

Sports, Politics and Human Rights

The Greek Junta and the participation debate in front of the 1969 European Athletic Championship

Karl Jostein Heyerdahl Nyquist



Master`s Thesis, Peace and Conflict Studies
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IV

Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between politics and sports in Norway during the Cold War in general, and in particular the debate in front the 1969 European Athletic Championship on whether Norwegian athletes and the Norwegian media should boycott. Norwegian foreign policy, was in the postwar era, concentrated on security and defense due to the Cold War climate and the threat of Soviet expansion. In the 1960s, we can see a trend where states became more concerned about international human rights, also in Norway. Conducting a foreign policy based on moralism and at the same time, protecting strategical self-interest was challenging for Norwegian authorities. In 1967, a military junta seized power in Greece. The new regime was quickly accused for violating basic human rights, evoking strong reactions in Norway. At the same time, Greece was the host of an international sporting event. The question was whether sports should be separated from politics, or if sports should become a part of Norwegian foreign policy protesting against the human rights violation within the regime.

This thesis contains a descriptive section, which examines the debate in detail, as one important part of this research was to map out major actors and arguments, and understand the process which eventually led to Norwegian participation in the championship. The analytic part discusses the empirical findings, and aims at understand the political interaction with sports. I have found out that the push to politicize the championship came from the Norwegian labor movement, which in 1969 wanted to use sports to react against the regime. Their commitment against participation is an early example of international human rights activism. However, Norwegian sports leaders wanted to make individual choices, and allowed participation. Conservative forces supported the decision. The embedded norm at the time was that politics should be kept out of sports. This is one factor explaining why the non-socialist government chose to stay out of the debate. However, Norwegian participation became a concern for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their policy concerning the championship was divided. In the public, the Ministry did not want to politicize the championship. Behind closed doors, diplomats received orders for how to behave during the events.

Acknowledgment

The relationship between politics and sports is of personal interest. As a former competitor in sports, and today a student in international relations it felt natural to combine these two interests. However, I owe my gratitude to the Director of the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, Sven G. Holtmark, for his guidance in the developing phase of this project. Without our conversations, this project would have never come to light. Your interest in this topic gave me the confidence to pursue this thesis.

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Karl Jostein H. Nyquist

Oslo, May 2016.

Abbreviations

AUF	The Workers Youth League (Arbeidernes Ungdomsfylking)
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IOC	The International Olympic Committee
IR	International Relations
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
LO	Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (Landsorganisasjonen i Norge)
MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIF	Norwegian Confederation of Sports (Norges Idrettsforbund)
NFIF	Norwegian Athletic Association (Norges Friidrettsforbund)
NOK	Norwegian Olympic Committee (Norges Olympiske Komité)
NRK	Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (Norges rikskringkasting)
UN	United Nations

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1 Introduction

This thesis wishes to explore the relationship between politics and sports during the Cold War. The case I wish to study is the 1969 European Athletic Championship in Greece and the debate within Norway on whether Norwegian athletes should participate in or boycott the championship. From 1967, Greece was ruled by a dictatorship led by a military junta accused of violating basic human rights. Norwegian politicians had to assess how the Norwegian state should react against these accusations of human rights violations and the dismantlement of democratic institutions in a western European state and fellow NATO member. At the same time, Greece was supposed to host an international sports event, leading to tense discussions within Norway. This thesis seeks to examine the debate from different angles. One aspect investigates to what extent politicians and public opinion interfered in the question of participation in the European Championship, namely, whether sports should be used as a foreign policy tool in response to the regime. I will also examine how the Norwegian Confederation of Sports (NIF),¹ the governing umbrella of organization sports in Norway, and the Norwegian Athletic Association (NFIF)² dealt with non-sports factors surrounding the championship.

Politics have played an important role in the history of Norwegian sports since the 1800s.³ As interest in sports grew tremendously from the beginning of the 20th century, international competitions between nations became more normalized. Today sports represent a billion dollar industry and a well-established actor within the international political and economic sphere. Different aspects of sports and its role in modern society led to many questions and debates. One of the issues that received attention in Norway was whether sports should be politically neutral and separated from international political controversies.⁴ It is necessary to explain what is meant with the expression “politics and sports”. Sports and politics intertwine both within states and between states on the international arena. How sports are influenced by

¹ The Norwegian Confederation of Sports was founded in 1861 as *Centralforeningen for Udbredelse af Legemsøvelser og Vaabenbrug*. The organization has changed name several times. In 1969, the organization was named *Norges Idrettsforbund*. Today the official name is *Norges idrettsforbund og Olympiske og Paralympiske Komité*. In this thesis the organization will be referred to as NIF.

² The Norwegian Athletic Association was established in 1896, named *Norges Friidrettsforbund*. In this thesis, the federation will be referred to as NFIF or Athletic Association.

³ For a detailed study on the early years of organized sports in Norway see Olstad, *Forsvar, sport, Klassekamp, 1861-1939*, Volume 1, *Norsk idrettshistorie*.

⁴ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*.

politics within states naturally differs in each country. Examples of domestic issues that have received political attention in Norway includes the conflict between the two main Confederations of Sports in the interwar period, to what extent organized sport should become a tool in improving public health, or the level of government funding in organized sports.⁵ Another aspect of sport and politics is the connection between sport and international affairs. Political actors have used international sporting competitions as means in achieving some sort of political gains in various ways. International sporting competitions have been used by states and non-state actors to recognize new states, establish diplomatic connections, as a propaganda tool, for nationalistic purposes in symbolic competition with other states, as an arena for terrorist-attacks and demonstrations, or as a stage to react against other states' unwelcome actions and policies.⁶ My study will focus on the latter understanding of the overlap between sports and politics. However these issues may overlap, and as Professor of Sport Policy, Barrie Houlihan points out "unfortunately distinctions between domestic and international functions of sport are by no means watertight".⁷

There are numerous examples in the 20th century which demonstrates the close relationship between international politics and sports. This was particularly apparent during the Cold War era, a period where it was difficult to distinguish sports policies from national interests.⁸ The Soviet Union chose to take part in the Olympic Games for the first time in Helsinki 1952, where rivalry between the two superpowers spilled over into the sports arena. The interaction between international politics and sport in the Cold War will be further discussed in the background chapter for this thesis. However, it is important highlight that the interaction between sport and politics was not just a "Cold War phenomenon", and is today more relevant than ever before. In 2008, China hosted the Olympic Games for the first time. Ahead of the Games was massive international focus directed towards China's troubled human rights record. Six years later it was Russia's turn to host the XXII Olympic Winter Games, in Sochi. The Games was again used to direct attention, in particular by non-governmental

⁵ Mangset and Rommetvedt, *Idrett og Politikk; Olstad, Forsvar, sport, Klassekamp, 1861-1939*, Volume 1, *Norsk idrettshistorie*.

⁶ Cha, "A theory of sports and politics"; Houlihan, "Politics and sport"; Houlihan, *Sport and International relations*; Levermore and Budd, *Sport and Internatoinal Relations*.

⁷ Houlihan, *Sport & International Politics*, 8.

⁸ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, 292-294.

organizations, towards internal conditions in Russia and the LGBT propaganda law.⁹ Non-sporting factors characterized other sports arenas than the Olympic Games as well. The latest discoveries of massive drug abuse in sports in general, and in particular by Russian athletes supposedly supported by their own organization and political leaders has drawn negative attention to the world of sports.¹⁰ The international football organization FIFA, has in recent years experienced several bribery and corruption scandals. One of them is connected to the World Cup Championship in 2022, awarded for the first time to an Arabic country (Qatar 2022). Additionally, FIFA and the authorities in Qatar have been exposed to massive criticism due to the lack of labor standards. In May 2015, Amnesty International published a report assessing measures promised by the authorities in Qatar to improve the situation. The conclusion was that the announced improvements have not yet been implemented.¹¹ In Norway, 2016 has so far been a rough year for sport leaders within the Confederation of Sports, who faced accusations of overspending and lack of transparency.¹²

1.1 Starting point – the military junta and the IX European Athletic Championship

In the post-WWII era, Greece was politically unstable with weak democratic institutions. In April 1967, Greece underwent a coup d'état carried out by a small military group consisting of Greek colonels. It was a bloodless coup that lasted only a few hours, as the colonels met no serious obstacles.¹³ Soon they controlled all sorts of communication channels, as political opponents were arrested and the current Prime Minister Panagiotis Kanellopoulos was removed.¹⁴ The danger of a political takeover by Greek communists was used by the junta to justify their actions.¹⁵ The regime that followed was accused of violating political and civil

⁹ The Russian lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGTB) law was implemented in 2013. The law bans “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships to minors”. For more information about the law, see Global Equality, “The facts on LGBT rights in Russia”.

¹⁰ For several relevant and updated articles on the doping scandal in Russia see, The Guardian, “Russian doping scandal”.

¹¹ Amnesty International “Qatar: Promising little, delivering less”.

¹² See for instance Selliaas, «Kampen om åpenheten I Norsk idrett».

¹³ Xydis, “Coups and Countercoups in Greece, 1967-1973”, 507-538.

¹⁴ Pedaliu, “A Discordant Note: NATO and the Greek Junta, 1967-1974”, 101-120.

¹⁵ Ibid, 101-102.

human rights early on. Among the most serious accusations towards the regime was the torturing of political prisoners.¹⁶

The regime provoked international reactions, especially within Scandinavian countries. As there was good chance the junta would control the country for a longer period, it was necessary for the Norwegian authorities to establish a policy towards the regime. Norway and Greece shared membership in several international organizations at the time. NATO and the Council of Europe were the two institutions where Norway could most likely put pressure on the regime.¹⁷ Greece became a member of NATO in 1952. Despite the Junta's violations, the major western powers recognized the Junta as the official Greek representatives in 1968.¹⁸ International historian Effie Pedaliu points out that NATO's response to the regime in Athens was so restricted due to the great importance of maintaining the alliance's strength and cohesion. It was important to keep Greece as a loyal ally, due to their strategic position in a time when the Cold War rivalry between East and West obscured everything else.¹⁹

Norway and Denmark were the only two NATO allies that really opposed the regime, but Norwegian historian Svein Gjerdåker noted it was difficult to achieve anything in the alliance, as NATO had not established guidelines for how to react when a member violated its framework. Within the Council of Europe, the situation was quite different. Members of the Council of Europe had ratified the European Convention of Human Rights in 1953. It was within the Council of Europe where Norway most clearly reacted against the Greek regime.²⁰ In 1967, Norway, Sweden and Denmark presented legal accusations against Greece for the European Commission of Human Rights, and later actively worked for Greece's suspension from the Council.²¹

In the middle of a politically tense situation, Greece was supposed to host the ninth European Athletic championship in September 1969. The fact that a fellow European country and NATO member now led by a military elite accused of violating human rights was to host an international sport competition led to massive reactions within Norway, especially from the labor movement. Several actors took part in the discussion. Should Norway send their

¹⁶ Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og Utanrikspolitikk*, 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁸ Woodhouse, *The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels*, 49-52.

¹⁹ Pedaliu, "A Discordant Note: NATO and the Greek Junta, 1967-1974", 102.

²⁰ Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og Utanrikspolitikk*, 2-3.

²¹ Woodhouse, *The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels*, 52; Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og utanrikspolitikk*, 2.

athletes to compete in Greece at the same time as the Norwegian government fronted the case against Greece within the Council of Europe? The political left, together with several main newspapers, argued if Norway chose to participate it could be perceived as support for the military regime, and Norway should use the European championship as one way to signal its disapproval for the junta. The opposite position, often promoted by sports leaders and the conservatives argued sports had to be separated from politics. The government chose to keep a low profile. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed the championship behind closed doors. According to the Norwegian writer Yngvar Ustvedt, the discussion about the role of politics in sports had never been more intense.²²

The 1969 debate is particularly interesting as the majority of Norwegian newspapers, besides *Aftenposten*, decided not to send any reporters to Greece and cover the sports events. The 1969 Championship in Greece was also the only time that the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) decided not to broadcast from a major sporting event as a protest against the regime.²³ Regardless of the pressure from political actors and public opinion, NIF decided that a team would be sent to Athens. However, athletes could decide for themselves whether they wanted to participate or not. It led to two Norwegian athletes, Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo selected not to participate in the championship.

1.2 Current research situation and theoretical considerations

Sports developed during the 20th century to become a cultural, social, economic and political phenomenon, and has naturally raised interest from different academic fields.²⁴ As I seek to examine the relationship between sports and politics in the late 1960s, this study places itself within several historiographic fields. The two most obvious are sports history and the history of Norwegian foreign policy, focusing on the development of human rights.

The historiographical trends in sports history until the late 1970s and early 80s was descriptive in nature, and characterized by a lack of analytical and critical aspects. The

²² Ustvedt, *Politisk engasjement og utdanningsekspløsjonen*, volume 5, *Det skjedde i Norge*, 220.

²³ Lothe, "Fra Clarke til Torkildsen".

²⁴ According to Jay Coakley and Erik Dunning, received sports in the 20th century academic interests from economists, historians, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and philosophers. See Coakley and Dunning, *Handbook of Sport Studies*.

previous focus had rather been on large events such as the Olympics, on the development of particular sports, or on individuals and spectacular results. Social historian Nancy Struna, an expert in sports history argues that the history of sports “told who did what at what point in time”, and that they were “largely uncritical...”²⁵ The 1970s saw a rapid growth in social and cultural history which also affected the histories of sports. Historian Barbara Keys, who works at the University of Melbourne, is a leading expert on history of sports and its interaction with international relations. In 2010, Keys wrote a book chapter in *Routledge Companion to Sport History* where she analyzed developments in the historiography of sports and international relations since the 1960s.²⁶ She argued sports history during the 1970s “overwhelmingly focused on sport’s role in society – its relationships to class, ethnicity, race and gender”.²⁷ She further points out that there were few sports historians who, at the time, included any international dimensions of sport, stating that “until 1990s sport studies remained ghettoized as a marginal sub-field within history and the social sciences”.²⁸

In the same chapter, Keys interestingly argues that historians of international relations also did not show any particular interest in sports until very recently. The event I seek to study places itself within a time period where any forms of international relations were heavily influenced by The Cold War rivalry. Keys argues there are mainly two reasons why the connection between sports and foreign relations was given so little academic attention during the Cold War. The first is that realism was the dominant theory within academia at the time. For realists states are most concerned with security. Sports is not relevant to realists, as it can never contribute to a nation’s drive to increase its “real powers” in international affairs. The second reason has to do with the general notion to distinguish “work from play”. Keys states that “the myth, deeply embedded in most Western democracies that sport exists in the realm of play, free at least in ideal terms – from political and economic ‘taint’, also contributed to a longstanding inclination to exclude sport from the study of ‘real’ politics”.²⁹

The mutual indifference between sports studies and diplomatic history started to dissolve after the Cold War, as it put new forces in motion raising critical questions against established modes of thinking about international relations. Keys also argues that international

²⁵ Struna, «Social history and Sport», 189-203.

²⁶ Keys, “Sport and International relations”, 248-267.

²⁷ Ibid, 248.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 249.

dimensions of sports in recent years received academic interest from historians who traditionally have had special fields other than diplomatic history. Keys states that historians now show an interest in sports due to “sport`s economic and political ramifications, and sport`s evident position as a central element of global culture”.³⁰ A factor crucial to the development of sports studies is the significant interest in globalization, as well as the rise of non-state actors in the international arena. These new trends concentrating on the social and cultural aspects of sports studies are a fruitful addition to the already well-established field of sport and foreign policy.

1.2.1 Sports and politics – Norwegian literature

As my study will focus on the Norwegian relationship between sports and politics in the 1960s, it is necessary to have knowledge of previous literature written by Norwegian sports historians or others academics who have touched upon the relationship between sports and politics. In Norway, sports historians have mainly focused on domestic, both political and non-political aspects. Sports historians Stein Tønnesson and Finn Olstad stand out as the most prominent writers on the topic. In 1986, as the Norwegian Confederation of Sport had existed in 125 years, Tønnesson and Olstad did a major study on the history of Norwegian sports.³¹ The political role in the development of organized sport in Norway is significant and receives substantial attention. The focus is naturally on domestic politics and sports, however Stein Tønnesson touches upon the history of sports and its relation to international affairs and Norwegian foreign policies.

Another sports historian that must be highlighted is Matti Goksøy. He has written several books and articles on politics and sports, especially the history of organized sport in Norway.³² Goksøy has also had an international perspective on the role of politics in sports in some of his research.³³ The sport historian and sociologist Gerd von der Lippe is the most prominent Norwegian researcher on gender and sports and sports in the media. Her research

³⁰ Keys, “Sport and International Relations”, 249.

³¹ Olstad, *Forsvar, sport, klassekamp 1861-1939*, volume 1, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, and Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*.

³² For the relationship between Norwegian authorities and organized sports see, Gøksøy, *Staten og idretten*. For the history of Norwegian sports see, Goksøy, *Historien om Norsk idrett*.

³³ See for instance Goksøy, “Skrivende fotballspillere og kjempende poeter; Berlin-OL og Nobels fredspris I 1936”

has been important in directing focus towards gender inequality within organized sports and in the media.³⁴

Sociologist Per Mangset and political scientist Hilmar Rommetvedt wrote a book on sports and politics in Norway in 2002. However, their study only concentrated on the relationship between organized sport in Norway and political authorities at a national and a local level.³⁵ As Norway hosted the winter Olympic Games twice, in 1952 and 1994, it resulted in massive academic interest.³⁶ However, there are few studies done on the relationship between international affairs and Norway hosting the Olympics. In 2004, Hans Christian Lund wrote a master`s thesis analyzing political aspects of the 1952 winter Olympics, analyzing on the process which led to German participation in Oslo.³⁷ The thesis argues that the Olympic Games is an arena where international politics are practiced, and that international sports must be understood on the basis of the current international political climate.

The role of international relations in sport and vice versa have not attained any substantial attention by Norwegian scholars. However, Andreas Selliaas is worth mentioning. He has written several articles focusing on international politics and the Olympic movement.³⁸ In addition, the Olympics in Beijing and Sochi led to some activity in Norway combining international politics and sports in the form of news articles.³⁹ Academic research on the relationship between sports and Norwegian foreign policy is limited. A master`s thesis from 1986 by Tomas Kothe-Næss, who writes on the Norwegian boycott of the Summer Olympics in Moscow 1980, is so far the only major study on Norwegian foreign policy and sport. Kothe-Næss examined the process in Norway which led to the final decision of not participating in the Moscow games. Kothe-Næss concluded that the boycott-issue in 1980 showed that there were confusions regarding whether it was the Norwegian government or the NIF who was supposed to make the final decision on participation.⁴⁰

³⁴ For one of Lippe`s studies on gender inequality in the media, see Lippe, *Et kritisk blikk på sportsjournalistikk: medier og idrett i en globalisert verden*.

³⁵ Mangset and Rommetvedt, *Idrett og Politikk*.

³⁶ See for instance Heyerdahl, *Vinter-OL i skisportens vugge*.

³⁷ Lund, *Tyskerne Kommer!*

³⁸ Selliaas, *Den Olympiske bevegelse og internasjonal politikk*.

³⁹ Hasselgård and Selliaas, «Menneskerettighetsorganisasjonenes olympiske leker»; Heyerdahl, «Men ingen slipper unna politikken».

⁴⁰ Kothe- Næss, *Idrett og utenrikspolitkk*.

1.2.2 The history of human rights and Norwegian foreign policy

This thesis will investigate to what extent politicians sought to use sports, in this case the European Athletic Championship in 1969, as a foreign policy tool to react against human rights violations in Greece. This makes it necessary to look at the history of Norwegian foreign affairs, the development of human rights and how a human rights aspect was implemented in foreign policy after the Second World War.

The international development of human rights has achieved massive interest from several academic fields, among them are history and political science. I would like to highlight American Political Scientist Jack Donnelly's research on universal human rights as important research at an early stage.⁴¹ Within history, however, the human rights subject a relatively new field which emerged from the 1990s.⁴² Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, Paul Gordon Lauren, as well as already mentioned Barbara Keys are historians with great expertise on the field.⁴³ In the 21st century, the research on the history of human rights has increased drastically. Among the latest contributions to the field comes from Danish historian Steven Jensen. This year, his research on the international development of human rights was published, and in contrast to other historians, Jensen argue that it was in the 1960s that universal human rights had their breakthrough.⁴⁴

In Norway, historian Svein Gjerdåker and Hanne Hagtvedt Vik's work should be highlighted, as it is particularly relevant for this study. Vik argues the Norwegian commitment to human rights was a result of international developments. Particularly important was the 1975 Helsinki Accords.⁴⁵ The relationship between the Greek junta and Norwegian government has received limited academic interests from Norwegian scholars. The exception is Svein Gjerdåker, who in 1992 wrote a master's thesis about Norwegian foreign policy and human rights.⁴⁶ Gjerdåker analyzed the Norwegian role in the case against Greece within the legal institutions of the Council of Europe initiated by the Scandinavian countries. He later was one of the editors behind the book *Norges Utenrikspolitikk* and wrote the chapter about Norwegian

⁴¹ See Donnelly, *Universal human rights*,

⁴² Iriye, Goedde, Hitchcock, *The human rights revolution*, 3-18.

⁴³ See for instance Lauren, *The Evolution of International human rights*; Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*; Keys and Burke, "Human Rights".

⁴⁴ Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights*.

⁴⁵ Vik, «Norge- verdensmester i menneskerettigheter?».

⁴⁶ Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og utanrikspolitikk*,

human rights policy.⁴⁷ Knut Funderud also studied the Greek case, and wrote in 1973 a master's thesis about the Norwegian political reactions to the regime in Greece.⁴⁸ It was mainly a descriptive analysis of Norwegian involvement and reactions towards the Greek regime. Norwegian historian Rolf Tamnes, an expert on the history of Norwegian foreign affairs argues that the Norwegian state appeared as a watchdog for democratic values in Southern Europe after 1945.⁴⁹ Examples of other historians, which have written substantial on Norwegian foreign policy, are Olav Riste, Geir Lundestad and Helge Pharo.⁵⁰

1.2.3 Sports and International Relations

In the last three decades, there has been a rapid growth in studies of sports in international relations (IR).⁵¹ Barrie Houlihan is an English Professor of sports policy, and stands out as one of the most important researchers on the relationship between international politics and sports. Writing his first book on aspects of sports policy and politics in 1994, he argued that previous studies on the matter had often tended to focus on either specific policy issues, such as on the role of politics on sports in one single country, or on political controversies within the Olympic Games. Little academic attention had been given to the role of sports used as a political tool by governments in international relations.⁵² Houlihan suggests five different arenas in which sports could be used for political purposes. Those are: sport and diplomacy, sport and ideology, sport and nation-building, sport and access, and sport and money.⁵³ Sport and diplomacy can, according to Houlihan, be understood in three different ways when it comes to how governments use sport for political achievements. One is how international sporting events have been used by states to improve their relationship with former adversaries. Houlihan argues that international sport competitions have “provided states with low-cost, but high-profile resources for publishing their policy on international issues or towards special states”.⁵⁴ Another way sport can be used in international affairs is to isolate

⁴⁷ Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker, *Norges utenrikspolitikk*.

⁴⁸ Funderud, *Norske reaksjoner på militærregimet i Hellas*.

⁴⁹ Tamnes, *Oljealder* Volume 6, *Norsk utenrikspolitikk historie*, 358-359.

⁵⁰ The book by Pharo and Knut Einar Eriksen on the history of Norwegian foreign policy between 1949 and 1965 has been important for this study.

⁵¹ In addition to Keys and Houlihan, see Cha, “Role of Sport in International Relations” and Levermore and Budd, *Sport and International Relations*”.

⁵² According to Houlihan, the issues which have attained most academic interest are football hooliganism, drug abuse or the commercialization of sport. See Houlihan, *Sport & International politics*, 24.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 9-24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 9.

certain states from international sports intercourse of any kind. The third use of sports is how governments send a message to other state(s) showing disapproval of their actions, often through boycotts. Houlihan argues that this is the most common use of sport by states in international relations. Houlihan's argument that governments use sports as a tool to react against other states' actions by boycotting or by threats of boycott has been the theoretical inspiration of this study.

The overview of historiographical trends within sports history, sports and IR, the history of Norwegian foreign affairs and human rights presented shows that the relationship between international politics and sports during the 1960s has attained little academic interest. I argue that the question of Norwegian participation in the European championship and the political debate which surrounded participation has not been given sufficient attention and that this thesis is an interesting contribution to several academic fields.

1.3 Research questions

This thesis will study the debate in Norway related to Norwegian participation in the 1969 European Athletic Championships in Greece. It was obvious that the military junta were guilty of violating human rights at the time. Were there any good reasons for not boycotting the championship? "Sport and politics must be separated" was the argument often used to support participation. However, did those who promoted such an argument have a political motive to say so? The first part of this study will be descriptive in nature with the aim of identifying actors and mapping out the process which led to Norwegian participation in Greece. In the first stage of my research, I need to ask:

Which actors were involved in the question of participation in Greece, and which arguments were promoted?

In addition to locating the main actors this research will also study the process which led to NIF's decision to send athletes to the championship in Greece. At the same time, two of Norway's best athletes decided to boycott the championship. I ask:

Why did the NIF approve Norwegian participation in the championship, and why did Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo choose to stay home?

The second part of this thesis consist of an analysis examining the relationship between sports and politics in Norway during the Cold War. My main research question is:

Why was the labor movement in Norway the leading actor wanting to use sport as a tool to object to the regime in Greece, and to what extent was there a political motive behind the government`s choice of not getting involved in the debate?

This question aims at examine the question of participation from a political perspective and discuss the level of political involvement in sports. Furthermore, I will discuss to what extent sports became an issue in Norwegian foreign affairs and used in the ideology battle of the Cold War. Barrie Houlihan argues states have the opportunity to use sports to react against other states unwelcome actions. The government chose to not interfere in the decision-making process, even though it is reasonable to argue the championship was an excellent opportunity to send a symbolic message to the junta and the international community, signaling disapproval for the junta`s violations of human rights. Finally, I will discuss if it is possible to understand why the NIF did not boycott in 1969 when the organization called off sports contact with the Soviet Union in 1968 and boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympics due to political circumstances.

1.4 Limitations

As this paper will look into the question of Norwegian participation in the Championships in September 1969, the focus of this work will be from the time the Greek case is raised in Norway until the championship began in September 1969. To search for similarities and differences related to the question of participation in the championship in our neighboring countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, would be interesting. This would have demanded more time and resources that I do not have, as exploring archives in Sweden and Denmark would have been necessary. However, as the Scandinavian countries are so tightly connected, Norwegian newspapers provided some information about the discussion in neighboring countries. I have included a short summary of the debate in chapter four.

In this study, I will look at the connection between sports and politics majorly in one case, the IX European Athletic Championship. A comprehensive and detailed comparison between this event and other events in the Cold War that gained massive political attention is tempting. I have concluded that such a study would require too much time and resources, though it gives

me motivation for further research. However, the analytic chapter briefly discuss similar situations of political aspects involved in Norwegian sports during the Cold War to analyze to what extent the 1969 debate stands out. As this study focuses on the role human rights played in sports in the 1960s, it would be interesting to compare the 1969 debate with the South African case, which was the other main issue related to human rights and sports in the same period. As this is a 30 credit master`s thesis, studying both cases in detail would not have been sufficiently thorough due to the lack of time and resources.

This study has only used Norwegian primary sources, as I wanted to understand the boycott debate exclusively from a Norwegian perspective. To gain an international perspective of the process in front of the Greek championship would have been very interesting. An idea would be to study the International governing athletic institution, the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF), as the organization had the overall responsibility for the European Athletic championships. To what extent had the organization any concerns related to conducting a championship in Greece at the time, and why did not the IAAF work harder to relocate the championship? These questions are worth studying.

1.5 Sources and methodological considerations

My research will dig deep into a single case, where the aim is to contribute to the literature on the relationship between politics and sports in Norway during the Cold War in general, and to what extent human rights activism was embedded in different levels of Norwegian society in the late 1960s. Although I have presented some theoretical reflections on sports and politics, this is not a theory-driven study in which I seek to apply one consistent theory to an event with the aim of generalizing my findings to other similar cases. However, the knowledge derived from this study might help in understanding the relationship between sport and politics in Norway.

This thesis is a historical archival study, in which central Norwegian political and sports archives, together with contemporary newspapers and interviews have comprise my primary sources. Information on the military coup in Greece in 1967 and Norwegian reactions to the Greek regime is based on secondary sources, largely within Norwegian academia. I will also draw upon secondary sources as a basis for the historical presentation of the relationship between politics and sports in Norway in chapter 2.

1.5.1 Archives

The National Archives⁵⁵, stored in Oslo, has been the most important archive, and house the private archive of NIF.⁵⁶ Every individual sport federation`s own archives is gathered under the NIF archive, together with the governing body`s board minutes and protocols. I started searching in the National Athletic Association`s archive for anything related to the championship in 1969. However, I found nothing, which was surprising. However, it turned out that there is a box within NIF`s archive named “355 *sports and politics*” where all major debates between politics and sport is gathered in the timeframe 1957 to 1970. All material about the participation debate is placed in this box, the process within NIF and NFIF, as well as letters from non-sporting actors who wanted to have a say in the decision.

The National Archives is the institution responsible for the records created by the government`s central administration, the ministries and directorates. Per Borten`s cabinet governed Norway between 1965 and 1969. I saw it necessary to search in these records for anything related to the debate. If the government had discussed the participation issue it is likely I would have found something in these archives, but I did not.

The National Archives is also where material from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is stored. However, the National Archives only stores material from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until the year of 1959. For any material after 1959, one must contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who stores their own records. The Ministry informed me they possessed a file on the Championship in 1969, referred to as “74.2/4 Europamesterskapet i friidrett”.⁵⁷ Much of the material was classified at the time. No one knew in 1969 to what degree the championship in Greece was a case discussed within the Ministry. As these documents have now been declassified, they have been an important and interesting asset to this thesis.

The documents proved the Norwegian labor movement was an important actor in the debate at an early stage. The Norwegian Labor Movement Archives and Library⁵⁸ informed me that they have digitalized all protocols from the Labor Party`s Party Congresses, which is the supreme body of the party and is held every two years, and from the Norwegian

⁵⁵ Riksarkivet, will be referred to as (RA)

⁵⁶ RA, Private archive 90 is the reference to NIF`s archive. It is within Box 355, named sports and politics I have found all the information about the debate. Will in the text be referred to as RA, PA 90, box 355.

⁵⁷ MFA , Section for Information and records management. The Archive is structured around cases. Will in the text be referred to as UD, 74.2/4.

⁵⁸ Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek (Arbark). It will be referred to as Arbark.

Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) congresses. Everyone can access these protocols.⁵⁹ Searching in these documents showed that both the Labor Party and LO discussed the championship in Greece.

NRK provided me with documents from their archive concerning the championship. There were three documents related to the question of broadcasting from the championship. It consisted of protocols from NRK`s board and NRK`s program council meetings, as well as the Director-General Ustvedt`s speech to the board, presenting his final decision to boycott the championship.

Before I started on this project, I strongly believed that the question of participation had been addressed by the Norwegian Storting.⁶⁰ However, searches in the Storting Archives gave no interesting results. The Storting Archives is organized around cases, and it stores documents from the Norwegian Parliament`s political, institutional and administrative activities from 1814 to present. The official parliamentary proceedings are digitalized which makes the search cases easier. It is important to highlight that the debate on participation was at its tensest during the summer, while the Norwegian Storting was on break, which could be why I did not find anything relevant.

1.5.2 Newspapers

The most important public sources have been contemporary newspapers. The newspapers have been crucial in locating actors and different arguments promoted in the debate.⁶¹ The National Library has digitalized all major Norwegian newspapers. I examined three newspapers, Arbeiderbladet, VG and Aftenposten. These are selected to give a representative picture of media actors in 1969, as these newspapers had different political agendas. My initial searches had a wide timeframe, as one goal was to locate when and who brought up the question of participation. It turned out that none of the newspapers focused on the championship in Greece before in 1969. I conducted the same searches for each newspaper so I not should miss out important articles or debates. I used different keywords: “the European

⁵⁹ Arbark, Protocol from the 1969 Labor Party Congress and Protocol from the 1969 LO Congress. See http://www.arbark.no/Digitale_dokumenter.htm

⁶⁰ Stortinget is the name of the Norwegian Parliament. I will use the Norwegian word *Storting* in this text.

⁶¹ The articles on the debate have in the newspapers been written by the editorial staffs, and not signed with any names. In the text, I will refer to the name of the newspaper, the *title* of the article and time it was published.

Championship in Greece” and “the Athens-championship” are examples which gave the best results.⁶² There was approximately the same amount of coverage found in each newspaper. The participation debate achieved the most attention from newspapers between May and September 1969.

1.5.3 Interviews

I have conducted interviews with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pahro, two athletes who boycotted the championship in 1969. These interviews are first class primary sources and will work as valuable support to the information I obtained from archives and newspapers. The overall aim with the interviews was to answer the second part of the first research question, but also to contribute to understanding the debate from another angle and discuss the bigger picture, which would be valuable to my main research question. Some methodological considerations related to interviews are necessary. The most important concern is to explain what I have done and why. There are several ways of conducting interviews. My interviews were constructed around the four main themes I wanted to address. Additionally, I prepared ten backup questions in case the conversation went slow, or if we missed important aspects, I wanted to discuss. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for approximately one hour. I interviewed Kvalheim and Pharo separately, but the interview process was equal. I took notes during the interviews and recorded the conversation on my phone. The empirical data from the interviews were transcribed and summarized in line with the main themes. As Kvalheim and Pharo`s boycott was a part of the process and one reason the debate gained momentum during the summer 1969, it was natural to place most of the empirical material from the interviews in chapter 3 (3.4.2). When I use information obtained from the interviews other places in the text, it is referred to as “Conversation with Kvalheim and Pharo”. Interviews can be very personal and leave the researcher with strong impressions. One could easily overestimate the information obtained from the interviews. Naturally, those interviewed are biased. However, if the interviewer is conscious of these challenges, interviews could be important assets to research by providing new knowledge, showing the information in a different light, or working as support to the information already obtained.

⁶² Norwegian: «Europeamesterskapet i Athen» and «Athen-EM».

1.6 Structure

This thesis consists of three main parts. The first part consists of a comprehensive background chapter. As this thesis is to some extent an unorthodox study of the relationship between politics, sports and the emergence of human rights, I saw it necessary to provide essential information about the three topics. Chapter 2 also includes non-sporting reactions in Norway to the Greek regime. The second part consists of chapter 3 and 4. These are the empirical and descriptive chapters. However, as they seek to answer the first part of the research questions, they also includes some analytic considerations. Chapter 3 presents the political and sporting actors, main arguments and the process which led to participation. Chapter 4 is a more detailed study on the media`s role in the debate, and the question of media coverage of the championship. The final part consists of chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 is the main analytic chapter where I discuss and try to answer the main research question for this thesis. The last chapter is an overall conclusion.

2 Background: sports, politics and human rights in the early Cold War

This background chapter will be divided in two main parts. The first section concentrates on sports. I will pick up where I left in the introduction, and discuss the relationship between sports and politics during the Cold War and provide insight into important events where political aspects in sport have been particularly apparent. The controversies are selected through a “Norwegian lens” as situation which led to debates in Norway are the most relevant for my research. The time period focused on in this chapter is from the end of the Second World War in 1945 until the European Athletic Championship in 1969. I argue it is important to have insight in earlier cases which in some way are similar to the 1969 case, as it contributes to a better understanding of the debate over the championship in Greece.

The second part of this chapter will cover politics in the same period, in particular Norwegian foreign affairs. This is necessary, as this study wish to analyze sport`s role in Norwegian foreign policy in a period of international political upheavals and at a stage where Norwegian foreign policy concerns started to expand from the traditional defense and security aspects. Naturally, the focus will be on Norwegian political reactions to the military regime in Greece. The discussion about sports boycott in 1969 cannot be analyzed in isolation of other Norwegian non-sporting reactions towards the Greek regime. Secondary literature will lay the basis for this chapter.

2.1 Sports is politics

The first Olympic Games in Greece 1896, are often referred to as the birth of modern international sports interaction. For the founders of the Olympic movement, among them the French Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the Olympic movement or *olympism* was meant to include more than just competition between athletes. Sports should be used as a tool to turn men away from egoism, politics, chauvinism and war.⁶³ The modern Olympic movement was inspired by both international peace movement developing from the late 19th century and from the political aspects of the ancient Olympic Games.⁶⁴ Nations competing in sports could be

⁶³ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, trim, stjerner 1939-1986*, 182-185

⁶⁴ Selliaas, “Den olympiske bevegelse og internasjonal politikk”, 413-414.

considered as a part of the broader international peace movement developing from the late 1800s.⁶⁵ Today, sports influence billions of people across the world independent of nationality, race, class and gender. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) states in the *Olympic Charter* that their mission is to “oppose any political or commercial abuse of sport and athletes”.⁶⁶ In an article published by *Sport in Society* from 2008 Professor Steven Jackson, who specializes in the socio-cultural aspect of sport, written together with political scientist Stephen Haigh, they argue that:

“The sport-politics discussion has largely been contained within two basic debates. First a naïve moral/philosophical perspective that stipulates that sport and politics do not, and should not mix. And, second, a narrow materialist framework that can be traced back to ideologies of both the left and the right who argue that politics is about power, social class and the distribution of economic resources.”⁶⁷ Despite the notion that sport and politics are separated from each other history provides us with several examples which demonstrates how sport and international politics intertwine. Barbara Keys states that “International sport cannot exist in a separate sphere independent of politics; the two have always been deeply intertwined.”⁶⁸ The debate regarding participation or boycott of the 1969 European Athletic Games is just one example, and certainly not the first appearance of political interaction in the world of sports.

The international arena after 1945 was shaped by the Cold War. Norwegian sports historian Stein Tønnesson argues that international conflicts complicated Norwegian and international sports in the 20th century. As mentioned, the Cold War rivalry entered the world of sport in 1952, when the Soviet Union joined the Summer Olympics in Helsinki. It resulted in a four decade-long rivalry for medals and glory. According to Barbara Keys, international sports “joined the struggle for hearts and minds,” and was used to promote nations` political, economic and cultural development at a high level where victories were celebrated by governments as national achievements.⁶⁹

American historian Allen Guttman argues that the period between 1948 and 1964 was a period where politics did not play an important role in sports.⁷⁰ Compared to the Olympic

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ International Olympic Committee, «Olympic Charter», 19.

⁶⁷ Jackson and Haigh, “Sport and Foreign policy in a globalized world”, 349.

⁶⁸ Keys, “The early Cold War Olympics”, 73.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 72.

⁷⁰ Gutmann, “Sport, Politics and the Engaged Historian”, 372-373.

Games in Hitler`s Germany in 1936, or the large-scale Olympic boycotts during the 1980s, Guttmann has a point. However, I argue that this statement has limitations, as there are several examples of political intervention in sports in the early period of the Cold War as well, both within the Olympics and in international sports in general. Barbara Keys counters this argument. She argues that the early years of the Cold War were also characterized by deep politicization.⁷¹ The examples that I present in the next section support this argument.

2.1.1 Controversies 1945-1969

The Olympic Games is the arena that have been most affected by politics through history, and in the Olympics we find the most famous examples of political interaction in sports. This chapter will draw upon examples from both the Olympics and non-Olympic cases which are relevant for this thesis.

Stein Tønnesson touches upon sport`s position in Norway during the early years of the Cold War. He states that politicians in Norway broadly agreed that Norway should aim at an international position as a “bridge-builder” in the postwar era. This was also the case for sports. According to Tønnesson, Norwegian politicians hoped that sports would be organized through an international forum within the UN.⁷² This did not happen, as the polarization between West and East continued to grow in the late 1940s. The first major Cold War conflict, which had major influence on sports, concerned Germany. Due to the War, Germany was not welcome to participate in the 1948 summer Olympics in London or in the winter Olympics in St. Moritz. In 1949, two separate states, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) were established. The day after West Germany was officially made a state, an Olympic Committee was formed, and an application was directed to the IOC where West Germany reclaim Germany`s Olympic status.

Norway had chosen to side in the Cold War with membership in NATO, joining in 1949.⁷³ For the alliance, it was important to develop and integrate West Germany as a part of Western Europe. However, as Hans Christer Lund points out in his research,⁷⁴ the Norwegian government showed little political will to approach Germany in the years that followed the

⁷¹ Keys, “The Early Cold War Olympics”, 72

⁷² Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk idrettshistorie*, 196.

⁷³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A trans-Atlantic military alliance established in 1949 with originally 12 member states.

⁷⁴ Lund, *Tyskerne Kommer!*

War, and was skeptical to the NATO`s acceptance of West Germany, which was desired by the U.S. In front of the Oslo Olympics, there were tense discussions in Norway about German participation. Only seven years had passed since German soldiers had left the country after five years of occupation. The Norwegian Olympic Committee (NOK)⁷⁵, led by Arthur Ruud, had no intentions of inviting German athletes to the Olympics in Oslo. In April 1951, it was decided by NOK that German participation not was desirable.⁷⁶ However, just one month later, IOC decided to approve the Olympic Committee of West Germany, which meant in theory that West Germany could send athletes to the Oslo Olympics. Tønnesson explains that due to the decision by IOC, NOK felt obligated to invite Western Germany to the games. NOK had hoped for a polite decline. Instead, the German answer was that they wanted to take part in the Olympics. NOK decided not to oppose German participation.⁷⁷

Four years later international focus was directed towards the tense situation in Eastern Europe due to Soviet Union`s invasion of Hungary in 1956. Again, sports was dragged into a broader political context, as the Soviet Union`s actions were right before the Summer Olympics were due to start in Melbourne. The Netherlands, Switzerland and Spain quickly decided to boycott the Olympics due to Soviet aggression. It also create a strong opposition in Norway, mainly from the press who demanded a Norwegian boycott. The Hungarian situation forced Norwegian sports leaders to discuss participation in the Melbourne Olympics.

It was decided that Norwegian athletes should travel as planned, but the final decision on participation should be made by sports leaders present in Melbourne after they had considered the international political situation. In Melbourne, Arhur Ruud consulted the case with other Scandinavia countries, and agreed on participating in the games.⁷⁸ Even Hungary took part in the Olympics, which resulted in the famous water polo game against the Soviet Union, referred to as “the bloodbath in Melbourne”.

The 1960s was a period in which human rights issues became apparent, and this focus manifested into sports. The system of racial oppression and segregation of the black majority in South Africa, known as Apartheid, created international attention already in the 1950s.⁷⁹ Africa was characterized by waves of decolonization in the decades after the Second World

⁷⁵ The Norwegian Olympic Committee (NOK), established in 1905. Merged with NIF in 1996.

⁷⁶ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Sjerner, 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, 197.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 198

⁷⁹ Tamnes, *Oljealder 1965-1995*, Volume 6, *Norsk Utenrikspolitikks Historie*, 364.

War. New states emerged, as well as new Olympic Committees, which were seen as an important step in becoming a sovereign, independent nation. Tamnes states that the international campaign against Apartheid was driven by other African countries.⁸⁰ This was also the case in sports, as many new African Olympic Committees demanded that South Africa and Rhodesia should be excluded from international sports contacts.⁸¹ IOC originally had no intentions of denying states participation in the Olympic Games due to political causes. The situation changed when proof of South Africa's segregation in sports were presented to IOC. As leaders of organized sports in South Africa not fulfilled IOC's demands that all citizens should have equal rights to represent their country in sports, South Africa was banned from the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo.⁸² The suspension lasted for almost three decades. In Norway, the situation was different. In 1964, South Africa was invited to play against the Norwegian Tennis team in the second round of the Davis Cup. It led to tense discussions in Norway on whether Norway should compete against representatives from the Apartheid-regime. Jan Staubo, the chairman of Norwegian Tennis Association, stated that their role was not to intertwine with politics with sport, and that Norwegian tennis players should play against representatives from any nation.⁸³ The NIF leaders were divided on the question of South Africa. Staubo received several messages from political organizations who wanted to cancel the match against South Africa. The final decision made by the Norwegian Tennis Association to play the South Africans led to massive demonstrations and confrontations with the police during the game.⁸⁴ The 1964 demonstrations raised international attention, and remains one of the first examples of Norwegian resistance against Apartheid.

The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and allies in the Warsaw Pact led to reactions not only by the Norwegian government, but also within the Norwegian sports. The NIF president, Torfinn Bentzen, demanded that Norway should cancel all sports contact with members of the Warsaw Pact, and banned Norwegian athletes from participating in the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico if representatives from the Warsaw Pact were not excluded.⁸⁵ It turned out that the IOC had no plans of excluding Eastern European nations from the Mexico Olympics. Bentzen had to reconsider his statement, as only 9 of 30 national

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Sjerner, 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, 199.

⁸² Selliaas, «Den olympiske bevegelse og internasjonal politikk», 415.

⁸³ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Sjerner, 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, 199.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 200.

⁸⁵ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Sjerner, 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, 292.

federations supported a boycott.⁸⁶ In September 1968, it was decided that Norwegian athletes should participate in the Mexico Olympics. These events in 1968 demonstrate that representatives of NIF at the time were not afraid of mixing politics with sport. This is interesting, as Bentzen still is the leader of NIF the year after, when the question of participating in the European Athletics Championship is raised. To what extent is NIF leaders consistent in letting international political situations impact sports policy?

2.2 Norwegian foreign policy 1945-1969

My intention with this part of the background chapter is to give insight into key elements of Norwegian foreign affairs in the time period close to the events of the 1969 Greek Championship. This short introduction on Norwegian foreign policy between 1945 and 1969 is not aiming at painting a complete picture. There are especially two areas I will focus on, the emerging focus on human rights and the Cold War.⁸⁷ Foreign policy based on security and self-interest, and at the same time upholding moralism and human rights is both challenging and interesting to analyze.

2.2.1 Reflections on the human rights aspect in foreign policy

Norwegian historian Svein Gjerdåker explains it has been difficult to integrate human rights into states foreign policies. He argues that it is problematic to conduct an active foreign policy based on human rights, as the main objective for any state is to promote and protect their own interests.⁸⁸ A state`s interests are understood as the desire to maximize the political and diplomatic power of influence, to improve trade relations and optimize military strategy.⁸⁹

An active foreign policy based on human rights, on the other hand, is understood as a policy where the government has two roles. The first role is still to protect their own interests, but at the same time work as an advocate for human rights internationally. There are several ways a state can implement an active human rights policy. Gjerdåker presents several measures a

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ The Cold War was a military tense era after the Second World War until 1991, between the Western block (The U.S main actor) and the Eastern Block (the Soviet Union the main actor). For analytic research on the Cold War see Gaddis, *The Cold War*, or Hobsbawn, *Age of extremes*.

⁸⁸ Gerdåker, «Norsk Menneskerettspolitik», 199-201.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 200. This section is inspired by Jan Egenland`s master`s thesis from 1988. See Egenland, *Impotent superpower-Potential small state*.

state has at its disposal to react against other states violations of human rights. Examples are public statements, confidential conversations, support to international investigations, restrictions on sports and cultural arrangements, reduction of aid, withdrawal of diplomats or economic sanctions.⁹⁰ Particularly interesting for my case is restrictions or boycotts of sports and cultural arrangements as a political reaction against human rights violations.

Jack Donnelly, who is an expert on human rights, argues that even if the most important foreign policy objective is to maximize power, it does not mean that states cannot have other agendas.⁹¹ Improving self-interests will often collide with human rights motives in terms of foreign policies, but Donnelly argues that each case must be considered independently. Foreign policies could include both objectives and still be successful, and an active human rights policy could be a valuable asset in achieving their own interests.⁹² With this in mind, will I now take a closer look at Norwegian foreign policy in the first 25 years after 1945.

2.2.2 Norway prioritize NATO

According to Norwegian historians Knut Eriksen and Helge Pharo, the geographical scope for Norwegian foreign affairs was significantly expanded in the period of 1949 to 1965.⁹³ The period after Second World War was characterized by massive internationalization.

International cooperation emerged mainly through global and regional intergovernmental organizations. The establishment of the United Nations in 1945, NATO in 1949, the Nordic Council in 1952 and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) are examples of cooperation forums which played an important role in shaping Norwegian foreign policies. New challenges emerged for Norwegian authorities as membership in these organizations could potentially restrict Norwegian sovereignty.⁹⁴ It was a delicate balance between committing to international cooperation and still be able to secure sovereignty.

Cooperation through NATO became the main pillar in Norwegian foreign politics from 1949 on.⁹⁵ According to Norwegian historian Even Lange, Norwegian politicians had hoped United Nations would provide collective security to its members, led by the major powers. However,

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in theory and practice*, 155-171

⁹² Eriksen and Pharo, *Kald Krig og Internasjonalisering 1949-1965*, Volume 5, *Norsk utenrikspolitikks Historie*.

⁹³ Ibid, 16.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 15-18.

the increasing tension between the Soviet Union and the U.S weakened the UN's abilities to provide such guarantees.⁹⁶ Joining a defense alliance was not an easy choice, and represented a turning point in Norwegian foreign policy as Norway had since its independence in 1905 conducted a policy based on neutrality.⁹⁷ According to Eriksen and Pharo, the threat of Soviet expansion and Norway's geostrategic position and economic interests the constituted reasons why the Norwegian government chose to join NATO.⁹⁸ The organization went from being mainly political alliance to become a defense alliance with an integrated military structure in the 1950s. For Norway, collective security was guarantee in case of Soviet attacks. However, this guarantee had to be credible, and a crucial task for Norwegian politicians in ensuring Norwegian interests was to exaggerate the strategic importance of the alliance's Northern flank.⁹⁹ Until 1955, defense and security was without question the most important focus areas for Norwegian foreign policy, which meant that NATO was prioritized. An example is how the Norwegian Defense budget tripled in this period.¹⁰⁰

Internally, Norway was characterized by political stability governed by one part, the Norwegian Labor Party, until 1965. There was a broad consensus in Norway on the importance of western coalition and cooperation. Nevertheless, NATO did create some oppositions, in particular on NATO's structure and the Norwegian role within the alliance. For Norway it was important that the alliance's geographical focus was within the North Atlantic area. Further, it was expected that members of the alliance should consist of democratic states. Norwegian foreign policy succeeded in securing the strategically important areas in the North. On the other hand, Norway was in no position of preventing NATO expansion in terms of new, non-democratic states located in non-Atlantic areas.¹⁰¹

Development aid and decolonization became two areas of Norwegian foreign politics which received increased attention from the mid-1950s. Within the UN as well as NATO, decolonization was a tense issue which forced the Norwegian government to take a stand. The Norwegian government was critical against colonial powers, as well against American

⁹⁶ Lange, «NATO-medlemskap og blokkpolitikk».

⁹⁷ Eriksen and Pharo, *Kald Krig og Internasjonalisering 1949-1965*, Volume 5, *Norsk utenrikspolitikks Historie*, 34.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 32.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 66.

¹⁰⁰ Lange, «NATO-medlemskap og blokkpolitikk».

¹⁰¹ Eriksen and Pharo, *Kald Krig og Internasjonalisering 1949-1965*, Volume 5, *Norsk utenrikspolitikks Historie*, 187.

interventions in Latin- and South America. The early 1960s was a period when Norway significantly increased economic support to developing countries.

2.2.3 Norway and the development of human rights

Norwegian historian Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, who specialize in the development of human rights in Norway, argues that human rights did not become an important aspect of Norwegian foreign affairs until the late 1970s.¹⁰² Internationally, the establishment of United Nations can be seen as the beginning of human rights activism. A similar initiative was started within the Council of Europe.¹⁰³ The 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the first global framework in protecting basic human rights. According to Vik, Norway was supporting these initiatives, but did not play an important role in early years.¹⁰⁴

Gjerdåker argues that a human rights dimension became visible in Norwegian foreign policy after the Second World War, a role that continuously increased during the Cold War. The Norwegian focus was directed towards the UN, human rights institutions within the Europe of Council and against countries in the third world.¹⁰⁵ Gjerdåker explains that the Norwegian commitment in the work for improving international human rights was inspired by a moral and idealistic point of view.

The political tension due to the Cold War made it difficult for major powers to agree on a universal framework for human rights, especially as the emerging focus on protecting human rights challenged the principle of state-sovereignty.¹⁰⁶ Norway`s position in the first decade after 1945 was based on rhetorical criticism against conflicts or other issues where the basic principle of democracy and human rights were violated. However, when such critics were in danger of colliding with national interests, human rights were not prioritized.¹⁰⁷ The Cold War climate made it difficult for Norway to react against human rights violations in other countries as it often collided with their own economic and strategic interests.¹⁰⁸ One example

¹⁰² Vik, «Norge – verdensmestere i Menneskerettigheter?».

¹⁰³ United Nations established in 1945. The Council of Europe in 1949.

¹⁰⁴ Vik, «Norge – Verdenmestere i Menneskerettigheter?»

¹⁰⁵ Gjerdåker, «Norsk Menneskerettspolitik», 202.

¹⁰⁶ Vik, «Trygve Lie, FN og menneskerettighetene».

¹⁰⁷ Gjerdåker, «Norsk Menneskerettspolitik», 203-205.

¹⁰⁸ Tamnes, *Oljealder 1965-1995*, Volume 6, *Norsk Utenrikspolitikks Historie*, 351-384.

is that Norwegian authorities prioritized shipping interests in South Africa for quite some time, despite heavy international criticism against the South African apartheid regime.¹⁰⁹

During the 1960s, we can see a change in Norwegian foreign policy and the role of human rights. The Norwegian people demanded, to a larger degree than earlier, to be heard in foreign policy matters, and in particular regarding human rights. The American War against Vietnam from 1962, which was the first televised war, was one crucial factor in creating a Norwegian awareness of human rights abuses. International questions became publically debated, and the public opinion's power of influence increased during this period.¹¹⁰ One of the earliest examples of an increased Norwegian engagement towards human rights is the involvement against Greece after the military coup in 1967. Gjerdåker states that the Greek case is an important symbol of Norwegian human rights activism.¹¹¹

2.3 Norwegian reactions to the Greek regime

This section will briefly look at Norwegian political reactions to the regime between 1967 and 1969. Norway's contact with Greece in the period after the Second World War was limited. The two countries shared membership in NATO and the Council of Europe. Greece was also a relatively important trade partner. In 1969, Greece was the sixth biggest importer of Norwegian goods.¹¹²

On the night of April 22, 1967 the military junta seized power in Athens. From the first day, the situation in Greece received massive attention from Norwegian newspapers. Funderud points out as that long as Norway was involved in the Greek case within the Council of Europe, Norwegian press actively followed up the case.¹¹³ Six days after the coup, the situation in Greece was brought up for the first time in the Norwegian Storting by Finn Gustavsen, who represented the Socialist People's Party. He described the internal conditions in Greece after the takeover by the junta, and suggested that Norway should break off

¹⁰⁹ Vik, «Norge – Verdensmestere i Menneskerettigheter?».

¹¹⁰ Gerdåker, «Norsk Menneskerettspolitik», 203.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 207-208.

¹¹² Funderud, *Norske Reaksjoner på militærregimet i Hellas*, 9-11.

¹¹³ Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og utnrikspolitik*, 17.

diplomatic relations with the regime as well as raise concerns about the situation in NATO.¹¹⁴ According to Funderud, the response from the government was unclear and hesitating.¹¹⁵

2.3.1 The Nast-case

The first issue which created domestic political tension in Norway's relationship with Greece after the military coup is referred to as the Nasty-case. In 1966, The Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Shipping decided that six military torpedo boats named *Nasty* should be sold to Greece. The framework for selling military equipment was that weapons and ammunition should not be exported to nations who took part in a military conflict or fought in a Civil War. It should only be exported to legal and recognized regimes. Before the military coup in 1967, Norway had already sent five of six boats. The sixth boat was supposed to be delivered by the end of May 1969, roughly a month after the coup.¹¹⁶ The Labor Party strongly opposed the delivery of the last torpedo. One of the governing parties, the Liberal Party, also opposed the delivery of the sixth boat. This created some controversies and tense discussions at the Storting, as other parties thought the torpedo should be shipped to Greece as planned. The government, led by the Foreign Minister John Lyng and Minister of trade, Kåre Willoch who both represented the Conservative Party, argued Norway had a legal responsibility to deliver the last boat. If the Norwegian authorities broke off the contract, it would have serious economic consequences. At last, the boat was delivered after the Storting voted in favor of shipping the torpedo. The government had to deal with heavy criticism from the political left and from several newspapers.

2.3.2 The Council of Europe and NATO

It was Halfdan Hegtun, representing the Liberal Party, who in May 1967 for the first and only time brought up the question of criticizing Greece to the European Commission of Human Rights due to Greece's violations of the European Convention of Human Rights.¹¹⁷ The Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Lyng, answered that the situation had been discussed within the government. A conclusion had not been reached at the time, but Lyng reassured the Storting that the government would follow up on the situation. The case was not further

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 16.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 17.

¹¹⁶ Funderud, *Norske reaksjoner på militærregimet i Hellas*, 22-33.

¹¹⁷ Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og utanrikspolitik*, 14-15.

discussed at the Storting. The major reason was that the Norwegian Storting had summer break, and when they met again in October the legal accusations were already filed in to the Commission. All parties supported this act.¹¹⁸

It is important to highlight that bringing the case to the legal institution within the Council of Europe not was a Norwegian initiative. It was first raised by the Prime Minister in Denmark who sent a letter to the Norwegian and Swedish prime ministers, and on May 10th the three leaders met to discuss the case. The meeting did not led to anything concrete, and it was decided to postpone a final decision. However, In late June, the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Torsten Nillson, initiated a collective Nordic complaint. Both the Danish and Norwegian governments were at first skeptical. However, the Swedish government wanted a quick response from the two governments, and stated they would lead the case even without support from Norway and Denmark. Gjerdåker argued it was Jens Evensen, the Director General at the Legal Affairs Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who convinced Lyng to follow the Swedish initiative, due to pressure from the political opposition at home.¹¹⁹

Gjerdåker further explains that it was the question of suspending Greece from the Council of Europe, which achieved the most attention, and led to the tensest debates at the Storting. The Liberals, the Socialist People`s Party and the Labor party were most eager in getting Greece suspended. These parties also argued for a stricter NATO policy against the Regime. The Conservatives were skeptical in the beginning on the suspension issue. Some questioned the balance in Norwegian foreign policy, and were skeptical to focus intensely on Greece compared to other communistic regimes.¹²⁰ The government was to some extent more passive in the suspension case than in the complaint case. It is likely that one major reason for the passive policy from the Norwegian government in suspending the regime, compared to the Swedish government, was that a suspension of Greece from the Council of Europe could raise demands from the political opposition and public opinion in getting Greece suspended from NATO as well.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the government eventually agreed on working for a Greek

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 38-43.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 18.

¹²¹ Ibid, 19, 51-55.

suspension. However, Greece withdrew from the Council in December 1969, before any conclusion was reached.¹²²

The involvement against Greece within the Council of Europe stands out as one of the first instances of human rights activism in action. Furthermore, it was special as an example of fast reaction, as the complaint was delivered only months after the regime seized power, and that the governments from three countries collaborated on its delivery. However, one should be careful in emphasizing too much of the role human rights played in this case. First, it was driven by the Swedish government. Gjerdåker also explains that the involvement by the government was a result of internal pressure, political tension due to the Nasty-case and a strategic act to move focus away from NATO.¹²³

It was the NATO case which led to the tensest debates in the Norwegian Storting. The political left argued that a Greek suspension from the Council of Europe had little value, and argued that only NATO could put real pressure on the regime in Greece.¹²⁴ The NATO issue was more delicate, especially as 1969 was the year Norwegian NATO membership was due to be readdressed. Those who supported the alliance, in this case, often represented by the political right, were afraid that the Greek case would weaken NATO. They argued that the primary concern of the alliance was defense and security, and that the alliance should focus on these tasks more than the internal situation in member countries.¹²⁵ On the other hand, those who were more skeptical towards NATO in the first place used the Greek case in their campaign of getting Norway out of the alliance. The young forces within the Labor Party especially stood behind this campaign.

2.3.3 Conclusion

One could say that the Norwegian reactions to the Greek regime was rooted in the trend after the Second World War where Norwegian authorities became more aware of human rights, and increasingly criticized other nations where the governing system not based on democratic and humanitarian principles. The Greek case was a watershed in Norwegian foreign policy, as it was concrete reactions and not just oral accusations.

¹²² Ibid, 15-16, 50.

¹²³ Ibid, 56-59.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 19.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 66-70.

However, the involvement in the Greek case by the Norwegian government was a response to internal political and public pressure. The Norwegian role in the case against Greece within the Council of Europe was, at least to some extent, strategic as it muted the opposition. Norwegian authorities had not been among the driving forces within the Council of Europe's work for a legal framework.¹²⁶ It is also important to highlight that the Norwegian reactions against Greece were not very comprehensive or on a bilateral level. The economic, diplomatic and military interests in Greece were not touched and maintained on the same level or even higher than before the coup.¹²⁷ Tamnes argues that the Greek case was one of the best examples of the difficulties of running a foreign policy based on both strategic self-interest and moralism.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Gjerdåker, "Norsk menneskerettspolitik", 206-207

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 207-208.

¹²⁸ Tamnes, *Oljealder 1965-1995*, Volume 6, *Norsk Utenrikspolitikks Historie*, 358.

3 The process leading to participation in Greece

The next two chapters will answer the first part of this thesis research questions. I ask:

I) *Which actors were involved in the question of participation in Greece, and which arguments were promoted?*

II) *Why did the NIF approve Norwegian participation in the championship, and why did Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo choose to stay home?*

I will present the main actors and their positions on the question of boycotting the 1969 championship in Athens and map out the process, which eventually led to Norwegian participation. In addition, this chapter seeks to explain why the NIF and the NFIF chose to take part in the events even though a massive opposition demanded a boycott, and gain a deeper understanding of why Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo decided not to compete in Athens.

In terms of structure, the chapter shall first present the main actors before taking a closer look at the process and arguments promoted by the different actors. The process is divided into phases and is presented chronologically. The first phase looks at when and why participation in Greece first became an issue. The second phase concentrates on the massive involvement by non-sporting actors who opposed participation in Greece from early June 1969. Political organizations, the labor movement, newspapers and other sport federations tried to influence both the NFIF and the NIF to boycott the championship. After massive external pressure, NIF chose to readdress the question of participation in the championship. Phase three looks at NIF's final decision and their argument for partaking in the championship. Lastly, I assess the reactions to the NIF's decision, and present Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo's thoughts on the boycott debate. Contemporary Norwegian newspapers and material from the Norwegian Confederation of sports' archive have been the most important sources in sorting out this process. Several newspapers and the NRK played a special role in the debate, which took a strong position in the discussion. A thorough search in Norwegian newspapers from the period show there were two questions debated in the press. The first, should Norwegian athletes participate in the championship? Secondly, whether Norwegian newspapers, radio and television should send their reporters to Greece and cover the event or stay home in protest. The question of participation by athletes and the discussion of media coverage do to

some extent overlap. The debate surrounding media coverage proved to be a rather interesting and comprehensive one. Chapter four will examine the media's role in greater detail, focusing on the debate about press coverage at the championship.

3.1 Actors within Norwegian sports

NIF is the umbrella organization above all national sport federations. The General Assembly, which is held every fourth year is the supreme governing body of NIF. NIF's Executive Board is the most central institution for this study, as it worked as the governing institution on an everyday basis.¹²⁹ The board consisted of eleven members in 1969, including the NIF president Torfinn Bentzen, and IOC representative Jan Staubo.

The NFIF is just one of several sport federations placed under NIF. The conservative factory owner Alf J. Bercke had been elected leader of NFIF in 1969. Under normal circumstances, the athletic association decided whether Norwegian athletes should participate in international competitions. However, in 1969, the NIF's executive board considered to overrule the NFIF and deny participation. Two other sport federations, the Norwegian Wrestling Federation,¹³⁰ and the Federation of Company Sports,¹³¹ actively engaged in the participation debate due to the political circumstances, even though these organizations did not represent any athletes who could participate in the European Athletic Championship.

Another interesting element about the European Championship in Greece was that two athletes, Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo, could have travelled to Athens, but chose not to. Political commitment from active athletes is not common, as the number one goal for any athlete is to compete on the international stage and fight for medals. Normally athletes are more concerned about separating politics and sport rather than taking a personal political stance. In this instance the political situation led to a boycott by two of Norway's best middle-distance runners at the time. Kvalheim and Pharo represented the Oslo based athletic club Tjalve. Kvalheim was among the very best 1500 m runners in Europe, and was among the favorites to win a medal that year.

¹²⁹ Idrettsstyret. Will be referred to as NIF's executive board or executive board.

¹³⁰ Norwegian name: Norges Bryteforbund.

¹³¹ Norwegian name: Bedriftsidretten.

3.2 Political actors

The Norwegian labor movement was the most active political actor in the debate, and strongly opposed Norwegian participation in Greece. In this thesis, the term Norwegian labor movement describes the Norwegian Labor Party,¹³² The Confederation of Trade unions (LO)¹³³, and the labor movements own newspaper, *Arbeiderbladet*.

Arne Treholt and Einar Førde stood out as some of the most committed politicians against the Greek regime. Treholt worked as a journalist for *Arbeiderbladet* between 1965 and 1970. He later became political secretary for Jens Evensen (the Labor Party). In 1969, Einar Førde was at an early stage in his political career. That year for the first time, he was elected to represent the Labor Party at the Norwegian Storting. Førde was among those within the Labor Party who supported a more radical profile. Treholt and Førde were personal friends with Kvalheim and Pharo at the time. Earlier, Førde had been a decent mid-distance runner for the same club as Kvalheim and Pharo.

Per Borten`s Government (1965-1969) was the first non-socialist government after the Second World War. The government consisted of The Conservative Party, The Liberal Party, The Christian Democratic Party and the Centre Party. For the first time after 1945, the Labor Party was in opposition. Borten`s government never became a major actor in the debate, instead they chose to keep a low profile. The boycott question never became an issue at the Norwegian Storting. However, it was brought up within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. John Lyng, who represented the Conservative Party, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1965 and 1970. Lyng himself was not a major actor in the case. Jens Evensen was an important person in the Norwegian work against the regime within the Council of Europe. Furthermore, he became a crucial person in the debate about participation in the championship. Evensen was at the time the Director General at the Legal Affairs Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He later became a politician for the Labor Party. Between 1962 and 1974, Norway had no embassy in Greece. However, from 1967 the Norwegian diplomat Per Gulowesen who was seated in Rome worked as chargé d`affaires in Greece. Publically, the Ministry was not involved in the debate. However, the Ministry communicated with NFIF ahead of the championship. Behind closed doors, the Ministry

¹³² Arbeiderpartiet (Ap). A Norwegian social-democratic party founded in 1887.

¹³³ Landsorganisasjonen I Norge. The largest umbrella organization for Norwegian labor unions, founded in 1899. Will in this thesis be referred to as LO.

discussed the political aspect of the championship, especially after NIF decided to allow participation. It was the political department within the Ministry that majorly discussed the championship,

The Norwegian Committee for Democracy in Greece¹³⁴ stood for a Norwegian commitment to help people in difficult situations outside the Norwegian boundaries was often coordinated through solidarity committees. Similar committees had already been established to raise attention towards the difficult situation in other countries. One example is the Norwegian Solidary Committee for Vietnam.¹³⁵ The Greek committee was founded in 1967.¹³⁶ It was a non-partisan committee led by Jens Haugeland, a politician representing the Labor Party at the Storting, who from the first day had a personal commitment to the case and actively worked to restore democratic governance in Greece. Treholt also stood behind the establishment of the Greek committee, and served as the deputy representative to the organization. Working for Norwegian boycott became one important task for the Greek committee as a boycott would draw more attention to their case.

After NIF decided that athletes would participate in the championship, several political youth organizations formed an “action committee”. The committee represented close to 200 000 young people in Norway. The Workers Youth League (AUF) was one of the forerunners in establishing the committee. The Young Conservatives was the only major youth organization that not wanted to take part in the committee.

3.3 Newspapers

Verdens Gang (VG). Established after the Second World War (1945), claims to be politically neutral. From 1966 it was owned by Schibsted Media Group, the same group that owns Aftenposten. VG was against participation in the championship and argued for a boycott.

Aftenposten, the largest newspaper in Norway in 1969, was traditionally a conservative newspaper and supported participation.

¹³⁴ Den Norske Komite for Demokrati i Hellas. English name: The Norwegian Committee for Democracy in Greece. Will be referred to as the Greek committee.

¹³⁵ Tamnes, *Oljealder 1965-1995*, Volume 6, *Norsk Utenrikspolitikk Historie*, 354.

¹³⁶ Funderud, *Norske reaksjoner på militærregimet i Hellas*, 115.

Arbeiderbladet, the labor movement's newspaper. Owned by the Labor Party until 1991, the newspaper strongly opposed Norwegian participation.

3.4 The participation debate

It has proved difficult to pin point exactly when the 1969 European championship in Greece first became an issue. The first trace of concerns regarding the question of participation in Athens was at a NIF executive board meeting, held January 31st 1969.¹³⁷ Prior to the meeting, the athletic association had asked NIF to address the question of participation in Greece. In a letter from NIF, the executive board stated that they would not oppose participation, if NFIF chose to travel to Athens in September.¹³⁸ The NFIF addressed the question of participation at their board meeting February 2nd. It was decided that Norwegian athletes would follow normal procedures and take part in the championship. At the same time, the NFIF had reached out to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked if the ministry could appoint an attaché for the Norwegian athletic team in Greece.¹³⁹ NFIF specified that they would prefer that someone representing Norwegian authorities was given this task, which had been the procedure in previous championships. The request was discussed at the political department within the Ministry on January 29th, 1969. The department concluded that the Norwegian authorities would not provide direct assistance to Norwegian athletes during the championship, but could assist in locating another Norwegian candidate in Greece for the position of attaché. According to the Ministry, this person could not officially represent the country. The official answer given was that the Ministry did not have the capacity to offer an official representative to the job. However, If NFIF was interested, the Ministry could assist the athletic association in establishing contact with relevant candidates, but suggested that further communication did not go through the embassy.¹⁴⁰

We can also see some interest related to participation in February from other actors, though it was quite limited at this time. Another national sport federation, the Norwegian wrestling federation, addressed Norwegian participation in Greece at their board meeting, on February 12th. The Wrestling federation sent a letter to NIF just days later, urging NIF to do everything

¹³⁷ RA, PA 90, box 55, protocols from the executive board meeting, 31.01.1969.

¹³⁸ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from NIF to NFIF, 03.02.1969.

¹³⁹ UD, 74.2/4, letter from NFIF to MFA, 22.01.1969

¹⁴⁰ UD, 74.2/4, minutes from the political department's meeting about the championship, 29.01.1969

in their power to influence the IAAF to relocate the championship to another country.¹⁴¹ NIF did not reply before May, explaining the issue had been discussed together with the Athletic Association. According to NIF it was difficult to relocate the championship as no other country had volunteered to host the championship.¹⁴² It is quite special and interesting that another sport federations actively opposed participation at such an early stage, especially as the Wrestling federation did not have anything to do with the championship. A possible explanation is that the Norwegian Wrestling Federation at the time was led by Lorang Kristiansen. Kristiansen was a young leader compared to the other leaders within Norwegian sport. At an interview published by *Arbeiderbladet* in May, Kristiansen stated that most of the leading persons within sport federations in Norway were politically conservative.¹⁴³ On the other hand, Wrestling was a traditional working class sport. It is also reasonable to believe that the Wrestling federation, among others, had NIF's decision to break off all sports contact with members of the Warsaw-Pact in 1968 freshly kept in mind.

Some Norwegian newspapers showed interest in the championship early on. My research shows that the first newspaper which brought up the issue of arranging an international sport event in Greece was VG. In an article from February 6th 1969, VG demanded that the NIF worked to relocate the championship. They based their demands on the new Greek regime's violations of human rights and absence of democratic institutions.¹⁴⁴ VG pointed to NIF's decision from 1968 and argued NIF should react against Greece the same way as they had against the Soviet Union and their allies. VG also argued the junta would use the championship as a propaganda tool, which definitely was a reason to boycott the events.

On February 18th, *Aftenposten*, for the first time brought up the European Championship in Greece.¹⁴⁵ The context was Professor Andreas Papandreu's press conference in Stockholm. Papandreu was a Greek politician whose father had been Prime Minister of Greece from 1963 to 1965. Andreas Papandreu had been arrested by the military junta in Greece in 1967, but was later released and forced to leave the country. Papandreu established an organization against the dictatorship in Greece, called the Panhellenic Liberation Movement. At the press conference in Stockholm February 17th, Papandreu explained to the Scandinavian people that

¹⁴¹ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from the Wrestling federation to NIF.

¹⁴² Ibid, letter from NIF to the Wrestling federation.

¹⁴³ *Arbeiderbladet*, *De fleste Norske idrettsledere er politisk konservative*, 31.05.2016.

¹⁴⁴ VG, *Flytt EM!*, 06.02.1969.

¹⁴⁵ *Aftenposten*, *Papandreu: Turist-boikotten har virkning*, 18.02.1969.

the tourist boycott of Greece succeeded in hurting the Greek economy. At the same time, Papandreou appealed to the Scandinavian countries, hoping for a collective boycott of the European Athletic Championship. At this point Aftenposten had not taken any position in the question of participation.

There was little activity related to the question of participation in Norway in general during the spring months. A letter to NIF from The Greek Committee was the exception. The Greek committee argued that the conclusion reached by NIF and NFIF in February, which allowed athletes to compete in the championship was simply sad and just wrong. Furthermore, they argued that participation in the championship would be interpreted by the international community as a recognition of the Greek regime and give the junta unnecessary publicity. The Greek Committee argued that sport leaders in Norway would be politically biased if they were not consistent in sports boycotts, referring to boycott of Warsaw Pact countries the previous year. The letter was signed by Jens Haugeland and Arne Treholt.¹⁴⁶ At this point, Norwegian politicians had not raised any concerns towards participating in the championship.

3.4.1 Escalation

From late May, the debate increased in tension and intensity. Articles were published on a daily basis. Politicians, the vox populi, sport leaders and athletes took part in the debate. The Labor Party sent an official letter to NIF on May 29th.¹⁴⁷ The letter reveals that participation in the championship had been a major issue at the party's national congress held earlier the same month, which resulted in a unanimous resolution to work for a relocation. In the letter, the Labor Party referred to the legal accusations against the military junta within the Council of Europe, led by the Scandinavian governments. The violations of human rights and removal of democratic institutions were the two main arguments promoted. The party demanded that the case be addressed by NIF's executive board. The message from the Labor Party was clear; the championship had to be relocated, if not Norwegian athletes should stay home. Six days later, on June 4, NIF received another letter. This time from LO.¹⁴⁸ The organization had discussed participation in Greece at their annual congress, also in May. The conclusion was similar to the one reached by the Labor Party.¹⁴⁹ The letter stated LO since the coup of 1967

¹⁴⁶ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from the Greek Committee to NIF, 28.03.1969.

¹⁴⁷ RA, PA 90, box 355, letters from the Labor Party to NIF, 29.05.1969

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, letter from LO to NIF, 04.06.1969

¹⁴⁹ Arbark, protocols from the 1969 LO Congress, 274.

had opposed the new regime in Greece, and was working for the reinstatement of democratic intuitions. The organization argued that the military junta would abuse the championship as a tool in promoting propaganda to the international community. According to LO, “the Greek regime did not deserve to host the event”.¹⁵⁰

Torfinn Bentzen, answered the Labor Party two weeks later.¹⁵¹ He explained that the executive board saw no reason to discuss the case further, and pointed to the decision from February where NIF had decided not to oppose participation in the championship. Bentzen also referred to new information from the Athletic Association which stated that a relocation of the championship had been addressed within the IAAF, but that any alternative candidates had declined IAAF’s request to host the event. There was simply not enough time to prepare.¹⁵² LO received a reply from the Athletic Association on June 19th. According to Bjercke, his federation had since the end of the Second World War competed against all types of nations regardless of race, religion, or type of governance unless NIF or the government had demanded otherwise. He further pointed to how Norway had participated in, or against, other similar regimes in East Germany, Cuba and Spain. In these cases, a boycott debate had been absent, even though Norwegian authorities did not support these regimes. According to Bjercke, sport leaders were not chosen to, or possessed the means to evaluate their opponents politically.¹⁵³

There are no letters from other political parties requesting a relocation or boycott of the championship in NIF’s archive. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Labor Party was the only party which opposed Norwegian participation. Arbeiderbladet published an interview with Jens Evensen in mid-June.¹⁵⁴ In the article, Evensen referred to his thorough research on Greece’s internal conditions in relation to the case against Greece within the Council of Europe. According to Evensen, there was no doubt that Greece had become a dictatorship heavily inspired by fascistic ideology. Evensen explained that the Secretary General of the Greek Confederation of sports, had in a public declaration in April 1969, stated one major task for the new regime was to “cure” Greek sports. Those who did not supported the revolution had no place within organized sports and would be excluded.

¹⁵⁰ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from LO to NIF, 04.06.1969.

¹⁵¹ RA, PA 90, Box 355, letter from NIF to the Labor Party, 10.06.1969

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from NFIF to LO, 19.06.1969.

¹⁵⁴ Arbeiderbladet, *Norsk deltagelse i Athen blir sett på som forræderi*, 17.06.1969

Other newspapers picked up the information and it led to a further escalation of the debate. After Evensen's article several politicians began to take a stance on the participation question. Though one cannot be certain, it is likely that Evensen's article was the cause of this, forcing politicians to take a position. VG asked five politicians each representing different parties at the Storting if the NFIF should change their decision to participate in the championship.¹⁵⁵ In general, those who supported a boycott were more willing to give an answer. Arnt Hagen who represented the Centre Party told VG that he, under normal circumstances, was against mixing politics with sport. However, as the Greek junta was excluding young athletes this situation was different. Hagen argued that Greece's case was special as the country was a NATO member. Karl J. Brommeland who represented the Christian Democratic Party referred to the junta's serious violations of human rights. Brommeland stated that Norwegian athletes should, under no circumstances, participate in the championship. Hans H. Rossbach of the Liberal Party, stated that his party in principle supported sports interaction with all types of nations and regimes, however he argued that Greece stood out from other similar dictatorships as the country recently had transformed from a democratic country into a dictatorship, which does not fit the ethos of the Western European community of which Greece was a part. Rossbach was against participation as it would give the junta the perfect opportunity to use the championship as propaganda, he drew parallels to the Nazi-Olympics of 1936. The Conservative Party representative Otto Lyng hoped that Norway had a consistent boycott policy towards all such types of regime. Lyng meant that Norway should boycott all sporting arrangements in countries with similar situations to that of Greece. The last person interviewed was Jens Haugland. Naturally, Haugland was against participation and begged NIF to reconsider the resolution from February.

The new information from Evensen also led to a new offensive from the labor movement. Local divisions got involved in the debate, and sent letters to NIF.¹⁵⁶ Leader of LO, Tor Aspengren, wrote another public letter directed to the leaders within NIF, which was published in *Arbeiderbladet* on June 25th.¹⁵⁷ Both the Labor Party and LO appealed to NIF one more time, based on the latest information, to boycott the championship. According to the Labor Party, it was impossible for Norwegian athletes to participate. Aspengren argued a boycott was particularly important in this instance as Norway had a special opportunity to

¹⁵⁵ VG, *Derfor bør Norge utebli fra friidrettslandskampen*, 19.06.1969.

¹⁵⁶ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from Bærum Labor Party to NIF, 18.06.1969

¹⁵⁷ *Arbeiderbladet*, *Nye opplysninger gjør et ja til Athen umulig*, 25.06.1969.

show both a political and moral stance, which would help undermine a regime which was already unstable. Aspengren finished his letter by reminding NIF that his organization represented close to six hundred thousand people, a fact NIF should take into consideration.

We can also see the involvement by other sport federations in this period. The Federation of Company Sports wrote to NIF on June 23rd, the day after their annual federation meeting where it had been decided that the Federation could not accept sports interactions with Greece.¹⁵⁸ The letter urged NIF to cut off all contact with Greece, and boycott the country until democratic institutions were restored. The Norwegian Wrestling Federation followed up their involvement from February, sending another letter in which they shifted from their original request for relocation, instead they demanded a boycott.¹⁵⁹ At this time, there were numerous comments, articles and interviews in the media by people and organizations who supported both sides of the participation debate. One who often expressed his thoughts in the media was the leader of NFIF, Bjercke. He confronted those who argued for boycott. It emerged from an article in *Arbeiderbladet* on June 20th, that Bjercke had the previous day told different newspapers that he had received information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to Bjercke, the Ministry had given the federation the “green light” and approved participation. In the same article, the Ministry refused that any such information had been given to Bjercke and stated that this information was incorrect.¹⁶⁰ It also became clear from the article that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no intention to interfering in the debate, and would not take a position in favor of either participation or a boycott. Jens Evensen and other politician`s previous statements in the media had to be considered as personal and not representing the Ministry.

3.4.2 Athletes boycotts the championship

The 1969 championship is often remembered as the championship Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo`s boycotted. The decision made in early June 1969 caused massive attention and gave those advocating a boycott momentum in the debate.¹⁶¹ Both Kvalheim and Pharo studied political science in 1969. Kvalheim at the University of Oregon in the United States, and Pharo at the University of Oslo. Pharo was not personally political active during this period,

¹⁵⁸ RA, PA 90, box 355, letter from the Federation of Company Sports to NIF, 23.06.1969

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, letter from LO til NIF, 19.06.1969.

¹⁶⁰ *Arbeiderbladet, Hardt skyts fra UD mot Alf R. Bjercke*, 20.06.1969

¹⁶¹ This sections builds on the interview with Kvalheim and Pharo 06.04.2016.

but he was a part of the quite radical political environment which characterized the University of Oslo's political science department at the time. Kvalheim represented the political left, and had from the early 1960s been a member of the AUF.¹⁶²

Kvalheim had travelled to Norway at the beginning of June 1969 and rather quickly decided, together with Pharo that they not would compete in Athens even though NFIF had not selected the team which would represent the nation yet. However, there was no doubt that they would both have been selected to represent Norway in Greece due to their previous results. When I asked which factors were crucial for their decision not to participate in the championship, their answers were quite similar. Kvalheim had been majorly interested in issues on the political agenda within the U.S, such as the civil right movement and the Vietnam War. Upon returning to Norway in June, the Greek case quickly received his attention, he proceeded to read a lot about the internal conditions in Greece. Especially the case against Greece in Strasbourg which made the strongest impression on Kvalheim. He also felt that participation in the championship would oppose the official Norwegian position against the regime. Furthermore, both Kvalheim and Pharo argued that the situation in Greece was different to other similar cases as Greece was a European state and a NATO member. Pharo pointed out that Norway had previously competed against other totalitarian regimes, but that there were better reasons to boycott Greece as criticism from a fellow NATO member could have a greater influence on the regime. Kvalheim stated that a western country that treated its people the way the junta did was shocking, as Greece was part of the western "family", Norway had a responsibility to react and promote democratic values.¹⁶³

Pharo, but especially Kvalheim, were heavily influenced by their good friends Einar Førde and Arne Treholt.¹⁶⁴ Kvalheim discussed participation in the championship with Førde and Treholt, but felt no pressure from the two politicians, nor from the labor movement in general to boycott. However, Kvalheim's choice of staying home was used politically. Kvalheim remembered one episode in particular. AUF had painted large posters stating, "Do as Arne - boycott the regime" for a competition at Bislett stadium. On the other hand, Kvalheim felt some pressure from the NFIF. Naturally, they wanted him to compete in Athens, as he was the most obvious Norwegian medal candidate. However, NFIF and NIF were not in

¹⁶² Conversations with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

possession of any means that could persuade Kvalheim and Pharo to participate, as athletes in the 1960s did not receive any financial support. Neither were there any external sponsors that could convince them to participate.¹⁶⁵ Pharo felt no pressure from either non-sporting actors or the Athletic Association. However, as Pharo and Kvalheim were the only two athletes who boycotted the championship, Pharo felt that the other athletes did not understand his decision whilst other teammates characterized the choice as naïve and foolish. Other athletes' thoughts on participation appeared in an interview published by VG. The article shows that the athletes strongly disagreed on whether one should boycott or participate, and the majority of the athletes were against boycott. Ole Bernt Skarstein, Kjellfred Weum, Martin Jensen and Arne Risa were athletes who saw no reason to boycott. Especially Skarstein and Weum argued there was no point in using the championship to demonstrate against the regime. Weum also stated that he believed the information about the regime was exaggerated.¹⁶⁶ Naturally, most athletes were against mixing sport and politics.

Both Kvalheim and Pharo confirmed that the principle in Norway that politics should be kept out of sport had a strong position in the 1960s. Pharo argued that participation in championships hosted by questionable regimes during the Cold War was a question about political preference as much as a question of principle. Furthermore, Pharo and Kvalheim interestingly pointed out that there was no doubt that people within NIF and NFIF during the 1960s were politically conservative, and no one within NFIF wanted to criticize another NATO ally or someone who shared the same political beliefs. This made it easy to use the principle of not mixing sport and politics in the 1969 and the European championship in Greece.¹⁶⁷ Kvalheim and Pharo pointed to several factors when I asked why the question of participation received so much attention and involvement from different actors. Pharo replied that it was a “media-driven” case, as many of the newspapers showed massive interest in the championship. He also stressed that advocates against the regime used the newspapers to front their case. Kvalheim highlighted that solidarity committees in Norway were run by highly skilled people who knew how to bring attention towards a special case, and used their skills to draw attention to the championship.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ VG, *Norske friidrettsfolk vil til EM*, 12.07.1969.

¹⁶⁷ Conversation with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Kvalheim and Pharo`s decision to boycott was one reason why the participation discussion achieved so much attention. It was highly surprising that one of the best athletes chose to boycott the championship due to political circumstances. Their decision to not participate in Greece is special and stands out as one of few times, if not the only time in Norwegian sport history where athletes have decided to let political circumstances be a crucial factor in not taking part in a major international championship.¹⁶⁹

3.4.3 NIF reconsiders its decision

The first trace of doubt within NIF regarding their decision from February can be found in an interview with the NIF`s president Torfinn Bentzen, published by *Arbeiderbladet* June 18.¹⁷⁰ Bentzen informed that the NIF`s executive board had decided it was necessary to reconsider the question of participation. Bentzen argued the reason was Jens Evensen`s latest information on the current segregation within Greek sports. He further informed *Arbeiderbladet* that the question of a boycott would be addressed at the executive board`s meeting on June 27th. He pointed out that the chance of a boycott still was relatively small as it required the majority vote in the executive board.

The next day, Jan Staubo strongly criticized those who were attempting to mix politics and sports.¹⁷¹ Staubo supported the principle that politics should be kept out of sport consistently, and argued Norwegian athletes should compete in Athens. According to Staubo, the IOC supported this view. He further stated that he was tired of how politicians and others tried to use sport as a foreign policy tool; sport should instead build bridges between nations. He argued that politicians should take action towards Greece, instead of pressuring idealistic organizations such as the NIF, to act on their behalf. On June 27, Bentzen, Staubo and the rest of executive board gathered to discuss participation in Greece.¹⁷² There is little doubt that this turn by the NIF was a consequence of the massive pressure by some of the major newspapers, political organizations and particular the information by Jens Evensen. However, it was not enough and the NIF`s executive board, with eight against three votes, decided that they would approve Norwegian participation. NIF justified the decision in an official letter

¹⁶⁹ Arne Kvalheim confirmed that the debate gained momentum after their decision became public in June.

¹⁷⁰ *Arbeiderbladet, vil idrettsstyret gjøre helomvending*, 18.06.1969

¹⁷¹ RA, PA 90, box 355, newspaper article published by *Morgenbladet*, 20.06.1969.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, protocols from the executive board meeting held 27.06.1969, case 318 about participation in the championship.

sent to all sport federations in Norway as well as every organization, which had encouraged NIF or NFIF to boycott the championship.¹⁷³ In a quite comprehensive letter, NIF apologized for how Norwegian athletes on some occasions competed in countries or against nations which violated the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. NIF further stated that the situation in Greece was relatively similar to other regimes where Norway had participated. According to the executive board, the situation in Greece could not be compared with the hostile actions conducted by the Warsaw Pact the year before. The executive board also highlighted that the most important task for sport was to build bridges between people independently of religious or political preference, and that it was not organized sport's task to influence the political situation in another country. At last the letter summarize the arguments promoted by the minority in NIF's executive board who were in favor of boycott. A letter was also sent to the national Confederation of Sports in Sweden and Denmark to inform that Norwegian athletes would participate in the championship.¹⁷⁴

3.4.4 Reactions to final decision

It was difficult to locate reactions to the NIF's final decision. Kvalheim and Pharo stated the decision by the NIF was not surprising, which to some extent explains why the response was limited.¹⁷⁵ The reaction by the NFIF was to send an extended team to Athens, to give the impression that Norwegian sports was united in the view on participation in the championship. Furthermore, when it was publicly known that NIF had reached a final decision focus turned towards the media debate, especially towards NRK, which at the time had not reached a final decision on whether they would broadcast from the events in Greece. However, I was able to find some reactions in the form of newspaper articles. In an article published the same weekend NIF decided to participate, VG wrote that they had contacted the Norwegian government and the prime minister Per Borten for a comment. It turned out that the prime minister did not want to give an official comment and that his view on Norwegian participation should be kept private. Borten's hesitation was criticized by VG.¹⁷⁶ Arbeiderbladet had not yet given up on a boycott. A month after NIF's conclusion the newspaper published an article stating the only political party at the Storting which supported

¹⁷³ RA, PA 90, box 355, public letter from NIF, 01.07.1969.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, letter from NIF to sports leaders in Sweden and Denmark, 02.07.1969.

¹⁷⁵ Conversation with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo

¹⁷⁶ VG, *11 styremedlemmer trer sammen og skal ta en beslutning om deltagelse*, 29.06.1969

participation in Greece was the Conservative Party. According to *Arbeiderbladet* traveling to Athens was a political act in itself. As it would be interpreted as Norway having chosen a side in the Greek conflict.¹⁷⁷ *Aftenposten*, on the other hand, published a public survey conducted by Norwegian Gallup on August 23rd, it showed that 58 % of those asked believed Norway should participate in Greece.¹⁷⁸ The same day VG published an article by their political correspondent in Greece.¹⁷⁹ The article stated that military leaders in Greece had started the preparation for the championship. Road blocks, delimitation, raiding political opponents and random interrogations were some measures used by the junta. According to VG, the junta was extremely afraid of demonstrations during the championship. Harsh methods were used to keep rebel groups from using the championship as a part of their fight against the regime. Norwegian newspapers also published an article in August stating a Greek opposition movement had threatened to take action against all participants in the championship.¹⁸⁰

In Norway, several political youth organizations gathered and formed an “action committee”. The committee launched a postcard campaign against athletes who had decided to participate in the championship and their leaders. The postcards show a caricature of athlete Kjellfred Weum jumping over a hurdle of imprisoned Greeks while the junta applauded from the stands with their right hands raised. The caricature drawn by Finn Graff was also published in *Arbeiderbladet*.¹⁸¹ The aim was prevent athletes from traveling to Greece.¹⁸²

It is within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs we find the most interesting reactions. It may seem like the ministry did not expect that there would be a Norwegian troop sent to Greece. The question of a Norwegian attaché was once again was brought up, this time by the administration office on July 25th demanding that the political department reach a conclusion on the matter.¹⁸³ Apparently, the documentation from January had been temporarily lost, which forced the political department to decide on a policy related to Norwegian participation in the championship. The political department, represented by Kjell Vibe, wrote an internal note, which addressed the championship in Greece.¹⁸⁴ He argued that the Ministry of Foreign

¹⁷⁷ *Arbeiderbladet, Athen boikotten styrkes*, 29.08.1969.

¹⁷⁸ *Aftenposten, Dyden og Lysten*, 27.08.1969.

¹⁷⁹ VG, *Oberstene ruster opp foran EM*, 23.08.1969

¹⁸⁰ VG, *Vil slå til mot alle idrettsmenn i EM*, 26.08.1969.

¹⁸¹ Conversations with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo.

¹⁸² VG, *En spontan reaksjon uten påtrykk*, 05.09.1969.

¹⁸³ UD, 74.2/4, MFA Secretariat request to the political department for an decision related to attaché, 25.07.1969

¹⁸⁴ UD, 74.2/4, UD's holdning til deltagelse, 31.07.1969

Affairs should adopt a neutral position on the question of participation in the championship in Greece. However, when the NIF finally concluded that a Norwegian team would travel to Athens, the Ministry should avoid creating the impression that the decision to take part in the championship had official support from Norwegian authorities. On the other hand, it was, according to the Ministry, difficult to deny any sort of embassy assistance to the group of Norwegians in Athens during the championship.¹⁸⁵

The public conclusion was that the embassy in Greece did not have the capacity to appoint an attaché who represented Norwegian authorities but that the Ministry would provide assistance in locating a Norwegian in Athens who could serve as an attaché.¹⁸⁶ Internally, the Ministry agreed on finding a private person in Greece who could work as an attaché during the championship and that would satisfy both the NFIF and the Norwegian authorities. However, this person had to be neutral in the question of participation. According to the Ministry, the political context surrounding the championship had made it difficult to handle the situation as the NFIF could exploit the fact that the Ministry supported the federation in locating an attaché as an act of official support for participation. On the other hand, the Ministry was afraid that if they did not provide normal support to Norwegians abroad due to political interests, it would lead to public outcry against Norwegian authorities.¹⁸⁷ The Ministry discussed guidelines for their official representatives in Athens during the championship on August 26th. It mainly concerned Per Gulowsen.¹⁸⁸ Thore Boye argued Gulowsen should be present at the European championship. However, more importantly, Gulowsen should not act in any way that could be received as a political demonstration. Einar Ansteensen stated that he wanted to discuss the matter with colleges from the other Scandinavian countries at the political leader meeting in Reykjavik on September 2nd and ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs John Lyng for his opinion.¹⁸⁹ On September 12th, the Ministry received another letter from Gulowsen. The letter explained that he had received, together with diplomats from Sweden and Denmark, an official invitation to the championship from the junta.¹⁹⁰ Gulowsen highlighted that Danish and Swedish diplomats already had stated in the media that they would boycott the championship. He asked the political department for advice. Gulowsen was

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*,

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁸ UD, 74.2/4, letters between Gulowsen and the political department, represented by Thore Boye and Einar Ansteensen, from late August and early September 1969.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

ordered by the Ministry not to show up during the opening and closing ceremony, but stressed he should be present at some point during the championship. Furthermore, Gulowsen should keep a low profile in this period.¹⁹¹

3.5 Concluding Remarks

In 1965, Greece had been awarded the role of host nation for the European Athletic Championship, before the military regime seized power. The IAAF would never assign the championship to a country led by a military junta. However, it proved difficult to relocate the championship as no other country volunteered to host the events. The explanation given was lack of time to prepare. Nevertheless, the IAAF together with its member federations had close to two and half year to come up with a better solution, which they did not manage. This tells us that Sport Federations in European countries did not worry too much about competing in a championship in a dictator state, which from 1967 was accused of violating human rights.

In Norway, concerns about participating in the championship were not raised before the same year as the championship took place, even though the Greek case had achieved massive attention in Norway from 1967. Leader of the NFIF, Alf Bjercke, must have predicted that there would be questions regarding participation in Greece as the federation already in January 1969 wanted to make sure they had support from the governing institutions within the NIF. Torfinn Bentzen, together with the executive board saw no reason to oppose participation at the time.

The political commitment against participation was run by the labor movement and the Greek committee. Both the LO and the Labor Party addressed the question of participation at their annual Congress in May, and concluded Norwegian athletes should boycott the championship if it was not relocated. The argument for boycotting was based on three main concerns. Firstly, the junta`s violations of human rights and the role the Norwegian government played in the case against Greece within the Council of Europe. Secondly, the regime`s segregation of athletes based on their view on the regime. Lastly, the fear that the junta might use the championship for propaganda purposes. The individual commitment from Arne Treholt, Einar Førde, Jens Haugland and Jens Evensen was the crucial factor in explaining why the participation question received mass attention. Haugland who led the Greek Committee

¹⁹¹ Ibid

consistently worked for a boycott and used his position to draw attention to the case. Førde and Treholt fronted the political opposition in Norway, and pressed for a stricter policy towards the regime. Their views influenced Arne Kvalheim, and eventually Helge Pahro. After it was known that Kvalheim and Pharo would boycott the regime, the participation debate gained momentum, particularly due to the interest from Norwegian newspapers who on a daily basis fronted the debate.

Some politicians who represented governing parties publicly stated they were against participation, but no party had a united position on the participation question. The Conservative Party stood out as the party which to some extent supported participation. The government kept distance from the debate. It is reasonable to believe that the most important aspect for the government was to make sure that no one could ask questions about political pressure from the government towards NIF during the decision-making process. On the other hand, political preference was a factor in the view on boycotting. I argue the embedded norm of not mixing politics and sport suited the government well in the 1969 championship

The championship in Greece created some difficulties for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which behind closed doors they showed some uncertainty related to how they should deal with Norwegian participation. It may seem like the Ministry to some extent was surprised over the decision by NIF, as they had not solved the issue of appointing an attaché to the Norwegian team. It is interesting that the Ministry had concerns related to participation in a sports competition. The most important factor for the Ministry was that they remain neutral in the decision on participation. This research shows that it was in the Ministry's best interest that the decision to participate be taken individually and completely by Norwegian sports leaders. I argue that If there was no doubt that the NIF was politically neutral and an individual organization, neither international nor domestic actors could put the Norwegian authorities in a difficult situation related to using sports as a foreign policy.

3.5.1 Why did the NIF approve participation?

Norwegian sport leaders were strongly influenced by the traditional position in Norway that politics should not interfere in sports. The NFIF had no concerns related to participation, as the federation's number one task was to ensure athletes best interests and help them perform in international competitions. NIF, which had the political responsibility, at first saw no problems related to Norwegian participation. The situation changed during the summer and

the executive board readdressed the question of participation due to the pressure from labor movement and the public. In particular, the information by Jens Evensen about segregation within Greek sport created uncertainties within the NIF, was more influential than the accusations of human rights violations. Segregation in sport is the number one political act which organized sports cannot tolerate. Nevertheless, the majority of NIF's executive board voted against boycotting. The official explanation was that sports should not be used to influence the political situation in another country. The board highlighted that Norway competed in other countries similar to Greece, and the number one task for sports was to build bridges in political difficult situations.

It is important to highlight that the decision to participate was made by the eleven members of the NIF's executive board. Leaders within organized sports in Norway were in this period known to be political conservative. Bentzen, Bjercke and Staoubo were three strong personalities working for participation. Two of them, Bentzen and Staoubo, were also members of the executive board. It is reasonable to believe that it was not easy for the remaining nine members of the executive board to oppose Bentzen and Staoubo who had publicly argued for dividing politics and sports.

3.5.2 Why did Kvalheim and Pharo boycott?

The boycott by Kvalheim and Pharo was first and foremost a personal decision, they simply felt it was wrong to participate in the championship. However, they were more politically active than most other athletes. They were influenced by their friends Einar Førde, Arne Treholt, and the radical political environment at the University of Oslo. Naturally, these factors also influenced both Kvalheim and Pharo. Of particular interest was their argument was their argument for boycotting to demonstrate the importance of reacting in light of the human rights violations taking place in a country which shared membership in the Council of Europe and NATO. On the other hand, their decision was not meant to pressure others athletes to take the same decision or front an opposition towards the NIF. They both understood why others did not want to boycott the championship. However, athletes have an individual right to stay home and not participate in competitions, Kvalheim and Pharo exercised this right. Neither non-sporting actors nor sports actors possessed any means which could force Kvalheim and Pharo to participate as the commercial revolution of sports just was in its beginning phase. There is no doubt that Kvalheim and Pharo's decision was surprising

and directed more attention towards the boycott debate. The fact that two of Norway`s best athletes refused to take part in the championship due to political circumstances was used by those who advocated for a boycott.

4 The Media debate

This chapter will concentrate on the second debate ahead of the 1969 championship in Greece. In addition to the debate about boycott or participation by Norwegian athletes, there emerged a debate about whether Norwegian newspapers, radio and television should cover the championship. The question of press coverage was to some extent discussed parallel to the sports boycott debate, but gained momentum after NIF decided to approve Norwegian participation in Greece by the end of June 1969. The public debates about participation by athletes and about press coverage occurred on in the newspapers. Naturally, as newspapers still were the most important communication platform where everyone could express their thoughts. Interestingly, it was the newspapers themselves, in this case meaning the editorial staff, who were the most active actors in the discussions about media coverage of the championship. There were four major newspapers which announced that they would protest against the regime and not cover the championship. However, it was NRK`s position concerning whether they would broadcast or boycott the championship which led to most heated discussions, which also involved other actors who were not representing the media in some way. NRK decided in August they also would follow many of the newspapers and boycott the championship. This is the only time NRK has boycotted a sports event due to political reasons. The question of covering the championship in Greece eventually turned into a discussion about the media`s fundamental duties and on NRK`s monopoly position in Norwegian broadcasting.

This chapter is structured in a similar fashion to the previous chapter. The different actors are presented before I take a closer look at the discussions between those who argued against or in favor of media coverage. The first part concentrates on the newspapers before focus is directed towards NRK. The newspapers also took an active role in the debate regarding NRK`s decision. Naturally, newspapers have been the most important sources in sorting out the process. However, access to NRK`s document archive for protocols and minutes from their board meetings was crucial in this process.

4.1 Media actors

The different newspapers' position on a press boycott became apparent from June 1969.¹⁹² The same newspapers as I presented in front of chapter 3 lay the basis for this section as well. In general, the newspapers which argued for sports boycott also supported a media boycott. *Aftenposten* strongly opposed a demonstration by Norwegian press which intended not to cover the events in Athens. *VG* and *Arbeiderbladet* strongly argued for a media boycott. *Aftenposten* and *Arbeiderbladet* were the newspapers which mostly confronted each other. *VG* had a more reticent approach. Though *VG*'s position on both sport boycott and media boycott were evident early on, the editorial staff were not as active in the debate.

The only television channel in Norway in 1969 was the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. NRK is a state owned public radio and television company. NRK started regular television broadcasting in 1960. Athletics became an important aspect of NRK's commitment to sports. From 1962, NRK broadcasted live from the European athletic championships.¹⁹³ It is important to keep in mind that NRK at this point had a monopoly on television broadcasting which placed NRK in a special position when it came to a boycott due to political circumstances. Hans Jacob Ustvedt was the Director-General of NRK between 1962 and 1972.

4.2 Political actors

Politicians were not as involved in the debate of media boycott as on the question of sports boycott. It was especially the youth political organizations, which worked for a collective boycott by the media. The same "action committee", which had been established to prevent athletes from participating, got more involved in the media debate. AUF stood out as the most committed organization. The Norwegian Young Conservatives were the only major youth organization, which argued that the press should cover the championship.

The Greek Committee showed great interest the European Athletic Championship in General. The committee was also active in the debate about media coverage, and was not interested in

¹⁹² *VG* is an exception, as their position was apparent from February.

¹⁹³ The first world Championships in Athletics was in 1983, and the European athletic championship was together with the Olympics the most important competitions for athletes at this point. For a summary of NRK's history of sports broadcasting, see Lote, "Fra Clarke til Thorkildsen".

any publicity from the championship. The debate also draw attention from several cultural personalities and the vox populi in general, who shared their thoughts in the newspapers and on the radio.

4.3 Newspapers announce their boycott

VG decided together with Arbeiderbladet, dagbladet and Nationen to boycott the championship, which meant that no reporters would be sent to Athens and cover the championship, nor would any articles or pictures from the events be published. Only the results would be published. Articles published June 13th confirmed the boycotts.¹⁹⁴ VG pointed to the regime`s treatment of their own citizens and referred to the leading role by the Norwegian government in the case against Greece within the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the decision was a reaction to Norwegian sports leaders lack of action, as at the time it did not seem that NIF would oppose participation in the championship, despite the massive encouragement from the public opinion during the early summer.¹⁹⁵ In the same article, VG confronted those who argued Norway would have to boycott every questionable regimes in the future if the championship in Greece was boycotted. Accordingly, treating the regimes differently would be to take a stance in the ideological battle. VG argued this statement was a cheap attempt to escape from difficult decisions. The newspaper explained that Norway could not boycott all forms of dictatorships around the world. However, the situation in both Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Greece were different and “upset every person in the free world”.¹⁹⁶ Vg further argued there were no good reasons for not reacting against those responsible for these acts.”¹⁹⁷ Arbeiderbladet`s argumentation for their decision to boycott was at that point not as comprehensive as VG`s. Arbeiderbladet explanation for protesting against the championship was quite similar to the arguments given by VG. The focus was mostly on the human rights situation in the country.¹⁹⁸ First at a later stage in the debate, we see a stronger commitment from Arbeiderbladet.

¹⁹⁴ VG, *VG`s nei*; Arbeiderbladet, *Arbeiderbladet, Dagbladet, VG og Nationen til boycott*, 13.06.1969

¹⁹⁵ The newspapers announced their boycott before NIF finally decided to approve participation on June 27th, 1969.

¹⁹⁶ VG, *VG`s nei*, 13.06.1969.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Arbeiderbladet, *Arbeiderbladet, Dagbladet, Verdens Gang og Nationen til boikott*, 13.06.1969

4.3.1 Aftenposten argues differently

Aftenposten stood out as the only major newspaper with a opposite opinion on the question of boycott by both athletes and the press. In an article published the same date as the other newspapers announced their boycott, Aftenposten informed its readers they would send reporters to Athens.¹⁹⁹ Aftenposten's choice was heavily criticized by other newspapers, Arbeiderbladet in particular. In an article published on July 8th, Arbeiderbladet attacked Aftenposten for not boycotting the championship and those who argued that the Norwegian press should cover any major international event despite the political situation.²⁰⁰ According to Arbeiderbladet, this argument was not valid in this case, and meant the newspapers who choose to report from the championship opposed Norwegian authorities. Arbeiderbladet argued media coverage of the championship would unnecessarily increase the regime's position, and a part of the junta's propaganda strategy was to abuse the international attention an international championship drew.

Two days later Aftenposten responded to the criticism from Arbeiderbladet.²⁰¹ The newspaper strongly disagreed with the accusations by Arbeiderbladet and argued whether Norwegian newspapers chose to report or boycott the championship would not have any effect on the regime's international position. According to Aftenposten, a protest by Norwegian newspapers was worthless. Aftenposten acknowledged that the junta could possibly use the championship as propaganda. However, the article stated that dictatorships always had the opportunity to exploit any kind of international events held in their country. Aftenposten rather focused on media's responsibility to inform the Norwegian people, and that Norwegians had the right to know what went on outside Norwegian borders even though no one supported the regime. Their main argument was that Norwegian newspapers could not ignore the regime in Greece, but rather should report individual and critical information to the Norwegian people.²⁰² In the same article, the editorial staff pointed out they supported the Norwegian case within the Council of Europe, and that they did not aim to undermine Norwegian foreign policy. On the other hand, they argued that the Norwegian reactions

¹⁹⁹ Aftenposten, *En rekke Norske aviser boikotter EM i Friidrett*, 13.06.1969.

²⁰⁰ Arbeiderbladet, *Høyverdige idealer*, 08.07.1969

²⁰¹ Aftenposten, *Norge og Hellas*, 10.07.1969.

²⁰² Ibid.

against the regime was hysterical and exaggerated. Furthermore, the debate in Norway were characterized by irrational feelings and blind hatred against the regime in Greece.²⁰³

The debate between the newspapers continued during the summer, and the political and ideological differences between them appeared more clearly. In early August, *Aftenposten* published an article where they discussed the relation between politics and sport in general. The article also summed up their arguments against a media boycott of the European Athletic Championship.²⁰⁴ *Aftenposten* pointed out that they felt the same way about the regime in Greece as they did about other dictatorships, but stressed the importance of a press presence in Athens, as Norwegian athletes represented their country in the competitions. *Aftenposten* could not understand why the Greek situation was different or more special than when Norwegian sportsmen competed with other undemocratic regimes, and referred to how a united press reported major events in other similar regimes, such as the Soviet Union or East Germany. *Aftenposten* further confronted the accusations that the newspaper supported the regime in Greece based on their attitude towards participation in the championship, and argued supporting participation and media coverage was not synonymous with sympathizing for the junta.²⁰⁵

4.4 Unexpected decision by NRK

There was for some time excitement directed towards NRK`s choice of whether the channel would broadcast from the championship. NRK decided on August 25th to boycott the championship. It is an unique case, as it is the only time NRK has boycotted a major sporting arrangement due to political circumstances.²⁰⁶ The next pages will provide a deeper insight into the process, which led to the decision by NRK, their argumentation for boycott, and present the tense debate before and after NRK reached their conclusion.

The first time representatives from national broadcasting companies in Scandinavia met to discuss how they should deal with the European championship was in February 1969.²⁰⁷ Non conclusion was reached at the meeting as there were still uncertainties related to whether the

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ *Aftenposten, Idrett og politikk*, 01.08.1969.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ NRK covered the 1980 Moscow Olympics even though Norwegian athletes boycotted the Olympics.

²⁰⁷ *Aftenposten, Fjernsyns-sjefer*, 25.02.1969.

national sport federations would send their athletes. However, the meeting was interesting as it proves that Scandinavian broadcasting companies at an early stage raised concerns about broadcasting a championship in a country accused for violating human rights.

In Norway, the public debate on NRK's position slowly started in the same period as the participation debate by Norwegian athletes were at its peak. As mentioned, the discussions about media coverage significantly increased after NIF decided athletes were allowed to participate. One of the first actors working for a boycott by the state channel was the Greek Committee. In June 1969, NRK received an official letter from the Greek Committee which encouraged NRK to boycott the championship in Greece. The committee referred to information from Jens Evensen on the internal conditions in Greece, especially that it brought to light that political prisoners were tortured. Furthermore, the committee used much of the same argumentation as other opponents against participation had used previously. The committee did not concentrate too much on the segregation of young athletes in Greece, but rather focused on how broadcasting from the championship would give the military junta publicity and good PR.²⁰⁸

Norwegian political youth organizations were also engaged in the boycott debate, mainly through the work of the "action committee".²⁰⁹ In a letter signed by 17 youth political organizations representing more than 200 000 people, the committee encouraged NRK to boycott the championships.²¹⁰ AUF and The Norwegian Youth Christian Democrats were some of the political organizations which were the most committed advocates for a boycott by NRK. However, not every major political youth organization supported a press boycott. In particular The Norwegian Young Conservatives held a different opinion. The Young Conservatives sent a letter to NRK in August arguing that they had to broadcast from the championship in Greece due to the state channel's monopolist position. The Young Conservatives argued NRK would have to boycott other sports events in the future if they decided to stay home and not cover the Greek championship. Furthermore, the Young Conservatives were surprised that NRK at all could consider a political boycott of a sports event especially as Norwegian athletes would participate.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Arbeiderbladet, *Den Norske Komité for demokrati i Hellas henstilling til NRK om boikott*, 19.06.1969.

²⁰⁹ The same committee that stood behind the postcard act against Norwegian athletes earlier that summer, see chapter 3.

²¹⁰ VG, *Unge Høyre trakk seg fra boikottappell*, 26.06.1969

²¹¹ Aftenposten, *Hvis NRK ikke dekker Athen-EM må det få føler*, 06.08.1969.

4.4.1 The process within NRK

NRK had through the summer postponed the decision pending on a Swedish or Danish initiative. However, it seemed like everyone waited for one of the other two companies to take the first step.²¹²

The NRK program board discussed the question of boycott on August 22nd.²¹³ It emerged from the meeting that it was up to the Director-general Ustvedt to reach a final decision, but members from the board could express their thoughts on boycott and advise Ustvedt in this difficult situation. At the same meeting, Ustvedt presented three possible opportunities for NRK. The first was to send their own reporter to Athens and broadcast live from Athens with Norwegian commentators. The second option was not sending any reporters, but broadcast selected material from the Eurovision broadcast. The third solution was not to broadcast from the championship at all, but only provide results to the Norwegian people.²¹⁴ There were different thoughts and strong opinions among the members when they discussed the different solutions. The program board managed not to provide a united advice to Ustvedt. Some members supported a total boycott based on the Norwegian government's legal accusations against Greece in Strasbourg, and meant a boycott was the natural choice as a state-owned channel should follow the official position promoted by the Norwegian authorities. In addition, some argued that any kind of publicity from the championship would be perceived as propaganda for the regime.

Two counterarguments were presented at the meeting. The first that NRK should be present where Norwegian athletes were participating. The second argument emphasized the solution to send their own reporters, but both sport reporters and political reporters should travel to Athens. This would give NRK the opportunity to present an independent picture of the situation. The chairman of the program board fronted this position. The dilemma of being consistent was also discussed, and some argued if NRK chose to boycott the championship in Greece, NRK should be prepared to boycott sport events in the future no matter the political color on the regime. This position was confronted by other members who argued that the Greek case was unique, as Greece was a member of NATO and the Council of Europe.²¹⁵

²¹² VG, *NRK drøyer med EM-avgjørelsen*, 04.07.1969.

²¹³ NRK, Minutes from the Program Council meeting about the Athens championship, 22.08.1969.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The Director-General, Ustvedt presented his final decision at NRK's board meeting August 25th.²¹⁶ The comprehensive speech held by Ustvedt summed up the different positions and arguments in the debate, before he presented supporting arguments for his decision. Ustvedt chose option three; a total boycott the championship. This meant that nothing except results would be published, no reporters would be sent to Athens, and the radio and television would not cover the competitions. According to the Director-General, NRK normally supported international contact unhampered by nationalistic, ideological and political contradictions, also in sport. However, Ustvedt stated that the principle of not mixing politics and sport could never be universal, it only worked as guideline under normal circumstances. In the Greek case the argumentation of not mixing sport and politics was too simple. He pointed to how politics had interfered in sport in earlier cases, and predicted it would happen again. According to Ustvedt, each of these difficult situations should be considered individually, and he argued the situation in Greece was definitely a special case. Again, the human rights aspect and the Norwegian authorities' role in the legal accusations against Greece within the Council of Europe was used as explanation for why the Greek case was special and different. Ustvedt highlighted that the case was one of a kind as it was the first time representatives from the Norwegian government took an active part in an international prosecution of another European country.²¹⁷

Ustvedt's speech further highlighted two interesting points. According to Ustvedt, the commitment against participation in the championship in Greece had been bipartisan. I argue it is important to highlight this was a personal statement by Ustvedt, which could be biased as he would have held a personal interest in a united political support for his decision. Ustvedt has a point, there were some politicians from both sides in Norwegian politics who wanted Norwegian athletes to boycott the championship. However, that the boycott had extensive political support from the political right is an exaggerated statement. Ustvedt further discussed the public opinion, and concluded it was difficult to say something certain about whether the majority of the Norwegian population supported participation or boycott. He referred to the Gallup in Aftenposten which showed that 58 % of the people asked supported participation, however, argued one should be careful in emphasizing too much on a public survey. Ustvedt's personal impression, was that there was a strong and wide opinion against

²¹⁶ NRK, Ustvedt's speech to the NRK board at their meeting about the championship, 25.08.1969.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 3.

participation. He highlighted the letter from the political youth organizations which represented close to 200 000 members as one crucial factor behind his decision. At last, the Director-General stressed the decision to boycott the championship was not influenced by the ideological battle between East and West.²¹⁸ The majority of the board members supported Ustvedt's decision.²¹⁹

4.4.2 Reactions

NRK's boycott quickly led to reactions in the press. It was not difficult to distinguish between the different newspapers thoughts on NRK's decision. Arbeiderbladet and VG applauded NRK.²²⁰ VG had argued against media coverage consistently through the summer, and stated NRK's decision was the right thing to do as the military junta would obviously exploit the championship to improve their reputation internationally.²²¹ Arbeiderbladet had, in the same period, generally argued for an NRK boycott. The newspaper often published comments and chronicles which fronted personal opinions on the question of media coverage. One example is an article published on August 23rd where a dozens of highly respected representatives from Norwegian cultural life encouraged NRK not to broadcast the championship.²²²

Aftenposten strongly disagreed with NRK's decision. The day after Ustvedt announced his decision, Aftenposten published an article where the editorial staff harshly criticized Ustvedt's choice. According to the newspaper, the decision by Ustvedt was embarrassing and characterized by political hypocrisy. They could not under any circumstances understand the explanation given by Ustvedt, as the Council of Europe not yet had reached a conclusion in the Greek case. The newspaper also accused NRK and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for communicating behind closed doors, and that NRK had been influenced by the Ministry in reaching the decision to stay home and protest against the regime.²²³ Arbeiderbladet criticized Aftenposten in an article published on August 29th, and stated Aftenposten obviously had

²¹⁸ Ibid,

²¹⁹ NRK, minutes from the same meeting, 25.08.1969.

²²⁰ VG, *NRK sier nei*, 26.08.1969; Arbeiderbladet, *Honør til NRK*, 26.08.1969.

²²¹ VG, *Athen Igjen*, 06.08.2016

²²² Arbeiderbladet, *NRK må boikotte EM i Fri-idrett*, 23.08.1969

²²³ Aftenposten, *Dyden og Lysten*, 27.08.1969

misunderstood the core issue of this case as *Aftenposten* failed to appreciate the powerful symbolic effect in boycotting the championship.²²⁴

The most powerful public reactions came from the NFIF president Alf Bjercke, who quickly commented on NRK's decision in several newspapers.²²⁵ Bjercke stated Ustvedt and the rest of the board in NRK completely had lost their heads and that the choice made absolutely no sense. He highlighted NRK had never boycotted any previous sports events, and pointed to how NRK's decision opposed the opinion of the Norwegian people.

4.5 The debate in neighboring countries

The question of participation was not just a Norwegian phenomenon. Searching in Norwegian newspapers has provided insight in how the question of both sport boycott and media coverage of the championship received massive attention in other Scandinavian countries as well, especially in Sweden. The situation in Sweden was quite similar to the Norwegian experience. Politicians, the press and public opinion took part in the debate. Swedish political reactions to the regime in Greece had been harsher compared to those of the Norwegians. The Swedish Athletic Association eventually decided that a team would be sent to Athens, even though the Swedish Sports Confederation recommended non-participation, as the championship most likely would be abused by the regime.²²⁶ The debate was tense, and political forces urged for a boycott. Several athletes chose to stay home in protest. Especially interesting was that the Swedish ambassador in Athens publically stated that he would boycott the European Championship.²²⁷ The Swedish newspaper *Expressen* decided, before any Norwegian newspapers had reach any conclusion, to boycott the regime.²²⁸ The conservative newspaper in Sweden, *Aftonbladet*, chose like its Norwegian counterpart, *Aftenposten*, to report from the championship.

In Denmark, the largest newspaper *Extrabladet* decided in late July to boycott the championship.²²⁹ NRK was the only state channel which chose not to broadcast from the

²²⁴ *Arbeiderbladet, Athen boikotten styrkes*, 29.08.1969.

²²⁵ *VG, Kringkastingstyret med hode under armen*, 26.08.1969

²²⁶ *VG, Svergie vil likevel delta i Athen-EM*, 02.06.1969

²²⁷ UD, 74.2/4, Gulowsen highlights in a letter to the MFA political departement that the Swedish ambassador would boycott the regime.

²²⁸ *Arbeiderbladet, Expressen ikke til Athen EM*, 07.06.1969

²²⁹ *VG, Extrabladet boikotter EM i Athen*, 24.07.1969

championship. Danish and Swedish television decided to broadcast some of the material provided by the Eurovision broadcast. However, this material was edited and not live pictures from the stadium in Athens. The opening and closing ceremony was neither broadcasted.²³⁰

4.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented the debate on whether Norwegian newspapers and the only television channel in Norway should cover or boycott the championship in Greece. The discussions have been presented exclusively from a media perspective as the newspapers and NRK became an important individual actor in the debate. The Norwegian media's involvement in the Greek case was massive, related to both sporting and non-sporting aspects, and was one major reason why the European championship achieved massive attention. The question of political interaction in sports eventually became a question about whether the political situation in Greece forced Norwegian media not to cover an international sports event and stay home in protest.

The media debate was concentrated around three issues. Firstly, to what extent a media boycott due to violations of human rights would send a strong symbolic message, which could hurt the regime in Greece. The second issue focused on the possibility the junta had to exploit the championship and used it as a tool in the regime's propaganda strategy. *Arbeiderbladet* fronted these two arguments and concluded that a boycott was necessary. The third argument asserted that the Norwegian press had a responsibility to cover any major international event even though Norwegians did not support the junta's actions, especially as Norwegian athletes were present. Norwegian newspaper could rather report from Athens and provide to the Norwegian people an independent, critical and unfiltered picture of the situation. The conservative newspaper *Aftenposten* stood out as one of the few wanting to cover the championship. *Aftenposten* saw no symbolic value in boycotting the championship.

The debate on NRK's position was slightly different as it received more attention from other actors as well. The major trend was that the political left supported Ustvedt's decision and the political right strongly criticized it. The same trend as we could see in the question of participation by athletes. The decision by NRK was extraordinary as a state-owned channel

²³⁰ NRK, Ustvedt informed about the conclusion reached in Sweden and Denmark in his speech to the NRK board, 25.08.1969.

with monopoly on the broadcasting rights chose to boycott an international sport event due to political circumstances. Ustvedt argued domestic political factors had not influenced his decision, but he instead focused on the internal situation in Greece and the special context surrounding the championship. We can never know for certain Ustvedt's true reasons behind his decision. However, Ustvedt as an individual had no self-interest in a boycott. He must have felt some of pressure from the public opinion. However, information from the accessible sources indicates that there was a human rights activism which characterized NRK's decision in 1969. The media debate shows that international concerns for human rights had made inroads in the public opinion and informed several media institutions in Norway as early as in 1969. This led to a boycott of an international sports event, which was one of the few measures Norwegian media had to react against the regime in Greece.

Aftenposten's accusations against NRK that the company had been influenced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to protest against the regime appears today as incorrect speculations. I have not located any information from neither NRK nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which indicates there was any form of communication or attempt by the Ministry to influence NRK. As this research has shown, the Ministry was most interested in keeping a low profile. A boycott by the Norwegian state-owned broadcasting company would not have contributed in keeping a low profile, and I see no reason why the Ministry should have wanted NRK to boycott the championship.

5 Understanding political involvement in sports

This chapter seeks to bring in a more analytic approach, and say something about the relationship between politics and sport in Norway during the Cold War. So far, the focus has been on mapping out the process, which eventually led to participation in the European Athletic Championship in Greece by Norwegian athletes, and locating major actors and their position in the debate. This research has showed that there was a tense debate on whether Norwegian athletes should participate in Greece. However, it was a discussion the Norwegian government choose to stay out of. Other Norwegian scholars in previous studies of the relationship between politics and sport in Norway have acknowledged that participation in Greece turned into a public debate, but this is the first detailed study which aims at understanding why some Norwegian actors worked for a boycott while others did not want to politicize the championship. The main goal behind this research is to understand political involvement in sports in general during the Cold War, and the 1969 case in particular, and look at how human rights and more traditional foreign policy objectives influenced Norwegian sports in this period. The main research question I ask in this thesis is: *Why was the labor movement in Norway the actor wanting to use sport as a tool to react against the regime in Greece, and to what extent was there a political motive behind the government's choice of not getting involved in the debate?*

In terms of structure, this chapter will first analyze why the labor movement was so committed in using the championship as one way of reacting against human rights violations in the regime. I argue that because the championship in Greece took place when the political debates over the Greek regime was at its tensest, opposing participation became a natural part of the Labor party's campaign against the regime. This makes it interesting and necessary to understand why the Labor party in the first place strongly opposed the Greek regime. I will then critically examine the Labor Party's relationship to sport boycotts in other cases, and discuss whether it was moralism or political preference and the "color" of regimes which was the most crucial factor in their view on sport boycotts.

As involvement from the Norwegian government proved to be limited, is it interesting to discuss why this was the case, especially as material from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows that the Ministry wanted Norwegian authorities to keep a low profile.

According to Barrie Houlihan`s theory on sport diplomacy, the championship in Greece would have been a perfect opportunity for the government to react against the regime. Why did the government not use this opportunity in 1969? Was it because the notion of not mixing politics and sports was so established in Norwegian society, and especially embedded within political institutions? Or did the government, which at the time consisted of non-socialist parties, have a political motive behind not mixing sports and politics in this particular case? Lastly will I discuss the NIF`s role in cases which have led to cutting off sports contact or championships boycotted due to political reasons. NIF is a nonpolitical organization. Nevertheless, NIF has chosen to boycott championships or break off sport contact due to political circumstances both before and after 1969. Is it possible to see a trend? The 1969 case was one of the very first times the human rights situation in another country led to a discussion about participation in a sports competition, but was not “enough” to prevent Norwegian participation. Was the concern for human rights at such an early stage in the late 1960s that it did not have the same effect on sports as other traditional political concerns?

5.1 Why was the labor movement pushing for boycott?

In May 1969, at the Labor Party`s Congress, it was decided that the party would oppose participation in Greece.²³¹ An extended discussion from the Party Congress is not found, but the letter sent to NIF just days after the Congress argued that the championship had to be relocated or boycotted by Norwegian athletes due to violations of human rights. It would be wrong to participate, as Norway was one of the countries leading the case against Greece within in the Council of Europe. Everyone in favor of boycott argued that the situation in Greece was a special case, and could not be compared to questionable regimes in other parts of the World because Greece was a NATO member and took part in the West European cooperation. I argue that the question of boycott must be placed in the ideological battle and the international political context of its time as well as from the perspective of the Labor Party`s major concerns and issues to better understand why the labor movement wanted to boycott the 1969 championship.

²³¹ Arbark, Protocol from the 1969 Labor Party Congress, 298

The first aspect I would like to point out is that the Labor Party, for the first time since 1945, was in political opposition. The party did not manage to win enough seats in the parliamentary election in 1965 to continue as a majority government. Instead, four non-socialistic parties formed the government. The Labor party was still the largest party receiving more than 40 % of the votes.²³² To be in opposition is quite different than governing the country. For the Labor Party it must have been particularly different. However, in opposition a political party can play a different role, and it is normal that parties in opposition can be tougher in cases that are important for them. This was the case for the Labor party in 1969. The Labor party had, since the military coup in 1967, wanted to conduct a stricter policy against the regime than the government. Even though the political parties agreed on Norway's engagement against Greece within the Council of Europe, it was a consistent pressure from the Labor party which drove Norway's policy towards Greece. As Gjerdåker points out, the government was not very interested in serious reactions against the regime, and the case within the Council of Europe was driven by internal pressure from the Labor Party.²³³ We can see the commitment from the political left already starting in May 1967, as the party heavily criticized the government for how they dealt with the Nasty-case. It is also important to highlight that the Labor Party wanted the Norwegian government to conduct a more aggressive policy towards the Greek regime within NATO arguing the alliance was the only international institution which could direct significant pressure against Greece.²³⁴

Some of this massive involvement from the Labor party in the Greek case could be explained by their position in opposition, as any political crisis for the government would benefit the party. The party wanted to be perceived as the party which was most concerned about human rights violations and a forerunner for democratic values by the public. Again, this is easier for a party in opposition than for a governing party, which has to conduct a more balanced policy and ensure other interests as well. One could ask how the socialist parties would have reacted if they ruled in 1969, but it would only be speculation. However, it is reasonable to argue that the socialist commitment against questionable regimes in Southern Europe builds on more than political strategy. In the next section, I will try to understand why the labor movement was so active in their work against the regime.

²³² Stamnes and Bakken, «1965- Blått firkløver tar makta».

²³³ Gjerdåker, *Menneskerettar og utanrikspolitik*.

²³⁴ See chapter 2.3 Norway and the Greek regime.

5.1.1 An advocate for human rights and democratic values?

Part of Tamnes research on Norwegian foreign policy has concentrated on the Norwegian role as an advocate for peace, international human rights, and aid in the three decades after 1965. He argues Norwegian commitment in these cases was concentrated around three main geographical areas; Southern Europe, Central America and South Africa.²³⁵ It appears from Tamnes research that the commitment towards human rights increased when the Labour Party was governing, and that the humanitarian engagement had a “red color” during the 1960s and 1970s. According to Tamnes, this involvement reflected the Norwegian image and tradition, and he points out that the Norwegian humanitarian and solidarity tradition had strong roots within the labor movement.²³⁶ Particularly interesting and relevant is that the Labor Party’s program from 1969 represented a more radical profile towards international commitment. One concrete result was the establishment of an international support committee the same year.²³⁷ The increased awareness for internal conditions in other countries and violations of basic human rights was partly a result of the Vietnam War which was on everyone’s lips in this time. This was the first time a war was broadcasted live, and showed people at home around the world the brutality of fighting a war. In Norway, the war led to a radicalization within the Labor Party and a skepticism towards the U.S and NATO, especially by the younger politicians within the party.

We must also place the labor movement commitment in 1969 against the fascist dictatorship in Greece in a historical context. It is reasonable to argue that the commitment against fascist regimes in Europe during the 1960s was an extension of the Labor Party’s involvement against Spain and the Franco Regime.²³⁸ The engagement started during the Civil War in Spain in the interwar period (1936-1939), and the Labor party strongly sympathized with the Republicans fight against the Nationalists. The activism continued in the first year after the War. The Labor Party had political control after the Second World War, which led to that Norway actively worked to keep Spain out of the United Nations.²³⁹

²³⁵ Tamnes, *Oljealder 1965-1995*, Volume 6, *Norsk utenrikspolitikks historie*, 339-443.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 343.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 344.

²³⁸ Conversation with Helge Pharo. Pharo stressed the importance of understanding the Greek commitment as an extension of the Labor Party’s “fight” against the Franco regime.

²³⁹ Pharo, “Small State Anti-Fascism”.

Additionally, I argue that the individual commitment by the young politician Einar Førde, and political activist Arne Treholt who strongly opposed the regime, played an important role in directing focus towards the humanitarian situation in Greece. Both had a connection to the Labor Party's newspaper, *Arbeiderbladet*, and understood the importance of media attention to demand political action against the junta. Both Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo pointed to the personal commitment from Førde and Treholt as a crucial factor behind why the Greek case achieved so much attention in general, but in particular related to the boycott debate as Førde and Treholt saw the European championship as one way Norway could react against the regime. The personal friendship and dialog between Førde and Kvalheim influenced Kvalheim in making his decision to boycott the championship. The fact that the best athlete wanted to boycott was definitely one reason why the championship debate achieve so much attention, also from the press.

As we have seen, there were several factors which pulled in the same direction and can explain why the labor movement was so concerned about the regime in Greece. On the international level, the Vietnam War led to an increased focus on humanitarian situations and led to a skepticism towards NATO and the U.S, which radicalized forces within the party. The junta's policy was far out on the right side. It was easy for the labor party to criticize a fascist junta. Furthermore, the Labor movement's involvement in Greece must also be seen as an expansion of their commitment in Spain, a situation quite similar to the one in Greece. On the domestic level, the Labor Party was in the political opposition for the first time since 1945. This was a position which provided a better opportunity to advocate for single cases. The government had been harshly criticized due to how they dealt with the Nasty-case, and the Labor Party would benefit from maintaining the pressure. Lastly, I argue the individual commitment by young forces within the party was absolutely crucial in directing focus against the Greek case in general and the championship debate in particular. Førde and Treholt understood they could use the attention a boycott by Arne Kvalheim would receive by the public opinion. As the labor movement was so dedicated in campaigning against the Greek regime, is it natural that participation in Athens also became an issue on their agenda. The labor movement understood that an international championship was an arena where Norway could mark their position against the regime. We can see it was argued by

representatives from both the Labor Party and LO that a boycott of the championship would have a strong symbolic value and would send a message to the international community.²⁴⁰

5.2 Political preference and boycott, 1969

I argue that one reason why the labor movement was actively against participation in the championship was the party's commitment to human rights. A sports boycott of the championship in Athens due to human rights violations would direct international attention against the Greek regime. States' reactions and criticism against other regimes for their violations of human rights was in the beginning phase in the 1960s, and became an important aspect of the international commitment for human rights.²⁴¹ Helge Pharo pointed out that the commitment could be understood as an early example of moralism, which in a larger degree characterized Norwegian foreign policy from the 1970s.²⁴² On the other hand, an interesting question would be to what extent the labor movement was consistent in their commitment towards international human rights in this period. The Labor Party had governed between 1945 and 1965, and had the possibility to form an active policy on improving international human rights. Gjerdåker interestingly points out that Norwegian authorities had not taken an active or positive role towards the Council of Europe's work for a legal framework protecting human rights.²⁴³ In 1969, however, the Labor Party put pressure on the government and demanded action within the Council. This makes it, at least to some extent, reasonable to ask questions related to the Labor party's true intentions. The 1969 debate was also the first time the Labor Party worked for a boycott of an international sport event due to violations of human rights. The interesting question here is, to what extent was the labor movement concerned about protecting human rights in all types of questionable regimes, and how did the ideological battle influenced the different political forces in Norway, and their view on sport boycotts?

It is important to highlight that the labor movement was repeatedly confronted by both political opponents and sport leaders during the debate over the European championship, who asked why the political left wing had not worked for a sport boycott when Norwegian athletes had competed in other regimes where human rights were undermined, especially in East

²⁴⁰ See letter from the Labor Party and LO to NIF, presented in chapter 3.

²⁴¹ Vik, "Norge- verdensmester i menneskerettigheter".

²⁴² Conversation with Helge Pharo.

²⁴³ Gjerdåker, "Norsk Menneskerettspolitik", 206.

Germany and Czechoslovakia. If we take a closer look at the 1969 case, it shows that the Norwegian people were divided in the question of participation. We can see a clear trend between political preference and the view on whether Norway should participate in the championship in Greece or not. In the big picture, this study shows that those who traditionally belonged to the political right in Norwegian politics, especially the Conservative Party, were against boycott. Those who supported a boycott were more left-oriented, and it was especially the Labor Party who strongly opposed participation. To be able to say something about why the political left and right fronted two different views on a sports boycott in 1969 it is necessary to have some knowledge about the junta, the political history of Greece, and the role the country played in the Cold War context.

The coup in 1967 was a result of a national division between political right and left forces, rooted from the Second World War. The tension was at its highest during the Greek Civil War, which was fought from 1946 to 1949 between a Greek governmental army supported by the U.S and Great Brittan, and the Democratic Army of Greece led by the Greek Communist Party, supported by Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania.²⁴⁴ It was the anti-communistic forces who won the war. Since the adoption of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the U.S had provided substantial support to questionable regimes in the region to prevent communistic influence and expansion. The victory from the civil war in 1949 eventually led to Greek membership in NATO in 1952, and close military cooperation with the U.S. For more than a decade, conservative forces ruled the country. However, in the mid-1960s the situation was about to change. More communist-friendly parties advanced. The parliamentary election in 1965 was a political scandal, and it was decided that a reelection should be held in May 1967. The military regime seized power in April 1967, just a month before the reelection. Greece turned into a dictatorship which politically stood far out to the right. The junta referred to their coup as a revolution to save the nation from communist takeover. The U.S, which had invested millions of dollar in the country through the Truman Doctrine, had interests in keeping the new regime. At least it was better than a communist regime. Other Western Europe nations, such as Great Brittan and West Germany, were also careful in their criticism towards the regime due to strategic interests, which apparently outweighed human rights violations in a neighboring right-wing dictatorship.

²⁴⁴ For a detailed study on the Greek Civil War, see Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War*.

In 1949, Norway, led by the Labor Party, chose sides in the ideological battle between East and West by becoming a NATO member. It led to significant military cooperation with the U.S. This was a security measure against possible expansion by the Soviet Union. The Norwegian attitude, especially within the Labor Party, towards the alliance changed when the alliance expanded with the implementation of questionable regimes in southern Europe. Norwegian politicians were basically against the geographical expansion of the alliance. However, the strategical importance of a southern flank against the Soviet Union exceeded these concerns for the leading nations within NATO. It was also important for Norway that member states in the organization consisted of democratic states. The fascist regime in Greece from 1967 was naturally anti-communistic, which suited NATO, and especially U.S, quite well. The Norwegian Labor Party, as a social democratic party, conducted, at least to some extent, a friendlier policy towards Eastern European states compared to the majority of other Norwegian parties. When the democracy in Greece was replaced with a “black” regime, it was something the left wing could not approve. There is no doubt that the political right in Norway was more modest in its criticism towards the regime. I argue that political preference is another factor which helps explain why the labor movement was the most eager actor in opposing the regime. However, one should be careful in establishing any sole cause. The reason why the Labor Party opposed the regime in general is complex, and there were a variety of factors which explain their commitment. Political preference was just one factor. It is reasonable to argue that a sports boycott of the regime in 1969 suited the Labor Party’s policy against the regime

The boycott debate in 1969 is just one example, and to paint a bigger picture about political preference and the view on sports boycotts the next section looks at other similar cases where Norway has either called off sports contact, boycotted championships, or at least discussed it during the Cold War.

5.2.1 similar cases

Tønnesson touches upon the connection between political ideological position and the view on sport boycotts during the Cold War. He argues that conservative parties in Norway had a strong tendency to call for boycotts when the Soviet Union in one way or another conducted an aggressive foreign policy, but otherwise argued that Norway not should mix sport and politics. The political left wing was no better. It agitated for boycotting South Africa and

Greece, but argued for modesty and understanding towards Eastern Europe. Of course, as Tønnesson points out, none of the sides wanted to admit that they treated the regimes differently in the question of sport boycotts.²⁴⁵ First of all, this analyze by Tønnesson establish a relationship between politics and sport. If Tønnesson is correct, politicians cared enough about sports during the Cold War to have an opinion on whether Norway should have sports contact or participate in events in countries based on their political color.

There are some other examples of political involvement in sports during the Cold War I would like to highlight which illustrate the connection between political preference and view on sports boycotts. The first is the Soviet`s invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 which caused massive political reactions, especially from the non-socialistic parties in government.²⁴⁶ As we know, the invasion also lead to the NIF, led by Torfinn Bentzen, breaking off sports contact with member states of the Warsaw Pact. Neither the government nor the NIF showed the same type of involvement just one year later. The 1980 situation is particular interesting, as the roles are switched compared to the 1969 case. Kothe-Næss`s research on the Norwegian boycott of the 1980 Olympics in the Soviet Union, due to the invasion of Afghanistan, shows that the political right was in favor of boycott, which the Norwegian Labor Party opposed.²⁴⁷ This tells us that that political parties in Norway during the Cold War not were consistent in their view on sports boycotts. Perhaps the norm of not mixing sport and politics was used as a cover by political actors to cover their own self-interests? The next section will take a closer look at why the question of participation achieved so little attention from the government, and analyze the position taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5.3 Why did the championship never turn into a large-scale political debate?

Barrie Houlihan`s work on sports an international relations was an inspiration for this research. Houlihan argues that sports, through international competitions provide states with “low-cost, but high-profile resources for publishing their policy on international issues or towards special states”.²⁴⁸ According to Houlihan, sports has been used by states or

²⁴⁵ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk idrettshistorie*, 294-295.

²⁴⁶ Alkärr, «40 år siden invasjonen av Tsjekkoslovakia».

²⁴⁷ Kothe-Næss, *Idrett og utenrikspolitikk*, 76-80.

²⁴⁸ Houlihan, *Sport and International Relations*, 9.

international organizations to either improve relations between nations, to register disapproval of a state's actions through boycotts or to isolate particular countries from sports contact. Let us briefly discuss Houlihan's theory and its relevance for the 1969 case. For the 1969 case and question of participation, sports diplomacy became Norway's opportunity to send diplomatic signals of disapproval to the Greek regime for their violations of human rights. Based on Houlihan's theory, the Norwegian government had the perfect opportunity to react against the junta in Greece. Why did the Norwegian government not use this tool, and pressure NIF to boycott the 1969 championship?

As far as my knowledge goes, Norwegian sports during the Cold War has never directly been used as a tool by the Norwegian government in foreign politics. This means that the government has not, at least officially, demanded the NIF to stay home from an international sports event to protect their political interests. This does not match with the theory presented by Houlihan, where states use sport as a foreign policy tool. The most obvious reason why Norway does not suit Houlihan's examples are that organized sports in Norway, in particular since 1945, have been a politically independent and individual organization, where one important goal is distance from political influence. When Houlihan uses examples of states which have used sports strategically, he often refers to countries where the relationship between political institutions and organized sports are much tighter. It is important to highlight that the times Norwegian sport has boycotted a competition or broke off sports contact with other nations, it has been decided by the NIF and not by the government. However, it is reasonable to argue that there must have been some sort of influence between Norwegian politics and sports, as after all the NIF let international political circumstances determine participation in some championships during the Cold War, but other times argued politics should be kept out of sports. The interesting question is, why did just some international situations lead to boycott? If political aspects did not have an impact on NIF, why wouldn't Norway participate in every international competition in the period, as this would have been in the best interest for the athletes? Norway boycotted the members of the Warsaw Pact for around a year in 1968, South Africa from 1974 and the 1980 Moscow Olympics.²⁴⁹ Why did some particular political events lead to boycott while others did not?

²⁴⁹ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, trim, stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk Idrettshistorie*, 195-200, 292-294.

To gain a deeper understanding and insight into the true reasons behind sport boycotts was the inspiration for this research.

The continuing involvement of politics in sports during the first three decades after the Second World War was confusing for sport leaders, for athletes as well as for the politicians. Eventually it led to the establishment of a framework within NIF from the late 1970s, which provided some guidance for Norwegian sports leaders in future situations. It was the result of the difficult situations in the 1960s. It was decided that the NIF's executive board should have the authority to deny Norwegian sports federations from competing in international competitions if participation could either hurt Norwegian interests, or in some way have a negative effect on Norwegian sports in general.²⁵⁰ This is confusing, as the NIF leader Bentzen, with support from the executive board decided to deny Norwegian sports federations sports contact with members of the Warsaw Pact in 1968, and discussed to overrule the NFIF in front of the 1969 championship. The framework established in 1977 was the first time a concrete policy was formulated which acknowledged foreign political factors in sports. It is the first clause in this policy, the one on Norwegian interests, which is particular interesting as it is directly linked to Norwegian foreign affairs. This was an area where Norwegian sport leaders had no expertise. The idea was that sports leaders should have the opportunity to ask the government for political advice in these delicate situations. Kothe-Næss wrote in 1986 that the Norwegian government had prepared advice for Norwegian sport leaders in front of the 1980 Olympics, when the question of Norwegian participation was heavily discussed.²⁵¹ However, his research shows that the NIF's executive board was so determined to take independent choices that they never asked for any political guidance.

In 1969, such guidance for sports leaders in Norway had not yet been formulated. If it had been established at an earlier stage, members of the executive board could have asked the government for their advice in front of the championship, to gain a better understanding of the political situation in Greece. This would have given members of the executive board a second opinion on the question of participation, even though they were not obligated to follow the advice. Also, if the NIF had asked the government for advice, it would have set sports on the political agenda, and force the government to assess to what extent participation impact Norwegian foreign interests. However, it is not likely that Torfinn Bentzen and rest of the

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 293.

²⁵¹ Kothe-Næss, *Idrett og utenrikspolitikk*, 47.

executive board in 1969 would have contacted the government for advice even if such a framework was available at the time, as sports leaders were extremely concerned with keeping politics out of sports.

From the sources available, I have not been able to locate any channels of communication between Per Borten`s Government and the NIF where participation in the championship was discussed. This means that the government chose not to get involved in the debate, and that the NIF`s executive board, was not interested in any political involvement. As we know, the case was not discussed at the Norwegian Storting, most likely because the debate mainly went on during between June and August, when the Storting has summer-break. However, several politicians, in both opposition and from the government expressed their thoughts on participation in the media. These statements were often personal and did not necessarily represent the position held by their political party, and definitely not the government. The lack of governmental engagement in the question of participation was not what I had expected before I started this study. What it tells us is that the government did not want to use the championship in 1969 as a tool to react against human rights violations in the country. It is important to highlight that this is a discovery in itself. It forced me to turn my initial research question around, and instead ask why sport was not used as a foreign policy tool? There is little doubt that a boycott of the regime would have gained international attention, at least in Europe. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs saw no diplomatic value in the championship. The next section aims at understanding why the Ministry wanted Norwegian authorities to keep a low profile, and whether there was political motives behind not interfering in 1969?

The main argument promoted by sports leaders` and representatives from the conservative forces, often communicated through the newspaper *Aftenposten*, was that politics should be kept out of sports. This notion is one important factor in why the government chose to keep a low profile, and should not been underestimated. The athletes I have talked with, who were close on the situation in 1969, have pointed to this embedded norm as one crucial factor in why the government did not try to influence or overrule NIF.²⁵² However, I argue there also were other factors, which explain why the political conservatives did not want to boycott the 1969 championship. As was the case with the Labor Party, there was a variety of factors,

²⁵² Conversation with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo

which led to the involvement against participation in the championship. There is no doubt their commitment was an early example of human rights activism. However, as the Greek regime was a fascistic dictatorship far out to the political right, the political preference most likely had a say. My point is that there is no reason to believe that the political right wing in Norway argued for participation only to protect sports independence. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the political right has in other similar cases supported sports boycotts due to the political circumstances. It is reasonable to believe that there was something more behind their argument of not mixing politics and sport in 1969. I argue that to say something about the lack of involvement from the government, and the right wing in Norwegian politics, we must first look at the special circumstances that characterized the Greek case.

5.3.1 Was it a political motive behind not mixing politics and sports?

The Greek case was special, as it was a watershed moment in the history of Norwegian foreign affairs. The fact that Norway now began to focus on human rights internationally was something new, and challenged the main pillar in Norwegian foreign policy during the Cold War which had been based on security. Close ties to the military alliance NATO and the U.S had since the Second World War, been perceived as the most important aspect and overshadowed Norwegian politics.²⁵³ A role as an international watchdog for human rights was a contrast to the traditional approach. It is important to keep in mind that the Greek case was the first time when Norway actively took part in an international institutional commitment to condemn another country for violating a supranational convention, due to Greece's violations of human rights. This was possible as the intergovernmental cooperation increased after the Second World War, mainly through the United Nations and the Council of Europe. An important game rule for increased cooperation between states was that internal affairs should not be addressed by the international community, as it was important for states to safeguard own sovereignty. One matter was to react against states which behaved hostilely against another state; another matter was to react against domestic issues, as was the case in Greece. The increased focus on internal conditions and how regimes treated their own people challenged the well-established rule of sovereignty. The fact that Greece was a European

²⁵³ Eriksen and Pharo, *Kald Krig og Internasjonalisering 1949-1965*, Volume 5, *Norsk utenrikspolitikk Historie*.

country, member of the Council of Europe and NATO did not make the situation any easier for the Norwegian authorities.

We must remember that the overall enemy for Norwegian interests during the Cold War was the Soviet Union. Greece was an important country for U.S and NATO's strategic and military flank in protecting Europeans against Soviet expansion. It is no secret that the U.S protected, and to some extent, supported the military junta in Greece, as the most important concern for the U.S was to prevent Greece falling under communistic control. As Rolf Tamnes has argued, the Cold War climate made it difficult for Norway to react against human rights violations in other countries, as it often collided with other interests.²⁵⁴ The U.S was not always pleased with Norwegian policies, and in periods it did lead to a tense relationship with Norway's most important ally. As mentioned, the Greek case illustrates the difficulty of conducting foreign policy based on both idealistic engagement and protecting self-interests. This was a concern the government had to keep in mind and not put everything on hold due to human rights violations in Greece. However, the fact that the non-socialist parties ruled in 1969 makes it tempting to ask whether the norm of not mixing politics and sport suited the government particularly well. If we first look at measures taken by the government against Greece, which had nothing to do with sport, we can see that the policy against the regime was confusing and divided. Norway was not willing to break off diplomatic relations with Greece, and kept their official representatives in Greece, even though Sweden and Finland withdraw their ambassadors in protest. Additionally, the trade with Greece continued as normal.

The involvement of the Ministry of Foreign affairs shows that participation in the championship was politically challenging. This is very interesting, as it illustrates that a sports event in fact concerned the Ministry. They saw political value in sports. The Ministry did not want to oppose, or support participation, even though some high-ranking employees within the MFA, such as Jens Evensen, argued for a boycott. In this way, the MFA insured that no one could question the political involvement in Norwegian sports. On the other hand, the Ministry decided that the Norwegian embassy in Greece would not assist the Norwegian troop in Athens and would not appoint an attaché, which had been normal in previous European championships. The Ministry based their decision on the political tense situation surrounding the championship. Most likely, they were not interested providing assistance to the

²⁵⁴ Tamnes, *Oljealder 1965-1995*, Volume 6, *Norsk utenrikspolitikks historie*, 358.

Norwegian team, as it could be interpreted that the Norwegian authorities supported participation. Their involvement is confusing and divided. The role of Norwegian political representatives in Greece during the championship was also discussed. The conclusion was that no one who represented Norwegian authorities should take part in the opening or closing ceremony. This must be interpreted as precaution, as these ceremonies could be exploited by the regime for propaganda purposes. If no representatives from the Norwegian state were present, no one could accuse the Norwegian government for supporting the regime. However, the political department within the Norwegian ministry pointed out it was important that the Ambassador Gulowsen was present at some of the competitions during the championship, as a total absence could be interpreted as a Norwegian political demonstration. We can see from the Ministry's behavior that the top priority was to not stand out in any way. Both Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo were surprised when I told them that The Ministry secretly had discussed the championship.²⁵⁵

I argue the Greek case shows us the beginning of a difficult balance in Norwegian foreign policy based on two different roles. The government saw not enough value in demonstrating with a sports boycott in 1969 and chose not to put any pressure on Norwegian sports. The most important reason why the government stayed out of the debate in 1969 was the embedded norm of not get involved in sports affairs. However, I argue that the government was, as we have seen was the case with non-sporting aspects, not particularly interested in conducting a strict policy against the regime. The political color on the Greek regime is likely one reason why the government was so restrained in the boycott question, and one could argue that the embedded norm of not mixing sports and politics suited the government perfectly in this case. Furthermore, some of the government's hesitating could be due to Greece's important role for the U.S and NATO in this period. Norwegian authorities were interesting in keeping a low profile and did not want to conduct a policy testing the relationship with the U.S. I argue this explanation has limitations based to two aspects. One, Norway took already part in the legal accusations against Greece within the Council of Europe. Secondly, it is hard to imagine that a Norwegian sports boycott would have had any significant impact on the relationship.

²⁵⁵ Conversation with Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo.

5.4 Why did the NIF boycott only some countries in the Cold War?

So far, I have looked at the question of sports boycotts from a political perspective, mostly concerning the 1969 debate, but also drawn some connections to similar cases to better understand the connection between politics and sports boycotts. This section will discuss the role of Norwegian sports when the question of participation has been discussed during the Cold War.

It is reasonable to question NIF's lack of consistency when it comes to boycotts of regimes which has violated international law. In very few cases, NIF has decided to boycott or break off sport contact with other nations. It was rare for the NIF to let political circumstances play a crucial role. Obviously, if Norway should have cancelled sports contact or boycotted all championships held in questionable regimes, there would not be many international competitions left for Norwegian athletes to compete in. The effect of boycotts would also disappear if they were used as a reaction tool against every unwelcome action by other states, especially during the Cold War. The interesting question is why the NIF boycotted the Moscow Olympics in 1980 and called off sports contact with members of the Warsaw Pact in 1968, but chose to participate in the 1969 championship. If the NIF never directly received orders from the Norwegian government, what makes NIF leaders decide when a championship should be boycotted?

One factor I would like to point out is that there are a few people within NIF who had the authority to implement boycotts in the 1960s.²⁵⁶ This means that the personal aspect and political preference held by the decision-makers are important factors in understanding sport boycotts. Tønnesson argues that no one within NIF wanted to admit they let the political color of regimes determine whether a championship was boycotted. Instead, the debates about sports boycotts during the Cold War, according to Tønnesson, were about more general principles. He presents three different positions held by sports leaders in this period.²⁵⁷ The first position was that sports and politics never should be mixed. Tønnesson argues that Torfinn Bentzen, who was NIF's president from 1967 to 1973, advocated for this view. As mentioned earlier, this was a strongly embedded norm in this period. The second main view

²⁵⁶ In 1980, it was the general Assembly who decided Norway should boycott the Olympics. In 1969, the decision to participate was made the by NIF's executive board.

²⁵⁷ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk idrettshistorie*, 295-297.

was that Norwegian sports had a moral responsibility, and should cancel sports contact and not participate in championships held by nations that exploited sports to glorify their immoral actions. It was important for those who represented this position to distinguish between moral and politics. They never spoke about boycotts as it was considered a political act, and rather argued that Norwegian sports was built on certain values which had to be followed. Ole Jakob Bangstad who was NIF president after Bentzen (1973-1984), represented this view. His highest concern was that the Norwegian government would try to use sports as a political tool. Bangstad's argument for a boycott in 1980 was based on a moral responsibility. The third main view is what Tønnesson calls the realistic position. This was a reaction to the two first main views, which in the end were unrealistic. Those who argued for this position meant that Norwegian sports had to realize it was a political tool, and instead focus on not letting political diversities divide and create conflicts within Norwegian sport. These people argued that sport leaders should keep a dialogue with the government in difficult situations. This view was developed by younger sports leaders from the 1970s.

In the 1960s, there was no doubt that sports leaders within both the NIF and the NFIF were politically conservative, and belonged to the first category just presented. We know that NIF's president Bentzen was, in principle, against mixing politics and sport. However, sports leaders had to be influenced by the surroundings of their time. The problem is that influence is difficult to measure, and we will never be able to determine the exact level of influence between politicians and sports leaders. Nevertheless, Norway boycotted the Soviet Union twice during the Cold War and South Africa from 1974, which was at a late stage compared to others. It was probably easier for sports leaders to boycott the Soviet Union than Greece and South Africa. However, I argue one must take a closer look at the actions by the Soviet Union, which eventually led to sports boycott to understand why Norway boycotted the Soviet Union. Firstly, it must be put to light that Norway had sports contact with the Soviet Union under normal circumstances, so political preference can only play a limited role. Both times the NIF decided to boycott or break of sport contact it was a reaction to military invasions by the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979. Also in 1956, as we saw in the background chapter, Norway came close to boycotting the Melbourne Olympics due the Soviet invasion of Hungary. This means that unexpected military invasions, and not human rights violations, led to sports boycotts during the Cold War. Domestic violations of human rights were nothing compared to a military invasion from the main enemy during the Cold War. As Norway is a western country sharing borders with Russia,

Norwegians reacted strongly to Soviet expansion. Protecting human rights in other South-European states did not have the same priority, which definitely influenced Norwegian sports leaders. The South Africa boycott from 1974 is the exception. However, it took the NIF 10 years to react against the human rights violations in country.²⁵⁸ It was a result of consistent pressure from the public. However, it is reasonable to argue NIF`s decision was based on the segregation within South African sports, and not necessarily the human rights aspect. I argue concerns for human rights was not implemented within organized sports in this period.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed political involvement in Norwegian sports in general during the Cold War, and in particular aimed at understanding the different actors` positions and motives in the debate over the 1969 European Athletic Championship in Greece.

It was not normal for Norway to boycott sports championships during the Cold War. This research has showed that the norm of not mixing politics and sport stood firm in Norway in the 1960s. This idea was something politicians sports leaders and the public, under normal circumstances, agreed on. However, in front of the Greek championship, this was not the case. This research has showed that there were several factors behind the Labor Party`s non-sporting commitment against the Greek Regime. However, to turn sports into a political tool was something new. The most interesting aspect, which I would like to highlight, is that the attempt by the labor movement to use sports as one way to react against the junta`s human rights violations is one of the very first examples of Norwegian human rights commitment. Gjerdåker argues that one should be careful in emphasizing too much on the role human rights activism played behind the government`s involvement in the Greek case within the Council of Europe. The same goes for the government`s involvement in the participation debate. However, as pressure from the political opposition and public opinion was directed towards NIF, the government was not forced to take any position in the debate. I argue that the human rights aspect played a more important role in the sports debate compared to the non-sporting aspects of the Greek case. As pointed out earlier, there were several reasons behind the Labor Party`s strong commitment against the Greek regime in general. Some of them were based on strategic political considerations, some influenced by political preference.

²⁵⁸ Tønnesson, *Folkehelse, Trim, Stjerner 1939-1986*, Volume 2, *Norsk idrettshistorie*, 293.

My point is that opposing participation in the championship did not provide the labor movement any strategical gains, and the political preference was only a contributing factor in explaining why the labor movement opposed participation. This means that it was the human rights aspect which was the most important factor behind the labor movements involvement to oppose participation in the championship. I argue there were no reasons for the Labor Party not to get involved in working for a sports boycott, as they had nothing to lose. The Labor Party was not in a position where they had to assess the possible economic and strategic consequences of a boycott. Most likely, they would have been limited. It may seem like Barrie Houlihan has a point after all, as a sports boycott of the 1969 Greek championship could have been a low-cost by high-profile resource for Norway in reacting against the Greek regime. On the other hand, one could question the real effects of a sports boycott, as it would not necessarily improve the situation in Greece. Nevertheless, I argue it would have drawn more attention against the violations of the regime.

This thesis asks if it was a political motive behind the government`s decision of not mixing sport and politics in 1969. I cannot give a concrete or easy answer to this question. The government was not particularly interested in drawing any more attention to the Greek regime, which is one reason why the government did not want to use a sports boycott to react against the regime. However, the most important reason was that the government neither could nor would overrule the NIF in 1969. The norm of not mixing politics with sport was so embedded in the 1960s, that it would have been a scandal for the government to officially use sports as a foreign policy tool.

The role of political preference played a role in the 1969 boycott debate, as it did in the Greek case in general. It was easier for political conservatives to criticize regimes in the East, as it was easier for the political left to critic questionable right wing regimes. However, the role of political preference and the view on sports in the Cold War as a whole played a limited role. Norway had sports contact with all types of regimes in this period. There were only military invasions by the Soviet Union that was the triggering factor for sports boycotts. Sports leaders argued in front of the championship that the situation in Greece never could be compared to the situation in 1968, when the Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia. The fact that the Greece was accused for human rights violations and not more traditional violations of international law is likely one important reason why Norway not boycotted the championship. It was the NIF which decided whether Norway should participate in international

championships, and the human rights aspect did not, in 1969, create the same reactions as military invasions.

6 Conclusion

This study wanted to shed light on a highly interesting debate about sports, politics and human rights which to some extent seemed to have been forgotten. I argue it deserved academic attention.

This study`s research questions were divided into two main parts. The first research question asks: *Which actors were involved in the question of participation in Greece, and which arguments were promoted?* The follow up question posits: *Why did the NIF approve Norwegian participation in the championship, and why did Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo choose to stay home?* Two main chapters, chapter 3 and 4, aimed at answering these two questions.

The second part of the research question examines: *Why was the labor movement in Norway the actor wanting to use sport as a tool to react against the regime in Greece, and to what extent was there a political motive behind the government`s choice of not getting involved in the debate?* Chapter 5 is a result of the empirical findings presented in chapter 3 and 4. This chapter analyzes the findings and discusses the main research question for this study.

6.1 The participation debate

This research aims at mapping out the process which eventually led to participation in the 1969 European Athletic Championship and gives detailed overview of the actors and main arguments promoted in the debate. Participation became an issue from February 1969. At this point, NIF had no concerns related to participation by Norwegian athletes. The tensest debates began from May and lasted until the championship started in early September. The labor movement, the Greek Committee, and several newspapers, especially VG and Arbeiderbladet, were actors who strongly opposed participation. Their anti-participation campaign started approximately at the same time, but were not coordinated. Political actors directly approached the NIF`s executive board through letters urging the governing body to deny participation. Furthermore, those who advocated for a boycott also used the media to create a public pressure against the NIF and the NFIF. The major actors who opposed participation mainly used the same line of argument. Norwegian athletes should boycott the championship in Greece, as it would send a symbolic message to the regime and the international community

that Norway would not tolerate serious human rights violations in another European country and fellow NATO member. In June, two of Norway's best athletes, Arne Kvalheim and Helge Pharo, decided they would not participate in the championship due to the internal situation in Greece. This came as a surprise, and the debate gained momentum due to their decision. At approximately at the same time, Jens Evensen's investigation of the Greek regime related to the case within the Council of Europe revealed segregation within organized sports in Greece. It was mostly the information about segregation in Greek sports, and not the human rights violations, which led to uncertainties within the NIF. Nevertheless, the result was to send athletes to Greece. The explanation was that international competitions were meant to build bridges between people and should not be used as a foreign policy tool. The executive board saw nothing special about the situation in Greece.

The boycott campaign met strong counterarguments. The argument most frequently used by those who opposed the boycott was that politics should be kept out of sports. Sports leaders and conservative forces promoted this view. The government, consisting of non-socialist parties, chose to stay out of the public debate. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, discussed the championship, mainly behind closed doors, and did not take a public stance. The Ministry decided Norwegian authorities would not provide the same level of support to the Norwegian team in Greece as had been normal in earlier championships, due to the political situation. The Ministry's highest concern was to distance Norwegian authorities from Norwegian sports. They did not want to use the championship as an arena to react against the regime; on the other hand, Norwegian political representatives were not allowed to take part in the opening or closing ceremony. To keep a low profile, and not act in any way which could be interpreted as a political demonstration against Greece was the Ministry's main concern.

After it was finally decided that athletes would travel to Athens, the focus was directed towards the question of media coverage. Prior to the championship, the newspapers presented strong opinions against or in favor of participation, and it became a tense debate about whether Norwegian newspapers and NRK should boycott the championship. It led to that VG, Arbeiderbladet, Dagbladet and NRK protested against the regime.

6.2 The relationship between politics and sports

To gain a better understanding of the relationship between foreign policy and sports in the Cold War and to look at what extent the different foreign policy objectives of traditional self-interests and the emergence of human rights had on Norwegian sports policy, are the overall subjects discussed in chapter 5. This chapter analyzes why the labor movement wanted to use sports as a foreign policy tool in 1969, and discusses to what the government's choice of staying out of the debate had political motives extent it was a political motive the government's choice of staying out of the debate. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes the policy adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At last, as this research shows that the NIF took independent decisions related to participation in international championships, it is necessary to understand why the NIF allowed political circumstances have an impact on sports contact or participation in other countries in other instances during the Cold War. Chapter 5 explains why the NIF not boycotted the 1969 championship.

The commitment by the Norwegian labor movement against participation in the championship must be understood in a larger context, which also includes other non-sporting reactions to the regime. The Labor Party had since the coup in 1967 pressed the government to conduct a stricter policy towards Greece. There were several factors which explain the Labor Party's commitment in this case. Most importantly, international events, as the Vietnam War, and a larger degree of intergovernmental cooperation within the UN and the Council of Europe led to an increased focus towards human rights. In Norway, and especially within the political left, there was an increased skepticism towards NATO and the U.S. When Greece, which shared membership in NATO and the Council of Europe, turned into a fascist regime, which removed democratic institutions and violated human rights, it was something the political left not tolerated. Domestically, the Labor Party was in political opposition, which made it easier to focus on cases particularly important for the party. Opposing participation in the 1969 championship became a natural part of the labor movement's campaign against the regime. However, working for a sports boycott due to violation of human rights was something new. I argue it was a milestone for Norwegian human rights activism.

Why did the government not want to use the championship to react against the regime? That is still a good question. I argue the championship would have contributed to directing focus

towards the human rights violations in the country. This research shows that the most important reason behind the government's restraint was the embedded norm that political leaders and institutions not should interfere in sports. However, this was not the only reason. Political preference influenced the view on sports boycotts, also in 1969. It was easier for the political left to argue for boycott in Greece than it was for non-socialist parties. As the U.S and other major NATO powers supported the regime in Greece, it was difficult for the government to criticize and implement measures which could either hurt their strategic interests or have a negative impact on Norwegian economic interests in Greece. The ministry did not want to oppose participation as it could direct negative attention towards Norwegian authorities. This also explains why the major concern for the Ministry was to ensure that Norwegian representatives did not act in any way which could be perceived as a political demonstration. On the other hand, the ministry must have felt some pressure from the political opposition regarding the championship, as they decided that Norwegian authorities would not provide normal assistance to the team in Greece, and that Norwegian diplomats should stay away from the opening and closing ceremony. The Ministry wanted to satisfy both camps. However, one could question whether a sports boycott would have negative consequences for Norwegian self-interests. After all, the government was active in the legal accusations against Greece within the Council of Europe. This point makes it necessary to highlight the norm of not mixing politics and sports as a crucial factor in explaining the lack of involvement by the government. Most likely, it did not play any role that the championship was the "perfect" arena for reacting against human rights violations. Politicians should stay out of sports.

Furthermore, this research shows that one should be careful in emphasizing too much on the impact political aspects had on organized sports in Norway during the Cold War. The Norwegian government has never directly approached the NIF demanding a boycott due to strategic self-interests. Sports leaders did not let political circumstances have a major impact on international sports contact and competitions. The exception was military invasions conducted the Soviet Union. NIF was a conservative organization in the 1960s. Human rights violations had not the same impact on sports during the Cold War as more traditional violation of international law.

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