

FINNISH VOLUNTARY SPORT CLUBS THE CHANGING USE OF SPACES

Mihaly Szerovay
16th EASS conference, Bø
4 June 2019

RESEARCH PROJECT ON FINNISH SPORT CLUBS

Topic areas

1. The changing field of Finnish voluntary sport clubs in the 2010's

2. The changing use of spaces

3. Mapping the profile of sport clubs



AIM OF THE STUDY

- To gain more understanding about the changes and current situation of voluntary sport clubs in Finland in the 2010's
- Research questions:

1. In what way has the use of spaces by sport clubs changed?

2. How does the use of spaces reflect the institutional logic?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Institutional change

- Institutional theory looks at the making of social and cultural values, rules, symbols and procedures that shape interactions in an **organizational field** (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Klostermann & Nagel 2014; O'Brien & Slack 1999)
- Organizational field level analysis (DiMaggio & Powell 1983)
- Institutional logic / dominant logic (Bettis & Prahalad 1995; Stenling & Fahlén 2009)
- Multiple institutional logics (Skirstad & Chelladurai 2011; Waardenburg 2016)

THE CONTEXT

Finnish voluntary sport clubs

- Almost 90% of young people are involved in sport club activities before the age of 18 (Mononen et al. 2016)
- **Shifting focus of operation** -> from competitive sport to a wider perspective (Koski 2012; Koski & Mäenpää 2018)
- Amount of **full-time professionals** growing 5-10% annually (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012)
- Increasing significance of the private sport sector (Laine & Vehmas 2017)
- A shift towards **'consumer logic'** (Van der Roest 2015; Szerovay, Perényi & Itkonen 2016)
- Environmental issues / Ethical considerations (Ilmanen 2015)

METHODS & RESEARCH DATA

26 semi-structured expert interviews

With Finnish voluntary sport clubs from Central Finland/Jyväskylä (2014-2017)

The chairman, a board member, the general manager, or another official interviewed

Carried out by Finnish 2nd and 3rd year *Social sciences of sport* students in the Research Methods unit at the University of Jyväskylä

16 different sports + 3 multi-sport clubs

Both from urban and rural areas

Thematic content analysis

METHODS & RESEARCH DATA

Informants

Sport discipline(s)	No. of CLUBS
Multi-sport clubs	3
Football + futsal	3
Gymnastics	2
Floorball	2
American football + handball	2
Skiing	2
Martial arts	2
Swimming + diving	1
Figure skating	1

Sport discipline(s)	No. of CLUBS
Finnish baseball	1
Athletics	1
Lacrosse	1
Boxing	1
Ice hockey	1
Basketball	1
Tennis	1
Triathlon	1
Total	26



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Themes identified in the data



Use of spaces



Production &
ownership of
spaces



Prerequisites
for use



USE OF SPACES

Sub-themes

1. Function

2. Temporal context

3. Increasing use of virtual spaces

USE OF SPACES

Sub-theme 1 - Function

- i. Increasing sport-specific demands by clubs
- ii. Suitable facilities for complementary training

i. “In general, most of the school halls are too small - they are good enough for basketball but not for futsal and floorball.”
(floorball)

ii. “We use the facilities of our partners [sponsors] for strength and conditioning training.” *(women’s Finnish baseball)*

USE OF SPACES

Sub-theme 1 - Function

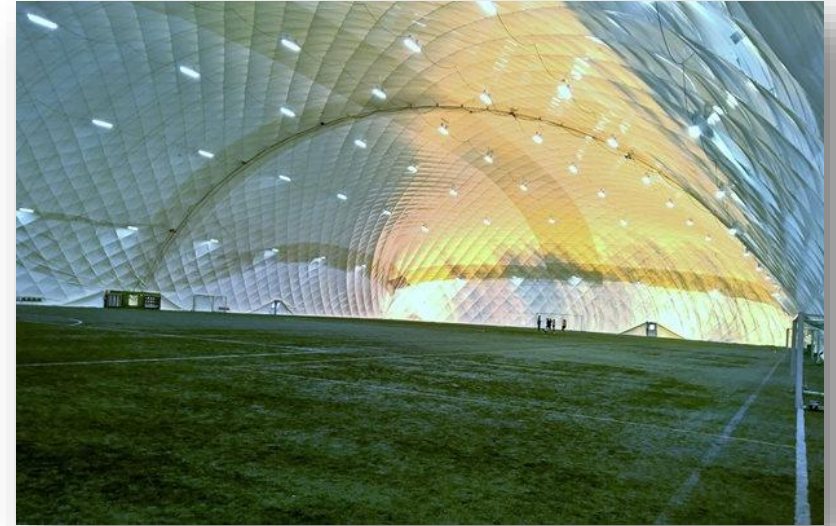
- iii. Varying functions and meanings of the same space
 - A kickabout or training session of a competitive team?
- iv. Need for office space becoming more common



USE OF SPACES

Sub-theme 2 - Temporal context

i. Shift towards clubs' all-year round activities



ii. Daily use of spaces becoming longer

- temporal reorganization of school day to fit in trainings and create a reasonable daily timetable

ii. “The slots are late in the evening which, due to the lack of light, is neither suitable for the sport nor for the players.” (*lacrosse*)

USE OF SPACES

Sub-theme 2 - Temporal context

iii. Calling for sport-specific booking duration

iii. “Two hours would be enough.” (*boxing*)

“One hour fifteen minutes is appropriate for the sport.” (*floorball*)

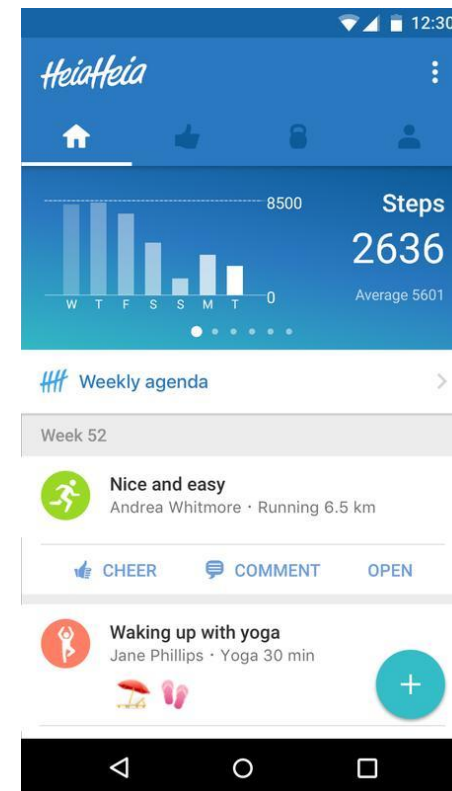
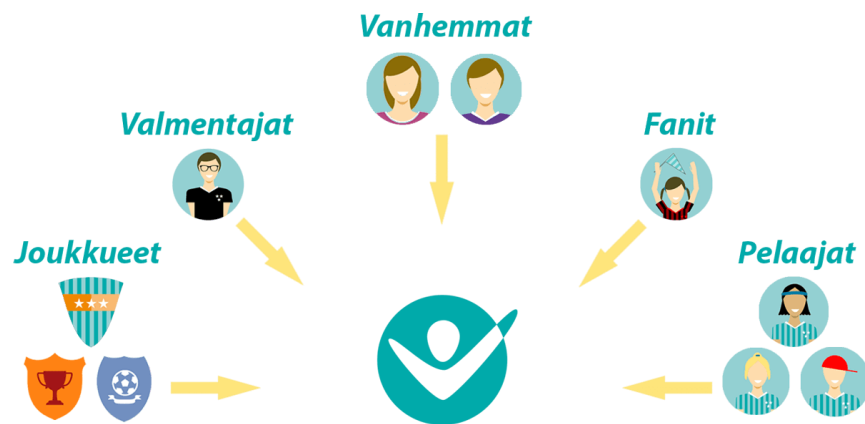
iii. Increasingly controlled time of coaches/instructors

Ti	Ke	To	Pe	La	Su
Amis	Amis	Amis	Amis	Amis	
17.30 - 18.30	18.00 - 19.30	16.15 - 17.30	17.30 - 19.00	13.00 - 14.30	
e-tytöt	e- ja d-pojat	Sää	e- ja d-tytöt	Naiset, c-tytöt	
		d-tytöt		14.00 - 15.30	
Puntti		Juoksurata		Miehet, c-pojat	
18.30 - 19.30		Naiset, c-tytöt	Lukko		Lukko
Naiset, c-tytöt			18.00 - 19.30		13.00 - 14.30
19.30 - 20.30			Naperot		Naiset, c-tytöt
Miehet, c-pojat			19.30 - 20.30		14.30 - 16.00
			Lukko		Miehet, c-pojat
					16.00 - 17.30
					d-tytöt

USE OF SPACES

Sub-theme 3 - Virtual spaces

- i. Management and communication function
- ii. Monitoring player development
- iii. 'Information overload'



Use of
spaces



Production &
Ownership



Prerequisites
for use

CONCLUSIONS

- The results reflect a shift in the logic of the sport club field - **multiple logics** can be identified (Stenling & Fahlen 2009; Scott 2014)
- Clubs with different profile and in geographical location have followed **diverse pathways**
- Sport clubs need to negotiate their position and compete for appropriate spaces
- Changes may be linked to **social roles** ascribed to sport clubs by a range of actors (Waardenburg 2016)

REFERENCES

- Bettis, R.A. & Prahalad, C.K. 1995. The Dominant Logic: Retrospective and Extension. *Strategic Management Journal* 16(1), 5-14.
- Itkonen, H. 2002. Sport and civil society: Sociological perspectives. Joensuu: University of Joensuu, Karelian Institute.
- DiMaggio, P. & Powell, W. 1983. The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review* 48(2), 147-160.
- Ilmanen, K. 2015. Liikuntapalvelujen Muutos 1800-Luvun Lopulta 2000-Luvulle [Changes in Sport and Physical Activity Services from the End of the 1800's to the 2000's]. In *Liikunta Yhteiskunnallisena Ilmiönä [Sport as a Societal Phenomenon]*, edited by Hannu Itkonen and Antti Laine, 19-38. Jyväskylä: Yliopistopaino.
- Koski, P. 2012. Finnish sports club as a mirror of society. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 4(2), 257-275.
- Koski, P. & Mäenpää, P. 2018. *Suomalaiset Liikunta- ja Urheiluseurat Muutoksessa 1986-2016 [Transition of Finnish Sports Clubs in 1986-2016]*. Helsinki, Finland: Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö.
- Laine, A. & Vehmas, H. 2017. *The Private Sport Sector in Europe: A Cross-National Comparative Perspective (Eds.)*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Mäenpää, P. & Korkatti, S. 2012. *Urheiluseurat 2010-luvulla. Ajatuksia seurojen kehittämisestä ja kehittämisestä. SLU-Julkaisusarja 2012:1*. Helsinki: Sporttipaino Oy.
- Scott, W.R. 2014. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities (4th ed.)*. SAGE
- Szerovay, M., Perényi S. & Itkonen, H. 2016. Glocal processes in peripheral football countries: Elite youth football clubs in Finland and Hungary. *Hungarian Review of Sport Science* 17 (65), 26-33.
- Van der Roest, J., Vermeulen, J. & van Bottenburg, M. 2015. Creating sport consumers in Dutch sport policy. *International Journal of Sport Policy*. 7 (1), 105-121.
- Waardenburg, M. 2016. Which wider social roles? An analysis of social roles ascribed to voluntary sports clubs. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 13(1), 38-54.

SOLENT
UNIVERSITY



Thank you for your attention!

mihaly.szervay@solent.ac.uk

[🐦@misiszervay](https://twitter.com/misiszervay)