



GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT  
GÖTTINGEN

## A European Perspective on the Current Issues of Intercollegiate Athletics (NCAA)



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# Overview

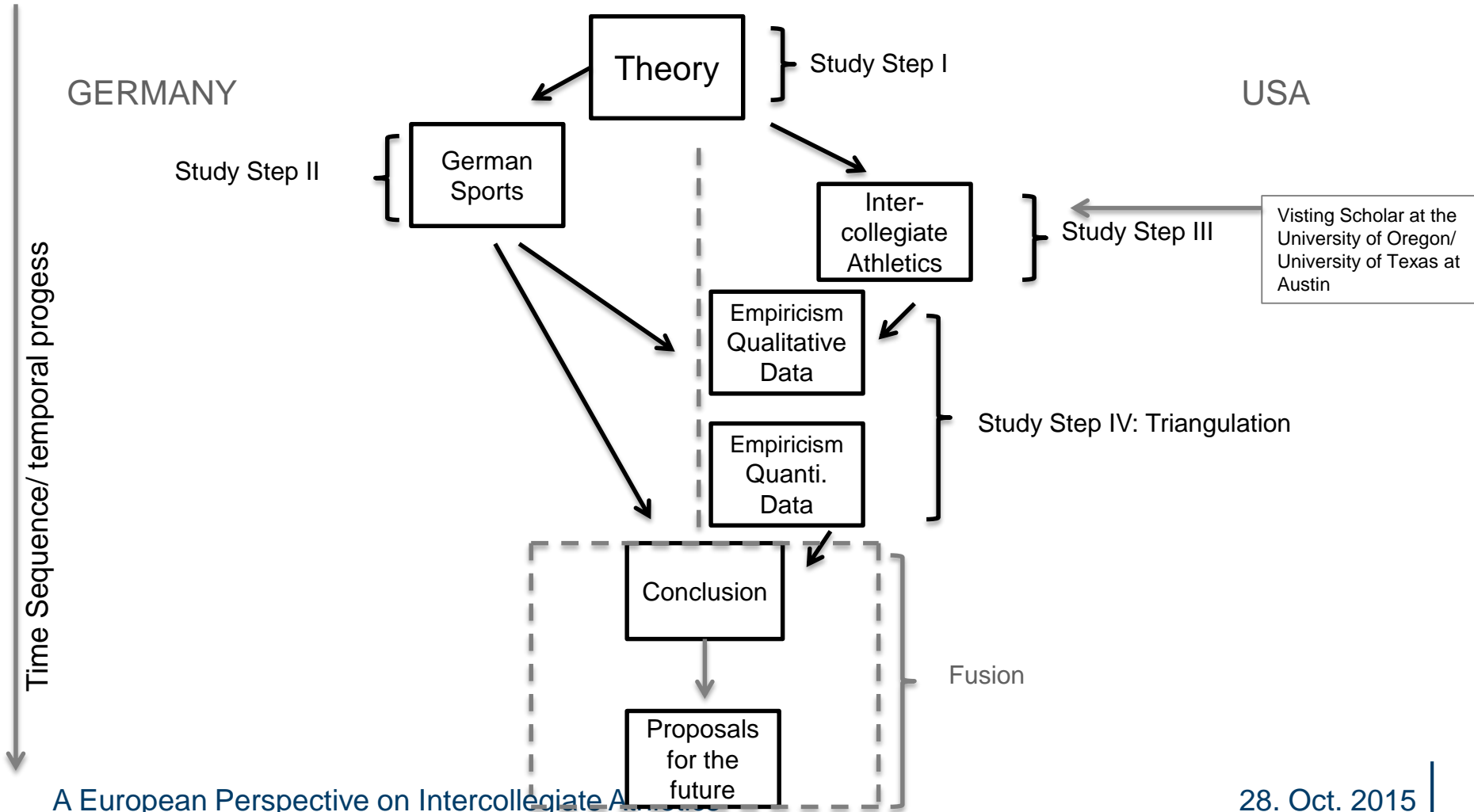
## Research by the Author

- Support services for student-athletes
- Development of a support program for student-athletes
- Aim of studies: learn from ideas and mistakes that have been made internationally
- Detailed analysis of the American system
- Has visited several American athletic powerhouses

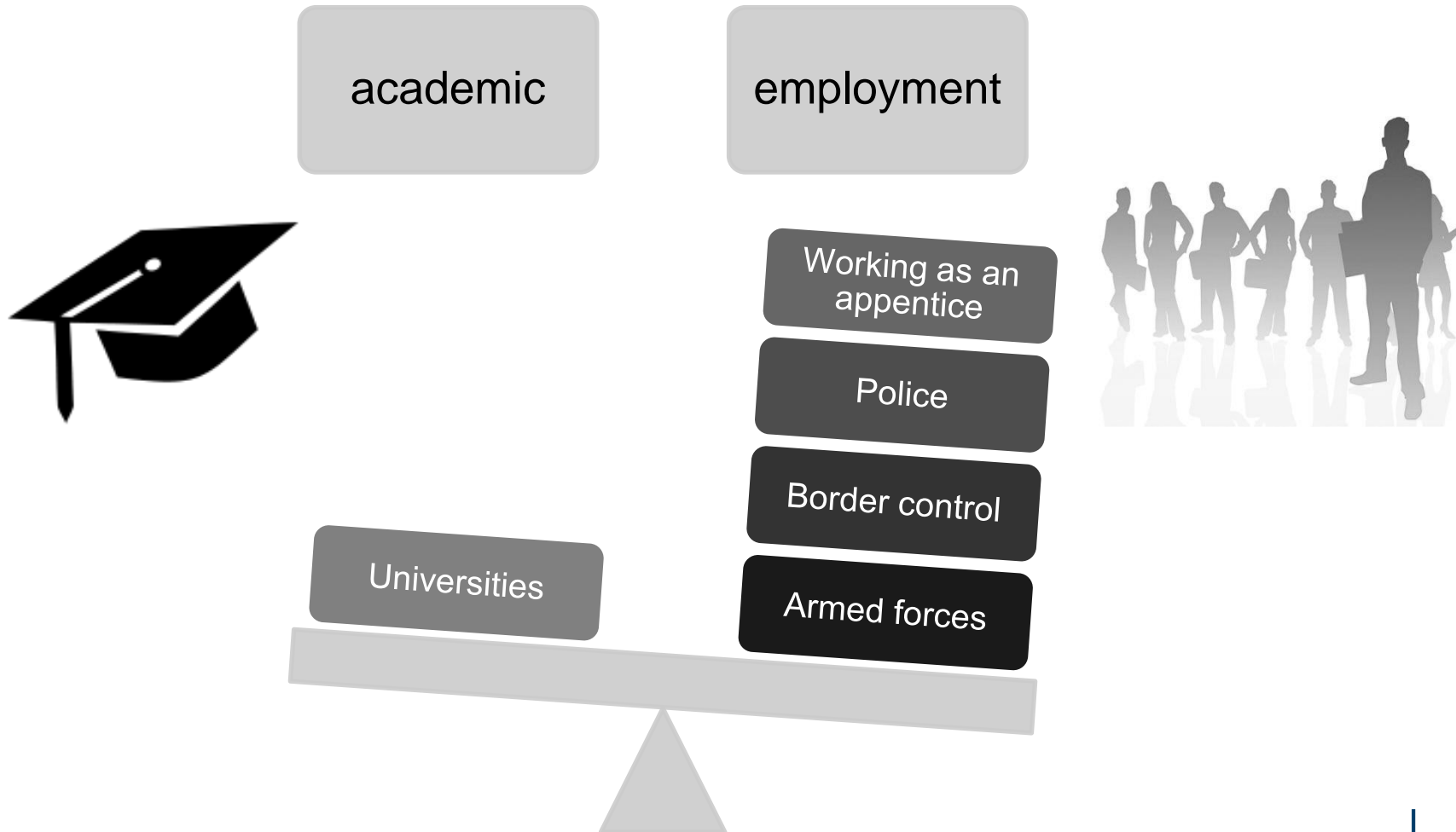
## Outline of the Presentation

- Introduction and structure of study
- Situation analysis: support system for athletes in Germany
- Situation analysis: Intercollegiate athletics (USA)
- Triangulation: New findings regarding the support of student-athletes
- The special role of German student-athletes
- Outlook

## Research project: Structure



## Study step II: Situation Analysis (Germany): Support of Elite Athletes





## Study Step III: American College Athletics - an International Factor

- Recruiting international athletes is a growing trend
- 17,653 international student-athletes competed during the 2009-10 school year
- 500-700 German „A to C-Kader“ athletes are active members of an US-institution
- Highest number of German athletes outside of Germany
- US-Universities as only option to pursue an academic and athletic career at the same time for many German student-athletes

## Study Step III: USA - Identification of Characteristics

### US-specific problems

- Illegal recruiting
- "*One and Done*" phenomenon
- Amateurism
- Athletes' rights
- Exploitation of ethnic minorities
- Role of „boosters“ and alumni
- Tax exemptions
- High profile vs. low profile sports
- Salaries in athletic departments
- Structure of NCAA
- Power structure within university

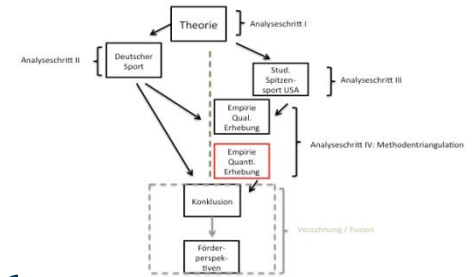
### Indicators for Germany

- Enrollment/ Matriculation
- Commercialism
- Scholarships (Length)
- Clustering
- Academic integrity
- Participation of faculty
- Competition between universities
- No one-dimensional focus
- Support programs / services
- Proximity of facilities



## Study Step IV: Qualitative Data (Interviews with US-experts)

- Were questioned about:
  - Problems of Intercollegiate Athletics
  - Perception of international student-athletes
  - Experiences with German student-athletes
- Findings suggest:
  - Wide spread problems especially in high profile sports occur:
    - Entrance procedures
    - Eligibility
    - Exploitation of student-athletes
    - Commercialism
    - Clustering (e.g. football, basketball)
    - Academic support, Life skills program (discrepancy = pros and cons)
- All experts valued European student-athletes regarding their:
  - Higher academic performance than American peers
  - Athletic performance, often leaders → Germans = special role



## Quantitative Data – Development of Questionnaire

### Contact:

- Individual university databases (use of search engines)
- Social network (facebook, LinkedIn etc.)
- Coaches, athletes, personal contacts

### Questionnaire:

- Mostly descriptive
- 550 times visited
- 163 completed questionnaires
- 47% female/ 53% male
- 18 different sports

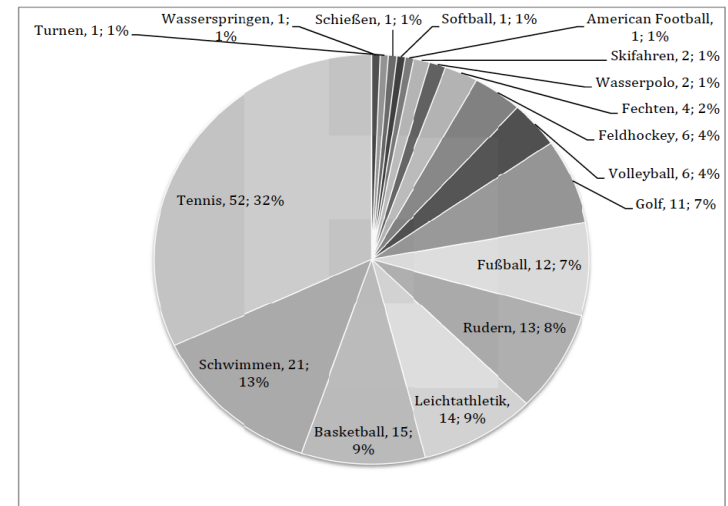
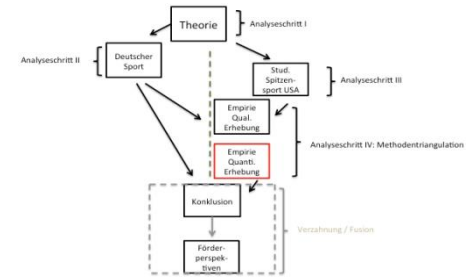


Abbildung 47: Prozentuale Verteilung der Sportarten





# Quantitative Data: Structure and Results

## 1. Design and process of conducting the survey

## 2. Range of results:

- Biographic, sport- and study-specific profile
- Duration of study
- **Time requirements/ burden (student-athletes)**
- Reasons for „exit“ USA
- Scholarships at US-Universities
- Support Services of American Universities
- **Academic performance of German student-athletes**
- Experiences at German und US-Universities
- **Evaluation of German and US Universities and sport-systems**



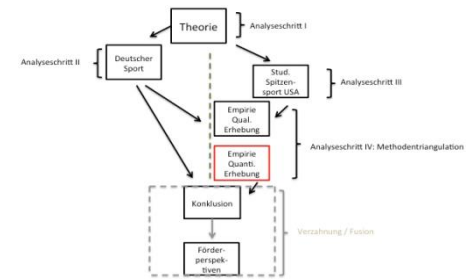
## Quantitative Data: German student-athletes in the US

- Would not have moved to the U.S. or continued to participate in elite sports without the opportunities in the US
- Want to pursue their university degree + compete at a high athletic level
- Athletic facilities and athletic opportunities in the US are superior
- Take advantage of academic support programs regularly
- Describe themselves as academically sounder than their teammates
- On average have better grades than the American student-athlete and the general student body

## Quantitative Data:

### Grade average:

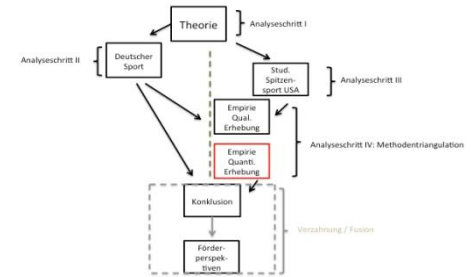
- Grade average of German student-athletes (GPA): **3.53**
- Grade average of students in the US (GPA): 3.11
- Grade average of all student-athletes in the USA (GPA): 2.56



### Comparison - USA vs. GER (grades):

- 37 Athletes:
  - Preference USA=92% GER=3%
  - „Laufbahnberater“ vs. Academic advisor
    - OSP-Berater: D
    - US-academic advisor: A
- All questioned Athletes:
  - US-Uni.= 1,15 (A)
  - Ger. Uni.= 5,18 (F)
  - US-sports system: 1,66 (A)
  - Ger. sports system: 4,36 (D)

## Study Step IV: Quantitative Data



### Time restrictions per week

- Training (hrs per week): 20.4
- Studies (hrs per week): 22.2
- Side job (hrs per week; N:37): 12.32

### Support services at US-Universities

- **US-Strengths according to the German athletes**
  - Academic support (only if independent from AD)
  - Physiotherapy / Medical support (superior to services in Germany)
  - Life skills courses (German student-athletes compiled a ranking in the study)
  - Psychological support (not common in Germany)



## Conclusion

- Whether support services for student-athletes make sense is an ethical question!
- Once found important, there is an ethical obligation to assist student-athletes to be successful (in both countries)
- German student-athletes prove that academically well prepared and motivated student-athletes can flourish even in the highly problematic American system
- Lowering academic standards, only helps to marginalize the intellectual enterprise, has to be an elite and select program



## Conclusions and Results

### For both countries:

- University presidents don't have the power to bring change
- Governmental or legislative influence is necessary
- Different conferences/ universities need different models (revenue for only a few athletic departments at the moment)

### Further research necessary:

- On efficiency of academic support +“life skills programs”
- On efficiency of state of the art academic centers
- Effects of close monitoring student-athletes
- Is actual academic success for student athletes in high profile sports possible



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**Thank you for your attention!**

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## Conclusion: Athletics in American Higher Education

- Rooted in the classical ideal of *Mens sana in corpore sano* - a sound mind in a sound body
- A complex/ controversial aspect of higher education
- Established a multibillion dollar industry
- Student-athletes are modern stars
- Millions in revenue for only a few athletic departments
- Student-athletes often labeled as “dumb jocks”
- ***QUESTION: What has been done to make actual academic success for student athletes possible?***





# Student-Athletes...

## In Germany

- possess two independent profiles (elite sports, university)
- Club system
- No financial support by the universities
- Support program  
„Partnerhochschule des Spitzensports“ has failed
- Cooperation with a lot of different organizations (olympic centers, associations, clubs, medical staff)

## In the USA

- Intertwined within the educational system
- College teams
- Scholarships
- Entire support within the university and athletic department
- Support programs are installed