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Erasmus Mundus and Education: The Leisure, Entertainment and Governance Initiative

GUEST EDITORS

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INTRODUCTION

The papers collected here arose out of participation in, or were inspired by, an EU funded Erasmus Mundus Intensive Programme, entitled Leisure Entertainment and Governance (LEGO) that took place in Trondheim, Norway in March and April 2009. The initiative for the special issue arose out of this, and the partnership forged between the [Norwegian University of Science and Technology](#) (NTNU), [Malmö University](#) in Sweden, and the [University of Westminster](#) in the UK.

The crux of this issue is the work of the participants in LEGO themselves: the students. It showcases some of the work produced as part of this project, containing work of which the partnership are very proud, and which lies testament to the extremely high quality of the students' performance. In order to place the work within a broader context, the participant work reproduced below is preceded by an article written by academics involved in the partnership. Foster and Osborn offer a piece that attempts to explore some of the underlying issues at the heart of this initiative. Both located within a Law School, their article examines the possibilities of interdisciplinarity and in particular explores the role of sport as a field of inquiry for interdisciplinary study. By way of an introduction, this guest editorial provides some background to the project, the educational initiative of LEGO, and to the students' papers.

BACKGROUND: THE CHALLENGE OF BOLOGNA

In 1999, a joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education noted that:

A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space (Bologna, 1999).

The Bologna Declaration contained a number of objectives including comparable degrees, a common system of credits and a simplification of academic cycles. It also sought to promote the mobility of students, teachers and researchers and introduced a series of developments to meet these aims, including creating the Erasmus mobility scheme. The Erasmus scheme has been successful, Keeling (2006, p. 216) noted that 87% of Higher Education institutions across 31 countries were participating in 2006 and it is likely that the numbers will continue to increase. Under this scheme, Erasmus Mundus was introduced in 2001, with the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window launched in 2006. The upshot of the Erasmus Mundus programme was to encourage cooperation between institutions, and mobility between institutions by offering scholarships for students and researchers. As noted on the official website; '[it] offers a valuable framework for exchange and dialogue between cultures. By supporting the mobility of students and academics throughout the world, Erasmus Mundus prepares its participants for life in a global, knowledge-based society'. The [objectives](#) of the programme are:

- to promote structured cooperation between higher education institutions and enhance the quality in European higher education with a distinct European added value, attractive both within the European Union and beyond its borders;
- to contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing the qualifications of

- women/men so that they possess particular skills, are open-minded and internationally experienced. This is achieved through promoting mobility for the most talented students and academics from third countries towards the European Union and vice versa;
- to contribute towards the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in third countries through increased mobility streams between the European Union and those countries;
 - to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of European higher education in the world as well as its attractiveness for third country nationals and citizens of the European Union

These objectives touch on a number important issues and challenges for the higher education 5 community. In particular issues of cooperation and mobility were stressed as was an overarching desire for 'European added value'. As Hodgson (2004, p. 348) noted:

While it is unlikely that there will ever, let alone within 5 years, be a clear single geometry of degrees within Europe, Bologna is a powerful engine of approximation, if not harmonisation. The overall aims are unobjectionable to anyone who is not an unreconstructed chauvinist, although how far students will actually avail themselves of the European dimension remains open to question.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND THE INSTITUTIONAL MATRIX

Coterminously, and outside of the Erasmus programme, links were being fostered between 6 the Universities of Malmö, Westminster and NTNU. The key link between the partners was sport, although each of the partnerships had a different disciplinary perspective from which to view the area. The development of the LEGo IP programme was expressly linked to the growth in cognate disciplines and the individual strengths of the Universities within the Consortium. There are long standing research links between Malmö and Westminster, Malmö and NTNU, and Westminster and NTNU.

The [School of Law](#) at the University of Westminster has a long history of teaching law at both 7 undergraduate and postgraduate level. The School developed what is believed to be the first undergraduate Entertainment Law module in the UK in 1991 and later developed the well regarded LLM in Entertainment Law. As noted in Foster and Osborn (2010), academic law programmes have made real efforts to contextualise themselves and the School of Law has been an important example of this movement. The School has strength in socio-legal studies generally and law and popular culture/entertainment law more specifically. The [Centre for Law, Society and Popular Culture](#) acts as a conduit for much of the teaching and research that takes place in these areas.

The [Malmö milieu](#) is the leading exponent of sport sciences, based in cultural and social 8 science, in Scandinavia. This is evidenced by the breadth of projects, disciplines and academics involved, and the development of the academic field in both Sweden and Europe. The development of the multi-disciplinary social and cultural approach to sports in the Malmö Model focusses on a)the dialectics between, and the dynamics of, tradition and transition, b) the different societal functions of sports (health, integration, networks,growth, image and development), c) the paradoxes of sports and their different characteristics and consequences, and d) the divergent forms of sports and their different conditions and logics. In relation to research areas and topics, the milieu concentrates particularly on socialisation processes, gender and ethnic relations, future sports, as well as the governance of sport, thereby integrating, for instance, sociology of law, cultural geography, economy, sociology, political science, ethnography, philosophy and economic history. In relation to the governance 'profile', the department arrange annually a national PhD course in the Governance of Sport, with a broad perspective focusing on law, policy, values, logics, planning, infrastructures, economic incitements and the past and future development of sport. The department is also the host to the refereed journal, the [Scandinavian Sports Forum](#).

NTNU has a strong record in sociology and political science as well as in sport studies. NTNU 9 offers sport science at bachelor, master and PhD level. The staff are actively involved in research, both nationally and internationally, hold leading positions in the main sociology of sport associations, including the European and International Sociological Associations, and are integrated into one of the largest sociology/political science departments in Europe. NTNU's main responsibility in developing the program was to provide the main issues of the course

with a wider perspective, including lectures on class and social inclusion, civil society and the commercialisation of culture, whilst at the same time relating these issues to the context of the sport and leisure industries.

The integration of sport science into the department of sociology and political science also has 10 consequences for which approach to choose. For example, a political scientist would perhaps examine the formal political and organisational regulations of sport, whilst power and the formal and informal structures of institutions would count as major explanatory variables. On the other hand, a sociologist would perhaps suggest that informal social relations also influence both the distribution of power and the institutional form of a given system. For example, the commercialisation of sport seems to have taken different forms in different sports, which could partly be explained by studying the level of resistance among spectators and supporters, as well as the values and norms that sometimes create that resistance. Here, perspectives from cultural sociology represent an interesting point of departure. To examine sport from different perspectives can therefore provide us with an enriched understanding of the phenomenon, but it can also be utilised the other way around; social science studies of sport may enlighten the study of leisure and popular culture more generally.

What the partnership was able to do, by drawing on the various areas of expertise detailed 11 above and the links that had been fostered, was to provide an integrated approach that attempted to explore the phenomenon of sport in terms of its political, cultural, legal and economic impact. From that premise an Erasmus Mundus Action 1 programme was constructed and submitted in 2007. Although unsuccessful, positive feedback to the application encouraged a further submission in 2008, under the Erasmus Mundus Intensive Programme Scheme. It was felt that this application would have a number of potential benefits, crucial amongst them being an opportunity to test the structure of the relationships at both an academic and administrative level, to further cement the relationships, and to enable a better quality Action 1 bid to be made in due course. This application was successful and the Intensive Programme, *Leisure Entertainment and Governance* (LEGo) ran for the first time in Trondheim in March and April 2009.

THE LEGO PROGRAMME & TRONDHEIM 2009

The original bid noted that:

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By its very nature, leisure and entertainment are diverse fields that draw upon many strands of academic thought. The LEGO IP programme is an innovative course that utilises and merges the fields of political science, sociology, economics and law. Students coming from each of these fields will have to broaden their knowledge and actively relate to how leisure and entertainment can be studied from a multi-disciplinary approach, seldom presented in European universities. The course will give the students a unique opportunity to specialize in fields such as sports, music and leisure services where this kind of interdisciplinary knowledge is uneven, fragmented and in high demand. It will enable the students to utilise a broader theoretical and academic palette when engaging in future study. This is a unique and liberating outcome for the students which reinforces the LEGO IP adherence to the priorities noted above.

The Bid therefore allowed for a number of specific areas to be used as subject matter for the 13 programme, and the area chosen for the first run of the Course, in Trondheim in 2009, was that of sport. The importance of sport can be seen, for example, within its social dimension and its ability to promote integration, inclusion and education. Its importance in commercial and cultural terms is acknowledged in the [EU White Paper on Sport](#). It was within this context that the course was developed; to enable students to acquire skills that foster a critical exploration of the role of sport within different societies, and to examine its political and economic dimensions. The importance of sport within the EU, and the extent of its regulation, is a good example of how these issues interrelate. The programme had a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of sport incorporating a wide range of concepts and ideas.

The LEGO IP initially chose to organise its thematic focus within four major issues, namely 14

- a) national identity,
- b) commerce or culture,
- c) responsibility of sporting/leisure bodies, and
- d) discrimination and stratification.

All of these areas were interrogated from the various disciplinary perspectives that had been 15 brought together by the initiative. In so doing students had an opportunity to view an issue through a different disciplinary lens. As such the course allowed an, admittedly limited, broadening of their educational and methodological palette that the students generally found to be both illuminating and useful. The students were allowed to write their papers according to their own research interests, but were strongly encouraged to make use of the interdisciplinary ethos of the course.

The course itself was varied in terms of its delivery; it was intensive, delivered over a 10 day 16 period, and organised as a mixture of lectures, group discussions, seminars and student presentations. One day was spent at [Rosenborg BK](#), the leading football club in Norway, where the managing director delivered a lecture on the club's vision and strategies. This was mixed with a social programme that included alpine skiing, a visit to the theatre, physical exercises and several dinners where teachers also occasionally attended. The social activities contributed to the strengthening of the integration in the student group, which in turn lead to more fruitful seminars and discussions. The students who took part in this LEGo initiative were very positive about the experience on many levels. The fact that it is a selective, EU funded initiative makes it both an attractive and valuable student experience. The quality of the work produced was extremely high with experienced tutors suggesting that the cohort was as strong as any they had encountered during their academic careers and being involved in a supportive and collegiate environment produced excellent work from all the participants.

Four papers have been selected as part of this special issue to showcase this work. Whilst 17 these papers are notionally student work, and the refereeing has been comparatively 'light touch', the LEGo tutors, and the Editors, are extremely impressed with these pieces, which they believe are worthy of inclusion in the journal on their own merits. The four papers include two from Westminster, Niall Trainor and Jurga Gradauskaitė, and two from Malmö, David Cardell and Stefan Mårtensson. Gradauskaitė's paper, 'The Advertising Appeal of Sports and the Legal Limits of the Incorporation of Sports in Advertising' is perhaps the paper that most illustrates the potential of the LEGo approach. Whilst coming from an avowedly legal background, and a qualified lawyer in her home country, this ambitious piece utilises a different disciplinary approach to complement the legal. 'The funzone and industrial play: the choreography of childhood spaces in a Swedish context', a brilliantly constructed essay by Cardell, is more fully located within sociology and cultural studies, whilst Mårtensson provides a telling analysis of sport and gender in his 'Branding women's football in a field of hegemonic masculinity'. Finally, Trainor's paper, 'The 2009 WADA Code: A More Proportionate Deal For Athletes?', analyses the WADA code from within a legal framework but which also attempts to locate his examination within a broader contextual framework. All these pieces are excellent examples of the work produced during the LEGo initiative, and are hopefully harbingers of the standard and level of work to come on future cycles of the course.

We hope that the material in the issue provides food for thought about the possibilities of 18 higher education and interdisciplinary study within an increasingly globalised, and competitive, environment. Most importantly, the initiative challenged ideas and preconceptions, fostered new relationships and projects, and above all else, was fun and collegiate, something often overlooked in higher education today.

POSTSCRIPT

The 2010 LEGO course was held at the Department of Sport Studies, in Malmö, during 6-16 19 April. As well as specific material from the Westminster/NTNU/Malmö consortium, it also drew upon the papers presented at the conference, '[Centres and Peripheries in Sport](#)' which the students were able to attend and contribute to. This conference emphasised both the commercialisation and Europeanization of football and its effects on national leagues and the

development of women's' sport and its challenges.

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