
Original research article

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SPORT AND CULTURE

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SUMMARY

If we are talking of culture as the mirror of an individual nation, then sport as a human activity is its cultural mirror, based upon the definition of the Greek philosopher Homer - to always be the best. This is reflected not only in a nation of sports youth, but also in the people themselves; their tradition, history, morality and religion.

All these aspects represent the phenomenology of sport and culture, not only within one nation, but also for their comprehensiveness in the world, globally. This comprehensiveness that is based on individuality makes sport and culture clear to understand. The power of sport, which is reflected in its individuality, as well as in its totality, better reflects the old Latin sentence: *Urbi et Orbi* (to all and sundry).

Regardless of the viewing angle, the dominant political and economic utilitarianism of sport is reflected both within a nation and a culture, as well as within the comprehensiveness of global sport and the level of civilization. If we are considering the phenomenology of sport and culture, at an individual level, we shall go to the present situation in Serbia, a small European country and the global situation in the Western civilisation.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 20th century, in many ways characteristic (two world wars and many regional ones, turbulent technological development, clear departure from the traditional and moral values), a liberal concept of social and economic relations organization began to show his dominance. Then the world faced a picture of globalization that by the skillful marketing campaigns permeated the whole world. In sports, it began by boycotting participation in the Olympic Games. First, the "West" boycotted the Olympic Games that were held in Moscow (1980), only to be followed by the "East" boycotting the Olympic Games that were held in Los Angeles (1984).

In those years the old Olympic motto: *It is important to participate, not to win* definitely went into oblivion¹. A new motto in accord with the neo-Darwinist ideas of the New Age: *It is not important to take part, it is important to win*, has entered the scene!

This change of mottos, of course, established a completely different attitude to sport in which its utilitarian value reached its full potential. Thus politics and economics began to rule ruthlessly the sphere of sport (as well). Also, depending on current priorities, they took turns in the leading position.

Sport² as a globally recognizable human activity basis its attractiveness on agon, deeply rooted in every human being. It is this very agon, a strive to always be the best and excellent among the others,³, that makes sport globally recognizable. However, this so recognizable picture is further being expanded by the powerful international sports associations, above all by the *International Olympic Committee* IOC and the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* FIFA, but others do not lag behind (The International Association of Athletics Federations IAAF, *Fédération Internationale de Basketball* FIBA, etc.). They are

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¹ "Comforting" motto "it is not important to win, it is important to participate", which, wrongly, is attributed to Pierre de Coubertin, are the words of the Bishop of Pennsylvania Etelberto Talbot which he used, at the Mass in London (1908) to address the participants of the Olympic Games.

² Among the large number of the definitions of sport we offer two, which reflect sport in the context of the following topics: (1) *Sport is an organized system of physical exercises, of the agonistic character, which strives to improve the personality to achieve maximum athletic performance. (Nenad Zivanovic), and (2) Sport is a voluntary and usual cult of intense muscular workout based on the desire for progress that can go up to the level of the high risk (Pierre de Coubertin).*

³ „Old Peleus bade his son Achilles ever be bravest, and pre-eminent above all, [785] /not to shame the line of your fathers who were the best....”, Homer, *The Iliad with an English Translation by A. T. Murray*, Ph.D. in two volumes. Cambridge, MA., (London Harvard University Press, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1924).

trying to through various actions and programs (Olympic education, fair play game, Sports Schools) arouse the interest of as many young people as possible to take up sports. In doing so, sport's professionalization is harsh masked by different "lures" whose task is to remove from the foreground the *new attributes of sport*. Instead, the reality is blurred by continued talking about the so-called *old attributes of sport*⁴. And they, fortunately for us, can only be recognized in school sport and partly in recreational sport. Those attributes simply cannot be found in elite and professional sports.

And in this game of politics and economics one should observe sports.

If in doing so, culture is the mirror of a nation, and it really is, then sport, as human activity based on the desire to follow the Agon of the Homer determination - to always be the best, is its cultural mirror. It reflects not only the sporting youth of a nation, but also the people themselves, their traditions, history, morality, religion.

All these aspects reflect the phenomenology of sport, not only in the framework of one nation, but also in its comprehensiveness in the world, globally. And it is this universality, that is based on individuality, that makes sport comprehensible and clear everywhere and in every place. This power of sport, which is reflected in its individuality and its comprehensiveness, is best reflected in the old Latin sentence: **Urbi et Orbi** (*to all and sundry*).

METHODS

By the historical research methods, theoretical analysis and meta-analyses, which were used for an additional analysis of the previously obtained results, considered to be the most appropriate methods for this type of research, relevant data were obtained.

The subject of this study was to assess and analyze the phenomenological aspects of sport and culture and their reflection on the social reality. Based on this the goal of the research was derived - to shed light on these phenomena through the examples on the individual and global level.

⁴ When at the end of the last century the Olympic motto changed from *It is important to participate and not to win*, then the old attributes of sport: *health, education, socialization*, were replaced by the new ones - *the result and money (profit)*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Culture, especially in its narrow sense, with all its subgroups (literature, film, music, theater, television, sports ...) and layers (subculture, postculture, elite, populist, sports culture ...), has its own political and economic utilitarianism. At the same time, culture is a good mirror of a nation, and civilization to which this nation belongs. That is why it is not only funny but also sad that there is no understanding when someone dares from the other side of the world, with *their cultural mirror* to advise, usually in an imperative tone, someone from the other end of the world⁵, what to do, and what to change.

Who, for example, will understand the importance of the given historic event for the people if one is not familiar with their culture, traditions, historical roots that are deeply intertwined in the space and time in which those people live. How can one, in this process authoritatively order the others to change in the way and to the extent the ordering party prescribes⁶.

In sport we are talking about, there are many phenomena that speak of its fragmentary and interesting images that can be seen in the cultural mirror. These images are interesting on the general - level of civilization, but also on the individual - cultural level. And when their pictures cross, very often, to put it mildly, there occurs confusion and misunderstanding.

To understand this we will first analyze the image of tennis that we see in the cultural mirror. And of course, the position of the currently best ranked player Novak Djokovic.

In the final of this year's tennis tournament in New York, (which is one of the five most important ones), featured by Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, whoever wished could see quite a lot of interesting things and could reveal culture of the Western world, as well. In this final, Novak Djokovic was playing not only against his tennis opponent, but also against more than 20,000 spectators. And both rivals he conquered. Of course, the audience has the right to cheer whom

⁵ Jokingly Eskimos can confer the Congo people what to do and how to manage their society, but it is dangerous when one steps out of the field of humor. Hence the occurrence of many of the "colored" revolutions, various springs, transitions, "collateral damages", etc.

⁶ Speaking on the individual level, we give the example of Serbia, a small country in the Balkan peninsula. The Serbs have a lot of important historical dates, but one month is particularly important for their history. It is the month of June, which in the Serbian historical consciousness was noted as a holy month. And in this 2015 this month is also recorded in the sports domain as an extremely significant one. In fact, in this month Novak Djokovic for the second time won the Wimbledon tournament, which is considered to be a world championship, the water polo players won the water polo World League and water polo World Cup, female basketball players have become champions of Europe and in the European games in Baku a lot of medals were won.

they want, but we have long been taught that the tennis audience is a special type of audience because of its lofty education and high culture standards. Consequently, what could be seen of it - vulgarity and arrogance that are more "appropriate" for the lower class groups.

A few pictures, very striking ones, are going to be reflected for a long time in that (their) cultural mirror: (a) rude interference and booing, with frenetic applause whenever Djokovic made a mistake; (b) arrogance and confidence of the Hollywood "elite" who came to be seen (probably under the direction of their managers), spiced up with the yawning of one of them (R. Redford). This yawning, which the hippopotamus would envy, is the picture of their (non) culture; (c) rapid fleeing of the same audience from the tennis stadium, immediately after the end of a tennis match, not only proves the quality of the stadium, but much more describes their character and (non) sublime origin.

All this was seen, cameras recorded everything, television media sent a picture of a sports reality around the world, which is actually a reflection in the cultural mirror.

And that picture has, unfortunately, confirmed the undeniable fact that the position of the best in the world is not a basic condition for one to be a sports star of the first order, or sports idol the young people will look up to. The attitude of the organizers and the audience towards other players, above all towards Nadal and Federer, clearly shows that the decision of who will be the sports star is reached elsewhere, rather than on the sports field. If Novak Djokovic were born in another (eligible) country, or if he gave up his roots and changed his nationality, he would then for long be respected and heralded up to the heights reserved for sports stars and sports idols. That he does not have "blue blood" and yet is the best in the world, is in the eyes of those who run the sport, a big minus.

Also interesting is the image of tennis, which actually sends a reflection of what we can define as *tradition*. Here we refer to a tradition which (except for Serbs and other "small" nations) one must not touch.

Tennis belongs to the category of sports that were once practiced by young people from the higher and highest social status groups. It was played in white sports clothes, mostly on red clay, or on (English) grass. People from the lower status groups could only be observers from considerable distances, as well as those who were there to help and serve.

Even today, people from the world's upper classes, not only play tennis recreationally, but also manage this sport. They do not allow the demolition of the

tradition of *their sport*, although at tennis tournaments one can see all the absurdity of the tennis rules.⁷ Tennis is the only sport in which the rules are not changing. Just remember how volleyball transformed from one monotonous sports game, by changing the rules of the game, into a dynamic and attractive sports game. This example is enough for one to understand the necessity of the rule changes.

Much different and uglier picture can be seen in the cultural mirror when it comes to collective sports. Football, because of its worldwide diffusion, is a good example for analysis. Therefore, we will point out three major football events that can be observed on the general and individual levels as well.

Hands Play. A football match between the football teams of France and Ireland⁸ played in the qualification for the World Cup (2010), will be remembered for the interesting *hands play*, which is not allowed in football, and even more interesting turn of events and explanations of this denouement.

At that match, at its very end, Thierry Henry, a French footballer, used his hands to prevent the ball from going into the goal out. He passed the ball (by foot) to his teammate and he scored a goal. All this action was seen on the TV screen and on the pitch as well, but the judges themselves did not see this "hands play". Understandable protests of the Irish players did not help, because the judges' decisions, like the emperors', are never disputed. Of course, on this rarely-seen football move newspapers reported, television debates were led, professional football public woke up, and split. Statements of reasons that were heard were utterly in the spirit of the times in which we live and in which all means are justified in order to achieve the set goal. One could hear and read the explanations that had been boiled down mainly to: yes, it was a violation and an unauthorized

⁷ We will point out only a few details that are typical and illogical from the point of the tennis game: (1) Once a tennis match begins, no one can know when it will be completed. The question is - what categories of people can spare such long time and in doing so keep listening to the lessons from the west - time is money; (2) All those who do not start the first match in the daily tournament schedule do not know the start time of their tennis match, and do not know when to start warm up. This is a huge problem for athletes; (3) The method of counting in tennis, because of the coins that were once clanked in falling in containers, is also absurd; (4) Repeatability of the service, which does not exist in any other sport, has led to the emergence and dominance of very tall tennis players. There emerged tall young people over two meters, who should belong to the basketball rather than to the tennis court. They are called the tennis thugs, due to the extremely strong and fast services. Although the structure of movement and type of load characteristic for tennis do not correspond to such tall persons, they are becoming more numerous among tennis players. This is a direct consequence of the tennis service rules.

⁸The second play-off match for the FIFA World Cup 2010 was held in Paris on November 18, 2009. The French in that game needed just the tie. An equalizing goal for the French national team was scored in the final moments of the match.

game, but as a referee at that time did not see the foul, everything is all right. After all, the players are constantly trying to simulate and use illegal means to win. So, playing with hands is an offense which does not differ much from the foul or simulation.

Of course, no one asked what about the ethics of a fair play, why Thierry Henry did not step out and admit his deception. And this he has not done because it is a part of the commonly accepted motto that the aim (victory) justifies the use of all means, regardless of whether they are allowed or not.

How sad a fact for the man, how very sad.

Faith. Young footballers of Serbia⁹, in July 2015, have achieved up to then, unimaginable success – they became world champions. This success was, of course, received with enthusiasm. Compliments were coming from all sides, but soon followed the analysis - how this success was reached. In searching for reasons for this great success there was a great questioning, by the wise analysts, how come that they being so young, used the Lord's Prayers. And immediately, to this last question, comes the answer: it is yet another shameless perversion of the religiosity and its ultimate instrumentalization.¹⁰

This statement and "concern" for these young people, expressed in a totally atheistic accord with the time we live in, clearly indicates the priority given to the Darwinian - hedonistic understanding of social reality.

But let us ask ourselves - who is entitled to judge it?

When an athlete in the depths of his soul and his heart, places prayers of the Lord, and utters them, is it set up, and for whom? Or is it the spark that illuminates their faith in the Lord?

Certainly, the prayer of the Lord even in its shortest form *Oh God help me*, can be honest, uttered by a sincere heart, but it also can be insincere, uttered for the entertaining sake. In any case, we are not called to measure and judge it. There are those who can do this and who can look into the heart and soul of those who invoke the name of the Lord; sincerity of the heart He rewards and dishonesty He does not reward.

What can be a reward, for truly mentioning of the Lord's name, we have seen – the title of the best in the world.

⁹ Football team of Serbia, players up to 20 years, on July 20, 2015 became the world champions. At the World Football Cup, which was held in New Zealand, the young Serbian football players in the finals won the selection of Brazil.

¹⁰ Ivan Ergić, *The Politics*, Comments, 8. 7. 2015.

More than a game. A recent football match between the national teams of Albania and Serbia had a turbulent foreplay and even more burning finals¹¹. Politics was, of course, in the foreground. And in the cultural mirror it could be seen that *football is, indeed, more than a game.*

A football match, which did not have a major competitive significance, was abused for a great political performance. It also showed the intricacies of multi-ethnic communities, especially in Serbia¹². In addition to tensions in Albania and Serbia and different perspectives on the same sporting event, with their threats and discontent some relatively remote countries that at first glance had nothing to do with this sporting event, got involved. Namely, the Turkish sports public, but also political one, threatened a Serbian footballer after he expressed his joy showing three fingers (instead of two, as they prefer). Nevertheless, this (wrong) symbolic meaning has already taken root in Serbia. As a result of the restless 90's of the 20th century, when Serbia was going through a major historical change, politicians invented this symbolic gesture. But now all of a sudden, that same gesture, is not eligible, because it violates (?) other people's feelings. Even of those so far away as Turkey.

If it was not so funny, it would be sad.

CONCLUSION

A few examples of cultural sporting pictures that we have illustrated make one inquire what today's ethics is. And, above all, the culture of the people that we talked about and civilizations that these people belong to.

If by ethics we imply personal application and respect of those rules and values that fit to the individual, so that he can achieve the goal he himself sets, and *it is considered to be so*, then we should not be surprised by the messages that these cultural images are conveying. For just as an individual can make decisions of what is right in his own opinion, so can the state enact laws, and it enacts them, so that the laws prescribe what must be respected. Thus we come to the conclusion: "Ethics is primarily a personal thing, the law is above all a matter of

¹¹ Within the qualifications for the European Football Championship, in Albania on 8 October 2015, a football match between the teams of Albania and Serbia was played. Serbia won the match.

¹² On 11 November, 2015 when the Albanian selection qualified for the Football European Championship, in the south of Serbia inhabited by the Albanian national minority, there was a huge celebration. And it culminated by their threats to Serbs, and their neighbors, using the slogans: "Kill, slaughter the Serbs so they do not exist."

society¹³" and its institutions. Since these institutions are made up of individuals who do not have to respect the issued and adopted ethical standards - *until they get caught*, it is unlikely to expect these institutions, i.e. the state, to be able to defend in any situation, the accepted norms of behavior¹⁴. That is why these sports pictures are like this. For a very long time they are going to stay like this, as well as the phenomena.

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ФЕНОМЕНОЛОШКИ АСПЕКТИ СПОРТА И КУЛТУРЕ

САЖЕТАК

Ако је култура огледало једног народа, онда је и спорт, као човекова активност заснована на жељи за агоним Хомеровског одредјења – да увек најбољи будеш, његово културолошко огледало. У њему се огледа не само спортска младост једног народа, већ и сам народ; његова традиција, историја, морал, вера.

Сви ови аспекти говоре о феноменологији спорта и културе, не само у оквиру једног народа, већ и њиховој свеобухватности на светском, глобалном нивоу. Ова свеобухватност, у чијој основи је појединачност, чини спорт и културу разумљивим и јасним. Ову снагу спорта која се огледа и у његовој појединачности, као и у његовој свеобухватности,набоље одсликава сентенца старих Латина: *Urbi et orbi*, (свима и свакоме).

Али без обзира на угао гледања, доминантна је политичка и економска утилитарност спорта. Она се огледа, како унутар једног народа и његове културе, тако и у оквиру свеобухватности спорта на глобалном и

¹³ Itule, D. Anderson, A. : (2001) *Writing news and reports in today's media*. Belgrade, Media Center, 309 pp.

¹⁴ The latest example comes from the German automobile manufacturer giant Volkswagen.

цивилизацијском нивоу. У разматрању феноменологије спорта и културе, на појединачном нивоу, поћи ће се од стања и прилика у Србији, малој европској земљи, а на глобалном нивоу од стања у ткз. Западној цивилизацији.

Кључне речи: феноменологија, народ, цивилизација

ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ КУЛЬТУРЫ И СПОРТА

РЕЗЮМЕ

Если считать культуру зеркалом нации, то спорт как человеческая деятельность основана на желании к агону гомеровского определения - всегда быть лучшим, его культурологическое зеркало. Это зеркало отражает не только спортивную молодость любой нации, но и саму нацию; ее традицию, историю, мораль, религию.

Все эти аспекты говорят о феноменологии спорта и культуры, не только в контексте того или иного народа, но и об их распространённости в мире, в глобальном масштабе. Это комплексность, которая основана на индивидуальности, делает спорт и культуру понятным и ясным. Эту силу спорта, которая отражается в его индивидуальности, а также в его комплексности, лучше всего отражает поговорка старых Латинцев: *Urbi et orbi* (всем и каждому).

Но независимо от угла обзора, доминирует политический и экономический утилитаризм спорта. Это находит свое отражение как в нации и ее культуре, также в рамках универсальности спорта и глобальном уровне цивилизации. При рассмотрении феноменологии спорта и культуры, на индивидуальном уровне, исходной точкой является состояние и обстановка в Сербии, небольшой европейской стране, а на глобальном уровне от обстановки так называемой Западной цивилизации.

Ключевые слова: феноменология, нация, цивилизация
