analysis will also provide ground to understand differences and similarities in student participation in sport in Portugal and Finland under the sociological concepts introduced in the theoretical framework.

6.1. The Potential of FADU to Influence Student Participation in Sport

In Portugal and FADU the major external factors that need to be considered currently are the economic situation of the country and families in general that compose the larger social groups. Economic capital reflects widely on consumption habits and particularly in recreational demands, as Bourdieu (1984, 1986) and others have observed the constraints created by income, work and economic welfare dictate strongly how individuals from distinct social groups perceive and occupy their free time. In Portugal the high working hours (39.5 hours per week) (Cabrita & Ortigão 2011) combined with salaries lower than the European average, affect how families program and optimize free time activities, and it is a major reason why people indicate lack of time and the

cost of sport services as reasons not to engage frequently in physical activities (Gomes 2009, EUROBAROMETER 2009).

Counteracting the previous factor, at least in the academic context is the fact that there is an increasing demand for low cost sport services and higher interest from young adults, especially women, in sports. The notions of aesthetics, physical beauty and the overall health benefits, thus the symbolic and health capital potentially gained contribute greatly for a higher awareness and interest in sport among the Portuguese society (Corte-Real et al. 2008; Gomes 2009). FADU through its long-term vision of improving sport provision in universities will definitely serve as a national level promoter of the opportunities students and the academic community can have of engaging in regular sports under more affordable services (FADU 2010, p 24).

The increasing interest in sport as a group recreational activity among youth as noted by Corte-Real et al. (2008) also provides a slight evidence of cultural and social traits concerning sport, people are developing a healthy life-style culture with a high degree of interest for activities where they can involve their friends, although Gomes (2009) identifies shopping or social meetings in cafes or bars and even at home has the widely culturally and socially predominant forms of recreation among university students.

Sports like futsal, football and other team sports are however very much appreciated creating opportunities to bond and interact with friends and new people ultimately contributing for social and cultural capital (Corte Real 2008). FADU being a federation with higher interest and expertise in elite sport according to Oliveira (2010), has nevertheless technical capabilities to develop, independently or join with universities, research and counseling for higher education institutions willing to implement sports programmes as a medium-long term objective, much like OLL has been doing and will actively continue with the Lähtenyt Liikkumaan project (Laakso Interview 15/02/2011).

Socially and culturally there is evidence (Gomes 2009; Costa Januário 2010) that Portuguese have preference for consuming sport as spectators whether at home or on stadiums, with the majority of the sport event market being dominated by football. This is deeply a consequence of the populist regime of Salazar that lasted until 1974, which not only impeded the development of the organized sport system, but also restricted the

importance of physical activity in schools, attributing its core-value to military purposes rather than focusing on its well-being and leisure functionalities, women and elders were especially affected because of their limited military value but also the population in general. This has deeply influenced family values and habits concerning sport practice (Rosário 1997, p 137-142). These deep cultural and social constraints are perhaps one of the strongest reasons why overall the Portuguese sport system is not yet capable of involving the society in sport and physical activity as in central and northern European countries.

Although FADU has a very wide range of sport competitions available for student-athletes (65 in total) according to Oliveira (2010) one of the biggest constraints is the risk of clash between the competitions and the calendar of other sports governing bodies and/or the universities' educational programs. This factor exposes the low political impact FADU has, and although the federation has strong ties with the Olympic Committee, the Portuguese Confederation of Sport and the Sports Institute of Portugal, especially on an international level, on a national scale, university sport events are not yet a priority (Oliveira Interview 16/09/2010). Thus FADU will have to continue being very creative and develop its political influence and communication with other federations and public authorities.

The public and academic infrastructures for sport practice are not very well developed in Portugal. Besides the major universities of Lisbon, Coimbra, Porto and Braga, there are very few institutions with quality facilities or perhaps cooperation between universities and the local authorities to provide sport services to their academic community in a similar way to Finland. In addition, FADU does not have an active involvement with universities or local authorities. (Oliveira Interview 16/09/2010)

In the last decade the central government has strongly invested in sport development. In 2010 the Annual State Budget allocated around 79.6 million euro through the Secretariat of Sport and Youth, investing especially in competitive sport, but also targeting 'sport for all', scientific development, modernization of national governing bodies and infrastructures (IDP 2010). FADU has updated its mission and status in accordance with the next State legislation for federations, maintaining now a public entity status. With it, it has the responsibility to be actively involved with individuals

and social groups directly affected by its mission, strategy and objectives (FADU 2010). Thus it is expected to see a stronger participation of FADU with university sport at all levels including the development of opportunities for students and members of the academic community on a national scale. The objectives and long-term vision stated within their activities report for 2011 is an indicator of this positive development.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis of FADU and the Portuguese University Sport Environment

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizes a high number of university sport events - Strong involvement with elite university sport - Good elite university sport policies - Students compose the executive and counseling committees - Cooperation with major federations such as the NOC, student unions and top universities in Portugal - Strong and positive long-term objectives with emphasis on both elite and recreational sport - Independent Financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited involvement with smaller universities - Short experience with recreational university sport - ‘Sport for all’ development is a secondary activity - Low political influence - Reduced knowledge of national data on university sports participation - No involvement with universities to create or develop sports programmes - Limited promotion outside the competitive segment
External Factors	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steady increase in average sport participation within the last 20 years - Growing interest and awareness to sport as a free time activity by young adults in general yields to more focus on ‘sport for all’ policies - Increasing number of university students = wider market - Stronger governmental emphasis on ‘sport for all’ = better funding for projects within - Economic difficulties prompt to more demand for less costly sport services, FADU could be a motivator for universities - High growth of historically symbolic academic sports such as futsal, rugby and martial arts. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of the universities’ interest to be involvement in FADU’s competitions - Sport participation in Portugal is still very low - Many university students in Portugal have other recreational preferences - Sedentary habits of the population limit interest and development of a sports culture - Limited economic and cultural capital of many families is a barrier for a physically active life-style - Inexistent or underdeveloped sports infrastructures in the majority of academic campuses - Social and cultural preference for sport clubs

Concluding, FADU desires to implement several crucial improvements for university sport, at both elite and recreational levels, on a short-medium term perspective (FADU 2010). Though to improve the levels of participation even among the major universities with sports infrastructures, and programs will require active interaction with central and local public authorities, major sport federations and perhaps even organizations with interest in promoting sport targeted to youngsters and young-adults.

The development of a sport culture and symbolic connections between sport and recreation among young-adults, and specifically university students in Portugal is extremely dependent on how the benefits of sport are transmitted. The functionalities of sport have been widely advertised nationally. Though historical, cultural and societal norms and values require time to change to allow people to create new attitudes and behaviors. Thus, within E.U., and according to the data of the EUROBORAMETER and national level studies Portugal can be seen as a developing country regarding wide spread sport practice. Though having a strong orientation for spectator sports, pleasant natural conditions, increasing government and a high sports potential support for public sport, there are favorable factors to reach higher participation rates in the near future (Tenreiro 2010, Viseu et al. 2002).

6.2. The Potential of OLL to Influence Student Participation in Sport

In the Finnish scenario, OLL's structure and the university sport system is more developed regarding 'sport for all' in comparison with Portugal. There are various reasons to be considered. The organization of sport in Finland originated over a century ago basically as soon as the country became an independent state, for instance OLL exists since 1924 (Opiskelijaliikunta 2011), which is very remarkable for societal and cultural reasons, signifying that students and universities in the country have been very aware of the importance of sport for nearly a century now (GHK 2009; Itkonen 2002).

Culturally and historically sport has been a crucial element for promoting and creating the identity of the Finnish nation. The achievements of Paavo Nurmi, Hannes Kolehmainen or Lasse Viren express the socio-cultural functionalities and cultural capital enrichment sport can provide for an entire society, because not only they greatly

contributed for Finland's position as an overall top 10 Olympic medal winner they also helped establishing values, habits, behaviors and positive associations between sport and society that helped exposing the nation throughout the world (Urheilumuseo 2011; GHK 2009).

Table 2: SWOT Analysis of OLL and the Finnish University Sport Environment

Internal Factors	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong political influence in university sport matters - Students compose the executive board - Good knowledge of the university's sport services at national level - Strong emphasis on 'Sport for all' policies - Good communication with major higher education institutions and student unions - Cooperation with major sports federations, including SLU (Finnish Sport Federation) and sport academies - Good level of awareness within universities - Strong long-term objectives and guidelines for university sport "Lähtenyt Liikkumaan" project 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependence of the Ministry of Education for funding - Limited number of national elite/competitive sports events - Difficulty to cooperate with peripheral higher education institutions - Difficulty obtaining private funding - Dependence of political lobbies
	External Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finland has one of the highest sport participation rates in E.U. - Strong sports culture - Sport is a major recreational and social activity - High number of university students - Strong government support of 'Sport for all' programmes - Wide number of universities with sports programmes - Wide variety of sport possibilities (with four seasons) - Finland has very good public sport infrastructures - Highly developed voluntary sector 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public funding for sport dependent of national lottery and competes with other areas - Long and harsh winters limit outdoor group activities in many regions - High number of polytechnic institutions with no sport services - Subjective symbolic and political importance of sport for the higher education system - Social and cultural preference for sport clubs - Competition for local facilities with other forms of organized sport

In addition the central government through the Ministry of Education and Culture is very interested in sustaining 'sport for all' in 2010 the funds allocated through Veikkaus for sport reached over 137million Euro which in accordance with the Finnish Fund Distribution act represented 25 percent of the national lottery company's profits (Veikkaus 2010). These funds are mostly invested for the development of quality facilities, programmes and promotion of the health and social benefits of sport, with the intention to raise the interest of the different social groups and classes in sport practice (Veikkaus 2010; Opetus ja Kulttuuriministeriö 2010).

Obviously those factors have been assimilated and help create cultural symbolism that is passed on throughout generations, sport is seen not only as a form of well-being and base for symbolic capital in this welfare society, but also represents one the most accepted forms of recreation, social interaction and bonding, and cultural development in Finland (Eurobarometer 2010; Puistonen 2009; Vuolle 2009; GHK 2009).

The very efficient socio-economic structure allows the production of both a high per capita income and free-time (Tilastokeskus 2009), which Finns utilize often to be involved in physical activities, whether in winter time with cross-country skiing, Nordic walking or running, or in the summer with various outdoor activities. The Finnish population is rather homogeneous compared to a highly stratified Portuguese society. Economically and culturally Finns in general can have access to various forms of expression, sports, events and other forms of entertainment (Kunto 2010; Tilastokeskus 2009).

The welfare society has created possibilities for everybody to benefit from the cultural and social capital provided by the access to multiple forms of recreation. Though in Finland certain socio-cultural traits associated and intensified by harsh winters limit the interaction between people, especially in central and northern regions, thus sport, predominantly in an organized form becomes a relevant form of social bounding and binding. This enables the development of social and cultural capital. (Zacheus 2009; Takkula 2011)

In fact, not only Finland has one of the highest sport participation rates in Europe at 94 percent it also has one of the highest regular engagement levels (Eurobarometer 2010),

an extremely well supported voluntary sector and a high number of quality multi-purpose sport facilities for outdoor and indoor purposes accessible by virtually all the population since in many cases public facilities are economically inexpensive (Puistonen 2009; Vuolle 2010; NOC 2006). These factors provide quality advantages and possibilities for sport federations and facility managers to organize sport events and for individuals to allocate their free time and income in sport practice.

For OLL the combination of socio-economic and cultural aspects described previously represent a series of opportunities and threats that the organization is taking into account through various activities within university sport. In the Finnish higher education system, universities and polytechnics have independent structures. Evidenced in sport provision by the incompatibilities even within the same locality where universities and polytechnics are not able to share sports facilities and programmes for the benefit of the academic communities, as in the case of Helsinki, Jyväskylä and Tampere, which creates threats for effective sport services on a local level (Laakso Interview 15/09/2011).

Though OLL has been active enough to develop, with the assistance of Ismo Miettinen of the Oulu University of Applied Sciences, an elaborated guide that underlines the main contributing factors of sport provision in universities as well as how programmes can be implemented and motivate students to engage in sport, and what benefits can arise from having sport services in higher education institutions and their academic communities (Laakso Interview 15/09/2011).

Moreover OLL inputs efforts to communicate directly with the Ministry of Education, the universities as well as politicians with influence in the decision-making on sport issues. This is crucial to promote the federation's objectives and vision, especially since OLL is very dependent financially on Veikkaus funding allocated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Hakala Interview 16/02/2011).

The public authorities and many sports clubs in Finland focus on the recreational philosophy of sport, being a major reason why participation rates are high. OLL also follows this trend, and although the federation does not neglect elite sport and university competitions, especially concerning international competitions, there is a slight

limitation in sport events organized annually by OLL in comparison with FADU. OLL has around 18 events scheduled for 2011 (Opiskelijaliikunta 2011). This limitation can have a negative effect on the transmission of symbolic capital and socio-cultural traits associated with competitive sport, such as leadership, ambition or discipline, values often developed during early adulthood, but is mostly a reflection of the financial dependence on the Ministry of Education and Culture.

OLL has a strong potential and many social and cultural conditions to become a channel, coordinator and communicator of sport practice and university sport development within Finland, the high number of students enrolled in the Finnish higher education institutions, high participation rates, relative access to local public facilities are positive factors from where OLL can create capital for universities and the academic community overall by allocating efforts to promote more university sport events and successful guidelines to implement best practices throughout the country.

6.3. Major Factors Affecting Sport Participation

Organizational and environmental factors contribute for the efficiency or insufficiencies of the sport system. Bellow is a set of organizational, and environmental factors and aspects identified through content analysis.

In terms of Organizational Factors, meaning those that vary depending on the sport federation itself, policies, objectives and budget according to the empirical analysis on OLL and FADU seem to represent the factor of stronger importance.

Regarding Environmental Factors this research emphasizes on elements of importance for sport participation independently of how the federation is organized. The awareness and importance society attributes to the benefits of sport, the economic and cultural influences and the global participation levels will be analyzed more closely.

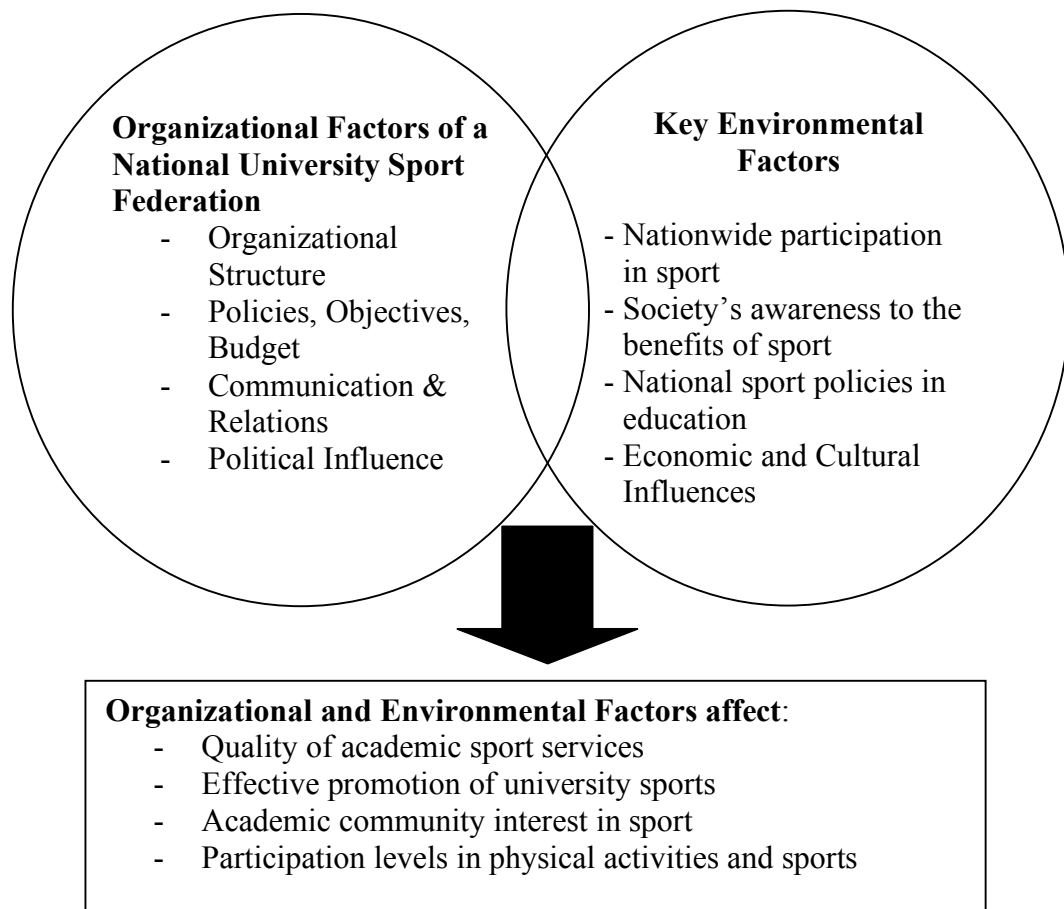


Fig 10: External and Internal Factors that influence the potential of University Sports Federations in enhancing student participation in sport.

6.3.1. The Influence of Organizational Policies and Objectives

Three main aspects that define where organizations want to be in the future and what they intend to achieve are set by their policies, objectives and often dependent of the financial management and budget disponibility. In the case of FADU and OLL it is possible to clearly observe distinctions and effects that the policy and objective structure has on their role in university sport and influence in student participation in sport.

Policies tend to define the strategic and operational framework of an organization driving the objectives that will be implemented on the short and long-term. Moreover

the objectives proposed reflect often the major policies set by the federation. In the case of OLL, having set a policy strongly based on providing access to recreational sports in universities, tends to develop strategic and operational objectives and goals that target multiple activities and tasks towards that policy. Increasing student participation in sport is an objective that tends to be a major focus of OLL's policies. Therefore, OLL's activity and role have a strong potential to affect university sport and student participation on a wider scale since there is already an orientation towards promoting the supply of sport activity to students across HEI's.

In the case of FADU the policies are strongly focused on promoting university sport in a competitive context with goals aiming to encourage the development of more university sports events and develop the integration of student-athletes with the academic system (Oliveira Interview 16/09/2010; FADU 2009). Hence the policy and objectives affect the role of FADU limiting its scope and influence in the academic community.

Therefore, the sport policies of the university sports federations and the objectives set are an important factor to consider in university sports development, because of the pressure they will put on the strategies, motivations and primary focus of the system on a national level, influencing not only the role of the federation, but also its budget allocation, short and long term goals, communication, relationship with other NGSBs, local and national government authorities and interest groups such as clubs and sports organizations. Thus student participation in sport at university level can be very dependent not only on the universities and public sector policy system but as well of the sport policies of the NUSF.

6.3.2. Economic and Cultural Dependencies of Sport Participation

As it is possible to observe on the analysis of the sport involvement of the Portuguese and Finnish academic community, factors related to the country and society need to be correctly understood to be able to describe the role of a university sports federation, among environmental factors the socio-economic and cultural aspects related with leisure time occupation and sport culture seemed the most relevant.

Although one of the main objectives of the E.U. is to increase the socio-economic harmony and equality between member states (European Commission 2011), every nation has its own economic structure with oscillations in the labor and working-hours scheme, different balance between leisure and work, distinct social classes and consuming power among others. These variables affect sports provision as well as participation in various ways especially when comparing Northern with Southern European countries (Eurobarometer 2010). As it was possible to observe the sport participation levels in Portugal were significantly lower than in Finland, and people in general had a preference for or more sedentary occupations such as spending time with friends or family (Gomes 2009; Dias et al. 2008). As demonstrated by the EUROBAROMETER survey these choices are influenced by the costs associated with sports activities and limited amount of time strongly linked to high working hours or academic duties. In Southern European countries like Portugal the socio-economic factors have a deeper negative effects than in the Nordic, the disparities between social classes and quality of life standards are more dramatic than in Finland or Sweden for instance.

In any case the Nordic countries with a more homogenous and richer economies with a welfare system that allows individuals of the society to engage in various activities being sports one of the primary choices (Tilastokeskus 2006; Puistonen 2009; Vuolle 2010). This is reflected by the high number of people who participate in sport activities and consume sport related services and products as a primary source of recreation and leisure not only among youngsters, but throughout every age group (Eurobarometer 2010; Puistonen 2009; Tammelin 2003; Van Tuyckom 2010; Kunto 2010).

From the analysis of the Portuguese and the Finnish sport participation levels and the observing the socio-economic differences between each country it becomes evident that this set of factors, including social classes, standard of living, leisure time, labor scheme, impact the ability and capability people in general have to consume and engage in sport. Although more studies on sport participation are developed, federations and other organized sports organizations need to be assess the impact, effects and consequences of socio-economic factors or take these factors under consideration when establishing comparisons and describing results.

The cultural aspects also influence greatly the perceptions and associations given to practice, choice and reputation of sports activities (Bourdieu 1986; Coalter 2005). In Finland sport activities are foreseen as an important form of socialization, well-being, entertainment, social integration as well as expression of historical national values and identity, this high cultural focus on sport consumption for leisure and recreational purposes limited the commitment to professional sport in Finland though (Seppänen 1982; Kunto 2010; Takkula 2011).

Whereas in Portugal before 1974 sport provision was limited and foreseen as a intrinsic part of the military training, with strong interdependence in political, cultural and social values and effects (Rosario 1997, p 159). Today sport is predominately a rather expensive activity, part of the youth development process, but less valuable in other stages of life, even though it is greatly consumed passively as a form of media or spectator entertainment (Corte Real 2008; Gonçalves 2010). Historically the Portuguese society was educated to consume sport in a sedentary form rather than in an active participative approach, this happens especially after high school, because there is no culture of continuity following high school graduation (Corte Real 2008). Though geographically Portugal has very good conditions for outdoor activities, and inexpensive sport development seem unlimited.

From FADU and OLL these socio-cultural tendencies affect the policies and primary objectives of each organization. FADU focusing more on elite organized activities prefers to encourage student-athlete participation in university sport events dedicated to students seeking a career in professional sports since the sport participation levels are relatively low (Oliveira Interview 2010). OLL focuses more on 'sport for all' activities since in Finland people have more appetency for sport engagement and there are better structural conditions and strong positive historical and cultural associations to sport practice (Hakala & Laakso Interview 2011).

6.3.3. The Influence and Benefit of Sport Participation Research

The European Commission has dedicated resources to evaluate the participation levels in sport and physical activity across member states through the EUROBAROMETER study of 2009 with the purpose of understanding and comparing the value of sport and its distinction in different countries and regions of the E.U. The EUROBAROMETER permitted to evaluate sport participation rates involving multiple quantitative variables and describing tendencies across age groups, gender, race and regions of Europe 27. There is a necessity to expand research towards socio-cultural aspects such as social class, social groups, values, habits, life-style and perhaps even psychological aspects to develop a deeper perception of why people do sports activities or prefer other forms or recreation.

The increase of sport participation or development in the quality of provision in E.U. countries is increasingly becoming an important public policy goal (European Commission 2011). The intervention of national sport governing bodies will be crucial for the successful implementation of measures to achieve it. Hence organizations like FADU and OLL have an imperative obligation to keep aware of the sport participation rates in their respective countries, especially across young-adults and university students, as well as maintaining an understanding of what needs to be done to improve sport provision and services in higher education institutions throughout their nations.

Sport participation numbers and rates become an increasing relevant factor when there is limited information concerning social groups, across regions, participation rates in private and public institutions, gender, educational and sporting background for instance. These are also examples of data that could be collected and analyzed by the national federations including FADU and OLL.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to determinate the role of university sports federations in enhancing student participation in sport within the university context. To produce a conclusive research a comparison approach between the Finnish and Portuguese systems was implemented stressing on the questions, what is the potential of university sport federations affecting student participation in sport, what are the differences and similarities between FADU and OLL from a structural and policy stand point, and what is the influence of social, economic and cultural aspects on students' determination to engage in sport.

The various empirical studies available on sport participation prove there are multiple benefits and profits coming from regular sport practice throughout a person's life, especially at psychological, physical and social levels, on an educational perspective sport practice can have positive effects on motivation and academic achievement. Thus it becomes more valuable to understand some of the factors that lead to some societies having higher participation rates than others.

The findings or results of the study highlight various structural, strategic and organizational differences not only between the university sport systems in Portugal and Finland, but at its core also expose multiple societal and cultural distinctions in the perception and attitude towards sport as a recreational activity in each country that are completely distinct in both sociological and organizational aspects.

7.1. The Portuguese Perspective for University Sport

In the Portuguese context participation is very limited by economic and structural factors, people seem to have insufficient free time, income and restricted access to low cost facilities to engage in sport or physical activities, cultural and symbolic traits embedded through family and historical values, and nearly inexistent sport provision in universities have also created negative sedentary recreational habits that only in the last ten to twenty years started changing. Women achieved a different status and especially young women are more aware of the physical and aesthetic benefits of sport (Gomes

2009). Thus it is expected that women participation in sports in Portugal will increase naturally although the major risk groups in the country are the elders and middle-aged citizens who have not grown with sport habits and values our were educated before the democratic revolution in 1974 (Gomes 2009).

According to the Portuguese socio-economic and cultural current sport environment and FADU's structure, strategy and policy this can be a period of strong changes, although the country faces economic difficulties, among young-adults sport is becoming an important form of identification and expression, universities can and will have to commit to develop recreational programs also as part of their promotional strategy, thus FADU's role and vision to be able to enhance sport participation in universities will have to incorporate increasingly more goals targeting not only competitive sport but above all widespread sport practice and work in providing guidelines, sports programmes and stronger cooperation and communication with universities and student unions, as well as public authorities, national sport governing bodies and interest groups.

7.2. The Finnish University Sport Context

Whereas in Finland, the macro-economic and sociological factors related to culture, habits, values and life-style have been deeply associated with sport practice for over a century now. Not only voluntary organized sport, but also top elite sport has been part of the identity creation and cultural symbols that allowed expressing the Finnish nation internationally. The Finnish government was able to greatly develop public infrastructures and support organized sports with special attention to widespread participation as part of the health and educational policies. Individuals from every social class are stimulated from early age to be physically active (Zacheus 2009), an effort that is expressed by balanced participation rates throughout different age groups (Kunto 2010, p 27).

The welfare system also contributes to economic and cultural homogenization thus families in general are able to profit from economic capital through stable incomes and free-time allowing the access to various forms of recreation and entertainment

(Tilastokeskus 2006; 2009), of which sport is clearly one of the most important, being one of the biggest hobbies from young age and contributing greatly to the development of social capital through the networks created by sports clubs (Seppänen 1982, p 82). Perhaps the biggest question in Finland is how to engage people with health risk factors, socially excluded or individuals with social interaction difficulties.

OLL has been developing its policy targeted towards improving sport practice for every student and overall members of the academic communities at national level (Laakso Interview 2011). This vision will continue being emphasized by joint projects with medium-long term effects that have a great potential to impact future public educational and health policies regarding the implementation and provision of sport services in higher education institutions, such as the Lähtenyt liikkumaan project (OLL 2010). Though the funding allocation, and increased competition for access to public facilities or other resources between federations, sport clubs or individuals is perhaps the major constraint to achieve excellence in sport provision in Finland at higher education level, since most institutions depend on the local public infrastructure to provide sports programmes to their academic community (Hakala Interview 2011).

7.3. Evaluation and Value of the Study

Sport participation among European Union member states is a topic of strong interest to various fields related to sport, such as sport sociology, economy and management. In the last 15 – 20 years the E.U. has produced multiple studies focusing on various aspects to identify where sport and physical activity contributes with benefits and advantages, but also how citizens perceive, consume and obtain value from sport. The EUROBAROMETER study of 2009 highlighted sport participation trends among the 27 member states and the discrepancies between Southern and Eastern European and Northern countries, raising certain reasons why people engaged or not in sport activities, but only on a superficial level. Therefore, it is necessary to continue exploring the sport participation phenomenon from different perspectives, analyzing what and how cultural, economic and social factors influence citizens' decisions and taste for sport depending on age, social group and class, gender and educational level.

This research focused on central organizations that promote and support the interests of sport practice at higher education level, describing and comparing the role(s) of the Finnish and Portuguese university sport federations. Ultimately by analyzing differences and similarities at university sport organization, and from a sociological perspective with special focus on social, economic and cultural capital as well as the function of sport this study enabled to target a social group (young-adults) within a very specific framework (higher education students) and understand at least certain cultural, social and economic traits that influence sport participation in Finland and Portugal.

The value of this study on the role of university sports federation affecting student participation in sport is expressed by the idea that these organizations can sustain relevant actions and why they need to utilize their proximity to higher education institutions and young-adults to embed and promote a culture of sport engagement, specially in countries like Portugal where sport practice and competitiveness is very low in comparison to the European average.

8. SUGGESTIONS

To finalize it is appropriate to introduce relevant studies that could be helpful for FADU and OLL. Therefore, the concept of change within higher education institutions according to Pennington (2003), the research developed by Jackson and Weinstein (1997) and the case-study on the British University Sport model, should be seen as added value to improve the role of sport federations in Portugal and Finland as well as sport participation among students.

8.1. University Sports Federations Coordination Role

The necessity and increased importance of sport and physical activity practice in universities according to Jackson and Weinstein (1997) went through an evolution in the past 30 years bringing new methods and approaches to provide healthier conditions for students. They identified first a shift towards preventive, rather than compensatory measures followed by a more social/collectivist approach rather than an individualistic method emphasizing on community intervention health programs.

Moreover, a healthier campus provides the emotional and physical support for students aiding them developing motivation to study and reach personal goals. But also build personality, social networks and mature into adulthood. This is the recognition that university sport development through better programmes tailored towards the college communities' requirements is a crucial element to promote health and social enhancement. (Jackson and Weinstein 1997, HTML)

Furthermore, the goal to achieve healthy(ier) university communities is not only a responsibility of the campus authorities, but should also be a relevant activity for national governing institutions, as the university sports federations, higher education boards, student unions, educational commissions among other education and health institutions.

National governing boards should be responsible for supplying the necessary resources to create the necessary physical or administrative infrastructures or held improving the existing environment, supporting programmes, training and facilitating the activities of the university's staff.

8.2. The Role of University Sport Federations as a Change Conductor

The potential of university sports federations in aiding universities developing attractive sports services for the academic community is in essence based on various interdependent socio-economic and cultural factors, but also organizational or internal factors which were partially identified through this research.

One unexplored factor is associated with the receptivity to change or the time necessary to produce directly or indirectly alterations on pre-existing individual attitudes and group behaviors, in this case, in the academic community. There are studies on organizational performance of sport federations and concerning multiple sociological aspects of sport, but not many studies consider the relevance of change as a factor.

“Change” is a continuous phenomenon that affects a people's lives in multiple ways and often is a consequence of social, economic or political tensions, breakthrough discoveries, market stimulations and modifications, (Pennington 2003, p 4).

Ackerman (1997) according to Pennington has identified developmental, transitional and transformational change as the three distinct categories of change. Stating developmental change is often part of a process of amelioration, where organizations improve or remodel certain functional aspects in order to evolve. Transitional change is linked to an attempt of reaching a position or condition distinct from the pre-existing one. Transformational change involves major shifts with current assumptions, objectives, structure and processes, can imply a change in ideas and values by the organization and its members. (Pennington 1993, p 5)

Increasing sport participation in universities is a policy involving various organizations and intervenients, affecting simultaneously people with very distinguished social,

physiological and psychological characteristics, it is a common goal for sports federations, higher education institutes, and public and private organizations.

The potential to change the students' perceptions and attitudes towards sports can be strongly influenced by the capacity of cooperation, adaptability and communication between university sport federations, public, private and higher education systems. Their ability to develop adjustments depending on different trends and understand how the organizations part of the structure acknowledge and develop the necessary conditions to conduct or maintain the change process effectively and cope with society's receptivity to the change factor itself.

Pennington (2003) identifies five stages or levels of the change process, incrementing according to the level of difficulty and amount of time required to implement (Pennington 2003, p 13). Numerous other authors (Kotter 1996, Nadler 1989, Hersey and Blanchard 1988) have also provided valuable research and knowledge concerning change implementation and management.

The first conclusion from fig. 11 is that any change process influencing intrinsic habits and behaviors shared by not only an isolated number of people, but whether by a large heterogeneous social group, takes a relatively large amount of time to implement. Besides a process of change affecting people's life-styles, common practices and behaviors will require a larger amount of effort and resources, for instance more communication, funding, research, qualified personnel and perhaps facilities. (Pennington 2003, p 13)

A crucial aspect for university sports federations, sport departments or student unions seeking ways to implement changes in the students' recreational occupations and increase their engagement in sport noted by Pennington is that individuals in higher education institutions require more arguments and motivational factors when they are suggested they should change their behavior and attitudes towards certain aspects of their life-styles (Pennington 2003, p 13).

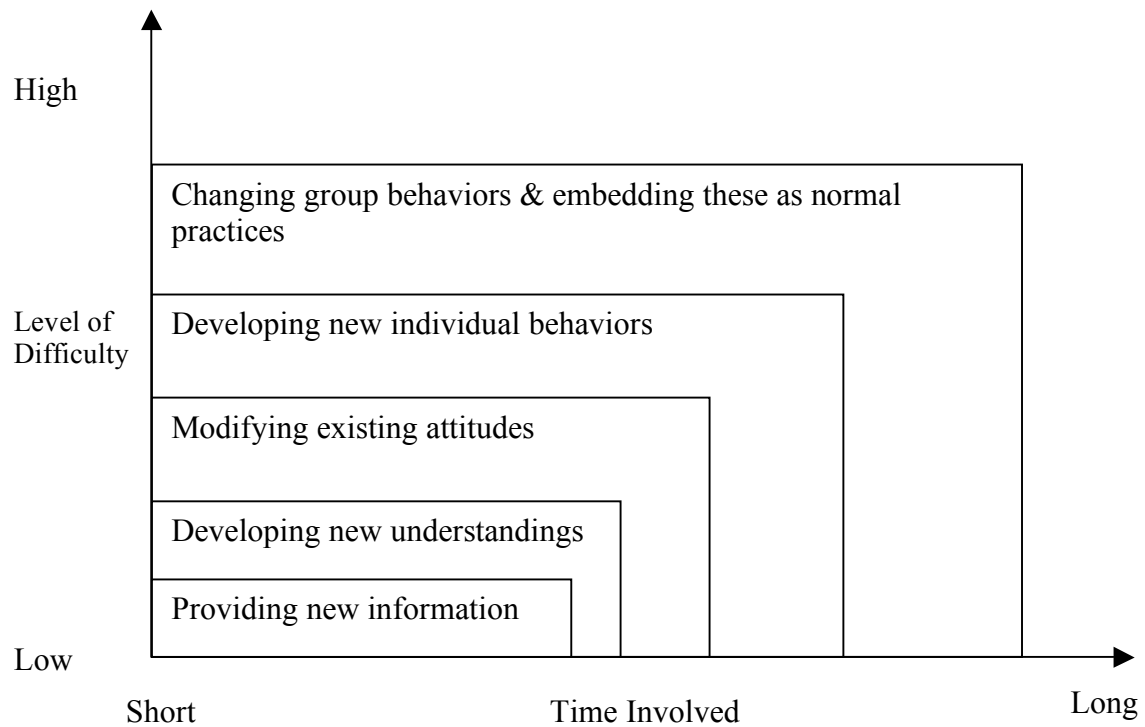


Fig 11: Stages in a change process (Pennington 2003, p 13)

University sport federations have the potential to develop a fundamental role in enhancing student participation in sport whether they intend to focus more on ‘sport for all’ as OLL does or more on university sport events and competitions as FADU wishes. By acting at a national perspective as an integrator, supervisor and coordinator guiding the change process university sport federations can develop research to identify certain unclear variables such as how long it takes for inactive students to engage in regular exercising, or what activities can help these students changing their attitude towards sports.

For active students, federations like OLL and FADU can trace trends and preferences on a national scale by launching questionnaires and enquiries throughout higher education institutes and provide this information to sports departments and student unions, which will have the responsibility to give continuity through adequate sport provision and guidance in an effort to develop healthier recreational habits among students and the academic community in general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Questions of the qualitative interview

Interview for the University Sports Federations (OLL and FADU)

1. How is your organizational structure composed?
2. What is the background of the students and non-student members?
3. Does your organization's policy focus more on elite sports or sport for all?
4. Do you have a responsible for recreational sports?
5. Do you believe your organization has enough power and influence to create conditions to increase sports participation in universities? Why?
6. In your opinion what are the biggest barriers for the development of your activities and objectives?
7. At national level how many higher education institutions have a sports department?
8. How regularly do you meet with the universities' sports department and the government to discuss improvements?
9. Are you involved with the government or the universities to develop infrastructures and sports programs?
10. What are the actions you intend to put in practice in the short-term and long-term to increase sport and physical activity practice in universities?
11. Do you believe the development of elite university sports can motivate more participation in recreational activities and why?
12. Can the guidelines of the White Paper be useful to your mission and goals for sports development in the universities? Why?

13. What areas do you think need to be improved to increase sport participation among the students?
14. Which groups of students need to be addressed first and why?
15. What structural and organizational changes at national or university level you think might be necessary to reach those groups of students?
16. Suggestions and comments...