
Theoretical and Historical Aspects of Safeguarding and Child Protection in Hungarian Sport

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Résumé

The study examines the historical development of evolution of child protection mechanisms within the sporting context, with particular emphasis on the sociological and legal dimensions of sport. Our theoretical and historical analysis demonstrates that, for much of its development, the institutional system of sport prioritized autonomy and performance-oriented practices, resulting in the marginalization of children's specific protection needs. Until the mid-20th century, children's participation in sport was scarcely regulated, and strict coaching discipline, excessive training loads, and psychological pressure were widely regarded as legitimate components of athletic education.

The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) marked a significant milestone in the international recognition of children's rights; however, sports institutions were slow to incorporate these standards into their structures and practices. This study outlines the relevance of Hungarian child protection legislation—particularly Act XXXI of 1997—to the sporting sector, and examines the extent to which sports clubs, academies, and federations have integrated child protection requirements into their operations.

Our analysis draws on Foucault's theory of power and Bourdieu's field theory to explore the power relations, norm-forming mechanisms, and structural inequalities embedded within sport. The findings indicate that children's vulnerability arises not only from shortcomings in legal regulation but also from deeply rooted cultural attitudes and institutional practices within the world of sport.

Mots-Clés: safeguarding, child protection, historical development, prevention

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