

Ecological Analysis of Hungarian Sports Culture and its Inspiration Based on Cultural Identity

Xinbin Hei

The Department of Physical Education, Xi'an University of Technology.
Xi'an710048, Shanxi China
xinbin_hei@xaut.edu.cn

Yuhua Zeng

The Department of Physical Education, Xi'an University of Technology.
Xi'an710048, Shanxi China
zyh_317@163.com

Long Zhang*

The Department of Physical Education, Xi'an University of Technology.
Xi'an710048, Shanxi China
zlong885207@163.com

Zhiquan Tian

The Department of Physical Education, Xi'an University of Technology.
Xi'an710048, Shanxi China
tianzhiquan2025@163.com

Abstract: The foundational patterns, structural properties, and social functions of Hungarian sports culture reflect the ecological lineage of the evolution of sports culture in the Northwest minority ethnic regions. This study examines the geographical factors, foundational patterns, and structural attributes of the Hungarian sports and cultural system, aiming to analyze its cultural attributes and social functions. It explores the cultural significance of the propagation of Hungarian sports culture, the direction of its dissemination, and its ecological implications under contemporary conditions.

Keywords: Hungarian Sports; National Culture; Social Identity; Dissemination and Influence

1. INTRODUCTION

As a critical subsystem within the broader ethnic social system of the Northwest minority regions, Hungarian sports culture occupies a unique and irreplaceable position with significant historical relevance. The interpretation of its foundational patterns, structural attributes, and social functions reveals an ecologically holistic trace of the evolution of sports culture across the Northwest minority regions (Kovács, 2019). With the implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the nation has

prioritized cultural preservation, promoting the transmission of traditional culture and the innovation of modern cultural practices (Futornyí et al., 2020). Recent archaeological discoveries regarding the westward migration of the Northern Hungarians and their cultural evolution have provided new evidence and perspectives for studying Hungarian sports culture (Albert et al., 2018). These findings have also underscored the transformation and upgrading of research paradigms in sports culture studies (Selejő Joó et al., 2024). This study investigates the geographical factors, foundational patterns, and structural attributes of the Hungarian sports and cultural system (Bennett, 2001; White, 2000). By analyzing its cultural attributes and social functions, it explores the cultural significance of the propagation of Hungarian sports culture and its dissemination pathways (Futornyí et al., 2020). Furthermore, it aims to identify the contemporary values and developmental directions of Hungarian sports culture in the context of modern societal changes (Molnár, 2016).

2. HUNGARIAN SPORTS CULTURE: DISSEMINATION PATTERNS, STAGES, AND DIRECTIONS

2.1 Dissemination Patterns of Hungarian Sports Culture

2.1.1 Hunting-Based Sports: Archery

Archaeological evidence indicates that archery was a fundamental characteristic of the Huns. The phrase "north of the Great Wall, the country that leads the bow" vividly encapsulates this tradition (Imre, 2009). In primitive societies with low productivity, the Huns developed archery as a survival skill to procure food and ensure their development (Greskovits, 2017). Historical records note that Hun children began learning archery at an early age, starting with small prey like birds and rodents and progressing to larger animals such as foxes and rabbits. Over time, archery evolved from a subsistence tool to a weapon of war, reflecting the transition from a hunting economy to a nomadic lifestyle (Tomlinson & Young, 2006).

2.1.2. Animal Husbandry-Based Sports: Horseback Riding

The ancient Huns inhabited the grasslands of Northwest Eurasia, where pastoral production was predominant. According to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Huns adopted a mature nomadic lifestyle by the 13th century BCE, domesticating wild horses and developing equestrian skills (Antunovic, 2019). Equestrianism, horse training, and the crafting of related tools gave rise to a distinct "horse culture," which became integral

to their identity. Horseback riding also laid the foundation for unique sports forms among the Huns.

2.1.3. Military Training-Based Sports: Archery and Equestrianism

Military training was a central aspect of Hun life, with archery and equestrianism being essential skills. Historical accounts, such as the siege of Bideng by 300,000 Hun cavalry during the Han Dynasty, highlight the military prowess of the Huns. Equestrian skills, a natural strength of nomadic peoples, were honed to meet military demands. These skills also permeated civilian life, with activities like horse racing and camel racing becoming prominent during folk festivals (Vaczi, 2015).

2.1.4. Everyday Entertainment-Based Sports: Wrestling

Wrestling, an ancient sport, served as a demonstration of human strength and individual skill in the struggle against nature and rival tribes. Among the Huns, wrestling became a popular form of exercise and entertainment. However, its prevalence declined over time due to environmental and societal constraints, leading to a gradual loss of traditional wrestling techniques (Valánszki et al., 2022).

2.2 Stages of Dissemination of Hungarian Sports Culture

The evolution of Hungarian sports culture reflects three key characteristics: universality, specificity, and transmission. **Universality:** Despite geographical and environmental differences, human societies often develop similar sports and cultural practices. For instance, the nomadic lifestyle of the Huns influenced their sports culture, with hunting serving both as a means of subsistence and a recreational activity. **Specificity:** The unique development path of Hungarian sports culture distinguishes it from other regional sports traditions. For example, Hun sports were closely tied to military training and nomadic life, as seen in activities like mounted archery and combat skills. In contrast, Northwest minority sports culture includes diverse activities such as horse racing, wrestling, and mountain climbing, reflecting adaptations to local environments and historical contexts. **Transmission:** The dissemination of Hungarian sports culture followed both mutational and progressive pathways. Its development can be divided into three periods:

- Late Paleolithic Age: The embryonic stage of Hungarian sports, characterized by rudimentary physical activities.

- Matrilineal Clan Society: With socio-economic advancements, sports activities began to formalize, laying the groundwork for Hungarian sports culture.
- Hungarian Empire Period: During the slave era, Hungarian sports culture reached its peak, incorporating regional influences and forming a distinct tradition.

2.3 Continuity of Hungarian Sports Culture

The continuity of Hungarian sports culture is rooted in several factors:

Production Practices: The transmission of skills like archery and horseback riding was integral to the cultural heritage of the Huns. Training methods, such as the Dauso technique, remain influential among Mongolian and Manchu ethnic groups.

Folk Traditions: Folk festivals and rituals provided a platform for the intergenerational transmission of sports culture. Activities like horse racing and wrestling were often integrated into religious and cultural celebrations, ensuring their preservation.

Military Legacy: The nomadic lifestyle of the Huns necessitated military prowess, which in turn shaped their sports culture. Equestrian and archery skills, essential for warfare, became enduring elements of their cultural identity.

Religious Practices: Religious activities, such as the worship of natural elements and ancestral spirits, played a significant role in the transmission of sports culture. These practices reinforced communal bonds and cultural continuity.

Individual Identity: Heroic figures and their exploits were celebrated in epic songs, highlighting the valor and resilience of the Huns. This emphasis on individual achievement contributed to the cultural legacy of Hungarian sports.

3. CULTURAL IDENTITY OF HUNGARIAN SPORTS CULTURE: ROOTS AND REGIONAL FACTORS

3.1 Coupling of Hungarian Sports Culture with Social Customs

Hungarian sports culture is deeply intertwined with social customs, which regulate community relations and reinforce cultural identity (Balogh & Bácsné Bába). Seasonal activities, such as archery and horse racing, were aligned with production cycles, ensuring their relevance and continuity

(Stambulova, 2016).

3.2 Material Representations of Hungarian Sports Culture

The material forms of Hungarian sports, such as traditional equipment and attire, serve as symbols of cultural identity. These elements not only reflect the unique characteristics of Hungarian sports but also strengthen communal bonds and national unity (Hermann et al., 2014).

3.3 Spiritual Strength of Hungarian Sports Culture

Hungarian sports culture embodies the spiritual resilience and cultural memory of the Huns. It transcends mere physical activity, serving as a medium for transmitting values, traditions, and historical narratives.

4. STRATEGIES FOR THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDENTIFICATION OF MODERN NORTHWEST ETHNIC SPORTS CULTURE

4.1 Strengthening Policy Support for Cultural Heritage

Cultural and Ecological Protection: Governments should enhance legal frameworks and resource allocation to protect traditional sports culture.

Value Reinforcement: Promoting the cultural and historical significance of traditional sports can foster greater appreciation and preservation.

4.2 Improving the Form and Content of Cultural Heritage

Research and Documentation: Comprehensive studies of Hungarian sports culture can inform conservation strategies.

Integration with Modern Industries: Combining traditional sports with tourism, education, and entertainment can enhance their relevance and economic value.

Talent Development: Training programs for athletes, coaches, and cultural practitioners can ensure the continuity of traditional sports.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foundational patterns, structural attributes, and social functions of Hungarian sports culture provide valuable insights into the ecological evolution of sports culture in Northwest minority regions. By leveraging traditional sports ecology and enhancing cultural diversity, we can

strengthen the identity and cohesion of Hungarian sports culture. This requires not only government leadership but also the active participation of individuals and communities, ensuring a vibrant cultural space for the development of national sports.

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