Megatrends

in the future organization of grassroots sport in Scandinavia

The commercial challenge and the association crisis?
Megatrends

in the future organization of grassroots sport in Scandinavia

The commercial challenge and the association crisis?

Defining ‘grassroots sport’ and the Scandinavian tradition

Where do we see commercialisation of sport and what does it mean?

4 challenges of commercialisation of grassroots sport
The Scandinavian tradition of grassroots sport

12,000 associations
2 million members
43% of the population

20,000 associations
4 million members
45% of the population

10,500 associations
1.7 million members
33% of the population

5,000 associations
1.5 million members
28% of the population
Defining ‘grassroots sport’

‘Grassroots sport’ relates to common members who participate in amateur sport at a local level – usually in an association/club – but also normal everyday exercise outside the organised clubs.

- distinguished from (professional) elite sport

- distinguished from sport federations
The number of sport activities has exploded.
The commercial challenge and the association crisis?

Commercialisation takes many forms and has many consequences.

There are at least four main reasons why commercialisation of grassroots sport is perceived as problematic:

1) The threat of other organisation types
2) The threat and conflict of values in grassroots sport
3) The threat of autonomy in grassroots sport
4) The threat of the social function of grassroots sport
1) The threat of social function of grassroots sport

The rise of commercial suppliers

Huge success on the commercial marked:
Fitness activities – easy to start – 427 commercial facilities in Denmark
Dancing studios – 248 commercial dance clubs (not discotheques)
Golf – easy to play – par 3 holes and driving range (no numbers)

But also tendencies to commercial activities in Denmark:
Squash – 196 commercial facilities
Bowling – 122 commercial facilities
Swimming – 26 commercial facilities
Soccer – 1 commercial facility
2) The threat and conflict of values

What is the values of grassroots sport?

Answer: Grassroots sport has long been considered as an important medium enabling social actors to practice and learn a sense of fair play and justice, conflict and resolution as well as generating sociability and collective effort.

Threat:

1) Commercialisation may in effect be seen as reducing the value of any act or object to its monetary value.
2) The threat and conflict of values

Grassroots sports are increasingly transformed into products and concepts © ™
3) Threat to grassroots sport autonomy

What is the autonomy of grassroots sport?

Answer: The perception that grassroots sport is a social movement outside the market and the state – a civil movement with its own member-based self regulation and a democratic nature.

Threats:

Rules, regulation and scheduling of sport are changed.

‘The golden goal logic’ – further focus on the one single event rather than the long-term performance. The big final match.

The flow of the game – changes in counting the scores. Running scores.

The official equipment – sponsors sometimes have the power to make their products the ‘official product’ of the sport.

The official dress-code – short skirts and more sex appeal.
3) Threat to grassroots sport autonomy

This means:

The loss of decision-making in grassroots sport.

The lack of autonomy at the local club level.

Changes of the ethics and democracy of grassroots sport.
What is the social function of sport?

Answer: The social function of sport is that grassroots sport traditionally is organised within voluntary sport associations where members join a local community as well as generating cooperation and collective ideas and visions. These social bounds are traditionally considered real and authentic.

Threat:

1) The future erosion of the voluntary basis of these associations.

2) Market relations involve limited personal relationships and obligations.

3) Exchange of activities and concepts – the rise of a commercial grassroots sport model?
The Scandinavian tradition of grassroots sport

Basic establishment of the Scandinavian model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scandinavian model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making:</strong></td>
<td>Bottom-up democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation:</strong></td>
<td>Association /club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power:</strong></td>
<td>Majority og legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal:</strong></td>
<td>Community and activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means:</strong></td>
<td>The presence and voluntary work of members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy and management:</strong></td>
<td>Voluntary activity and subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core activity:</strong></td>
<td>Participation and organisation of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal:</strong></td>
<td>Solidarity and dependence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The commercial challenge and the association crisis?

### Scandinavian model vs. the commercial model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scandinavian model</th>
<th>Market model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making:</td>
<td>Bottom-up democracy</td>
<td>Effectively top down decision implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation:</td>
<td>Association /club</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power:</td>
<td>Majority og legitimacy</td>
<td>Money, supply and demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal:</td>
<td>Community and activity</td>
<td>Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means:</td>
<td>The presence of members</td>
<td>The presence customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy and management:</td>
<td>Voluntary activity and subsidies</td>
<td>Pay-and-play logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core activity:</td>
<td>Participation and organisation of community</td>
<td>Products, concepts and flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal:</td>
<td>Solidarity and dependence</td>
<td>Liberty and segmentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you for your attention

| Researcher, ph.d.-fellow, Kasper Lund Kirkegaard |
| kasper.lund@idan.dk, cell-phone: +45 2921 0932 |