

*Title:* Leading a change in organizational culture

*Author:* Banzhaf, Johan Frederik

*Aim:* Organizational culture is attracting interest in contemporary sports psychology. Growing evidence suggest that a focus on culture is of value for talent developing environments, as strong cultures support development of desired traits (Henriksen et al, 2010). Other studies highlight an urgent need of progressing from determining whether a focus on culture is important, to how these cultures can be actualized (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). This may enable better informed interventions as well as support leaders seeking to embrace cultural leadership. As so, the aim of this study was to investigate cultural leadership *in situ* in an elite sports organization.

*Method:* The research design represents a qualitative singlecase-study which includes interviews, observations and document analysis. Empirical data is composed of a 10-week period representing multiple contexts. The unit of analysis is the director of sports in an elite sports organization.

*Results:* The study provides a real-time insight into the process of changing an organizational culture. Results indicate how existing guidelines for cultural leadership may be adapted to better accommodate the reality in which an elite sports leader has to navigate.

*Conclusion:* The unique characteristics of sport open up specific ways of accelerating cultural change, which has traditionally been seen as a slow process. Furthermore, while sometimes it is necessary to prioritize immediate results to the detriment of a long-term cultural aim, these conflicting signals may be used constructively for cultural learning. This is of potential great value to leaders in talent development environments as well as researchers that wish to investigate cultural leadership in sport.

- Henriksen et al, Scand. J Med Sci Sports; 2010; (2): 122-132
- Maitland et al, Sport Management Review; 2015; 18 (4), 501-516
- Fletcher, D. & Wagstaff, C.R.D; 2009; Psychology of Sport and Exercise 10: 427-434

### ***Biography***

Johan is a teaching assistant professor in Sports Science at the University of Aalborg. His research interest is the organizational context and its implications for individual participation, performance and personal development. Johan also works as a leadership consultant to facilitate environments conducive for success. Johan is a former board member of DIFO, the Danish Association of Sport & Exercise Psychology.