

# **SPORTS, IDENTITY & FINANCIALS**

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**NAVIGATING AND MANAGING MULTIPLE INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS IN A  
SWEDISH ELITE FOOTBALL CLUB**

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## **Sports, Identity & Financials - Navigating and Managing Multiple Institutional Logics in a Swedish Elite Football Club**

Abstract:

This qualitative study investigates how managers in a Swedish elite football club handle and make sense of multiple institutional logics by drawing upon the theories of institutional logics and framing. A single case study was conducted in which 12 individuals in various roles at the case football club participated in in-depth interviews. The findings show the existence of three main institutional logics or frames, namely, a sports, business and identity logic. The coexistence of these three logics at the case football club resulted in different tactics to manage this plurality of frames: frame blending, frame shifting, as well as frame compartmentalization and frame denial. There was a multitude of frame tactics deployed depending on the individual and the context. It was also found that frame tactics could depend on identity work, emotions, as well as that those tactics could be deployed in a dynamic way. For instance, a frame compartmentalization from the sports logic in light of a blending of the business and identity logic tactic. This thesis helps practitioners to identify which possible frame tactics to deploy in case of dealing with multiple institutional logics, independent of industry or sector.

Keywords:

Football, Commercialization, Institutional Logics, Frames, Sports, Hybrid Organizations, Professionalization.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Football is Sweden's largest and most influential sport in terms of the number of people that practice it as well as spectators (RF, 2020, p. 71). Like other sports, football has come to fulfill different functions for individuals and for society at large. For the individual, it can serve as a social community, bringing people together, and an opportunity to escape reality. It also helps to tackle societal issues such as mental health, physical well-being, and segregation (Bergsten, Esterling, 2019).

The professionalization of football can be traced back to the founding of the English Football League (EFL Official Website - History, 2022). Since then, there has been an increased professionalization of the sport with many clubs structured and run like corporations, moving from non-profit organizations to hybrid organizations (Kennedy, Kennedy 2012).

There has been an increased commercialization of football that has changed the revenue streams of many clubs. Matchday revenues used to make up most of a club's revenues, but today the largest revenues are sponsorships, broadcast deals, and transfer fees. This commercialization has been criticized by supporters who feel like the sport is losing its soul and connection to its heritage (Ronald, Jean-Pierre, 2019). However, there exists a correlation between money and success (Droste, 2019). The teams that continually perform the best are the teams that have the highest squad value, meaning one cannot simply ignore the business side of football. During Riksidrottsforum 2010, the Swedish Sports Confederation presented four trends that Swedish sports, in general, are facing with a perspective to 2020, where one of the identified trends was increased commercialization which demands a certain level of professionalization (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2010).

Unlike some of the most successful football clubs that today are run like corporations, all sports associations in Sweden, including football clubs, are membership-based clubs where 51% of a club is owned and controlled by member-supporters (RF:s Stadgar, 2021). This is an important factor concerning the commercialization of football. Football clubs in Europe can be fully controlled by private investors. The 50 + 1 rule makes it hard for clubs with this rule to attract investors and thus they must look for alternative streams of income to compensate for this opportunity cost in order to close the gap between clubs that are owned by rich oligarchs and states (e.g., Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester City).

Football clubs are exposed to multiple institutional logics (Gammelsaeter 2010). Two of them are, firstly, a sports logic (sports success such as winning a Derby or Championship, motivating members and establishing bonds to important stakeholders such as supporters and sponsors) and, secondly, a business logic in terms of financial performance (i.e., balanced budget, level of debt, for-profit). Success in football is expensive due to high investments and expenses, yet it is also rewarding financially. Clubs which are successful sports-wise benefit from prize money and attract new supporters and sponsors that attend games, buy merchandise and support the club financially. However, in a competitive league, such success is uncertain and not many will experience this virtuous cycle. An important caveat why it is not possible to fully adhere only to the business logic in Sweden is the 50 + 1 rule (where fans hold most of the ownership) which is closely intertwined with the identity logic (fans' identification, feeling of belonging and loyalty to the club) (Gammelsaeter, 2010). This interaction and interplay between the different logics, with its ambiguity, make football clubs a highly relevant context for studying how they cope with and navigate while being exposed to multiple institutional logics.

Moreover, another important aspect that cannot be overlooked when it comes to this sector is the extent of how emotionally laden it is, that can both have implications for the rationality of decisions being taken and how one manages multiple logics (Ronald, Jean-Pierre, 2019; Shakina et al. 2020). In our study, this aspect has been identified as the *emotional elevator* in the football club.

## 1.2. Aim and Research Question

The purpose of the study is to investigate how managers of a Swedish elite football club navigate through and make sense of multiple, different institutional logics in their day-to-day working life.

In order to investigate this, a theoretical framework which is a combination of institutional logics and framing theory will be used. These concepts will be further elaborated and described in the theory section.

To fulfill this research aim, a qualitative study approach in the form of a single case study of a Swedish elite football club is used. The interview participants were either part of the Board of Directors, Board of Management or operational level of the football club.

To achieve this research aim, the study tries to answer the following research question:

*How do managers in a Swedish elite football club navigate through and make sense of multiple institutional logics in their day-to-day work for the club?*

### 1.3. Delimitations

This study is limited to one of the 16 Swedish elite football clubs in the highest Swedish football league, *Allsvenskan*. Thus, a single case study approach has been chosen to the exclusion of a multiple case study approach, since the goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of the sense-making and navigation of individuals in a single football club. An underpinning assumption is the belief that the logics are more outspoken in the highest Swedish football league compared to, for instance, a regional division.

Further, the chosen football club for this study is in a geographical area where there is only one other competitor, and, importantly, since most other studies on Swedish football clubs have been conducted in another geographical area, the aim is to expand the geographical scope of existing empirics and contribute to a more nuanced discussion.

Moreover, the choice of the specific football club has been a conscious one relating to specific factors, such as that they historically have achieved and celebrated sports success but have struggled with sports performance in recent years. This provides an interesting empirical context to study with respect to the interplay of multiple logics.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Multiple Institutional Logics

The inception of institutional logics can be traced back to *Bringing Society back in and the Introduction of Institutional Logics* by Friedland and Alford (1991). They define institutional logics as “a set of material practices and symbolic constructions which constitutes its organizing principles, and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate.” (Friedland, Alford 1991, p. 248). Thornton and Ocasio (1999) further refine the definition of institutional logics to “socially constructed, historical patterns of material, practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton, Ocasio, 1999 p. 804). Several studies have revealed the existence of different logics in a myriad of sectors (e.g., Reay, Hinings, 2009; Lounsbury, 2002). Earlier research found that logics can co-exist in a transition stage until one of the logics dominates and replaces the earlier one (DiMaggio, 1983). However, it is also possible that logics merge, creating a hybrid one (Glynn, Lounsbury, 2005). Moreover, recent research shows that multiple logics can co-exist in different sectors (Reay, Hinings, 2005; Dacin, Dacin et al., 2011; Glynn, Lounsbury, 2005; Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al., 2016; Senaux, 2011). An emergent number of researchers have begun to investigate the consequences of logic multiplicity for organizations (i.e., Almandoz, 2012; Battilana, Dorado, 2010; Besharov, Smith, 2014; McPherson, Sauder, 2013; Pache, Santos, 2013).

### 2.2. Logic Compatibility and Centrality

When it comes to multiple institutional logics, Besharov and Smith (2014) propose the concept of compatibility as a dimension through which logic multiplicity varies among organizations, defining compatibility as “the extent to which the instantiations of logics imply consistent and reinforcing organizational actions” (Besharov, Smith, 2014, p. 365). The level of compatibility and incompatibility, respectively, depends on three levels of analysis accompanied by factors that influence compatibility: institutional field, organization and individual. They further propose a second key aspect for understanding logic multiplicity in different organizations, namely, centrality, which they define as “the degree to which multiple logics are each treated as equally valid and relevant to organizational functioning” (Besharov, Smith, 2014, p. 369). Like compatibility, centrality differs on three levels of analysis accompanied by factors that influence centrality: institutional field, organization and individual.



### 2.2.1. Situation Specific Variations

Besharov and Smith (2014) do explain variations in logics across organizations, however, they do not explain variations within an organization, i.e., that logics sometimes create tensions, and sometimes not. Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al. (2016) show that the compatibility of multiple logics differs in different situations within an organization. They explain this with “ambiguous cause-effect relationships between the activities and outcomes that relate to the logics” (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al., 2016, p. 56). Their empirical evidence suggests that the sports and business logic of a football club are in harmony when a situation’s course of action benefits both sports and business (unambiguous cause-effect), whereas, in other situations, the cause-effect relationship is rather ambiguous which provides for different enactments of the logics (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al., 2016).

### 2.3. Managing Conflicting Logics

Institutional complexities can be managed in different ways. One approach is to manage the organization in line with one logic and only respond symbolically to the demands of the other logic. This approach is also called decoupling (Meyer, Rowan, 1977; Westphal, Zajac, 1994). Decoupling is either structural (permanently committed to one logic and symbolically towards the other) or situation-specific (react symbolically to the demand, but not really changing overall practices). However, decoupling is only feasible if stakeholders’ demands can be satisfied in a sufficient way merely by a symbolic response (Pache, Santos, 2013).

Another strategy is structural differentiation, meaning the compartmentalization of an organization into subunits, allowing them to act independently and in line with the demands of the respective institutional logic they attend to (Kraatz, Block, 2008). Berry et. al. (1985) refers to structural differentiation as ‘horizontal decoupling’, implying that multiple institutional logics are managed in the form of configuring decisions and actions in advance in the future to avoid facing multiple demands simultaneously. However, structural differentiation does not avoid the issue of compromising at the organizational level (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al., 2016).

A third strategy consists of compromising full adherence to one logic to be able to partly fulfill the demands of another logic. Structural compromise combines elements such as governance, control systems, rules and routines from different logics to adhere to the demands of different stakeholders on a permanent basis (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al., 2016). However, Alexius and Furusten (2018) argue that if hybrid organizations can become good at deploying and switching between logics, it can be

advantageous to have multiple logics as these can be invoked in different situations if deemed suitable and appropriate.

## 2.4. Multiple Logics in Football Organizations

Regarding football organizations, Senaux (2011) argues that the multiplicity of logics affects the organizational identity of football clubs and has managerial implications with respect to governance and management. The issues of management stem from the fact that there does not exist one set of ‘rules of the game’ when managing a football club, but multiple ones. Analyzing French football history, Senaux (2011) posits that the “privatization, commercialisation and commoditization of football appeared to lay the foundations for a more management-oriented perspective” (Senaux, 2011, p. 258). Professional football clubs have implications for the management of these organizations since “pluralism creates the potential for fragmentation, incoherence, conflict, goal-ambiguity and organizational instability in an organization with multiple identities, purposes and belief systems, no group is likely to be fully satisfied and political tensions are likely to be endemic” (Kraatz, Block, 2008, p. 244).

Moreover, Gammelsæter (2010) develops a typology of different institutional logics found in commercialized sports clubs. Proposed strategies to manage this pluralism are marginalizing the claims of one logic, attending to the demands sequentially or independently, playing the stakeholders against each other or negotiating cooperative agreements. However, a more sustainable approach might be to “forge durable identities of their own [...] such that it can legitimate its own actions and be a self-directing producer of culture” (Gammelsæter, 2010, p. 572-573). Further, Gammelsæter (2010) found seven institutional logics: idealism/non-profit voluntarism (ideal purposes), identity (fans’ identification, feeling of belonging/loyalty to the club), autotelism (sports end in itself for players, enjoyed for its own sake), entrepreneurialism (hands-on leadership, coaches and players constitute small businesses trading in a market), managerialism (management tools, performance measurement for commodification, staff with business expertise and education), bureaucracy (development of governing football bodies, regulating football clubs and controls) and politics (direct political involvement in clubs, politicians utilizing sports as a mean to reach out to the electorate; city councils’ favorable treatment of local sports clubs).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The findings are analyzed through a combination of institutional logics and framing theory perspective to explore how managers in their daily work navigate and make sense of multiple institutional logics that their football club is exposed to.

#### 3.1. Limitations of Institutional Logics and Contributions from Framing Theory

Purdy, Ansari et al. (2019) state that the view of meaning-making in institutional logics has been static and does not take into consideration the “interactions and processes through which meanings and practices are not just used or recombined but also initiated, reconstituted, or instantiated at multiple levels of social organization” (Purdy, Ansari et al., 2019, p. 409). There are calls for attending to ‘meaning making’ that guide social actors and inform prospective actions. They argue that framing theory is an insightful lens to articulate how meanings are constructed. Framing theory is complementary to institutional logic accounting for the “communicative, constitution, maintenance and transformation of institutions” (Purdy, Ansari et al., 2019; Cornelissen et al., 2014, p. 14). Framing sheds light on the perspective of institutions being produced and reproduced in the daily activities of individuals. Framing theory makes it possible “to investigate the specific interpretive processes at work in fields where multiple meanings clash and/or find ways to coexist while maintaining their differences.” (Purdy, Ansari et al., 2019, p. 414). Moreover, framing theory highlights bottom-up processes where frames move from individual sensemaking to organizational- and field-level frames. Overall, this approach helps to view institutions as inhabited places and socially negotiated (Purdy, Ansari et al., 2019; Zilber, 2016). Concluding, framing theory provides a dynamic view of social construction, where individuals serve as ‘meaning entrepreneurs’ and initiate patterns that could become institutionalized. It focuses on everyday organizational interactions, where people both engage with, interpret and leverage meanings to guide their actions, and construct or remold these in interactions (Purdy, Ansari et al., 2019, p. 415).

## 3.2. Framing Theory

Frames are mental maps guiding the interpretation of the past, present and future (Harris, 1994). They are cognitive structures where knowledge is retained and organized. Framing theory was used to form the concept of individual sensemaking, in that an organizational culture's impact on individuals' sensemaking is revealed through frames. The following section on framing theory is presented in line with Lundström and Håkansson's (2021) study on ESG integration in investment practice.

### 3.2.1. Interactional Paradigm

Goffman (1974) is credited for the popularity of framing theory and since, there has been great diversity in framing research. The spread in the field was recognized by Dewulf, Gray et al. (2009) and to achieve some order they distinguished between two paradigms: interactional and cognitive. In accordance with Lundström and Håkansson (2021), the interactional paradigm, also called tradition, focuses on the interaction and communication between individuals. Bateson (1954) explains that framing helps us understand how an interaction should be interpreted since we through framing exchange non-verbal cues or indirect messages. He further explains that the need for framing stems from the uncertainty of how one can interpret an ongoing interaction.

### 3.2.2. Cognitive Paradigm

In the cognitive paradigm, which will be applied in this analysis, frames are represented as cognitive structures facilitating the organization and interpretation of information by fitting it into hitherto learned schemas about reality (Dewulf et al., 2009). Individuals, facing novel situations, draw upon frames while some details may not be relevant in all situations and are thus changed to adapt (Dewulf et al., 2009; Minsky, 1975). As stated by Lundström and Håkansson (2021), frame shifting occurs when individuals shift to another frame by "mobilizing an alternative frame that restructures expectations and experiences and suggests different inferences" (Werner, Cornelissen, 2014, p. 1456), including the questioning of existing institutionalized frames and acting contrary to prior frame(s). Frames are viewed as static but can alter as framing occurs in new situations and are matched to available frames. More precisely, frames consist of structures of expectations about people, objects, events and settings. Frames can be utilized in the understanding of people's experiences, processes, interpretations and representations of issues in settings of conflict (Lundström, Håkansson, 2021). Since individuals interpret new situations based on available frames, this creates biases and influences information processing. Based on the study's focus on the individual level and micro-level, the interest lies in cognitive frames corresponding to that level of analysis, defined as a "knowledge structure that directs and guides information processes" (Cornelissen, Werner, 2014, p. 184).

Since the focus is on the individual and how he/she makes sense and navigates multiple institutional demands in their daily working life, the perspective of cognitive frames is insightful since individual understanding is crucial in this context. This perspective describes frames as biases of the social world of individuals (Dewulf et al. 2009), which makes it useful in studying and comparing individual differences (Lundström, Håkansson, 2021).

### 3.3. Frame Plurality

Football clubs exposed to multiple institutional logics creates a context where a plurality of frames is at play (Gammelsæter, 2010; Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al., 2016). In the analysis section, a *business*, *sports* and *identity* frame will be presented, derived from the empirics.

### 3.4. Frame Alignment

Cornelissen and Werner (2014) developed a typology regarding frame alignment. They present micro-level tactics individuals use in reframing and challenging the status quo. These tactics are applicable since the interest lies in the micro-level and cognitive framing in relation to a plurality of frames. The two proposed tactics are frame shifting and frame blending.

#### 3.4.1. Frame Shifting

In line with Lundström and Håkansson (2021), frame shifting occurs when individuals shift to another frame by “mobilizing an alternative frame that restructures expectations and experiences and suggests different inferences” (Werner, Cornelissen, 2014, p. 1456), including the questioning of existing institutionalized frames and acting contrary to prior frame(s). In shifting, the individual “query the institutionalized cognitive schema in a field and articulate and promote an alternative frame that marks the contrast with the prior cognitive understanding” (Werner, Cornelissen, 2014, p. 1450).

#### 3.4.2. Frame Blending

As mentioned by Lundström and Håkansson (2021), frame blending occurs when individuals “iterate between or integrate cognitive schemas in a field, including bridging between past schemas as part of a proposed novel schematization” (Werner, Cornelissen, 2014, p. 1450). The blending of frames does not mean that the frames are of equal importance, instead, one frame often modifies the other.

While blending often occurs when frames are similar, shifting occurs when they contrast each other. Tactics are further classified into moderate and radical ones, where moderate means a minor change with the previous frame being adjusted/updated and radical means a major shift, i.e., complete integration of frames (Werner, Cornelissen, 2014; Lundström, Håkansson, 2021).

### 3.5. Tactics of Managing Frames Drawn from Institutional Logics

These frame tactics are supplemented with tactics of managing pluralistic and competing frames drawn from institutional logics (Creed et al., 2010; Lok, 2010; Jones et al., 2012).

#### 3.5.1. Identity Work and Compartmentalization

Derived from Lundström and Håkansson (2021), individuals may challenge institutional recipes through identity work if they experience contradicting logics/frames (Creed et al., 2010). Taking the form of using cultural meanings representing prescribed ways to act and think, where identity work can either “perpetuate or resolve the experience of institutional contradictions by drawing on institutionally endorsed cultural resources” (Creed et al., 2010, p. 1357), as mentioned by Lundström and Håkansson (2021). Identity work maintaining the experience of institutional contradiction takes place when organizational members have difficulties to adhere to institutional scripts, resulting in compartmentalization, constituting a separation of frames in different organizational contexts or physical spaces. (Creed et al., 2010; Lok, 2010). Further, compartmentalization can take the form of decoupling, where one frame is only addressed symbolically (Lok, 2010; Lundström, Håkansson, 2021).

#### 3.5.2. Denial and Ignorance

Two further tactics are denial, where one frame is suppressed; or ignorance, where the individual is not aware of the frame (Creed et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2012).

## 4. Methodology

In the following, the methodology of the research is presented. First, the research approach is explained (section 4.1.), thereafter, the data collection is described (section 4.2.), followed by a description of the data analysis (section 4.3.). Finally, the research quality is discussed (section 4.4.).

### 4.1. Research Approach

#### 4.1.1. Research Design

The study's point of departure is the interpretive frame of social science, since the aim has been to obtain an understanding of the social worlds of the interviewees from the football club. Specifically, how they make sense of multiple institutional logics in their daily work. This understanding will be arrived at through analyzing social sense-making and inter-subjective processes during the interviews. The methodology corresponds to the description by Neuman (2000) of the interpretive social science paradigm where interpretation, understanding and language is emphasized (Chua, 1986). Consequently, knowledge is gained by subjectively interpreting the conducted interviews. With respect to the interpretive paradigm and the study's aim to gain an understanding of how managers make sense of and handle multiple institutional logics in their daily work at the club, a qualitative study approach is deemed suitable.

The study has been conducted as a single case study. By focusing on a single case study instead of, for instance, a multiple case study, a more in-depth and richer contextual understanding is ensured (Dubios, Gadde, 2002). Moreover, another consideration of the design of the study is the focus on the individual regarding the level of analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). The data collection takes place on the individual level through interviews, and the analysis is focused on the individual since the interest lies in the individual manager's navigation and sense-making of multiple institutional logics. This is both due to the research question of this study and the method theory, namely framing theory, used in this study. Moreover, this level of analysis is also of interest since a further interest is how the navigation and sense-making of multiple institutional logics might differ between individual managers.

## 4.2. Data Collection

### 4.2.1. Choice of Case Organization

The case organization is a Swedish elite football club. When selecting a case, Stake (1995) suggests that the choice should be determined first and foremost on where the authors believe they will learn the most. The chosen Swedish elite football club (referred to as *EFC*) has a rich history of being a top performing club, while in recent years having been hit with multiple setbacks. The choice of football club was facilitated by a professor acting as intermediary with the football club.

### 4.2.2. Interview Participants

Interviews with managers at the football club have been the main source of empirical data, even though these were complemented with secondary data. A total of 12 interviews were conducted with managers at the football club, including members of the Board of Management and Board of Directors. Interviewees included, among others, the Club Director, Head of Security, SLO (Supporter Liaison Officer), Commercial Manager and Sales Manager (See Appendix 1.). The interview participants were contacted via email (See Appendix 4.). The collection of the data took place between January and March 2022. For a homogenous group, such as in this study, Guest et al. (2006) states that 12 in-depth interviews are sufficient to reach data saturation. The length of the interviews varied from 31 minutes to 120 minutes, with an average of 65 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the authors.

### 4.2.3. Interview Design

Most of the interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams since EFC is located inconveniently for the authors to travel for every interview. However, one of the interviews took place physically at the Stockholm School of Economics.

### 4.2.4. Interview Guide

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with an interview questionnaire drafted after the authors conducted extensive secondary archival research on both the research topic, Swedish elite football as well as the football club *EFC* (See Appendix 2. and 3.). The purpose of the questionnaire was to be used as a guide for the authors, covering relevant and interesting topics for the aim of the study. Most of the questions were open-ended, hence allowing the participants to give extensive answers as well as explain or build on their responses. Before conducting the interviews, the questionnaire was checked by a person with relevant knowledge to ensure that it was



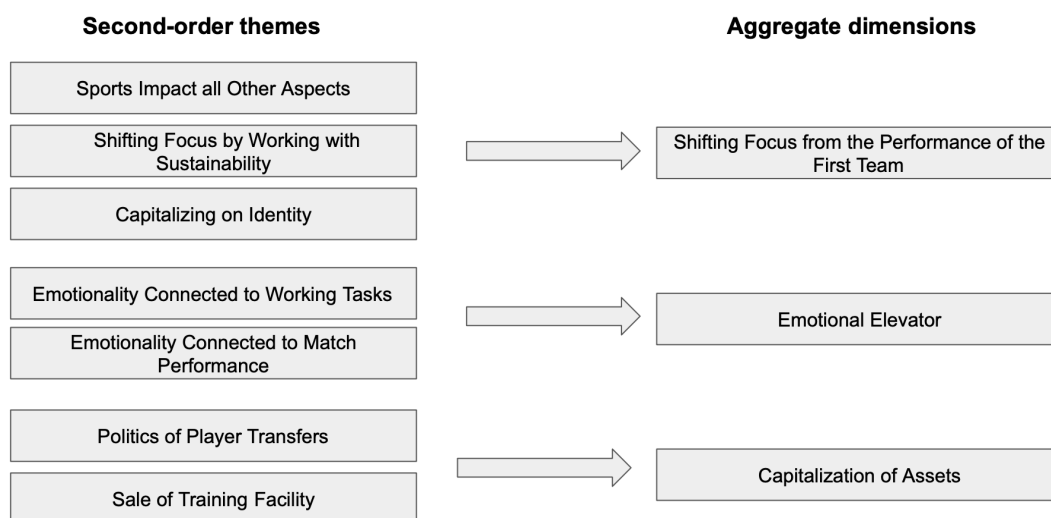
both relevant and not misleading. There was no need for editing the questionnaire after this meeting.

### 4.3. Data Analysis

The study has been conducted in accordance with an abductive approach where theory and empirical data have been collected in parallel to each other and informed one another. The empirical data facilitates the narrowing down of the scope of the study to the relevant aspects of institutional logics, which is a broad theory and captures several potential research areas. Since the aim is to gain an understanding of managers' sense-making in their daily work life with multiple institutional logics involved, semi-structured interviews are used. This format gives the interviewees the possibility to express thoughts freely and researchers the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' social worlds, which is difficult to achieve in a structured interview format.

With the approval of each interviewee, the interviews were recorded and transcribed in parallel to data collection. After all interviews were conducted, the authors individually analyzed the material and mutually compiled the findings using Saunders et al.'s (2019) thematic analysis approach. The overall coding of the gathered empirical material generated around 40 first-order themes. By applying the theoretical framework, the concepts were evolved into second-order themes and subsequently aggregated concepts (see Figure 1).

#### Empirical Overview



**Figure 1:** Empirical Overview

## 4.4. Research Quality

### 4.4.1. Ethics

The research builds upon the ethical pillars of beneficence (do good) and non-maleficence (do no harm). During the research process, particular attention was paid to: (1) obtaining informed consent from potential research participants; meaning they are informed about that they are taking part in research and what the research requires of them, (2) protect the research participants anonymity and confidentiality, which involves that data is treated confidentially in the storage of the data, its analysis and during the publication process. Regarding the storage of the data, every single interviewee was asked for their consent to record the interview, with the information that the recording will be transcribed and subsequently obliterated within 24 hours. Further, when using quotes, identifiable information will be stripped off, and pseudonyms used (in the form of city names), (3) avoid deceptive practices and (4) give the participants the right to withdraw from the research at any stage of the process.

Moreover, since the research mainly builds upon in-depth interviews, this is a delicate issue that must be dealt with since, during the interview process, greater disclosure of information and self-expression takes place. Due to the more personal nature of in-depth interviews, some ethical concerns have been addressed with more emphasis: (1) a more rigorous adherence to data protection and participants' confidentiality, (2) more transparency regarding letting the interviewees know how we as researchers have interpreted what they have said and (3) permission from interviewees to report any quotations, other personally identifiable information and/or facts.

#### 4.4.2. Method Criticism

With respect to interpretive and qualitative studies, there is an inherent risk, which also applies to this study, that the authors' beliefs interfere with the interpretation and subsequently the presentation of the empirical findings and analysis. To increase the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study, (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019) (2019) criterias were adhered to. Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish, there is a potential issue with credibility concerning the translation into English. However, this is mitigated through the verification of quotes by interview participants. Further, the authors increased the external and internal reliability by clearly reporting each step of the process which provides the readers and other researchers to judge the reliability and transferability of the study. Moreover, by recording and conducting the interviews together, and by engaging continually in reflexivity throughout the process, reliability was further ensured (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019).

## 5. Empirics

In the following, the empirics drawn from the in-depth interviews are presented. The aggregated dimensions from the thematic analysis concerning how managers make sense of and navigate multiple institutional logics in their day-to-day work are: Shifting Focus from the Performance of the First Team (5.1.), Emotional Elevator (5.2.), as well as Capitalization of Assets (5.3.). Further, two of the dimensions are divided into sub-dimensions. The identified institutional logics in this study, *sports*, *business* and *identity* logic, are further mentioned under each respective section.

**Table of Transcription Symbols**

.	Full stop: completed intonation
,	Comma: continued intonation
[...]	Ellipsis in brackets: exclusion of word(s)
[text]	Text in brackets: authors addition
?	Question mark: indicates question

**Figure 2:** Table of Transcription Symbols

### 5.1. Shifting Focus from the Performance of The First Team

Historically, the men's first team performance on the pitch (sports logic) has impacted and determined the performance of all other working areas at the football club *EFC*, as section 5.1.1. illustrates. There is an awareness amongst interviewees and a demand internally as well as from outside stakeholders to become more independent from the first team's performance (which is blurring the relationship between the sports and business logic). The respondents mentioned how working with sustainability and identity are two exemplary ways in order to become more financially stable, which sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 demonstrate.

### 5.1.1. Sports Impacts all Other Aspects

The following quotes highlight the fundamental role of the sports logic. The success of the first team has been the main contributing factor to the performance of the other areas. When the first team is successful, it facilitates both the commercial work (easier to attract partners, sell tickets, social media engagement) and the identity work (sustainability, Academy and work in the suburbs). However, when results are lacking, it makes the job strenuous:

*The latest or upcoming results dictates the most. We play a Cup match this weekend and then we have a thing that is on its way out that's planned for Sunday night. If we lose [...] we have already decided today that it will be postponed to Monday night or Tuesday night.* – Lisbon

*Easier to get a partner when things are going well. Harder when things are going badly. We want to get away from that.* – Marseille

*It is the first team that is our focus. Everything revolves around it. So, I would say they are prioritized.* - Helsinki

*A large part of the revenues depends on the result. Everything becomes so much easier when you achieve good sporting success. After all, what impacts the attendance of the next home game, the most, is the result of the last home game.*  
– London

*What is the purpose of our existence? For me, it is to win football games. If we win games, we can do so much better in our sustainability work, in our Academy, out in the suburbs. But that is just the way it is: the engine is that we win football games with the A-team.* – Denver

The central role of the sports logic comes from the interest that the men's team generates, as the following quote explains:

*It's the men's team that generates the greatest interest.* – Lisbon

The need for decoupling from the sports logic is stemming from the lack of success on the field over the last couple of years, where managers also have realized that there is a possible correlation between revenues and the team performance:

*For a long time, our brand was very much dependent on the success [of the first team]. So, part of why our brand value fall is the lack of success.* – Rio

*If we perform well, many will attend the matches because we have many supporters, but what happens if it goes badly? Then, unfortunately, there will not be as many spectators. - Berlin*

### 5.1.2. Shifting Focus by Working with Sustainability

Sustainability was a recurring theme during the interviews. It sheds light on how the identity, business and sports logic do not necessarily have to stand in conflict to each other but, instead, can align. Alignment in terms of that one can blend the work with identity (regrowth, recruitment as well as different sustainability initiatives such as work in the suburbs) with the business logic (attracting sponsors and members who pay, attend games and buy merchandise etc.) as well as, in the long term, supports the sports logic (recruitment of players in the Academy, more money to spend on e.g. player transfers and coaches). The area of sustainability shows how tensions between different logics can be reduced.

The following illustrates the importance of the identity logic in terms of recruitment, women's identification with the club and creating experiences:

*[...] recruitment also takes place in the Academy as well as finding children who like to play football. The women's team is super important because then young girls see that they are also playing in these colors and I can go and watch them play. [...] the most important thing is that you attend a game at some point and experience it because that's unbeatable, that's how you recruit a new person. - Manilla*

In the following, one interviewee highlights how paramount the identity logic is to stay competitive and attract new supporters when there are teams performing better:

*It is so easy now to watch really good football, everyone can watch the Champions League, the Premier League [...] That is why we have to go out and show that there is a club where you can actually come and watch a game with [...] come and experience the atmosphere [...] We go there with our players, and they notice "Okay wow, they really want me" [...] The fact that everyone can watch so much better football than EFC plays, then we must be able to show that we want you, you are a part of us, you are a part of the city, you are a part of our entire cycle. - Rome*

One interviewee saw the adherence and work with the identity logic (women's team and working with young children) as a prerequisite towards the business logic in terms of attracting partners and sponsorship:

*[...] it is a prerequisite if you are going to [mentions company name] and ask “Do you want to sponsor our A-team?”. No, there are some elements there that are not so nice from the outside. But if we say “Do you want to be part of our journey where we have our own locally grown women’s team. Do you want to be part of that journey where we also helped several hundred children from social exclusion to go out and play football?” Yes, that is a prerequisite. - London*

### 5.1.3. Capitalizing on Identity

By working with identity and distancing it from the performance on the field, the interviewees describe a shift from fully adhering to the sports logic (the first team) towards the identity logic (women, suburbs, Academy, recruitment of young people etc.) with the objective to eventually create stability revenue-wise. Proving that the identity and business logic can, in fact, create a virtuous cycle:

*One has to see identity as a work area and the potential in it. This profound identification with the club. It is easy to see it as something difficult, you only see the negative sides. But you do not see the social and commercial potential [...] Social capital that can become commercial capital. – Rio*

*[...] now we also work a lot with the sustainability aspect where we get partners in that we do not only have the A-team, we have women, we have the Academy, we have done a lot in the suburbs and do a great deal there among children and young people to get them on the right track. - Helsinki*

*You have to remember that what draws people to the arena according to market research is not only the football [...] but it is the arena atmosphere, [...] and then a well-functioning relationship with subcultures becomes important. Again, we achieve this through communication, inclusion, and identity work. - Rio*

*Our biggest partner today is [mentions partner]. They have much more interest in and questions about how we work in schools, in suburbs, to make [mentions city] a better city than it was before. - Marseille*

In the following, it also becomes clear how paramount the identity logic is for one of the interviewees:

*In my world, it is simple, identity comes first. - Berlin*

## 5.2. Emotional Elevator

Another relevant aspect that emerged during the interviews is the emotionality within the football industry. It is not only about rational decision-making when managing multiple logics, emotions also have a role to play. The identity and sports logic can be emotionally laden, which in turn has implications for how one manages them, and for the business logic.

The following illustrates how decisions involve emotions and how this could, potentially, have detrimental effects for the business logic if decisions are based on emotions and not rationality:

*I think many decisions within EFC and other clubs are emotionally driven because it is precisely football that is at stake. A large group of people who don't see the rationality around a football club, but it is just emotions. - Palermo*

## 5.3. Capitalization of Assets

### 5.3.1. Politics of Player Transfers

Concerning player development and transfers, the interviewees explained that they must sell players even though this may not be the best option sports-wise, or, vice versa, if there is a player that might not be the best, but you want to sell, this player may be allowed to take penalty shots to increase his statistics. Most respondents agreed that money controls this industry, and it is going increasingly towards the commercial side. This is nothing new as the interviewees explained, but it is becoming an increasingly important aspect, creating tensions between the sports and business logic:

*The industry has become so that you want to bring in a player and sell him expensive. "Yeah, we came 5th in the table, but we have made a profit of 10 million" and there comes the non-profit against the commercial. Our task is not really to make money, our task is to make sure that we win our football matches. But it has moved a little closer to the economic. - Denver*

*You sell! Are you strong and [mentions another team in the league] are strong, they can say no to X number of sales because they have money and you would like to do that too, but you sell. - Denver*



*Our first team must be composed in a certain way where we want to have a percentage of academy players who will of course hopefully also be a good deal. This is how it is in this world, we raise a person that we then can sell. - Manila*

*A commercial part of a Swedish football club is to sell its self-produced players, so it's nothing weird. On the other hand, I can feel that we are a bit quick to take bids, [...] we would not only have made a good sale, but also an important player for a period. But there you must not forget that there are two other stakeholders, and it is the player himself and the player's agent who also want to leave as well. - Palermo*

In the following, it also becomes clear how the business logic is prioritized over the sports logic concerning a specific player on the pitch:

*When EFC lets [mentions player] take all the penalties, it boosted his statistics quite a lot, and he got to play even though he was not one of the best 11 players. - Lisbon*

### 5.3.2. Sale of Training Facility

Some years ago, *EFC* decided to sell their training facility that held significant historical and symbolic value for the club. This caused outrage from members and supporters. When asked why this decision was taken, respondents, although there is no one truth, point to it being a way to capitalize on its assets since the club was on the brink financially, but also a way to commercialize. This clearly demonstrates how the business logic at times clashes with the identity logic:

*There was an opportunity to commercialize, as they said then. I can have a certain understanding for that, the club is more important than a training facility. - Denver*

*I've heard two versions of why it happened, one is that [...] they had a very bad liquidity development throughout the year and the Board received reports of this, but it was not fixed in time. The other is that we had invested in being able to play in Europe at the time and there are some who say that this was a capitalization of the training facility to be able to continue the investment. In both cases, no matter what is true, it is a proper misjudgment. [...] It was complete chaos. Because the training facility is a symbol from the 60s for us. - Rio*

Years later, this training facility was bought back by *EFC* and when asked why, the respondents again reiterated the historical and symbolic value of this training facility for the identity of the club and its members. This decision was also economically

sound since it is cheaper to own the asset in the long term. If that had not been the case, some interviewees were not sure if this decision would have been taken:

*Buying back the training facility was for the members' best because it was partly very symbolic, and it was good financially. Had it been good in terms of identity and symbolism but bad financially, it would have been a more difficult issue. - Rio*

*Then we can again talk about how different interest groups perceive a thing and which values are important. While, surely, many corporate sponsors perceive it as "How good it is that EFC takes control of their finances, takes out a loan and gets a better final figure on the last line by owning their training facility", while for others it is just an identity issue. We will own our own training facility, we will not rent from someone else. - Lisbon*

## 6. Analysis

### 6.1. Tactics to Manage Logic Multiplicity

A total of three logics were identified at the case football club that managers needed to navigate, deemed as the main logics, even though these could potentially be divided into more, namely a *sports*, *identity* and *business* logic. The theoretical framework provides a lens through which different tactics that managers drew upon can be uncovered. The tactics varied from various ways of blending the frames, shifting between them to compartmentalizing the frames. In the following, the wordings of logics and frames are used interchangeably.

#### 6.1.1. Frame Blending

One observed tactic concerning the managing of a plurality of logics was frame blending. In cases where the sports logic, identity logic, and business logic are conceptualized as both similar and congruent, they are consequently also blended in the managers' sense-making. This results in a full integration of logics, which Werner and Cornelissen (2014) refer to as radical frame blending.

For instance, radical frame blending was present when one interviewee talked about identity as a work area and how social capital can be viewed as something that can become commercial capital. This illustrates the blending of the identity and the business logic. Another case where the identity and business logics are blended is with regards to attracting sponsors to the club, which yields financial returns and is in line with the business logic. However, in order to attract sponsors, the identity logic emerged as an important factor regarding the women's team, work in the suburbs as well as recruitment. Again, a case in point where the identity and business logic merge. Lastly, also the regainment of the training facility was something interviewees made sense of by blending both the identity logic as well as the business logic, for instance: "it was partly very symbolic, and it was good financially" (Rio).

For another respondent, the blending started with the sports logic as a starting point, but this then translated positively regarding the identity logic, thus a blending between the sports and identity logic: "if we win games we can do so much better [...] out in the suburbs" (Denver).

One illustrative case where a respondent blended all three logics was when he took the identity logic as a basis and blended it with both the business and sports logic, more specifically, how work with the identity logic contributes to recruiting potential

talented football players (sports logic) as well as attracting members that pay membership fees, attend games etc. (business logic).

To conclude, when frames/logics were understood as congruent and supporting each other, they were consequently blended in the interviewees' sense-making. Interestingly, the question that remains is which frame/logic is compatible with which? Here, a blurry picture emerged where either the sports logic, the identity logic or the business logic could be the basis and subsequently the other two logics were positioned in a virtuous cycle and correspondingly congruent. There exist a multitude of variances in the cases depending on the person and context, an interesting finding, which also corresponds to the theory stating that the blending of frames does not mean that the frames are of equal importance.

#### 6.1.2. Frame Shifting

Another observable tactic in the empirics regarding managing plural frames or logics was frame shifting (Cornelissen, Werner, 2014). In this case, the respondents shifted to and from a frame depending on whether it was perceived as contrasting with another frame. One case in point here is the issue of *politics of player transfers* identified in the empirical material. Whereas other issues covered during the interviews oftentimes were in line with frame blending, on the issue of player transfers, managers shifted their frames. In this case, the basis was the financial frame and one shifted from either the sports logic or the identity logic at different instances. Firstly, when it comes to a player who performs well and is good for the club sports-wise, one manager still says "You sell!" (Denver) shifting from the sports logic towards the business logic. Further, this could also be about shifting the frame from sports to business if you are aiming for boosting statistics of a player you want to sell, even if he is not the best sports-wise: "When EFC lets [mentions player] take all the penalties, it boosted his statistics quite a lot" (Lisbon).

Secondly, if you have a player who is raised in the club from their own Academy and succeeds within the club and thus is good identity-wise, another interviewee responded: "we raise a person that we then can sell" (Manila). Again, a shift from the identity logic towards the business logic. Furthermore, also the sale of the training facility and the subsequent repurchase can be seen in light of frame shifting. As it was sold, one saw it as a way to commercialize, catering the business logic. However, years later, one shifted both to the identity logic, but also stayed within the business logic, saying that it was in line with the identity logic, but also with the business logic. This demonstrates how frame shifting dynamically transforms into frame blending.

Thirdly, the overall theme of shifting focus from the performance of the first team could also be viewed as a form of frame shifting. Interestingly, it is not necessarily about that the frames need to be perceived as contrasting, rather it was about that one saw it as more promising to shift focus towards the identity and business frame, since it was difficult to succeed in the realm of the sports frame. However, this aspect is also intertwined with frame blending and compartmentalization, mirroring the dynamic and dual deployment of tactics.

To conclude, regarding frame shifting, this tactic was deployed concerning the sale of players, in the case of the sale and subsequent repurchase of the training facility as well as regarding the shifting from the performance of the first team. Putting this into a historical context regarding the increased commercialization of the football industry, originally being in the non-profit sector, the frame shifting tactic is not unexpected since it is about the questioning of existing institutionalized frames and acting contrary to prior frame(s) (Cornelissen, Werner, 2014). This is the case if one sees the sports or identity frame as the ones that are existent prior to the commercialization, and the increased commercialization and business frame as the ones that are more to the contrary in some instances, as demonstrated above.

#### 6.1.3. Frame Compartmentalization

Yet another tactic that was observable during the interviews was frame compartmentalization, which is about frames not being integrated at all. These tactics do neither involve frame blending nor frame shifting, rather, the frames were separated in different organizational contexts due to the experienced contradiction, referred to as frame compartmentalization (Creed et al., 2010).

For one interviewee, the identity logic was of paramount importance: “in my world, it is simple, identity comes first” (Berlin). On one hand, this can be seen as a special tactic called frame denial, meaning that the other frames are suppressed and not used to guide thought or behavior in a certain process or context (Creed et. al., 2010). In this case, the identity frame guides behavior, and the business and sports frame are denied. On the other hand, this is also intertwined with identity work. This very interviewee is so deeply ingrained at *EFC* identity-wise that this identity work maintains an experience of institutional contradiction, resulting in frame compartmentalization (Lok, 2010). Furthermore, another interviewee at *EFC* stated that the logic which you adhere to is very dependent on your background identity-wise. For instance, in his view, people within the business sector generally tended to focus more on the business frame whereas individuals from the non-profit sector had more understanding for the identity logic, mirroring the intersection of identity work and compartmentalization.

Relating to frame denial (Creed et. al. 2010) and based on the following quote: “I think many decisions within EFC [...] are emotionally driven [...] large group of people who don’t see the rationality around a football club” (Palermo), one can imagine a context where emotions, for instance, suppress the business frame and highlight either the sports or the identity frame. In fact, one interviewee inquired about this, stated that emotionally driven decisions oftentimes are to the detriment of the business logic.

Moreover, the entire issue around identity work and sustainability initiatives more broadly is both about synthesizing the identity and business frame, but also about becoming more independent from the first team’s sports performance which, from this angle, can be viewed as compartmentalization from the sports logic in light of a blending of the business and identity logic. Lastly, another interesting case in point is how one manager regarding the competition that it is “so easy now to watch really good football, everyone can watch the Champions League, the Premier League” (Rome) and how this implies that one should not focus on the sports logic in this context, but rather focus on giving individuals experiences and building an identity based upon that, in line with the identity frame.

## 6.2. A Plurality of Tactical Responses

The frames or logics of sports, business and identity were different, yet sometimes in harmony with each other, and sometimes resulting in conflict. The managers at *EFC* drew upon different tactics to manage these logics or frames. The tactics varied depending on the context and situation and can thus be seen as contradictory. Sometimes, the business and identity logic were blended, yet at other instances one shifted from a sports logic towards a business logic or blended the business and identity logic while simultaneously compartmentalizing it from the sports logic. Interestingly, the shifting of focus from the performance of the first team was intertwined with both shifting, blending as well as compartmentalizing. These findings on the deployment of these very tactics may seem paradoxical, nonetheless, they correspond to Lok (2010) saying that tactics for managing a plurality of frames may be dual as well as contradictory.

## 7. Discussion

### 7.1. Answering Research Question

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate how managers of a Swedish elite football club navigate through and make sense of multiple, different institutional logics in their daily working life. Using the theories of institutional logics and cognitive frames, and tactics to manage a multiplicity of frames, the study's aim was to answer the following research question:

*How do managers in a Swedish elite football club navigate through and make sense of multiple institutional logics in their day-to-day work for the club?*

Overall, three main logics, or frames, were identified at the case football club. These were a *sports*, *identity* and *business* logic.

The analysis revealed that interviewees from the football club deployed different tactics to handle the three above mentioned logics (*sports*, *identity* and *business*). These were the tactics of frame blending, frame shifting, as well as frame compartmentalization.

Firstly, concerning frame blending, managers deployed this tactic when logics were conceptualized as both similar and congruent. The logics were blended in different ways (different combinations of two of them, or all three) depending on the individual and context in question.

Secondly, regarding frame shifting, managers deployed this tactic when a frame was perceived as contrasting with another frame. It was most outspoken concerning the transfer of players, and the sale and subsequent repurchase of the training facility. With respect to the increased commercialization of a historically non-profit sector, this tactic is not unexpected. Interestingly, the shifting of focus from the performance of the first team was intertwined with both frame shifting, blending as well as compartmentalizing, demonstrating the dynamic and dual deployment of tactics.

Lastly, with respect to the third tactic of frame compartmentalization, this tactic involves neither frame blending nor frame shifting. Here, both compartmentalization of the identity frame related to identity work, business versus non-profit background, as well as implications of emotions on the business logic were observed. Further, a compartmentalization from the sports logic in light of a blending of the business and identity frame was also observed.

## 7.2. Contributions to Existing Literature

Overall, this study contributes to previous literature about institutional logics with another perspective than most of hitherto research, focusing on the individuals' handling and sense-making of multiple institutional logics, through deploying the theory of cognitive frames in the analysis. More specifically, the study contributes with findings of which cognitive frames and tactics individuals in a Swedish elite football club deploy when managing multiple institutional logics.

The research resonates with the tactics of frame shifting and frame blending put forward by Werner and Cornelissen (2014). It further resonates with the tactics of managing frames drawn from institutional logics, such as identity work and frame compartmentalization, as well as frame denial (Creed et al., 2010; Lok, 2010; Jones et al., 2012). Further, the plurality of how frame tactics were deployed by different individuals and in different contexts may seem paradoxical but resonates with previous research saying that tactics for managing a plurality of frames may be dual and contradictory (Lok, 2010).

However, this research contributes with a more dynamic and nuanced view on how these frame tactics can be deployed. For instance, a frame compartmentalization from the sports logic in light of a blending of the business and identity logic tactic, and a dynamic transformation of frame shifting into frame blending tactic was observed during the interviews. Moreover, we also extend the research by demonstrating how emotions in such an emotionally laden sector can contribute to the tactic of frame denial, suppressing the business frame. This is an interesting intersection and finding, but not investigated further in this thesis.

Furthermore, this research also resonates with Alexius and Furusten (2018) arguing that it can be advantageous to have multiple logics if one is good at deploying and switching between them, as these then can be invoked in different situations if deemed appropriate.

Lastly, the research also corresponds to Carlsson-Wall, Kraus et al.'s (2016) findings regarding situation specific variations, since we observed that there was not a stable relationship between the three logics, and whether they were in conflict or in harmony with each other was not given but dependent on the individual and the context.



### 7.3. Implications for Practitioners

This study also offers some practical implications. Overall, the context of the study is relevant to all practitioners dealing with and being exposed to multiple institutional logics, or stakeholder demands. Firstly, our study sheds light on in what ways these logics can take form and how they are expressed by managers. Secondly, the study illustrates how logics not only necessarily need to conflict with each other, but that they, in fact, can be in harmony with each other. More practically, our study points towards how one can utilize, among others, sustainability initiatives or building upon identity to become more independent from one specific logic. Lastly, the study also demonstrates what different framing tactics, for instance, frame blending, frame shifting as well as frame compartmentalization and frame denial, managers draw upon. Tactics that other practitioners are free to use when they are dealing with multiple stakeholders demands.

### 7.4. Limitations

This study contains some limitations. As the study is based on an interpretivist approach, the presentation of the empirical material is influenced by the authors' interpretation. Thus, the authors' perceptions and biases can have affected whether the empirical material has been presented in a proper way. More specifically, by studying institutional logics, framing theory and the context of football clubs and reading literature on these topics, and informing the interviewees about that the aim of the study is to investigate how they handle different and sometimes contradictory demands from stakeholders, this may have shaped the responses of the interviewees, the data analysis as well as the results. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of the study constitutes a limitation in that other factors, which are not included in the framework, could be interesting for the study. Additionally, the results of the study are affected by the selected interviewees. Finally, the scope of this study was limited to a football club in Sweden's highest league (*Allsvenskan*). Conducting a similar study on a football club in a lower division, in another country (without the 50+1 rule), or an entirely different sports association, would yield a dissimilar context which may render some different conclusions.

## 7.5. Future Research

This study gives some promising avenues for future research. Firstly, future research could focus on comparing how managers in different sports associations, or even in different sectors, handle multiple institutional logics, to investigate if differences can be found. On the same train of thought, one could also conduct research on football clubs in different ranking leagues in Sweden, or leagues that, for instance, do not have the 50 + 1 rule. One could also expand the scope of interviewees to include football players to compare their responses to football managers'. Further, potentially rewarding studies would take a more longitudinal approach and follow some managers closely to investigate if and how they shift tactics and the contextual factors behind that. Moreover, one could also investigate more holistically how managers' frames are affected by changes in the world around them. Finally, one interesting topic that emerged during the research was that of the *emotional elevator*, meaning the impact of feelings in such an emotionally laden industry. Thus, we call for more research on the intersection of managing institutional logics and the influence of feelings, emotions and passionate interests on the very tactics one employs.

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## 9. Appendices

### 9.1. Appendix 1. List of Interviews

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Via Teams	Head of Security	105 min	4th March 2022
2. Via Teams	Head of Media & Information	100 min	8th March 2022
3. Via Teams	SLO - Supporter Liaison Officer	82 min	10th March 2022
4. Via Teams	Leadership Coordinator	38 min	17th March 2022
5. In Physical	Member of the Board of Directors	120 min	17th March 2022
6. Via Teams	Member of the Board of Directors	54 min	18th March 2022
7. Via Teams	Sales Manager	41 min	23rd March 2022
8. Via Teams	Club Director	62 min	25th March 2022
9. Via Teams	Financial Officer	31 min	28th March 2022
10. Via Teams	Commercial Manager	61 min	29th March 2022
11. Via Teams	Coordinator & Responsible for Organizational Values	43 min	30th March 2022
12. Via Teams	Operational Coordinator - Sustainability	48 min	31st March 2022

## 9.2. Appendix 2. Interview Guide in English

### Formalities

- Recording of the interview
- GDPR form
- Anonymity

### Example of Questions

- Could you tell us a little bit about yourself? (Background before EFC, education etc.)
- How did you end up at EFC? Did you have any connection to the club before?
- What is your role? How do your daily work tasks look like?
- What is your area of responsibility?
- Which internal/external stakeholders are most important in your role? Which ones do you have the most contact with?
- How does the performance of the A-team affect your work?
- How would you define success?
- How do supporters impact your daily work?
- How do you evaluate the previous year? Performance metrics?
- How does the strategy look like? How do you work with it?
- Which are the main challenges you encounter in your work? Specifically when you take decisions?
- How do you take into consideration different stakeholders' demands?
- How does the decision process look like when you take a decision regarding XY?
- Which factors do you consider when taking a decision regarding XY?



### 9.3. Appendix 3. Interview Guide in Swedish

#### Formalia

- Inspelning av intervjun
- GDPR formulär
- Anonymitet

#### Exempel på frågor

- Skulle du kunna berätta lite mer om dig själv? (bakgrund innan EFC, utbildning etc.)
- Hur hamnade du på EFC? Hade du någon koppling till klubben sedan tidigare?
- Vad har du för roll, hur ser ditt dagliga arbete ut?
- Vad skulle du säga är ditt ansvarsområde?
- Vilka interna/externa intressenter är de viktigaste för din roll? Vilka har du mest kontakt med?
- Hur påverkar A-lagets resultat ditt arbete?
- Hur skulle du definiera framgång?
- Har fansen påverkan på ditt dagliga arbete?
- Hur utvärderar du det året som varit? Performance metrics?
- Hur ser strategin ut idag? Hur jobbar man med den?
- Vilka är de största utmaningarna du möter i ditt jobb? Specifikt när du tar beslut?
- Hur tar du hänsyn till de olika intressenternas behov?
- Hur ser beslutprocessen ut när du ska ta ett beslut kring XY?
- Vilka faktorer överväger du när du ska ta ett beslut gällande XY?

## 9.4. Appendix 4. Email to Prospective Participants

Hi [First name],

We are two third-year Bachelor students at the Stockholm School of Economics. [Name of main contact person] contacted you this week regarding our Bachelor thesis we are currently writing in management where we analyze how employees in a Swedish Elite Football Club [EFC] are handling demands from different stakeholders (e.g. from supporters, demands on sports success, financial targets) in their daily working life and concerning different decision-making situations.

We would have been incredibly thankful if you could line up for an interview of approximately 45 minutes. No preparation is required.

We are available for conducting the interview at the following times:

[Proposed time slots]

We are also available on weekends.

Feel free to come back with a time that suits you based on the list above.

If you have any further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you!

[Contact information; telephone number]

All the best,  
Lennart and Sadia