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## WELCOMING THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OF SPORT SOCIOLOGY IN BUDAPEST A Report on the 51<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Sociology of Sport<sup>2,19</sup>

### Abstract

In June 2016 Budapest hosted the 51<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Sociology of Sport. This annual assembly of the International Sport Sociology Association (ISSA) was considered unique and important by the association as well as by local organizers. ISSA Board of Directors were especially pleased to be holding a sport-related academic congress for the first time in the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), the second time in Hungary – as an ISSA Congress was already held in Budapest in 1999. Local organizers were delighted to showcase this annual event in a truly academic environment, especially since the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) – adhering to the mission of ISSA as well as to the goals of MTA in supporting international collaboration among members – included Hungarian scholars and academics working in the field of sport sociology home and abroad. The aim of this report is to introduce the organizers and participants to as well as share the academic content and overall nature of the congress with a broader academic audience.

### Organizers and Participants

The International Sport Sociology Association (ISSA) is an independent academic, non-for profit organization and was founded in 1965. ISSA is a member of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE). ICSSPE is one of the largest networks of associations, organizations, and institutions concerned with sport, sport sciences, and physical education accounting for millions of people worldwide. ICSSPE belongs to UNESCO and as such cooperates with the wider sport movements to foster sport, physical activity and exercise; education in and research on

health; as well as advocate for the benefits related to an active lifestyle and ethical values inherent in sporting activities. ISSA is also affiliated with the International Sociological Association (ISA) and operates as ISA's Research Committee 27 – Sociology of Sport. The International Sport Sociology Association congresses are normally held annually – sometimes in conjunction with ICSSPE or ISA meetings. As part of its role as Research Committee 27, ISSA holds sessions every four year at the ISA World Congress. Additionally to that ISSA's 218 members come from all of the five continents, approximately 50 countries. To give all members equitable access to the annual meetings ISSA Executive Board follows a rule of geographic rotation when it comes to the selection of congress locations. Helping Executive Board members to make the right decision with site selection ISSA has a very detailed and well written policy to be followed when it comes to reviewing the applications, the so called 'Expression of Interest – Hosting ISSA Annual Conference'.

The sociology of sport, while grounded in sociology, has always been much more of a social science of sport. In addition to sociology, work in the field encompasses history, political science, human geography, anthropology, social psychology and economics. Also, the new offshoots of sociology such as, cultural studies, media studies, and gender studies, are well represented in the field. Hungarian sport sociologists – working at institutions of higher education at home or abroad – have been actively involved with the work of sport sociology associations nationally, regionally, and internationally.<sup>2</sup> The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of the 2016 ISSA World Congress intended to represent this variety and included scholars published in

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2 As the international 'umbrella' organization, ISSA consults with national and regional groups. In North America – NASSS, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, which publishes the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, is the most well known regional group. European researchers are also linked to the European Association of the Sociology of Sport.

different subfields of sport sociology as well as graduate students who are just beginning their career (Table 1). The main goal of the conference was to gather the international community of sport sociologists to discuss and debate the key issues surrounding the role and place of sport in global social and economic development. Beyond the main theme – “Sport, Global Development, and Social Change” – the congress also featured a diverse range of sessions to enable scholars, including postgraduate students, the opportunity to share their latest research.

The work on hosting a successful congress in Budapest started a year before, in the summer of 2015. The LOC put together an inviting welcome video and showed it in Paris, at the ISSA 50<sup>th</sup> annual meeting.<sup>3</sup> Delegates liked the presentation: the majestic building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the main theme of the congress, as well as the location, Budapest, with the variety of cultural and social programs and activities it can offer. After the Scientific Committee announced the Call for Papers late fall 2015, the LOC experienced an ongoing influx of academic abstracts. As a result, the congress in Budapest attracted 208 delegates from 39 countries (Table 2). The LOC was extremely proud to see the active participation of Hungarian scholars and young professionals. While academics from the University of Physical Education – Dr. Gyongyi Foldesi Szabo, Dr. Andrea Gal, Dr. Tamas Doczi –, from St John’s University (USA) – Dr. Eme-se Ivan –, from Worcester University (UK) – Dr. Gyozo Molnar are considered to be regular presenters at ISSA annual meetings, there have been an additional eight presentations delivered by colleagues from ELTE University, Corvinus University, Debrecen University, University of Pecs, Szechenyi Istvan University (Gyor), and Lafayette College (USA). The growing importance of sport sociology among young Hungarian scholars was demonstrated by the five paper submitted by graduate students. Thus, hosting the ISSA 51<sup>st</sup> World Congress in Budapest provided a unique opportunity to make stronger ties and build long-lasting relationships between the international sport sociology and the Hungarian academic community.

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to the side [www.issa2016.org](http://www.issa2016.org) and use the link to the video at the bottom of the page.

## Academic Content

The main theme of the congress, *Sport, Global Development, and Social Change*, provided a wide range of opportunities for scholars to discuss and debate current topics of sport sociology. The congress started with a plenary session. David Black, a professor of political science at Dalhousie University (Canada) delivered the keynote address: “*Never the twain shall meet? The challenge of articulating top-down and bottom-up development through sport*” Dr. Black’s research interest focuses on multilateral diplomacy and development assistance specifically in Africa with a special focus on sport mega-events’ role and place in the process. Recently, international federations and sport governing bodies have awarded the opportunity to host a range of sport mega-events to developing countries and emerging markets. They argue that sport and sporting mega-events play a positive role in social and economic development. However, others argue that as a result of these policies nations spend valuable resources on sporting events instead of education, health, or social programs. No surprise Dr. Black’s lecture was conducive to lively discussion among delegates and set the tone for the entire congress. Among the 208 registered participants 180 authored and presented academic papers over the three days. 124 presenters shared their research findings in parallel sessions while six choose to showcase their scholarly work in the form of a dedicated poster session. The most papers were submitted to sessions such as *Sports and Media*; *Race and Ethnicity in Sport*; *Sports and Gender*; *Sports and National Identity*; and *Sports, Economics, Business, and Society*. The following abstracts give us an overview of topics and issues researched by sport sociologists around the world and presented at the Congress in Budapest.

In *Sports and Media* sessions:

### **How Do Korean Sport Celebrities Communicate via Instagram?**

Eunhye Yoo, Seoul National University (South Korea)

Yun Jung Kim, Seoul National University (South Korea)

This paper examines ways in which Korean sport celebrities use Instagram to communicate with their fans and possibly other audiences. Our primary focus was to analyze characteristics of sport celebrities Instagram users, types of contents, and methods/

strategies for communicating and interacting with fans. A total of ten male and female Instagram cases were selected for analysis. Instagram was the most frequently used image-based SNS among sport celebrities, through which they actively presented their everyday mundane activities not covered by mainstream media and other communication channels. It is noted that celebrities and their fans easily create their online communication space in which they share rather personal information using tag, hash, and reply functions. The primary feature of this communication is a form of 'parasocial interaction' by which fans respond to a range of posts initiated by celebrities. This paper discusses the nature and characteristics of the Korean sport celebrities Instagram community.

*In Race and Ethnicity in Sport sessions:*

**From the tip of a finger to the tip of the tongue: Sport science and the (re)production of biological 'race'**

Brent McDonald, Victoria University and ISEAL (Australia)

Whilst sport is often posited as an exemplar of egalitarianism in Australian society, it is littered historically and 'scientifically' with all sorts of racism and racialised logic. This paper draws on the ethnographic research and systematic literature review to examine how biological 'race' is (re)produced in 21st century sport science. In particular it attempts to understand how the minutiae of the sport science laboratory is translated and experienced in the classroom and then is further prepared for 'coffee-table' consumption through the media. Finally I argue that, in the post-colonial context, sport science potentially creates the conditions for a particular version of 'well-meaning' racism, as it enacts a common-sense grounded in biological 'race'. The conclusion is the need to apply critical 'race' theory to the sport sciences and their research design.

*In Sports and Gender sessions:*

**Analysis of Factors Influencing Women Leadership Development Programme in Sport in Turkey**

Gülay Özen, Hacettepe University Graduate School of Health Sciences (Turkey)

Canan Koca, Hacettepe University Graduate School of Health Sciences (Turkey)

In the recent years, leadership development programs for women have aimed to provide a better understanding of their communities and contribute to both social networks and new business opportunities. Various non-governmental organizations help to ensure equal rights for women by organizing leadership educational programs to encourage women to become. Unfortunately these kinds of programs are not included in sports organizations in Turkey. Today many countries have implemented leadership development programs, for example The Women Leaders in Sport-Australia, Women and Leadership Programme-Canada, Women and Leadership Development Programme-UK. The purpose of this research was to examine the organizational and socio-cultural factors involved in the development of sports and women's leadership educational programmes in Turkey. Research methods used include document analysis and analysis of statistical data. The results indicate that 97% of presidents and 95% of secretary generals of sports federations in Turkey are male. In order to be successful in the elections process of sports federations, candidates need political-economic capital and other forms of influence within the sports community. Unfortunately, at present female athletes constitute only 27% of all athletes in Turkey revealing that women's political-economic capital is less compared to men. To date, studies conducted in Turkey reveal that the regulations of sports organizations make it difficult for sports administrators to establish policies aimed at increasing the number of female athletes and, in turn, the number of female sport administrators. Moreover, sports management staff and sports organizations seem to have negative attitudes towards women managers. This study suggests that in order to advance the development of women's leadership training program in Turkey, the socio-cultural structure of the sports organizations and gender relations must be considered.

*In Sports and National Identity sessions:*

**2014 FIFA WORLD CUP and corruption: contesting the national football team as a symbol of Brazilian identity**

Felipe Tobar, Universidade da Região de Joinville (Brazil)

Luana Gusso, Universidade da Região de Joinville (Brazil)

Football started to play an important role within the Brazilian society in the early 1900s, being considered a metaphor of social life par excellence. The game which was invented by the British, could not resist the popular interest, becoming, not without conflicts, a shared space and popular ground and, consequently, a key factor to the “nation-building” process exploited by the State. As the Sociologist Mauricio Murad pointed out “Football is like a book which tells about the positive as well as the negative features of Brazilian society”. In that context, the 2014 FIFA World Cup, not only uncovered the shortcomings of the Brazilian government, through countrywide protests, but also, with the disclosure of corruption cases involving FIFA and CBF (Brazilian Football Federation) officials, helped to set up an important debate questioning the continuity of the established notion of the national football team as a legitimate representative of the national identity, in other words, it actually belongs to the Brazilian people, or if it is only an object of exploitation in order to ensure benefits for its leaders, at different times and contexts. With the support of Bourdieu's sociology theories of habitus and social fields, this article problematizes how the notion of 'national identity' has been used before and during the World Cup in Brazil under two premises: the connection between the popular protests of June 2013 and “FIFA's World Cup”; and how corruption in football universe has jeopardized the identification of Brazilian people with one of their national symbols.

In *Sports, Economics, Business, and Society* sessions:

**Resources in support of grassroots sport clubs: a comparative analysis between Italy and Norway**  
Irene Masoni, University of Pisa (Italy)

Sport clubs are the key elements in both Italian and Norwegian grassroots sport. This comparative study address two research questions: what type of economy supports these sport entities in these countries and what are the related modes of governance? Starting from qualitative interviews conducted during the last year (2015) in Italy and in Norway, and continuing with a detailed study of institutional characteristics, this paper analyzes the resources that are at the base of the grassroots sport activity and the modes of governance that regard these specific players of social economy. The research considers the support of: 1) public institutions, 2) local community actors (neighborhood, relatives)

and 3) private companies. This presentation also investigates the different form of involvement and how this involvement becomes concrete through transfers of money, supply of services or individual performances (e.g. financial contributions, provision of facilities, voluntary work). Therefore, through the analysis of institutional documents and field-work, the aim of this work is to understand current differences between Italy and Norway, especially concerning the balance between different tools supporting the grassroots sport activities. Moreover, the research highlights the changes that have occurred over the years and that are linked to crisis or institutional modifications (at both national and local level).

Hungarian scholars presented in sessions such as *Sports and Migration; Sports and Regional Development; Sports and National Identity; Sports and Urban Development; Sports, Ethics, Law, and Education; Politics and International Sport; Teaching Physical Education and Coaching; Sports, Politics, Olympics; and Sports and Physical Education at Schools*.<sup>4</sup>

4 For more information on these presentations please contact the authors: Doczi, T.: “The Budapest 2024 Olympic bid: Questions of legacy” doczi@tf.hu; Mate, T., Andras K.: “International sport events as urban development incentive: Effects of European Youth Olympic Festival 2017 and possibilities for Győr” tundi.mate@gmail.com; Kozma, M., Andras, K., Kynsburg, Z.: “The role of major events in the development of smaller cities” miklos.kozma@uni-corvinus.hu; Gal, A., Benedek, P.: “Migration of players in domestic and foreign leagues: Identification and analysis of migration channels of Hungarian football players” gala@tf.hu; Ivan, E., Vidoni, C.: “Teaching fair play: In the classroom and beyond” ivane@stjohns.edu; Peto, D.: “Sport as a tool of diplomacy in Russia and Hungary” dori177@gmail.com; Garamvolgy, B.: “Sport: A tool for reaching EU external policy goals?” garbence89@gmail.com; Rabai, D.: “Football academies as educational environment” david.rabai67@gmail.com; Fletcher, C., Ivan, E., Lebel, K.: “What should be different in coaching education? An overview of USA participation at the YOG” ivane@stjohns.edu; Szatmari, A.: “Sport: Only a simple tool for profit?” aszatmari@eusp.hu; Fabian, K.: “The Olympic Spirit and Illiberalism: Hungary's Game” fabiank@lafayette.edu; Molnar, G., Kanemsu, Y.: “Challenges of exploring women's resistance in post-colonial hegemonic masculinity” gmolnar@worc.ac.uk; Kovacs, K., Kovacs, K. Zs., Nagy, B.: “Institutional, individual, and social effects on students' sport activities in Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Serbian cross border area” karolina92.kovacs@gmail.com.

The academic program also included the closed screening of documentary *“Forever Pure”* directed by Geoffrey Arbourne. This movie explores the story of Beitar Jerusalem F.C. – the most popular and controversial football team in Israel – the only club in the Israeli Premier League never to sign an Arab player. Mid-way through the 2012/13 season, a secretive transfer deal by the owner, Russian-Israeli oligarch Arcadi Gaydamak, brought two Muslim players from Chechnya. The deal inspired the most racist campaign in Israeli sport that sent the club spiraling out of control. One season in the life of this famed club is also the story of Israeli society, personal identity, politics, and money. It also demonstrates how racism can destroy a team as well as society from within. The screening was followed by an open discussion where the director shared his experiences while filming in Israel. Delegates were strongly motivated to find answers to questions raised by the movie, which led to hours long discussion on important social issues worldwide. Quickly the question and answer session turned into a lively debate on the role and place of sport in international development, on fighting violence in sport, and making sure that the discipline of sport sociology will help in building a more just society.

Young participants were also excited by the exhibition where influential publishing companies such as Routledge and Sage displayed their products and where delegates could buy books and journals or access articles related to different subfields of sport sociology at a discounted price over the entire time of the congress. But no doubt, the main reason for success was the enthusiasm and hospitality of the local organizing team including the diligent staff, students, and numerous volunteers. While offering the participants a great mix of academic and cultural activities the local organizing team provided the help and support needed always with smile, readiness, willingness, and kindness! The Gala Dinner of the 51<sup>st</sup> ISSA World Congress took place on the board of Boat Zsofia. Why cruising on the Danube River guests were introduced one last time to the historical and cultural treasures of our country. The international academic community of sport sociology was saying farewell to the 2016 World Congress by enjoying the sights and lights of Budapest.

### **Overall Experience**

On the basis of personal observations and a certain amount of informal conversation with participants, both local and foreign, it is fair to say that all delegates were satisfied with their overall experience of the congress. The main reason for that was perhaps that it was planned and operated extremely well. Materials were available when needed, sessions started and ended on time, contacts with other participants were facilitated. Nowadays, successful organization of an international congress cannot be achieved without sufficient financial, media, and human resources. ISSA can get some of the credit for arranging St John’s University located in New York City, to serve as the host academic institution together with the Hungarian Ministry of Human Development (EMMI) and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA). The LOC can take credit for teaming up with Bell & Partners Communication to oversee the day to day operations and with Spectrum TV to disseminate information about the congress through regional

Name	Affiliation	Responsibilities
Dr Emese Ivan	St. John's University (USA)	Chair, overall organization
Dr. Timea Tibori	Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Institute of Sociology (Hungary)	Liaison with MTA and other academic organizations in Hungary
Dr. Tamas Doczi	University of Physical Education (Hungary)	Scientific program
Dr. Andrea Gal	University of Physical Education (Hungary)	Social and cultural programs
Kinga Barath PhD Candidate	University of Physical Education (Hungary)	Day-to-day operational relations
Johanna Mellis PhD Candidate	University of Florida (USA)	Creative work, organization of session on publishing
Agnes Kovacs PhD Candidate	University of Physical Education (Hungary)	Marketing and sponsorship relations
Adrienne Vizkei	Bell & Partners Communication (Hungary)	Event management and organization

Table 1. Members of the Local Organizing Committee

Country	Representation at 2016 ISSA Congress (% of all participants)
United Kingdom	18
France	13
United States	11
Canada	11
Republic of South Korea	10
Taiwan	10
Hungary	9
Brazil	7
Norway	6
New Zealand	5

Table 2. Countries with most participation at the Congress