

Culture and Globalisation

The Role of Sports in International Relations

Fuat Boyacıoğlu¹, Ahmet Gürsel Oğuz²

Abstract: The sport became and continue to be a major sanction tool in international relations in a positive way. By its increasing effects it is one of the most important cases from the past century to nowadays. The sportive competitions executed previously by a very small minority has influence almost all the world before the Olympic Games, and then other organizations (especially football). The sport has become even a phenomena more widespread than the facts such as the democracy, the free market, and even the freedom. The sport has been a decisive instrument in national and international politics. As a global phenomenon it has the popularity due to the governmental socio-economic conditions of communities. It takes place in the consumption phenomenon accelerated by the globalization. The politically bipolar world was considered as a world based on competition between two camps which have established the culture, art, sports, literature, technology, military and policy. In fact the sport in that period played a significant role in the test of power and competition between the two poles in an environment without war, because athletic competitions mean the war of which the results are not death. The economic effects of the globalization also show itself in the sports industry.

Keywords: sport; human; science; international relations; globalization; politics

1. Introduction

Sport (UK) or **sports** (US) are all forms of usually competitive physical activities or games aiming to use, maintain or improve physical abilities and skills of people. Usually the contest or game is realized between two sides, each attempting to exceed the other. Some sports allow a tie game; others provide tie-breaking methods, to ensure one winner and one loser. A number of such two-sided contests may be arranged in a tournament producing a champion. Many sports

¹ Professor, PhD, Selçuk University, Turkey, Address: Ardıçlı Mh., Alaaddin Keykubat Kampüsü, Konya, Turkey, Tel.: +90 5336586002, Corresponding author: fboyaci2000@yahoo.com.

² Senior Lecturer, PhD, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Selçuk University, Turkey, Address: Ardıçlı Mh., Alaaddin Keykubat, Kampüsü, Konya, Turkey, Tel.: +90 5322419309, E-mail: agoguz@selcuk.edu.tr.

leagues make an annual champion by arranging games in a regular sports season, followed in some cases by playoffs. Hundreds of sports exist, from those between single contestants, through to those with hundreds of simultaneous participants, either in teams or competing as individuals. In certain sports such as racing, many contestants may compete, each against all with one winner.

The sport being a part of the universal culture, is an important instrument of combining different people in the world. It is an activity that contributes to world peace. It can be defined as a totality of activities realised in order to affect positively social and moral benefits as well as physical benefits. The sport has not a stereotyped classic definition, but many different definitions.

Ekmekçi et al. define the sport: “the sport is basically a fact made by people to stay healthy, to have fun and to evaluate the free time. With the full sense of the word the sport means the play, distraction, entertainment, recreation, melancholy distribution and keeping away from the usual work” (Ekmekçi et al., 2013). It is derived from Latin words “Disportare and Desport” which mean “distribute to separate from one another”. From XVIIth century these words became “Sports”

Britannica Encyclopedia defines the sport as follows: “competitive and entertaining activities that require a certain degree of strength and skill.” The sport is an integrative and competitive phenomenon turning the natural environment of an individual into a human environment and developing the abilities in the scope of individual or collective leisure activities with or without vehicle under specific rules (Kılıçgil, 1985). Some people considers the sport as a secret of the healthy life; some as a total of movements in the direction of community motivations; some as a tool for war or advertising (Çankaya, 2001).

2. Sports and Human

There is a social cohesion in all of sportive activities as well as relax and fun. The sport plays an important role in the social fusion and identification. The physical and mental satisfaction facilities provided by sports are an integral part of a new way of life. The sport is one of the most popular organizations in the community. There is no doubt that the sport is a set of important events taking place in the human life and the public health in the narrow and broad sense (Özbaydar, 1983).

From the history of humanity to nowadays the mankind has always working both for the peace and war; he has working for his community as well as his egos. What were all these people do sports with the loss of such an effort? When the sport was started according to the actual definition of the word? Determining when the sports were started is almost impossible. Some researchers answer to this question: "Sports began to spread with the humanity's history; some say: "People have learning the sports by imitating firstly their parents, then their tribes and nations in which they live." Sports, especially in recent years become an instrument required for the quality of the human life in a healthy and balanced form. The idea that people are psychologically prepared to the daily life by sports activities and cultural activities is generally accepted today.

3. Sports and Science

In recent years, the sports scientists oppose to the word "Body Education" and say that the word "body" expresses only the physical aspect of the living organism. However, the physical structure and the mental structure can not be isolated from each other; According to the today's educational philosophy the objectives of the physical education, more precisely the sports training rather tend to aim far beyond the physical word. These purposes are social, physical, sensory and cognitive facts. For this reason, sports scientists have begun to use the word "Sport Education" rather than "Body Education". Thus, at the end of the 20th century a new branch called "Sport Sciences" has been ranking among other disciplines.

Sports scientists avoiding from the classical conception of physical education have begun to argue a new conception about the sport, in order to study the sporting movements under several scientific branches such as exercise physiology, biomechanics, sociology, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy and biochemistry. "Sports Sciences" have emerged as a result of nearly 20 years by such an evolution. According to today's understanding, the sport became a very important instrument of mass media. It is also a new science determining the nature of the human behavior and mental structure by means of activities, games, competitions as well as physically the human body. It becomes a social event entered deeply into the social life of people. The sports sociology in this context has been defined as a science branche describing the sport as a major and social phenomenon, studying it as a social institution and a social system (Fişek, 1998).

Nowadays the sport, especially in developed countries began to be perceived differently than a decade ago. For example, professional sports areas are divided into sub-groups and turned into professions requiring the expertise in their area. Until recently in many countries the sport profession were considered as a profession of physical education teaching and coaching. The sport teaching, sport fitness and health-related professions, sports management, sports media and publishing, sports law, sports consulting, sports medicine, sports statisticians and similar sport branches have emerged nowadays.

4. Impact of Sports on International Relations and Globalization

It is seen that there is a close interaction between Sports and politics.

Benito Mussolini used the 1934 FIFA World Cup, which was held in Italy, to showcase Fascist Italy (Kuhn & Gabriel, 2011; Blamires & Cyprian, 2006). Adolf Hitler also used the 1936 Summer Olympics held in Berlin, and the 1936 Winter Olympics held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, to promote the Nazi ideology of the superiority of the Aryan race, and inferiority of the Jews and other “undesirables” (Blamires & Cyprian, 2006; Saxena & Anurag, 2001). When apartheid was the official policy in South Africa, many sports people, particularly in rugby union, adopted the conscientious approach that they should not appear in competitive sports there. Some feel this was an effective contribution to the eventual demolition of the policy of apartheid, others feel that it may have prolonged and reinforced its worst effects. Sport of the apartheid era was based on customary segregation reinforced by general discriminatory legislation, challenged by an increasingly forceful non-racial movement that raised the crucial question: who is a South African? (Merrett, 2005).

In the history of Ireland, Gaelic sports were connected with cultural nationalism. Until the mid 20th century a person could have been banned from playing Gaelic football, hurling, or other sports administered by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) if she/he played or supported football, or other games seen to be of British origin. Until recently the GAA continued to ban the playing of football and rugby union at Gaelic venues. This ban is still enforced, but was modified to allow football and rugby to be played in Croke Park while Lansdowne Road was redeveloped into Aviva Stadium. Until recently, under Rule 21, the GAA also banned members of the British security forces and members of the RUC from

playing Gaelic games, but the advent of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 led to the eventual removal of the ban.

It has been suggested that the nationalism is becoming obsolete as a result of globalization and that the role of sports in the making of nations is weakening. Global sport has presented fundamental challenges to local and national sport, but it has also created the opportunity for sport to be more international. The role of sport in terms of reconciliation is rarely mentioned within contemporary discussions of global sport, power, and culture; the same is true for sports' contribution to the process of anti-globalization (Grant, 2010). The Nationalism is often evident in the pursuit of sports, or in its reporting: people compete in national teams, or commentators and audiences can adopt a partisan view. On occasion, such tensions can lead to violent confrontation among players or spectators within and beyond the sporting venue, as in the Football War. These trends are seen by many as contrary to the fundamental ethos of sports being carried on for its own sake and for the enjoyment of its participants.

A very famous case when sports and politics collided was the 1972 Olympics in Munich. Masked men entered the hotel of the Israeli Olympic team and killed many of their men. This was known as the Munich massacre. A study of US elections has shown that the result of sports events can affect the results. A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences showed that, when the home team wins the game before the election, the incumbent candidates can increase their share of the vote by 1.5 percent. A loss had the opposite effect, and the effect is greater for higher-profile teams or unexpected wins and losses (Cowen & Grier, 2012). Also, when Washington Redskins win their final game before an election, then the incumbent President is more likely to win, and if the Redskins lose, then the opposition candidate is more likely to win; this has become known as the Redskins Rule (Jones, 2012).

It is well known that the international sporting events aren't a war but a peace. There is an international sports law like law of nations. The evolving rules from ancient Greece to nowadays have reached to advanced principles at the present time. Therefore, those who are stronger in sports gain while those who use the force lose in sports. At the individual sense the sport improves the individual feelings to evaluate the sovereignty and facilities. Thus, it completes the training of people and nations. It is based on common training and is the mirror of mind and level of education of people. The sport is the most noble of the wars in

international platforms because it is a war of peace. The international sports battles aren't like to the political wars. The sporting competitions are manfully, honest, friendly and sportsmanlike. For such a sportsmanship, a person can not be natural athletes, by contrast he should deserve the title.

All the athletes competing in international competitions have the same feelings. The same enthusiasm covers their inner world. This is a peaceful world war which isn't directed to any nation. The parties competing each other have one ideal. It is possible to see over there all types of people from different culture, religion or race. Five interlocking rings of the Olympic Games represent five continents. This shows a great community where young people are coming together for the peace world.

It is observed that the sport becomes increasingly efficient in international politics. In cases where the first diplomatic instruments give no results the sport can be used as a second diplomatic tool by all countries and groups who feel powerless (Doğu, 2010).

After the 1940's Soviet Marxist Regime aiming to use sport as a state policy utilized one of the diplomatic weapons in the cold war period after 1950s referring to the overtension between rival alliances without making war (Heywood, 2007). Here the cold war is defined as a prestige, influence, struggle between two blocs divided and ideologically opposed, nuclear-armed states and states becoming the satellite of the powerful states between 1945-1989 years (Morse, 2003). During the creation of the political power the sport is used as a natural means, due to its mass effect and acceptability. Former East Germany using the sport as political instrument is a great example (Morse, 2003).

Western states not giving the sufficient and necessary importance to the sport in international relations until the early 1970s, had taken it in their political programs in the last 15 years after the end of cold war. The early 1970s is the time when the differentiation started for western states in this regard. Western states particularly United States and Canada realizing at the end that the sport plays an important role in the international arena had sent a group of athletes to competitions held in China in 1973 to reshape their relations (Morse, 2003).

The globalization turning economically the world into a huge market by the communication technology affects all aspects of the social life. The fact that the negative impact of globalization occurred mostly on underdeveloped is argued and discussed still (Yilmaz and Horzum; 2005). Institutions, governments, politics,

ideologies, forms of production and ways of life have taken a new form by the globalization (İrmiş, 2003). We can study the globalization process under three main factors: The first is the impact of technology, the second the ideological factors, the third economic factors.

The technology is not a sufficient condition in the globalization process; but a *sine qua non*. Nowadays, information technologies demonstrating rapidly a remarkable extent accelerate the global transformation in the international interaction process. Blooming in the communication and computing sector accelerate virtual competitions as well as global financial markets. Indeed, international sports channels, sports TV's radio channels, mass media plays an important role in the creation of masses. Star TV broadcasting in Asia, BSkyB and Eurosport channels in the UK, do sports publications (www.cat.org.au/aoa/documents). Besides a lot of functions, they do advertising of athletes and clubs and take the moral and material support of the supporters (Genç, 1998).

As for ideological factors a rivalry between the western world led by the United States and the eastern world led by Soviet Union had set everything in the world since 1945. This rivalry was consisting of the competitive, culture, art, sports, literature, and of course technology and military. Cold war world was founded on the competition policy. In fact, the sport was the testing of power in an environment without war between two political poles. The victories and success between two poles in International Olympic Games were perceived as the success of their ideological systems and technology. The sporting activities were supported by the private incentives of governments. Sporting success was attributed to the success of the political regime. The sport was considered as an effective tool for the advertising of countries and their regime. The fact that the sport has become a political tool dates back to the early XIXth century. In that period, German gymnastics were considered as a part of public education to develop a sense of discipline and heroism; the main aim was to prevent the propagation of Napoleon in Europe (İkizler, 2002).

The 22 African countries boycotted 1976 Montreal Olympics Games. Taiwan boycotted the organizing committee because Public Republic of China was in this committee. The 65 countries boycotted 1980 Moscow Olympics Games under the pretext of the USSR's invasion to Afghanistan. Eastern Bloc countries citing security reasons and anti-Soviet propagandas boycotted 1984 Los Angeles Olympics Games. Romania joined only to these Olympics. In 1988 Seoul

Olympics Games the famous weightlifter Naim Suleymanoglu became successful and figured on the cover of "Time" magazines. He participated in the world championships in Australia in the same year. He was secretly escaped from Bulgaria authorities to Turkey (Koryürek, 1996).

The collapsing of Soviet Union has been the end of the cold war. In particular, the collapse of the Eastern bloc increased the confidence to the liberal market economy and the capitalist order of USA. Eastern Bloc countries used sports to cover up their economic failure, to prove that they are still strong. Indeed, the sport has been used to mobilize the public masses and to unify and combine them around a purpose" (Atasoy, Kut, 2005). However, today the brands that western capitalist systems have creating influence all countries. All these show us how the sport with its universality has penetrated into other cultures. The brands of sports equipment and clothes are globalized by depending on economic conditions.

Today the sport is considered as an important service sector with its qualities protecting and improving personal and social health. In addition, the sport becoming a profitable advertising and promotion tool under the influence of mass media and a consumption sector as a leisure activity attracts the attention and curiosity of people. It becomes an attractive economic activity for investors. With its production and consumption services it is the research subject of sport business management and sports management (Devecioğlu, 2005). The sport enabling to form large consumer groups and to come together is used as a marketing tool with the impact of a rapidly growing consumer society. Sports industry allow producers to produce sports goods and consumers to consume them (Mullin, 2000).

5. Conclusion

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