Glocal processes in elite youth football: A comparison of Finnish and Hungarian clubs

Isännän Ääni seuraseminaari, Mikkeli
Mihaly Szerovay
6 helmikuuta 2016
A bit about me

2007 Hungary -> Finland
2007-2012 Player of JJK Jyväskylä
2010 MSc in Social Sciences of Sport
2013 -> Doctoral student at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland
2012-2013 Head of youth and coaching at Palokan Riento ry
2014 -> Board member at Palokan Riento ry
2013 UEFA B level coach
2008-> Goalkeeper coach in various youth clubs

Research interests: Football; sport clubs; professionalization; sport marketing
Background

- Football as a global sport
- Football as the most researched sport
- Lack of detailed mapping and understanding on the different models of youth football
- Scientific literature on youth football is scarce
- Practices of top-level sport trickling down to youth sport
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP (PPP, 2012)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Licensed players</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>FIFA ranking (since '93/03)</th>
<th>UEFA club ranking</th>
<th>Big 5 players (11/15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>39,200 US$</td>
<td>5.4 million</td>
<td>131,000 / 27,000</td>
<td>No major tournaments</td>
<td>55 / 18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>22,600 US$</td>
<td>10 million</td>
<td>151,000 / 8,000</td>
<td>1938; 1954 WC runner-up</td>
<td>54 / 34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The economic level of European leagues
(Poli, Besson and Ravenel 2012)
# Hungarian youth national teams 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Games played</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>GD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U 21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>8-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U19*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U19-EC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>10-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altogether</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research questions

(1) In what way do the operations of Finnish and Hungarian elite youth football clubs differ in the 2010s?

(2) In what way does the glocal dimension appear on the youth level of football in the 2010s in these countries?
Elite youth clubs?

- In Hungary, the top 15 youth clubs included in the Double Pass youth football academy audit, commissioned by the Hungarian Football Federation.

- In Finland, youth clubs selected for a pilot programme launched by the Finnish Football Association in 2013 for developing a quality system.
Theoretical framework

- Globalization of football within the social sciences of sport
  - ’Duality of glocality’ (Giulianotti & Robertson 2009)

- Interacting local specificities and global influences shape the operation of elite youth clubs
Methods and data

- Structured interviews with general managers of elite youth football clubs
  - HJK (Helsinki) and JJK (Jyväskylä) from Finland
  - Ferencvarosi TC (Budapest), Vasas Kubala Academy (Budapest), and Debrecen Football Academy from Hungary

- Semi-structured interviews carried out with Finnish (13) and Hungarian (14) football practitioners

- Thematic analysis
Points of comparison

The interview guide consists of the following topics
- range of roles in the organization
- embeddedness in the local environment
- resources
- goals of the club
- sporting activities
- competitiveness and coaching
- publicity

Most notable themes found in the data on differences
- Scope of activities provided by the clubs
- Range of resources available for the operation of the clubs
Typical player pathways in elite youth clubs in the 2010s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>2 - 4</th>
<th>5 - 6</th>
<th>7 - 9</th>
<th>10 - 12</th>
<th>13 - 16</th>
<th>17 - 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| FIN  | Daycare football | Daycare football | Age group teams:  
(1) all players together  
(2) district teams | Age group teams:  
(1) first team  
(2) challenger teams | Recreational teams  
After-school activities for pupils | SHA academy (10 - 16) |
| HUN  | Daycare football | Age group teams:  
(1) first team  
(2) second team | Age group teams:  
- one team per age group  
- academy age groups (14-19) |
Scope of activities

- Finnish clubs typically provide activities for a wider range of participants compared to Hungarian clubs

- Concept of academy

- Bozsik programme (2011->)
  - Club programme (U6-U11)
  - School programme (U6-U14)
Main sources of income for elite youth football clubs in the 2010s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payments by parents</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tax revenues foregone by the state</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Club membership fee</td>
<td>- Company tax allowance system (TAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team monthly fee</td>
<td><strong>Hungarian Football Federation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Market oriented services based on consumer logic</td>
<td>- Support for academies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tournaments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other forms of resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>Other forms of resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- After-school activities (paid by municipalities)</td>
<td>- Payments by parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Football Association of Finland</td>
<td>- Monthly fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach education scheme (Fortum Tutor)</td>
<td>- Legislation favouring sport clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent coaching scheme</td>
<td>- Simplified entrepreneurial tax and contribution regime (EKHO) for employing coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ministry of Education and Culture</td>
<td>- Municipality support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club support scheme project money</td>
<td>- Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volunteer work by parents and members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sponsors; Municipality support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Clubs and teams have separate budgets and they are partly independent within the club.
Embeddedness in the local environment -facilities

JJK Juniority
- Office rented
- Pitches and school halls owned by the city (free of charge)
- ’Air domes’ (subject to charge)
  - Owned by JJK
  - Owned by the city
- Piispala training centre

Debrecen football academy
- Football academy, Pallag (free of charge)
- Artificial turfs at schools (free of charge)
Homogenization processes

- Importing know-how
  - Soccer Services
  - Double Pass

- Increasing number of full-time and part-time coaches as well as specialists
  - Physical trainers, goalkeeper coaches, medical staff etc.
  - Heads of coaching, heads of sections

- New technologies

- More systematic way of management
Metaphors for sport clubs

- Koski (2010) explains the notions of a sport club through figurative examples

- Sport clubs
  - as a public service
  - as a production plant
  - as a supermarket
  - as a community

- Finland -> all dimensions are rather strong
  - the supermarket dimension getting stronger?

- In Hungarian clubs the production plant dimension is considerably stronger than the others -> referring to the elite development
### Glocal dimensions in elite youth football

#### (1) Specificities of the youth football system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of operation</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities for a variety of participants</td>
<td>Market-oriented elements; Consumer logic has appeared</td>
<td>Elite development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>Focus on maximizing support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>Contribution of volunteers</td>
<td>Higher amount of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main financial resources</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>TAO; Support from the HFF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence of heterogenization**
- Professionalization; specialization; internationalization
- Growing amount of full-time and part-time employees
- Expanding social networks; importing knowledge

**Evidence of homogenization**

#### (2) Football in the subsystem of sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of football</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most practiced team sport</td>
<td>Not the No 1</td>
<td>No 1 sport in terms of both spectators and participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport policy</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport for all</td>
<td>Focus towards elite sport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other**
- Distinct development paths of professionalism
- Different legal and taxation environment as well as role of the three sectors
- Different role of media

#### (3) The place of Finnish and Hungarian football in the global football system

- Transit / supplier countries in the football market
- Growing amount of international networks in both professional and grassroots football (tournaments, cooperation)
- Peripheral inclusion in the global football figuration
Changing landscape of youth sport

- Diversification of sport culture
- The number of paid officials has grown
- Expertise is at a higher level
- Cost of practicing increasing
- Participants becoming consumers
- Widening social networks
- Children begin to practice sport in sport clubs younger age than before
- Commitment (coaching, volunteers) decreasing
- Changing and multiple roles (pl. board member, coach, parent)
Conclusions (1)

- **Finland**
  - traditions of third sector sport and civic activities are still strong
  - market-oriented elements have become increasingly important -> appearance of consumer logic

- **Hungary**
  - the present context may enable the country to break away from its peripheral status, however, changes in the political platform may endanger even the basic operation of the football clubs
  - the expanded involvement of the state may hinder the civil sphere from finding its independence and self-maintenance
Conclusions (2)

- The concept and organization of top-level youth football are understood differently.

- Diverse development paths of local football as well as global influences are reflected in the organization of youth football.

- Both football organizations have been increasingly integrated in the global order of football.

- It is suggested to be highly challenging for these countries to compete on the global market of football.
References


Itkonen, H. (2013): Urheilun kentällä globaalia ja lokaalia räätälöidään koko ajan uusiksi [Global and local are constantly reformed on the field of sports]. Liikunta & Tiede, 50: 5. 4-8.


Thank you for your attention!

mihaly.szerovay@jyu.fi