

TRANSPARENCY OF THE FUNCTION OF SPORT OFFERED TO SPECTATORS AND TV VIEWERS AND TO THOSE ACTIVE IN SPORTS RECREATION (The case of Slovenia)

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Abstract

The most important function of sport is the one which also includes usefulness in the most general sense of the word, physical, mental, social and certainly material usefulness.

The crisis of the "state welfare" is evident in the East as well as in the West. The problem of growing social differences which are more evident in the East, reflects also in sport, among other things by distorting its utilitarian functions.

Regarding the results we can conclude that, in Slovenia, sport acts in the function of wholesome utility. It has active and passive participants (spectators at sport events). Evidently Slovenes enjoy sport, they are aware of its positive effects on health. Sport is a way of life and top-level sport achievements are appreciated as they show what Slovenes know and can attain in this field. In post-socialist Slovenia there is no distinct crisis in the function of sport, that is to say no marked distortions of sport values.

Key words: function of sport, East and West Europe

Zusammenfassung:

FUNKTIONSTRANSPARENZ DES SPORGES ANGEBOTEN DEN ZUSCHAUERN UND DEN SPORTLICH AKTIVEN

(Der Fall Sloweniens)

Die wichtigste Funktion des Sports ist diejenige, die die Nützlichkeit im weitesten Sinne des Wortes inkorporiert: körperliche, psychische, soziale und bestimmt auch materielle Nützlichkeit.

Die Krise des "Sozialstaates" ist im Osten, wie auch im Westen evident. Das Problem der wachsenden sozialen Unterschiede, die im Osten offensichtlicher sind, wird auch im Sportbereich widerspiegelt, unter anderem auch durch Verdrehung dessen utilitarischer Funktion.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, daß Sport in Slowenien in der Funktion der Gesamtnützlichkeit ist. Es gibt aktive und passive Teilnehmer (TV-Zuschauer und das Publikum an den Sportwettkämpfen). Es ist offenbar, daß die Slowenen Sport genießen und sich dessen positiver Einflüsse auf die Gesundheit bewußt sind. Sport ist die Lebensweise und sportliche Spitzenresultate werden hochgeschätzt, denn sie zeugen von den slowenischen Kenntnissen und Leistungen in diesem Bereich. Im post-sozialistischen Slowenien kam es zu keiner ausgesprochenen Krise in der Funktion des Sportes, d.h. es gibt keinen bedeutenden Verdrehung der Sportwerte.

Schlüsselwörter: Funktion des Sportes, Ost- und Westeuropa

Purpose of the study

In logic and mathematics a function means the reciprocal dependence of quantities. Consequently the change of one quantity determines the change of the other, or even of other quantities. Due to the change in one or more parts, the other part or other parts of the same entity change as well. The variable which changes because of the other changing variables is in logic and mathematics called a function. Sometimes the word "function" is used differently. It may express intention, the idea of an action, while

retaining mutual dependency between the parts of the structure.

Every human activity has a function, a purpose. An activity can have various functions. The special human activity we call sport has, like all other human activities, different functional purposes: winning a competition, education, relaxation, maintaining good health, rehabilitation, earning, diversion for spectators and mostly a way of life, which in a chaotic sense contains the substance of "the quality of life". Functions as purpose, aim, meaning, i.e. the conclusive reason (meaning) of sport, sport activities, can be

quite diverse. Therefore the question arises which sports are the most significant. We could say that the most important ones are those which also contain usefulness in the broadest sense of the word, meaning physical, mental, social and certainly material usefulness. The last one can be understood as a better standard for the participants in sport, as marketing in sports or as the national interest. If sport did not have a holistic value, then the participants would not experience feelings of well-being: in the sensation of active physical movement, healthier nurturing, at being conscious of doing something useful for oneself, delight in watching sport events, by socializing with other participants, feeling the lasting positive effects of a sport activity (being slimmer, better-looking, relaxed), feeling safe because of the knowledge about different sports or being proficient in them, e.g. swimming, combative sports, etc. Without the values that are expressed in the feelings of well-being or discomfort, sport activities would have no participants. If there were no participants, there would be no material effects of sport. Sport could not be offered as a service to the active participants, nor as a service for the spectators (the public). There would be no sport in tourism, sports would not give jobs to workers, competitive and top sport would not be a multiplier to such an extent, nor a promoter or generator of other sports, there would be no sport industry, in fact, there would be no sports marketing, etc.

The utility of sport is therefore the consequence of its holistic range to which people constantly contribute new values. Science and the professionals are discovering these values through parameters which are being studied more and more. Because of this, or primarily because of the presented reasons sport is a significant economic category, whose importance grows from year to year.

In the former socialist countries, one of the most important functions of sport was the promotion of a country and the efficiency of its political system. In this sense, all sportsmen/women were, at least to some extent, "the soldiers of the Cold war". But only partly because their main goal is and was to show their talent and work.

Slovenia is a post-socialist country. Therefore the knowledge, whether sport satisfies its basic holistic functions, which are reflected in the

well-being of its participants and are manifested by numerous active sportsmen/women and the public at sport events, is quite significant.

From this basic purpose, it is possible to derive a series of the partial goals of this research:

- the percentage of the adult population of Slovenia that follows sport on television and the number of regular sport-events viewers,
- the forms and manner of sport participation of all adults in Slovenia, those attending sport events and TV-viewers of sport events.
- how the adult population of Slovenia assesses the contribution sport has in promoting Slovenia abroad,
- in market communication, and
- how noticeable are sport sponsors.

Methods

The sample of respondents represents 1033 participants, selected so as to represent, with certain statistical limitations, a sample of representative opinions and viewpoints of all Slovene citizens older than 18. From this sample, subsamples of sport-events spectators, occasional and regular TV-viewers of sport events and fans were selected on the basis of individual questions.

At the Faculty of Sports University of Ljubljana, we extracted from the complete sample of the adult population of Slovenia, by use of the SPSS statistical package, the necessary subsamples. Then we described the complete sample and each subsample by each of the available selected variables in such a way as to calculate their frequency distribution.

Results

From Table 4, it is evident that the subsample of sport-events spectators is more sport-active, mostly significantly more regularly active than the complete sample of the adult population of Slovenia. Regular adult viewers of TV sport events are more sport-active but mainly they are significantly more regularly active than the adult population of Slovenia. But their active sport participation is

Table 1: Percentage of sport - event spectators

sport event spectators	f	f %
yes	385	37.2
no	651	26.8
Total	1036	100.0

Table 2: Percentage of occasional TV viewers of sport events

TV viewers of sp. ev.	f	f %
yes	892	86.1
no	144	13.9
Total	1036	100.0

Table 3: Percentage of regular TV viewers of sport events

reg. TV view. of sp. ev.	f	f %
yes	505	48.7
no	531	51.3
Total	1036	100.0

somewhat smaller than that of sport-events spectators.

The majority, which is 86% of the adult population of Slovenia, is of the opinion that sport is an important factor for the promotion of Slovenia internationally. It is unquestionably a fact that the sport results of sportsmen/women are a factor of promotion, identification and identity of every nation, state, therefore also Slovenia. Furthermore, it is evident that the adult population of Slovenia is of the opinion that these results can also be a successful factor of the promotion of sponsors, who are business partners in sport. The majority of the representative sample of the adult population of Slovenia (79.8%) is of the opinion that it is useful for enterprises to act as sponsors of the Slovenian sport. Out of these, 36.1% think that sponsorship relations are profitable for enterprises, and less than 1% state that collaboration in sport is ineffective for enterprises.

For sponsors it is significant to know whether the Slovenian public recognises and knows them as sponsors of Slovenian sport. On the other hand, this is also important for the sponsorees, since in this way they get an evaluation of how highly their results are valued in exchange. The question put before the respondents was: Can you name a Slovenian enterprise which successfully advertises its products by advertising sportsmen/women? The results showed that 32.1% of the sample of the adult population

of Slovenia did not know even one enterprise that sponsors sport. About 15% of the respondents of the representative sample know the enterprises which are most recognizable as sponsors. We shall not mention their names as this information falls in the category of professional secrets for both sides, the sponsor as well as the sponsoree. In any case, we can state that the majority of respondents is familiar with the enterprises which are not solely sponsors, but also advertise this sponsorship by marketing strategies that include sportsmen as well. This demands larger funds than just for sponsoring. The Slovenian sponsors are quite unaware of this, since the majority expects optimal effects just by signing the sponsorship contract.

Discussion

Slovenia has, at present, two interests in sport: political, as sport is a natural ally of politics, and an interest in the development of sport since development in this field points also to the cultural level of a country.

Considering Slovenia's population (2 million) and its registered competitors and their achieved successes, Slovenia can be compared quite easily with Western Europe and the post-socialist countries. Slovenes appreciate their top sportsmen/women and are of the opinion that they are valuable promoters of the state and the sponsors.

A comparison of the sport-active population in different countries is very difficult. Countries follow sport activity using various age samples. Even the definition of sport activity as such differs from one country to another. But all the same, it is evident from the comparison of the research by Andreff (1995, 111) that Slovenia can, by the percentage of the sport active population, be compared on equal levels with the countries of Western Europe, and that, according to the data by Krawczyk (1997, 80) the percentage of the sport active is higher than in other compared post-socialist countries.

But it is a fact, that the adult population of Slovenia is chiefly a TV audience and less a sport-events public. This is one of the basic problems of the financing of sport in Slovenia. In the world, sport events are an important financial source for sport. In Slovenia only a few of the events attract a large public.

Table 4: Comparison among the sample of adult citizens of Slovenia and the subsample of regular TV viewers of sport events and the subsample of sport event spectators according to the forms and ways of their sport involvement

response	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f
	viewer	viewer	com. sample	com. sample	spectators	spectators
organized regular	20.6	104	14.7	152	25.7	99
unorganized regular	22.8	115	18.7	194	20.5	79
organized irregular	5.4	27	4.3	44	6.8	26
unorganized irregular	16.0	81	13.2	137	15.8	61
no	35.2	178	49.1	509	31.2	120
Total	100.0	505	100.0	1036	100.0	385

The active sport participation of regular TV viewers is somewhat smaller than the active participation of sport-events spectators. These two groups are also more regularly active than the complete sample of the Slovenia's population. Evidently passive and active participation in sport acts one upon the other. Watching sport can increase the sense of necessity and the wish (need) for one's own sport activity, and reversely, one's own activity can increase the interest for sport events and for watching sport.

Regarding the results, we can conclude that in Slovenia, sport acts in the function of wholesome usefulness. It has participants - active and passive (viewers, sport-events spectators). Evidently Slovenes enjoy sport, and they are aware of its effects on health. Sport is a way of life and top-sport achievements where Slovenes can show what they are capable of, are very appreciated.

We can certainly find reasons for this state of affairs in the relatively good position of sport in the education system, in which 2800 sport educators teach students sport proficiency and the sense of sport. Top-sport achievements significantly influence youth acting as a generator of sport, and this should be sport's major function. In sport for all, conditions are created which ensure relatively equal conditions for all potential organizers of sports recreation. This stimulates competition and with it offers more. The tendency for an increase in organized sports for the active population, i.e. increase of the target market, while still having an approximate 70% reserve, has quite stimulative effects on the new organizers of sports recreation.

Regarding the results presented in the paper, we can estimate that in Slovenian sport, there are no distinct crises in the value

system. At least not such as are present in some other post-socialist countries. The reasons for these crises are probably in the remains of the socialistic understanding of sport: as extensive a base of sportsmen/women as possible; possibly young and should be educated into top-sportsmen/women, so that they could propagate the country and its political system. Such a tendency was also present in socialist Slovenia and is, in some circles, present even today. But it is not, and was not, even in the final phases of socialism, a public and generally legitimate doctrine. Doctrinated selectors of sport in Slovenia advocated well enough the meanings of national sport and top sport as being generators and promoters of all sport, so that in post-socialist Slovenia no distinct crisis in the function of sport occurred, i.e. there are no marked deviations in sport values.

But we must not forget that the structural changes in contemporary societies, such as lack of jobs, long-term unemployment, increase of senior citizens, social program cuts, etc. also reflect in the crisis of the Slovenian welfare state. Due to all this, there is also, beside new elites, new poverty. Therefore sport can also become available for only some. The fact that, in Slovenia, the number of the sport active is not increasing as fast as the number of the regularly sport active, warns us of these circumstances. The quality of sport consumption is increasing more than the quantity.

Differences in attaining the assured services of the welfare state in the field of health, education, housing and, among others, also sport, are increasing in the East as well as in the West. The problem of inequality is anything but marginal and will most certainly also reflect increasingly in sport.

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