

The Socialising Function of Sport in the Process of Civilisation

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Abstract: Problem statement: The development of sport is certainly one of the great cultural and especially civilising achievements in the history of mankind. Particularly due to its socialising function, sport plays a significant role in the context of civilising processes. **Approach:** Sport as a mass phenomenon also offers the possibility of exploiting and abusing the general public. Not too long ago, totalitarian systems and regimes used to take advantage of sport for their ideological means; whereas nowadays there certainly is the danger of exploitation due to massive economic interests, which are additionally fuelled and popularised by media networks. An important factor to act contrary to this alarming development and especially in top-class sport-would be to continue to strengthen the ego-functions of man, emphasise his autonomy and to always point out the uniqueness and singularity of his existence. Particularly a pluralistic/democratic and open form of society provides the opportunity to elucidate and counteract. **Results:** As sport represents-by its clearly defined rules (strict rules and regulations in each individual sport-laws of the game) and sanction mechanisms (through regulations) an ideal field of exerting social action, it can also train conformity to standards in sports. The resulting risks of success and situations of disappointment associated with sport can have a positive impact on each individual in the long term (ego identity, training the id-ego-superego). Sport can show here its socialising function and help develop the athletes' solidarity. **Conclusion/Recommendation:** From today's perspective and with increasingly scarce budgetary funds, sport with its claim to (construction) areas, locations for sports facilities and especially financial funds, is of course competing with other municipal fields of responsibility, such as hospital administration, education, social security, youth care and eldercare. Therefore, it will be a main task for all parties involved in this issue to continue securing the essential role of sport in a major city, particularly with regard to municipal challenges.

Key words: Sport, education, socialization, sports community

INTRODUCTION

Many scientists of the 19th and 20th century, both Elias and Dunning (2008) and Freud *et al.* (1974), believe that mankind is threatened by aggression and violence. In spite of the civilising processes and cultural work done for centuries, the protective veneer of humanity is thin and the relapse to destruction is possible. Nevertheless, various attempts to reduce violence and aggression regarding the civilising processes have always been the leitmotif of human history.

"Where it was, there shall ego be. It is a study of culture not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee" (Freud *et al.*, 1974). Especially pedagogy is very important regarding sociology and the "draining of the Zuider Zee". Pedagogy and sport are very closely linked to the respective social development. This study wishes to shortly describe and analyse socialising processes by means of sport.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Nowadays the term of an "educated man" is criticised as being worn out, although it is used again and again. For analysts of civilising processes it has been already evident that the "creation of a valuable personality" is one of the most important branches of production. Not only pedagogical experts, who might overestimate the appreciation of their work, speak about the social importance of effective work regarding the educational system, but also economists, whose opinions find greater approval in society. The challenges of the last decade, the crises in terms of energy, economy and democracies have queried the present economical opinion, because this opinion identifies economics with materials management. The natural (human) power sources and intellectual properties are, for a society which is perceived that way, an input from the outside (exogenous) like wild plants growing in an unattended field without special care or help. Regarding the requirements for balance in

society, all human activities from research, training and development to education should coincide completely; otherwise, the pace of development will restrain the field, which falls behind the other fields.

The awareness about the importance of education for the economy in terms of a continuous socialisation and preparation is not reflected by the attention and care targeted at schools. As a first “official” institution of education schools should not only impart an economical focus, but also pedagogical values. When neglecting these claims, quite the contrary happens and school timetables are adapted to the demands of economy. One can learn from economic, political, social and pedagogical factors about the specific effects it has on schools. However, there is no study available about this development. It is only to be hoped that today’s school will develop into a better, more modern and more effective workshop of “human production”, where the unity of body and mind is as important, as it should have been a long time ago.

Sadly, the current practice of familiar education can also not be described as particularly attractive. The family cannot even accomplish its function of education at the required level. Common bad authoritative traditions, laziness gaining currency as a life principle, instability of human relationships inside the family, isolation in housing complexes and many other reasons have led to the family not being able to fulfil their role sufficiently.

Family and sports: The family is a very complex entity. Besides economic possibilities and traditions, many and hardly comprehensible factors also influence their actions. We cannot expect a rapid and positive change in the design of the pedagogical duty of family, since the pedagogical quality of the family depends fundamentally on the attitude and human quality of those constituting it. We certainly need not mention that from a pedagogical mentality of an adult society the shared responsibility of the family is the third important factor in educating the upcoming generation. If this collective responsibility is functioning at a high level, it could be experienced in the public/pedagogical mentality of both the educator and the one being educated. In this way, the effectiveness of the school and also of the parental home increases. With its peculiar, balancing interactions it brings together the ones responsible for education in the common interest of the members of society. We should not talk about pedagogical utopias, because we know that the diverse moral values and interest relationships divide today’s society into different camps. If the two main institutions responsible for education, namely family and school,

unfortunately fulfil their tasks only problematically and if the pedagogical mindset, which expresses the responsibility of the adult society, is at a relatively low level, then apparently other surrogating spectrums of education seem to increase in value as one might expect; reality, however, looks a lot different. Therefore, collaboration between family and school and also the community is required.

School and sports: The sports movement offers us unique possibilities for educational tasks. It is well known that thousands of young people do sports in their free time; thus it is also an obligation for schools to create a sports-pedagogical foundation. Since sport is a voluntary commitment, it is a very advantageous field (motivation, integration, performance, trainer-student/athlete relationship) of the sports-pedagogical study. For many students/athletes the sports teacher is one of the most important reference persons at school. The education in schools and sports clubs of young people engaged in sport activities seems to be an included part of the sports movement, so that the country’s public interest can be classified as very low. It is as if the public opinion is not able to understand that it is not only about a possibility of training the body; in fact there is much more to it (Krueger, 2005).

The pedagogical possibilities latent in sports are particularly perceived from those, who approach them from a healthcare point of view. An important pedagogical power is thus concentrated in the hands of sports teachers. In order for this power to serve for education better than it does today, we still have much study to do. Pedagogical research should, above all, put on display valid data and new facts, which can be interpreted, in order to have a more reliable picture about the educational work regarding sports in today’s changing society (Krueger, 2005).

The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, points to two important prerequisites for a safe transfer effect, which, in this case, are significant moments in the development of personality. In his opinion, sports cannot be separated from other human activities, since only a fusion of sports and other forms of human activities can ensure a positive development. A similarly important role is attributed to the cooperation between the teacher and his student regarding physical education.

That interaction alone lets young people see the serious character of sport, which makes it impossible to see only the transient entertainment. On the other hand, this cooperation with the teacher provides the opportunity to train the students also morally. It may seem odd that one’s own will can do this training

without anyone's help Coubertin adds in a footnote—thus making obvious that he considers the personal development in sports as a result of development through education.

Even when assessing the relationship between sports and intellectual education, Coubertin considers the realistic sight based on observation as distinctive. He sees here that the sometimes odd-looking exercises for improving one's performance in sports have an influence on the development of the ones doing sports. It is useful that the athlete has to not only evaluate and compare at any moment, but also that the mental activities are taking place extremely fast, since the speed of decision almost always originates from the sport-specific property of each sport.

Coubertin's pedagogical concept focussed on moral education. He deals very extensively with this complex of problems. He claims that it is important for sportsmen to have a balanced emotional life and to learn to control their emotions. As sport does not tolerate lying and cowardice, it represents an important field for forming character and personality. With this train of thoughts dealing with moral education, Coubertin emphasises that this is not about the solitary struggle of the sportsman with himself although this also might be necessary; the educator has to support and respect the one being educated, in order to teach him morals. If the educator does not remember this, he reveals that he does not fulfil his profession (specialised knowledge). If the educator hardly thinks about supporting the sportsman morally, it is not the sportsman himself who has to deal with it. Pedagogy is responsible to make sure this happens.

The most convincing pedagogical argument can be read in the subsection of his work "Corporate Work". If the archaic style wasn't that obvious, we may believe that Coubertin's reasoning was written today. He claims sport to be a big and effective school of human collaboration, whereby the football team is mentioned as the most perfect formation. Cooperation in sports has some characteristics of future democracy. But not even the democratic state could exist without help and competition, thus sports cooperation becoming the basis of a sports society and at the same time one of its most important prerequisites. But which pedagogical institution can prepare us directly for this? We could try in vain to find it beyond sports.

We have already established realistic considerations and reasonable judgments as being the foundation for Coubertin's sport pedagogical way of thinking. The noble idealism of the entire work (complete works) and the realism of the details get on

quite well. Coubertin was certainly a very educated man. In his sport-pedagogical analyses we can not only find the ideas and experiences of the philanthropist, but also the contemporary educational reform spirit. The responsibility for the evolving man and the aspects of the general social interest complement each other in sports pedagogy. This study appears as the complete inventory of related questions regarding sport and education. Today's sport pedagogy actually deals with detailed analyses with the same issues. However, it does not state very clear that the persons involved and responsible in sport (teacher, coaches) could/should implement the pedagogical possibilities offered by sport. Sport itself is not educating, but the educator is, when he teaches!

Pierre de Coubertin's biggest achievement, the modern Olympic Games, is more relevant today than ever. The Olympic movement is primarily an educational movement. Here we can find the founder's basic idea, which regards the comprehensive, harmonious and balanced education as the key to the development of a human society. We will not persist at this point with the fate of this idea, at least not regarding the Olympic Games.

The pedagogical ideas of the ancestors of modern sport and its modern practice seem to have a long life. They have overcome the social crises of our century, the changing ideologies and political systems and persist—just as sport itself even today. Also, the great importance of sport with its holistic claim is always remembered at formal occasions (unfortunately only at these). In order to determine the relationship between sport and pedagogy, we may remind of the legacy of Coubertin's pedagogy. In a society, which views itself also officially as an "educator", where the absolute development of the individual, the fully developed man, is the most important thing, sport is required twofoldly on the one hand as an indispensable component of the holistic claim, on the other hand as the pedagogical means for "development". The sports movement was regarded as the basis of centrally planned social education. After numerous, mostly lowbrow ideas about the central planning of the social conception of permanent education, this approach also failed.

Within the on-going development of our society, incessant education is both the means and the result of the efforts to secure equal opportunities for all citizens and to create an individually, differently formed common life form at a high mental and physical level. This reasoning shows that sport is to be regarded as a part of education and that it also plays a role in the conception of a unified central education planning. The shift of the general trend of

the development of personality merges with the complex explanation of the process of education and training. However, the unconditional faith in sport and its pedagogical possibilities, which ascribed importance to Coubertin's reasoning at the beginning of this century, perished. We have long believed that sport can make a significant contribution to the education of the individual. Yet we were disabused by empirical research in the early 1980s. Hence, sports scientist Niedermann (1996) believes that both sports sociology and sports psychology distinguish clearly from these hopes, since sport can not only serve as a tool for self-realisation, but also in extreme cases for self-destruction. Sport can not only develop but also destroy an individual's character; it can not only integrate but also oppose man; and not only induce patriotism but also mislead to nationalism or chauvinism.

The Austrian sport scientist Grossing (2002) summarises the disappointment regarding sports as follows: "Sport is plunged into a crisis. General social criticism was levelled at it; the correctness of a linear development was doubted; its performance was criticised. The crisis of sport is deep and does not only affect its performance dimensions recreational, mass and school sports." The notations which refer to the educational function are very revealing. They urge to override the previous optimistic views, because those are not supported by any research. However, conducting empirical studies can only come in useful for this matter. Some scientists question the doubtful strategies of the institutionalised sport, the doubtful function of sport and also the educational function of sport within and outside school. Ulaş (2008); Elham *et al.* (2010); Gawrilowicz (2010) believes children and young people are yet to learn to do sports, they must be educated to sport, so they experience sport consciously, without being yet able to explain whether sport serves for health, socialisation or for the personal development. Following sentence of German sport scientist Heinemann (2007) asserts well with this critical reasoning, "I can suggest waiving any claims about the function of sports; on the one hand, because we don't know anything about this matter and on the other hand, because we can raise expectations, sports cannot fulfil. Although I cannot doubt that sports have a really positive effect-everyone who has ever done sports could experience it personally-however, we have no systematic, empirically confirmed evidence at disposal." The lack of necessary facts in the analysis is distinctive for the sports pedagogy and in general for the educational way of thinking regarding sports. It is striking that compared to other scientific fields; sports-

pedagogical analyses provide fewer useful data and facts. Of course, we should not forget that regarding the experimental spirit it is very hard to do research in pedagogy and that a quantitative analysis can be conducted only in a certain context. Pedagogy is involved in many areas of our life. In the field of sports science, an objective explanation of its philosophy is remarkably uncertain, because it might have received only little international attention. Due to the social status of sport, sports science is viewed from a very narrow point of view and the medical, physiological and morphological model of performance optimisation is predominant. In this context, sports scientist K. Carl stated that the development of sports after World War II has given impetus to medical research regarding interval training and isometric strength training in sport science. Sports medicine research was basically limited to fitness and to the process of physical perfection. As a result, the training theory, especially regarding the optimisation of top performances in sports, became an effective foundation for top-class sports. Rossmann (1987) analysed the topics and publications of the most important congresses in sports science and found that most of the time sports diagnostics, talent research, competitors' preparation and the race it were the main focus, with the pedagogical approach to fall by the wayside. In practice, this bias led to strange restricted techniques, which aimed solely at the abilities and skills of the athlete.

It was already mentioned that absolutely unexpectedly sports pedagogy asserted itself, despite its unfavourable development. Just think of the expectations that have proven to be naïve, which arose with the foundation of the "Sports Science" magazine, stating that sports pedagogy was a discipline that drew the focus of other sciences. The former hopes were not confirmed, since sports pedagogy is formed of a number of scientific disciplines, which deal with sports. It became the scientific discipline of the pedagogical orientation of sports. Sports pedagogy had to master a twofold task, namely the training of an athlete and the training by sports. From the mid 1970s of the 20th century sports science has started to acknowledge the importance of the pedagogical benefits of sports. It turned out that pedagogy could not only proclaim popular educational ideas, but also contribute to the achievement of sports performances. This in turn represents the time period in which the "human factor" is brought into focus. The fact that this was placed special emphasis on, made the following possible: the intensity of the training was increased to the utmost, the specific psychological preparation reached its limits; hence, personal motivation and other personal factors of

the athlete became increasingly important. Thus, top-class sport drew the attention to pedagogical research, which also seemed important to sport itself; other researches, which did not serve the top-class sport directly, still remained marginal. All the attention was directed to specific pedagogical issues, such as the peculiar problems of certain sports, where top performances can already be achieved in adolescence or puberty. In addition to that, the pedagogical issues regarding the promotion of outstanding performances, motivation and the sports career can be added. Although the pedagogical possession of sports has been successful, the pedagogical issues regarding youth- and mass-sports have continued to be neglected. As a characteristic tendency we may mention the fact that both sports sociology and sports psychology started to give their attention to issues, which were traditionally part of pedagogy.

Sports pedagogy now actively started to extrapolate reality empirically; with a certain delay it identified the true face of sports. This also changed the previously ebullient style and became more useful due to the proportion (practical relevance). However, it is still criticised and people ask for empirical studies. M. Lammersdorf stated, regarding the function of sports, that numerous sports scientific studies were dealing with the different, often opposite views about this social phenomenon. For this reason it is striking that only few of these works are oriented empirically. The discrepancy between theoretical considerations and empirical studies can only be eliminated by expanding empiricism. The diversity of collections and analyses of existing empirical values can contribute to this fact, like the social functions attributed to sports can turn into reality.

CONCLUSION

The development of humanity is characterised by violence and aggression but also by the balance due to centuries of civilising processes. Despite of severe relapses into barbarism and inhumanity, human history can still be deducted, due to “civilisation and cultural work” taken to mean in the broadest sense, from a certain urge to secure the livelihood of the always endangered human race.

Ancient peoples’ threshold of violence, shame and embarrassment and the conscience formation were less marked; nowadays national and especially international institutions refuse and ostracise, at least to some extent, conflict resolutions by violence and aggression.

Pedagogy and sports-always closely intertwined-have occupied a significant role on the way to civilisation. Often exploited, ideologically abused or

serving a “cause”, pedagogy has been an essential part in the socialisation process of mankind.

There is a large bridge from the microcosm, the individual itself to the family (the first persons of reference), the school and finally the macrocosm, the institutions: council, government and the community of states. Individuals such as Pierre de Coubertin, who “rediscovered” the Olympic Games, made a major contribution to the development of the civilisation process due to their humanism and ethics in the fields of pedagogy and sports.

Pedagogy and sports are not two separate entities, but a part of the respective social development both taking and giving. On the way to civilisation and to a more humane world, both areas have played a prominent role.

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