

ACQUIRING EMBODIED AND INSTITUTIONALIZED CULTURAL CAPITAL: CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS AMONG SLOVENIAN FOOTBALL PLAYERS

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Abstract:

The main objective of this study was to determine whether sociocultural factors influence the career development of Slovenian national team football players. In this interview-based research, we consider Bourdieu's theory of *embodied and institutionalized cultural capital* to find possible influencing sociocultural factors on the career development. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Slovenian elite football players. The content of the interviews was organized based on the chronological events in each player's life using seven open-ended questions. We analysed careers from the very beginning (initiation), across the development and mastery period to the career peak of the Slovenian football players in terms of the migration abroad. The results of this study support previous studies on the career development of football players. The work shows the important role of primary and secondary socialization processes, which exert a significant influence on career development among Slovenian football players.

Key words: Bourdieu, culture capital, career development, top-level football, Slovenia

Introduction

According to Bourdieu (1984), affinity for a particular sport is influenced by economic, social and cultural factors. This specific *sport habitus* of an individual is formed in his/her childhood through social interaction with the primary family and environment based on parental initiative and family tradition (Lenartowicz, 2016). The term *habitus* (mindset and/or embodied disposition) is one of the Bourdieu's (1984) most influential theoretical concepts, which he describes as the physical embodiment of habits, knowledge, skills, and dispositions in an individual through learning processes and life experiences. This *habitus* is strongly linked to an individual's cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986).

In this context, Wheeler (2012) explained that adolescent's willingness to participate in sports is a result of an acquired specific *sports culture* in terms of beliefs and behaviours passed down from his/her parents through primary socialization processes (Whitbeck, 1999).

In addition to the Bourdieu's theoretical framework, there is a large body of academic research on the career development in sport (Côté, 1999; Côté, Lidor, & Hackfort, 2009; Matthys, et al., 2011) and football (Hornig, Aust, & Güllich, 2016; Poli,

Ravenel, & Besson, 2015; Sieghartsleitner, Zuber, Zibung, & Conzelmann, 2018). Career development in professional football is very closely linked to processes of talent identification and development (Reilly, Williams, Nevill, & Franks, 2000).

There are many theoretical explanatory models in the field of talent development that attempt to discover the most fundamental factors for a successful sports career. In particular, it is debated whether early specialization (focusing on the main sport) or sampling (gaining experience from different sports) is more appropriate for talent development (Bridge & Toms, 2013; Côté, et al., 2009; Malina, 2010; Rees, et al., 2016). For example, Sieghartsleitner et al. (2018) claim that the optimal model for the football talent development is a combined approach in terms of a: *specialized sampling model, in which a huge amount of domain-specific learning activities within early sport participation is recommended as well as miscellaneous activities (other forms of football in terms of free play, etc.)*.

In our approach, we have assumed that talent alone is not the only prerequisite to become a professional football player. From a sociological point of view, we could presume that the explanation of success in sports cannot be done only through the concept of talent in terms of sports

skills. The concept of talent is closely linked to the idea of individualism. Social forces shape our lives and at the same time the performance level of each individual (Collero, 2013; Wagstaff, 2016). Research in talent development often ignores social factors, although we know that the environment in which a young football player grows up is crucial for his/her further career development (Côté, et al., 2009). Fernández-Río and Méndez-Giménez (2014) as well as Côté et al. (2009) have emphasized the importance of social influences on the development of sports talent.

The career development of a football player seems to be a dichotomous process as seen in Bandura's (1971) social learning theory. On the one hand, the individual is in the process of learning sociocultural behavioural skills through various social support mechanisms, while at the same time he or she is in the process of learning specialized motor skills.

Second, the individual must also integrate these new skills into game situations on the field and in his/her daily football life and leisure. However, the forces in his/her environment also shape the life of a football player. The *internalisation model* of socialization in sports highlights this environmental influence from a sociological perspective in terms of social learning and development (Coakley, 1993, 2015). Accordingly, individuals are strongly influenced by the norms of the social context in which they live. In line with this theoretical perspective, we note that both the body and the mind of a football player constantly interact with the surrounding social and cultural context during matches, training periods and daily life.

Our attempt to holistically understand multidimensional complexity of the footballers' career development is supported by the Bourdieu's (1986) theory of *cultural and social capital* and his concept of *embodied cultural capital*. *Embodied cultural capital* is defined as the knowledge (skills), behaviour and attitudes acquired over time through social learning (socialization processes) and a more formal process of education. In the case of football career development, there are two forms of *embodied cultural capital* – one that is behavioural and one that is closely linked to football-specific motor skills.

Specifically, over the course of his/her career development, a football player must learn a broad range of motor skills combined with the social-psychological skills necessary to interact effectively with teammates during the game. From our practical perspective, this process of learning technical motor skills and tactical interaction skills requires, on the one hand, the everyday repetition of similar exercises in the sense of early specialization with a high value of *domain specificity* and *performance orientation* (Coutinho Mesquita, & Fonseca, 2016;

Storm, Henriksen, & Christensen, 2012), until the movement sequences are automated and incorporated, or as Bourdieu (1986) would say, *embodied*. Of essential practical importance to date are also *low value of domain specific exercises* such as other sports and other forms of football training contents (Sieghartsleitner, et al., 2018), which generate high levels of motivation in a football player and allow him/her to accumulate additional helpful motor patterns. In addition, the player must also learn and follow certain social norms in order to communicate, maintain relationships, and interact effectively with teammates, coaches, and other stakeholders.

In summary, we suggest that these two forms of *embodied cultural capital* help us to understand the symbiotic integration of a footballer's body and mind. In other words, a successful career in football requires social and physical forms of *embodied cultural capital* gained through the processes of learning and integration associated with the body and mind of the football player (Bourdieu, 1986).

To understand the multidimensional structure and dynamics of footballers' career development, we also consider Bourdieu's (1986) notion of *institutionalized cultural capital*, defined as formal recognition or credentials that attest to certain qualifications. To this end, we categorize footballers in terms of competition levels in which they have participated (Poli, et al., 2015, called this categorization model of football players *experience capital*), and their individual performances in terms of championships won, the number of international matches played, and the number of appearances in the national teams. We used this categorization system as a way of assessing the career success of individual players.

An *athletic career* is a multi-year sport activity with the goal of achieving the player's peak athletic performance (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). The process of continuous career development depends on the influence of various psychosocial factors that create a sense of motivation of the athlete for his/her sport (Keegan, Harwood, Spray, & Lavallee, 2009).

Additionally, parental encouragement and support (Côté, 1999; Downward, Hallmann, & Pawlowski, 2014; Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Nunomura & Oliveira, 2013; Ward, Hodges, Starkes, & Williams, 2007; Williams & Reilly, 2000) has an impact on career development. Finally, research has also documented that the coach plays an important and crucial role in the junior development process (Dawson, Dioth, & Gustin, 2016). In this regard, there are practice sessions that are characterized by playfulness and fun that are very important and essential in keeping young players at a high level of intrinsic motivation (Bailey, Cope, & Pearce, 2013).

However, the main scope of this study was to find out whether sociocultural factors influenced the career development of football players, and if so,

to what extent they were important. Therefore, we analysed chronological career development periods as identified by Lavalley and Wylleman (2000) and Wylleman and Lavalley (2004) and related career success to employment migration (Agergaard & Ryba, 2014).

Our qualitative research approach is based primarily on the Bourdieu's (1986) theory of embodied and institutionalized cultural capital. We use these two forms of cultural capital to describe and explain the sociocultural reality of football players' professional backgrounds and career paths. By analysing various content-related dimensions, we have created an overview of footballers' life events and career development activities as described by the players themselves.

Methods

Participants

The participants of this study were eight former Slovenian national team football players from different national team levels (from U16 national team players to senior national team players). The total sample of active and retired footballers included four footballers who played abroad and four who did not. The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. The names of the participants are fictitious to preserve their privacy.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in March 2016. Recruitment followed the classic snowballing method. However, participation in the interview was voluntary. All participants were informed in advance of the purpose and process of the interview; they were assured anonymity and told that the data from the interview would only be used for the purpose of the research. The research followed the ethical guidelines and rules for the research with human subjects at the University of Ljubljana and was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Sport in Ljubljana. Interviews were conducted under the same conditions: individually, "face-to-face", in a separate isolated room. With the participants' consent, each interview was recorded using the recording function of a mobile phone.

Content of the interviews

The content of the interviews was organized to follow the chronological life events of each player. The social reality of the players' careers was determined using seven open-ended questions. Similar to Wylleman and Lavalley (2004), the participants' careers were analysed from the beginnings (initiation), through the development and mastery period, to the career peak of the Slovenian football players in terms of their migration abroad (Table 2). At this point, we did not consider the termination phase

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics and information about actual football status of participants

Name	Age	Education	Active football player	Played abroad	National team appearances
Max	37	High school	No	Yes	U16, U20, U21, A national team
Marcel	36	Vocational school	No	Yes	U18, U20, U21, A national team
Mario	37	High school	No	Yes	U17, U19, U20, U21, A national team
Adam	22	High school	Yes	No	U21
Nejc	30	Vocational college	No	No	U20, U21
Marko	34	College	No	Yes	U21, A national team
Adrian	23	High school	Yes	No	U16, U17, U18, U20, U21
Aljoša	24	High school	Yes	No	U21

Table 2. Interview guide (questions asked in chronological order)

1 Beginning of a football career
1.1 Please, describe the reasons that provoked you starting to play football.
1.2 Please, describe the main characteristics of the first years of playing football.
2 Family
2.1 What role did your family play in your sports career?
2.2 Did they encourage you? If yes, how?
3 Reasons for success in football
3.1 In your opinion, what factors in your career have mostly affected your success in football?
4 Migration
4.1 What are the main reasons for the migration of Slovenian footballers to foreign clubs in general?
4.2 What did prevail in your decision to go (or not to go) playing abroad?

of the football career (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007), as some of the players had not yet finished their careers.

The players' subjective assessments of their experiences aid to get a retrospective overview of the necessary conditions and events, which are leading to a successful career. This research is focused on the initial career conditions (first clubs) and the role of supportive activities from the family (parents). Using a qualitative approach, the existence was identified of the two forms of cultural capital and their influence on players' career development. By identifying and analysing the sociological background of the Slovenian football players through different developmental periods, we were able to identify the factors that enabled the players to achieve career success through their employment migration.

Analysis of the data

Each interview was transcribed and analysed to create a clear account of each player's career. We identified important factors and events based on common terms and phrases that appeared in the transcripts. A qualitative content analysis was also conducted through a higher-order category naming system to reduce the amount of information and identify relationships between different higher-order categories. Based on the results of this analysis, a sociocultural model was hermeneutically constructed to explain the influence of the football players' social background on their career development.

Results

Beginning of the football career and the process of socialization in sport

The results of the first phase of the analysis showed that the player's father was the main initiator of football participation.

One of the main reasons was ... that my father was always thrilled in this direction he led me to football... (Max, 37 years)...

My father was a professional footballer, and from a young age we (our family) followed him on this path. (Marko, 34 years)

..., the main reason was that my father enrolled me in a football club. (Adrian, 23)

However, the influence of fathers was supplemented by the influence of friends and football coaches:

Then a certain influence on starting to play football came certainly from my friends, they played non-stop with the ball ... (Necj, 30 years)

...I think I had cancelled a tennis training session...and then the football coach of the U8 team approached me and asked me if I would play football. (Marcel, 36)

In one case, the media (television) was an influential factor in the socialization process leading to sports participation:

That desire for football, when you see this game on television... when you have to play it a little bit behind the house. (Aljoša, 24 years)

Overall, we found that watching football matches on television was a strong incentive to play football. Kelly and Donohew (1999) described this media-based influence process as a secondary process of socialization. Additionally, the enjoyment of playing seems to be an important mechanism of developing and/or maintaining a certain level of intrinsic motivation for playing football (Hendry, Crocker, & Hodges, 2014), as can be seen in the following statement:

The joy of playing football ..., that's quite simple. (Mario, 37 years)

Based on our analysis of the responses, we found that the foundation of a football player's career is mainly influenced by the father's social stimulation (Whitbeck, 1999) in relation to family tradition (Lenartowicz, 2016). As a result, the football player develops a psychosocial motivational disposition for his/her sport (Keegan, et al., 2009) in the form of joy, pleasure, and playfulness (*we played with the ball nonstop; you have to play it a little behind the house*). Furthermore, we can conclude that young footballers' willingness to participate in football is the result of an acquired *sporting culture* (Bourdieu, 1984; Wheeler, 2012) mediated by the primary (father) and secondary socialization processes (friends, coaches and media). In our analysis, it became clear that football players had incorporated the social structures of their environment in terms of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and developed motives for playing football during the initiation phase of their football career.

Main features of the first years playing football

In the analysis of the events and experiences during the early years of playing football, the focus of interest was on the primary conditions of participation and the organizational quality of the football clubs in which players began and continued to play at different age categories.

...the structure of the club and everything else (pitch, equipment) was at a very low level...the coaches over my entire youth career... they were not on the required level... (Max, 37years)

Yes, the basic equipment, we had poor training conditions... (Marcel, 36)

We had training sessions where on the side pitch, when it rained, there was a lot of mud, the training sessions were often cancelled... Mainly it was about playing... (Necj, 30 years)

In those days, in the beginning, it was more a game of pleasure ... we played mainly for entertainment... (Adrian, 23)

It was very simple then, in the beginning: Here you have the ball and play the children's game. (Mario, 37 years)

Our analysis revealed that the football players usually had poor workconditions for training in their clubs; the participants mainly mentioned poor infrastructural conditions (pitches), low level of coaches' knowledge, poor equipment, etc. Nevertheless, we also found that the coaches were not so bad from an important professional point of view. In any case, the coaches enabled the youngsters to have fun and enjoy training sessions in the first years of playing football. It seems that the coaches knew how to motivate young players to continue participating in football. As we know, providing the child with enjoyment of exercise could be an important factor for continued sport participation in adolescence and adulthood (Bailey, et al., 2013).

Career development (the role of the family)

We attempted to determine the role of family in the players' career development process. All participants mentioned that their families played an important role in this process, as follows:

Family played a key role in my career. I have to say both my father and mother ... we were of limited finances at home, but my father sacrificed everything so that I could attend different camps and so on. (Max, 37 years)

Yes, this is where I really have to single out my mom, who was behind me 100%

from the first day I started playing the sport and up until the moment I signed my first professional contract ... In my younger years she accompanied and drove me to all the away games. (Marcel, 36)
Yes... I can say this much because they had to make a lot of effort... They took me to practice every day by car... They gave me everything I needed, football boots and tracksuits. (Adam, 22 years)

Our participants confirmed, even emphasized the crucial role of the primary family in the process of creating their football career. In fact, we identified two main types of support from the primary family: logistical support and financial support from the family in terms of granting football equipment. Thus our findings confirmed previous research regarding the influence of parental encouragement and support on the career development in sport. Similar to Nunomura and Oliveira (2013), we found that parental involvement and investment in the form of time and money enabled young soccer players to participate and realize their potential. Furthermore, we found positive parental support in all our cases. It seems that without such a positive

sociocultural environment (Kay & Spaaij, 2012), the successful professional development is not possible.

Main factors for career success in football (subjective opinion)

We tried to find out the footballers' subjective opinion about what were the most important and significant factors that contributed to a successful football career. In this regard, the participants responded as follows:

...career also depends on your personal character and what goals you set for yourself... for myself, I was very sure about what I really wanted... of course you need talent... But also, how much work you put in overall... certainly quality of training sessions are also important... (Max, 37 years)

...definitely my dourness and my own will to prove myself... (Marcel, 36 years)

Persistence, that's definitely the basis for everything...sure talent plays a role too, but the amount of work invested is more important...and of course taking care of your body... (Mario, 37 years)

...I think I would say...the coaches..., every one of them has contributed to my development... (Adam, 22 years)

Hard work and more hard work, that has the greatest influence on success...I have made a lot of progress with individual work. (Nejc, age 30)

...The mental toughness that I had ... And of course, I definitely had good physical dispositions ... (Marko, 34 years)

... I mean above all my character, which is somehow formed through family. Also, I must emphasize persistence, individual and hard work... I worked out for myself..., well. I'd go to the gym... or I practiced technical skills. (Adrian, 23)

...Self-discipline, enjoyment of football, hard work..., of course, the quality of training sessions... (Aljoša, 24)

The results of this section show that, in addition to physical talent, there are also personal characteristics that are associated with success in football. Specifically, participants mentioned traits such as *a desire to succeed and prove oneself, a willingness to work hard, additional individual training, persistence and care for the body, grit, mental toughness, and self-discipline*. Hard work combined with high motivation and large time commitment seems to be a critical issue with regard to a successful elite sport career (Güllich & Emrich, 2013; Ward, et al., 2007).

It was also interesting to note that our footballers did not rate *football talent* as the most important criterion for a successful career. On the contrary, they identified the psychosocial and motivational factors mentioned above as the most important in the career development process. Previous research has confirmed that these personal psychosocial characteristics (*sporting habitus*) emerge from

two processes: primary socialization processes and secondary socialization processes (Coakley, 1993, 2015; Whitbeck, 1999).

Furthermore, Bourdieu (1984) explained that this specific *sport habitus* was formed primarily in the early childhood years through social interaction in the primary family. For example, Adrian made explicit reference to this primary socialization process when he said: *...I mean, above all, my character, which I think I got from my family ...*

Our data strongly suggest that this *sporting habitus* or *character* definitely contributes to the development of an individual's football skills, as well as the player's career development and attainment of a master level (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). According to the participants in our study, all of the accompanying activities (individual training and willingness for additional training) in terms of their career development are influenced by these aforementioned personal mental factors. Thus, there is a strong mind-body connection in successful football players. They learned, developed specific behavioural skills (willingness to work hard, persistence, grit, mental toughness, and self-discipline) of how to improve their specific football motor skills during their careers. In the end, these skills are incorporated in the body of the football player.

Thus, following Bourdieu's (1998) theory, the *sporting habitus* involves a socialized and specialized body that contains the immanent structures of a player's specific *football society*. Furthermore, this specific *embodied cultural capital* (in terms of socio-cultural behavioural activities) was demonstrated through the player's willingness to engage in individual training and committed involvement in football. We suggest that this *embodied cultural capital* is primarily based on the individual's reflections, knowledge, and experience of what is required for professional success.

Mastery stage and migration

Migration abroad to a *richer football country* is a clear indicator of career success for a Slovenian football player. Our participants answered as follows about the reasons why footballers migrate abroad:

Well, Slovenia is a very small country, and in that sense, I think the opportunity to earn more money and secure your own existence as soon as possible... (Max, 37 years)

In general, the higher level of professionalism... (Marcel, 36)

The footballers see a greater opportunity there... Playing abroad was a dream come true for us... (Mario, 37)

The ambition to play at a higher level of competition and higher financial earnings, those are the two most important reasons. (Nejc, 30 years)

Based on these responses, two main motives for migration were identified. First, players emphasized the poor financial conditions and a lower level of competition when playing in Slovenia. Second, they emphasized the prospect of higher salaries abroad (financial motive) and the possibility of playing at a higher level of competition (sporting motive) due to better professional conditions (higher level of professionalism) outside Slovenia.

These two motives fit into the classic push-pull model (Elliott, 2016; Lee, 2010), which attributes the emergence of migration pressure to financial and social differences between home and abroad. The decision to migrate is made with the aim of providing the individual with *an ensured existence (Max)*. Both economic and occupational inequalities between the home country and abroad are so significant in the case of Slovenia that participants in our study were very emotional when they described their desire to migrate abroad as *a dream for us (Mario)*.

When asked about their personal reasons for migrating abroad, the football players answered as follows:

...I felt that I had outgrown things here and I took the next step to go abroad to play at a higher level. ... I had good performances at my home club, we placed in the qualifiers from European Cup... yes, then I got the first invitation to play in the senior national team, and after that I got an offer from abroad ... (Max, 37 years)

...well, I won two championship titles here with my team and then I got a good offer from a club abroad ... (Mario, 37, years)

... yes, the financial aspect was perhaps more important than the sporting one ... (Marko, 34 years)

For me there was no real possibility to go abroad. I went to another club in Slovenia. Yes, if I got an offer, I would go abroad as well. (Nejc, 30 years)

In our analysis of personal reasons to go abroad, we have already pointed out the push-pull factors responsible for migration. The participants' desire for further professional advancement was shown to be related to both financial and sporting aspects. From our data, we were able to infer the necessary conditions for migration as follows: Max, for example, mentioned that he played very well in the domestic championship before going abroad. This points to the player's high level of football-specific *embodied cultural capital* or, in other words, reaching the level of mastery identified by Wylleman and Lavallee (2004). It is clear that the player must demonstrate football knowledge at a mastery level in order to be perceived by a foreign club. According to Bourdieu (1986), this football knowledge (motor skills) represents the physical or bodily part of the *embodied cultural capital*

required for successful migration abroad. As we have noted, both *embodied cultural capitals* (physical and behavioural) are interdependent. Without the willingness to work hard, achieving high levels of competitive performance is not possible.

Moreover, before going abroad, footballers acquired a high degree of *institutionalized cultural capital*... (we placed in the qualifiers from European Cup... .. yes, then I got the first invitation to play in the senior national team, and after that I got an offer from abroad ... (Max, 37 years);...well, I won two championship titles here with my team and then I got a good offer from a club abroad ... (Mario, 37, years). Possessing this *institutionalized cultural capital* is important when seeking and receiving an offer to play abroad. Without such an offer, migration does not take place. These results confirmed our theoretical predictions about the importance of *embodied and institutionalized cultural capital* for successful career development and also for migration abroad.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of this study support previous studies on career development of football players. We were able to identify and describe the career development path of elite football players using the Bourdieu's (1986) theory of *embodied and institutionalized cultural capital*. The data from our qualitative research allowed us to recapitulate the career path of football players from the initial stage of participation to their career peak (Wylleman &

Lavallee, 2004). Furthermore, we were able to classify our findings into distinct higher-order categories to provide an overview and understanding of players' backgrounds in terms of sociocultural life events, career development activities, and important career development frameworks (Figure 1). However, our results show that talent alone, in terms of individualism theory, is not sufficient to become a professional soccer player. It can be seen that social forces strongly influence the performance level of each individual (Collero, 2013; Wagstaff, 2016).

Based on the subjective reports of the participants in our study, we identified key practical guideposts that influence the career development process. During the formative period, we noted the emergence of positive emotions and passion (psychosocial aspect) for football and the development of some *behavioural embodied cultural capital* that created the attraction and motivation to play football (Keegan, et al., 2009). The transition from this formative stage of development to the mastery stage is influenced by several different factors (Figure 1). While the family of the football player has been an important source of financial and logistical support, the organization and infrastructural conditions of clubs, as well as the overall quality and education of coaches working with young players, are critical (Dawson, et al., 2016). It is important for football clubs to provide quality and professional training sessions that lead to the development of high-level football skills. In addition, the effectiveness of coaches depends on their ability to provide young

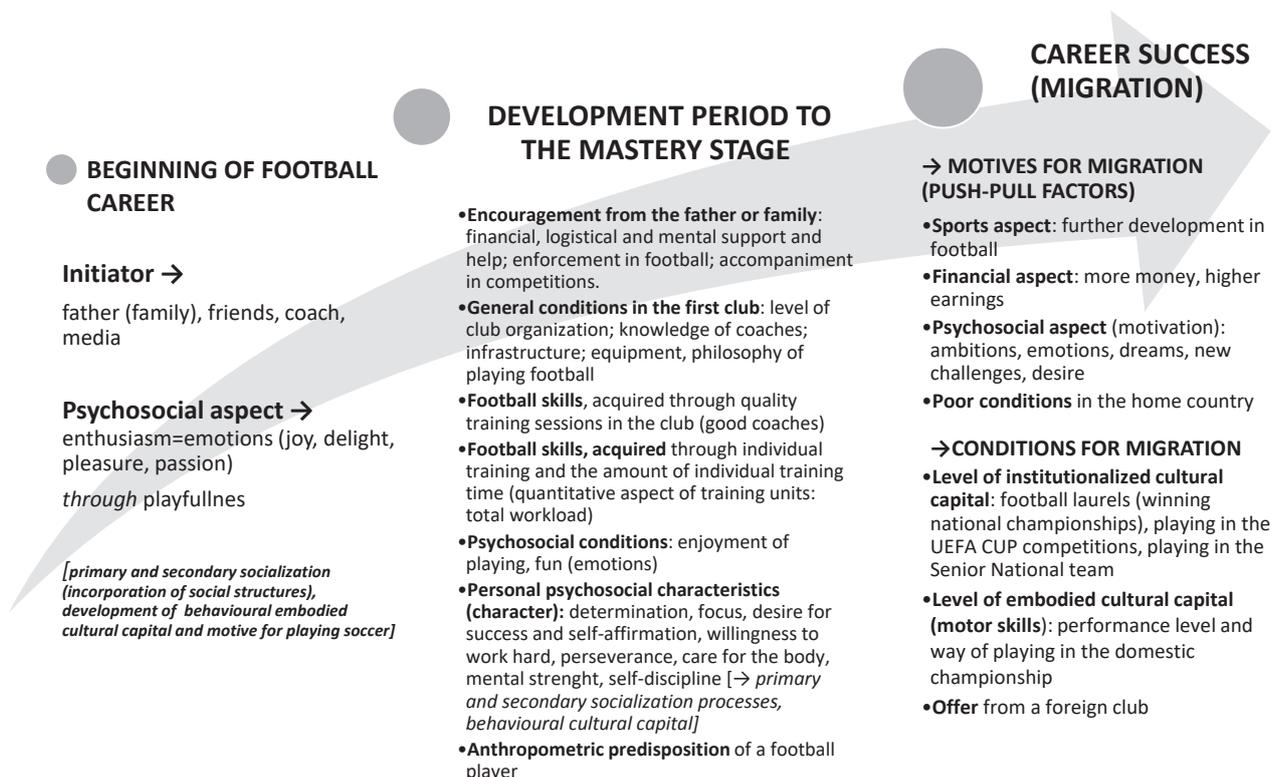


Figure 1. Model of career development pathway of top-level football players.

players with exercises that follow the philosophy of playfulness and bring joy and fun to the participants (Figure 1). Successful career development of young soccer players requires a personal commitment to improving their motor skills. Within early sport participation, we found a large motivation for domain-specific learning activities compared to joyful free play activities (Sieghartsleitner, et al., 2018). Sieghartsleitner et al (2018) recommend a combined learning approach to talent development. In addition to the relevant anthropometric factors of the football player, personal psychosocial characteristics or *character* are a prerequisite for the transition to the master stage of career development. Taken together, these findings confirm that sociocultural factors such as primary and secondary socialization processes, as well as father/family support, exert a significant influence on the career development of football players. This indicates that sociological predictors should be included in talent development processes (Feichtinger & Höner, 2014; Fernández-Río & Méndez-Giménez, 2014; Williams & Reilly, 2000; Zuber, et al., 2016).

In the migration process (Figure 1), we identified the factors that made Slovenian players want to migrate to other countries in order to succeed in their careers. However, we found that players' decision to migrate depended on several motivational processes and local conditions, as also noted by Elliott (2016). Classic *push-pull factors* are involved (Ravenstein, 1889), but the basic requirement for a successful migration abroad is the acquisition of a sufficiently high level of *institutionalized and embodied cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1986; Figure 1) to be attractive to a new employer abroad.

The results of the present study, based on the data from a small sample of individuals, may not be generalizable to football players from other countries. Further research is needed to identify the process of successful career development in different national and cultural contexts. Furthermore, our methodological approach did not allow us to investigate the influence of Bourdieu's (1986) theory of *social capital* on migration processes. This issue should also be investigated in future studies.

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