

# MODELING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE ELITE SPORT IN CASE OF HUNGARY

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## Keywords

Competitiveness, elite sport system, Hungary, sport founding

## Aim of abstract/paper - research question

This study is part of a big national comprehensive research project about the competitiveness of Hungarian sport. The aim of this large scale research is to develop a competitiveness index which includes all segments of sport such as recreation, elite and spectacular sports. Within the framework of this case we would like to present the key factors which lead a country to international success in the field of elite sports. The focus is on the significance of the organizational structures, financing systems and the type of the resources and on the role of the structure of the competitions in particular.

Over the past decades at least, governments have shown a considerable willingness to devote significant sums of public or government controlled money to the maintenance or improvement of elite (Olympic) sporting success. Due to the narrowing state funds the structures of the competitions are also served short term goals which have led to the continuous decline of the competitiveness of the national sport.

## Theoretical background

Various grading systems and medal tables do not only evaluate sport performance, but also serve as an incentive tool to all major participants of the economy. These actors follow self-interest which is changed in view of the applied methods and tools. It is particularly important to use tools that incite and motivate them towards the attainment of goals set by the Hungarian sport policy. The current evaluation system of sport performance used by the Hungarian sport governance determines – beyond the performance evaluation – the structure of financing. Wrong methods can lead to wrong incentives, which derive from a distorted financing structure. Taking into account the laws arising from the bounded rationalism an alternative scoring system needs to be built. This could lead to the setting up of a "good enough" incentive scheme, better than the existing one.

## Methodology, research design and data analysis

The elite sport literature has traditionally focused on macro level factors such as population, GDP etc. but there has been a trend in the last ten years to try and understand better factors that effect elite sport at the policy or meso level but mainly concentrate on transnational comparisons [1]. This study sits at meso level as well but seeks to identify factors specific to the Hungarian context. Our research reviews and analyses the role, status and position of the governing bodies of the Hungarian elite sport system since the structural reforms 2004. The methods are applied for the generation of data includes surveys and interviews with key stakeholders of the Hungarian sports federations collaborating with the Hungarian Olympic Committee. In addition, study visits were also used for data collection from different relevant countries which can stand as an example front of Hungary as a best practice.

## Results, discussion and implications/conclusions\*\*

The study and the analysis of the development of the Hungarian sport governance show that the existing funding system of the elite sport is not working efficiently and that is way it is not sustainable in long term. By examining and following the practices of other countries with a state-funding-dominant-system a more effective funding system of elite sports can be developed in a long-term perspective. Our research by exploring the salience of the concepts of policy transfers; including the analysis of the development of elite sport systems in other countries would be beneficial for the Hungarian sport governance. The aim is to build up a model which could show and scale the key component of the competitiveness that can provide alternatives for the decision makers.

\*\*The results are not yet available at the time of abstract submission, but all the data were collected. The evaluation processes have already started which means that all the results will be available by the time of the conference.

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