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Perspectives of Sport in a Global World

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Abstract

Sport is increasingly becoming a lifetime companion of man, from kindergarten up to the sport of ninety-year-olds. The dynamics of the job market require mobility, which again weakens the solidity of social networks. Due to this development society has become extremely complex. The author states that we can only temporarily commit ourselves to partial relationships. It is characteristic of those decades to almost obsessively modernise everything that was held to belong to yesterday. Modernisation itself is gaining acceptance primarily through specific developmental processes, of which the author analyses five characteristics: Individualisation, rationalisation, economisation, increasing legalisation and globalisation. In the change of paradigms there will be some key developments that concern the whole world.

One can recognise some striking characteristics as indications of problems that could accompany and burden life in sport in the coming years. Ten aspects are highlighted. The author concludes that Sport has come to an arrangement with the mainstream of society. It is on the side of those that follow market logic. It not surprising, however, that critics see it as a driving force for social injustice.

Sport has changed

More than 40 years ago I started my active sports career. Sport was my life. For the first time I played in a C-youth-handball team, shot goals, was celebrated and dreamt of the National Team. To me sport meant practicing technique and tactics and, primarily, competition at the weekend. Athletics was almost equally important to me and football was played almost everywhere. Besides that I played in a table tennis team at position four. ‘Higher, further, faster’ was our maxim. Already at that time the term sport was ambiguous: It could mean school sport, competitive sport, military sport or preventive sport. In comparison with today, especially in retrospect, life with sport was clear-cut and easy to grasp. At least for those who were personally active in sport it was obvious what it meant. Today it seems to be different.

To me sport is still the central purpose of life. I live of sport, write about sport, talk about it, and sometimes, but too rarely, I practice sport. I play tennis, although, as a juvenile, I regarded this sport as an elitist expression of an upper class and hence rejected it. I do special back and torso exercises, without pursuing any traditional sports goal. I go on cycling tours with my family, because I believe they are beneficial for our general well-being. More rarely I torment myself as a runner, since I still hope in vain that it will reduce my weight.

What sport means to me today has only little in common with what it used to mean to me in the past. However even today the sport of the old days still exists. The actual novelty of today’s situation is primarily that the term ‘sport’ has received a considerably larger and still growing variety in meaning.

Today more and more activities are described by the term sport, furthermore a still growing variety of functions is to be accomplished by sport. A diffuse mixture of behavior patterns has developed from a relatively closely limited number of patterns that were initially called sport. The allocation of this mixture to the total range of supply of 'sport' depends to a high level on subjective value judgements. Breathing exercises, hiking, bathing, yoga or jogging, depending on the point of view, are 'real' sports or not sports at all. Codified rules, competition and performance classes are features and showpieces, if you definitely want to belong to the core of the sports family.

However the sports family has long had its adopted children. The behavior pattern of sport shows imperial traits. Moving bodies are sports bodies and unmoving bodies also find a place under the umbrella of sport. Sport can be everything and everywhere—with or without codified rules; with binding participation or without obligation; integrated into a lasting organization or informally practised; measured with externally set quality standards or informally agreed upon. State-municipal sport can be found next to private sport. New organizational structures labeled 'sport' are in great demand and allow the assumption that the triumphant advance of sport, the sportification of our society, can hardly be stopped. Sport is increasingly becoming a lifetime companion of man, from kindergarten up to the sport of ninety-year-olds.

Changes in society

The causes of this development can relatively reasonably be identified. The material standard of living has been considerably increased for many groups in society since the fifties. As a result a mass consumption has developed and has already partly developed into a luxury consumption. Freedom of action, to have a share in consumption, is ensured by participation in the job market. Consequently the job market has not lost its importance. On the contrary—today it is more important than ever to have a job. The dynamics of the job market require mobility, which again weakens the solidity of social networks. Due to this development society has become extremely complex. In the process of increasing diversification there is more and more an appeal only to functional specific items in the subsystems of this society. We can only temporarily commit ourselves to partial relationships—as neighbour, as voter, as sportsperson, as holidaymaker. Flexibility is the maxim.

This process of diversification has been beneficial to us in many respects. More and more people have a greater autonomy at their disposal than in the old days; more and more they find scope for expression and development that was formerly denied to them; more and more they can fall back on financial means that present them with individual choice and decision patterns, especially in their free time. At the turn of the century the values are promising: 'Always having free time, acting as a creative person, experiencing work and pleasure as a unity, receiving reward not only by work, but also by acknowledgement and affection, being socially involved, laughing carefreely, weeping uninhibitedly, being independent philosophically, being able to love and being able to find oneself', who would not like to lay claim to this statement (ROBERTSON 1989). Who does not wish creativity as a lifestyle? Who does not plead for tolerance, openness, truthfulness and a greater depth in acceptable behavior? If sport contributes an important share in this matter, this can only be desirable.

The individualization tendencies that are observable today can be interpreted in manifold ways. From a positive viewpoint the new individualism can be understood as a desirable global change, expressing a new understanding of work, family, culture and society. Hereby a turning towards a sense of life oriented by personal benefit is taking place. But also the tendency towards an expressive individualism is immense. This individualism forms a new version of a successful life, namely the desire not to be taken in and sacrificed in favour of comprehensive social goals and demands.

Considering such an understanding it would only be logical if sport also corresponded with the tendency towards individualism, modernized and individualized its offers and hence came up to man's expectation in his freedom of choice. Looking back at the last two decades of the previous century, it becomes clear that exactly this has taken place in the system of sport. However, there is doubt about whether the path sport development has taken at the moment is the only correct one.

Futures of 'Modernisation'

It is characteristic of those decades to almost obsessively modernize everything that was held to belong to yesterday. This modernization is reflected in all parts of society. It can especially and distinctly be acknowledged in

the fields of politics, economy and law, as well as in social and cultural areas. Modernization itself is gaining acceptance primarily through specific developmental processes, five of which are especially worth mentioning in this context:

First there is the upgrading of the individual, as it has taken place in advanced industrial societies in past decades. In sociology one talks about individualization of society. A gradual erosion of partnerships that used to be relatively firm and were handed down from generation to generation is effected by the process of individualization. Therefore Ulrich BECK is talking about a releasing dimension that has formed the process of individualization (BECK 1986). Furthermore this led to a detraditionalisation of influences directing behaviour and cultural norms. Traditional fields of knowledge were becoming irrelevant and were replaced by new ones, formerly relevant sets of belief were becoming superfluous. BECK describes this as ‘the dimension of losing its magic spell’. It was not particularly surprising that this release and ‘loss of magic’ led to an acquisition of new forms of social integration as a reaction to disintegration tendencies. This could be described as a re-integration dimension.

A second characteristic is the more and more drastic rationalization of our thoughts and actions. Man’s bases of action are increasingly vehemently cleared of value-rational decision structures and replaced by purpose-rational ones. Central themes of ethical mentalities are gradually replaced by functionalistic considerations of effectivity. Life becomes increasingly an input/output calculation; sober calculation replaces faithfulness to principles.

The economization of our life goes along with this rationalization of our bases of action. In the course of rationalization, economic rationality is expanded and gains supremacy. Individualization and rationalization melt to a utilitarian individualism. Personal benefit and maximization of personal advantage become a rule of human action. The expectation of benefit is put in relation to the necessary effort. Cost-benefit calculations become a characteristic of everyday life. They can be observed in children, as well as in youths and adults and can be found in school, in working life and in free time. Taking advantage of privileges becomes a characteristic of today’s daily practice and so it also leads to a departure from the unified community to a certain extent. Masterly cost-benefit calculations become a mark of quality for competent action. Life is completely capitalized and marketed.

Considering such changes it would appear that questions of justice and injustice become increasingly important. A special feature of the modernization of the modern age is therefore its increasing legalization. New hierarchy and power proportions are created among its members. Hereby legalization touches all areas of life, especially the social and cultural sectors of our society, and the private sphere is increasingly affected by questions of civil and public law.

The fifth important trend is identified by the term globalization. Today the term is applied in many ways. Frequently the term integration could equally be used. It must first be stated that in spite of its incessant use it is mostly not sufficiently understood and the empirical evidence proving the process of globalization is only scarce. It has to be pointed out, though, that policy-makers have started much too late in dealing with the implications of the present globalization. The latter has its origin in industrial companies and up to the present day it has been largely limited to this field. It refers to changes and an increase in cross-border activities of companies for the purpose of organizing development and production, obtaining materials, marketing and financing. At the moment these entrepreneurial behavior patterns are going through a time of upheaval, primarily determined by new forms of flexible production. Globalization becomes clear in an empirical way in cross-border transfers of money, goods, services and know-how. Evidence for this globalization process can be found in foreign direct investment, international cooperation at company-level, the changing structure of international trade and the globalization of financial markets. Increasing direct foreign investment can primarily be explained by technological change, macroeconomic structural divergence and governmental policies. It is not least linked up with falling communication costs which form an essential basis of the globalization process. Hence globalization is chiefly distinguished by a new labour market in which traditional influences are receding and standards of labour are undermined in advanced industrial societies. Hereby economy dominates everything. The rising new world society is, politically speaking, in a kind of natural state. Everybody is fighting in an almost anarchical way looking for his individual advantage and legal standards have to be formed with difficulty. A globalization of capitalistic production and market conditions is effected, a re-feudalization of politics comes into being. Governments, political parties and associations have to find a new identity. The most important conflicts of interests are settled by exchange and the arising costs are paid by the taxpayer. There is an almost complete lack of democratic supervision.

Change of paradigms

Consequently it makes sense talking about a change of paradigms. This change is comparable to the replacement of farming by the Industrial Revolution. The emerging change from the industrial age to a society of information, knowledge, and communication will include all people: the industry and all its employees, the unemployed, private life and free time. In this change of paradigms there will be some key developments that concern the whole world. Growth will not necessarily take place in areas that used to be important in the 20th century. On account of the new possibilities of electronic data processing and due to new communication technologies there will be new growth patterns for the national economies of the world. There will be areas where growth can be noticed and there already are areas distinguished by decline. The traditional nation state loses some of its power to influence questions of growth and decline. Regional economic areas come into being in a world without borders; trade is proceeding in those areas. In the 21st century the key to prosperity evidently lies in thinking and acting via telephone lines and via new media of satellite communication. According to the Japanese economist Kenichi OHMAE those regions which are not supported by a common vision of the population will hardly have a chance in this change of paradigms. They will be swallowed up and made redundant by the rest of the global community.

Considering this development we have to put forth the general question of which value systems shall mark this new world. This is closely linked with probably the most important question arising from the fact that new purposes of life have to be found when values like work and professional success wane in importance. Which purposes of life will be important? How does man want to live in this new world? Does the metropolis, inseparably connected with traditional industry, still have justification today? And if not—in what kind of settlements do we want to live instead?

Contours of the development and consequences

In view of the observable changes it is already possible to assume certain contours that are possibly able to characterize the beginning of the new century:

A continued obligation for an increased application of redistribution policies is unavoidable in the development of a globalised economy, due to rationalization processes and new technologies. If more and more social strata cannot make their living by gainful employment there arises the necessity to provide them with a financial income. There is no doubt about a redistribution policy to solve this issue. Redistribution is the requirement of economic reasoning. Accepting that companies in a globalised economy are urged to adapt quickly to the market, that they have to carry out thorough rationalization measures and hence unavoidable dismissals of employees, then it is equally obvious that such adaptations can only be put into practice with an extended social system. This is true because the loss of jobs is less threatening where there is social security for those concerned. Economy can only adjust flexibly to new market conditions if the redistribution in our society is carried out in favor of a broader social security.

The releasing processes cause the individual to understand himself less as a polyvalent cosmopolitan. He will rather focus more on local connections. His place of residence has to cope with the tasks of integration that have to be solved urgently, considering the loss of gainful employment. For future municipal and town development this means that town and municipality structures that cultivate isolation and anonymity need to be changed in such a way that they enable the individual human contact and personal perspectives. The coexistence of dwelling, free time and places of work will be especially important.

As man cannot distinguish himself in these situations by flexible dynamics, but always has to adapt to new constraints, it will be decisive to provide him with a 'new' personality, a personality that will succeed in living a meaningful life beyond adaptation to external pressures. Virtues like mental independence, critical distance and unconventionality will experience a new Renaissance.

The education system will have to change, as well. In the future it will be less important to prepare people in educational institutions for specific job perspectives, if those are only partly emerging in the system of gainful employment. It will rather be important to give them a perspective of civilized behavior to help them discover personal interests. At the universities those courses of studies that are oriented towards a specific professional career will be given less emphasis. Focus has to be laid on mediating students curiosity and interest in substantial social matters and the universities themselves have to function even more in an integrating way than they are already doing today, to compensate for the loss of traditional education. Study can rather be seen as a process of intensive finding of self.

Considering these changes it is after all foreseeable already that a society without opportunities in gainful employment will also create new conditions for arts and culture. Culture will serve less as a distraction for stressed members of the system of gainful employment. More than before culture could rather be about inspiration; it could become a meaningful area of life. The consequences of globalization must not only be seen negatively. They also offer chances that have been recognized too rarely up to now.

Sport in the mirror of the 90s

In this transition of our society into the new millennium there now arises the question of how sport, as one of the most successful cultural phenomena of the 20th century, is affected by these trends. A look into the mirror of sport in the nineties can give us help in answering this question. General aspects of social change can be detected, as well as specific aspects.

The picture that comes into view is split—the division not only being where shortly before an inhuman wall used to be. In the old as well as in the new states (of Germany, editor) cracks become apparent that run crosswise to all usual east-west contrasts. We can recognize some striking characteristics as indications of problems that could accompany and burden life in sport in the coming years. Ten aspects are to be highlighted:

1. The ideology of the market has formed the last decade of the 19th century especially in sport. The entire economization of all areas of life is marching on. This favors the already existing individualization spiral and shows a modern age dominated by the basic figure of the unattached, the single. But this also means that the ‘constructions of independence’ have become ‘prison bars of loneliness’ (BECK 1991, 6). The last years have been characterized by the fundamental contradictions of industrial society. The contradictions directed towards private life and towards the level of the individual are aggravating.

2. You can see in the mirror of sport that the process of destigmatisation of behavior patterns and life spheres is taking place in sport, as well. The increasing freedom of choice for the individual and the simultaneous weakening of traditional relationships will influence it in the future. Decision making obligations for the individual will arise more and more. Everything has to be discussed, justified and its consequences considered. Self-evident matters become a source of conflict. Destigmatisation, increasing freedom of choice and loss of traditional relationships become problems without apparent solution. For many people the life styles produced by entertainment, consumption and the media industry become landmarks and objects of imitation. Stressing differences has a special meaning. Identity and uniformity are not in demand, but rather variety linked with very individual forms of stylization.

3. Also in sport a multiplication and differentiation of partial fields and hence of value patterns can be observed. Due to an increase in the number of organizations and institutions, the individual is the more dependent on his ability to be flexible and on an exchange of roles. Rationalities of action in one area of life do not necessarily have to correspond with other areas. For many life is somehow becoming a ‘choice of menu’. Numerous compositions are possible.

4. The conflict of the sexes has entered into a new stage. Inequality in the field of education and law has not only shown women the inequality in professional life, in family and in politics, but also in sport, clearer and more consciously than ever before. The male policy of only verbal commitment has become increasingly unsuccessful.

5. In addition we can see those problems that we can call crises of human time experience. Still increasing flexibility in the field of work has brought about higher incomes for only a few, more individual free time for a few and more personal time sovereignty for a few. For most employees this has led to more night and shift work, more Saturday and Sunday work, as well as increased isolation and uncoupling from a commonly spent lifetime. The individual may have become richer in goods and services but is increasingly under time pressure. Sport is especially affected. More and more people are yearning for a time organization that corresponds with their organic rhythm and the cyclic movements of nature.

6. Looking into the rear-view mirror, we can identify a continuing problem that can be described as a problem of environment. We are facing it primarily as an ecological and architectural problem. ‘Playground in the Alps’ and ‘sport facilities close to the place of residence’ are the poles. An increasing number of people realize the connection existing between ‘plotted’ and ‘armored’ urban sports architecture and the escape from a world of performance into free nature.

7. Due to a fatal unimaginativeness, mass media and especially television are characterized even more than ever before by merely the principles of the market. Counting on the forgetfulness of its recipients and characterized by an ephemeral spirit of the times, television influences the perception patterns of its recipients, manipulates its messages with superficial entertainment interest and so sells questionable products. Sports coverage plays a central role in this context.

8. In the nineties the renaissance of national values is striking. This can be observed wherever there are sport comparisons between the nations—at Olympic Games, at World or European Championships. But the recognizable nationalisms are mostly nourished by images from the past that put a wrong complexion on the present and the future. The Balkans not only show us that markets may well become more global, but that at the same time, in terms of civilization, spheres of living are clashing more and more vehemently. These spheres have not adopted integration, but separation as their program.

9. Looking back at the nineties one can find indications about who had the final say and who was rather in danger of being excluded from development. In Germany the new middle class, consisting of the so-called upper service class, namely businessmen, traders, lawyers, physicians, journalists, priests, professors, scientists, managers and teachers has set landmarks of political action more emphatically. Hence it has determined the time limit of future social development.

10. Demographically the elderly form the biggest sociopolitical challenge. Their importance in the total population becomes clear in the fact that already today people above 60 constitute a quarter of the total population. A figure of 40% is forecast for the year 2030. There is the danger that our society will become a 'selected' society, even more than is already the case. This is not least because of the problem of an adequate old-age pension scheme, but primarily also due to difficult political tasks of integration between East and West. Inequality will increase. The selection concerns parts of the older generation and a portion of the juveniles. But there is also a selection according to sex. The new foreigners are falling more and more frequently through the sociopolitical sieve of our society.

The general development of our society does not only show positive tendencies. In the last centuries the changes in working life caused traditional class loyalties to break off. The individual has increasingly to look after himself. He experiences his individual fate in the labor market with all its risks, chances and contradictions. The paradox is that increasing differentiation of individual situations is accompanied by an extreme standardization of life patterns. Our society is becoming more ambivalent than it already is. Paradoxes are accumulating. 'Risky chances' is the name of the formula that characterizes our time (KEUPP 1990, 838). Processes with intensive momentum of their own are to be observed more frequently, without us being equipped with suitable and effective rules for stopping them. The ever quicker accelerating modernization of our society creates ever more serious consequences in terms of problems and burdens. Elevator effects have apparently brought our society towards the top. Real enhancement in prosperity, though, has shifted a physical minimizing of existence into the distance. Nevertheless, social inequality remains the central problem for a further development of our society.

Today our society is split. The image of the one third / two thirds-society might be exaggerated. On the tide of contemporary efforts to create a new social policy, this instance is becoming more appropriate from day to day. Let us take a closer look at those who are separated from the majority ever more resolutely in our split society. First of all there are about four million unemployed amidst an economic boom. There are those on social security whose number has reached a record of more than three million today. About eight million people are living at the fringes of the relative subsistence level that is defined by the minimum social security benefit of the federal law of income support. Today's poverty is the poverty of the unemployed, the old people, those in need of care, those in debt, the foreigners and the single mothers. In income distribution it is becoming ever more evident that the lower third of private households is equipped with an ever decreasing income—at the moment less than 15% of the national total. The medium third has 25% at its disposal, but the upper third more than 60%. At the same time the clear profits of independent enterprises continue to increase. They have increased four times as much as take-home salaries. The disposable income of self-employed households was four times as much as the disposable income of employee households in the nineties. These figures make it clear that it is time to talk about social injustice in our society.

Yet official sports politics much too rarely takes note of this fact. Sport has come to an arrangement with the mainstream of society. It is on the side of those that follow market logic. It is not surprising, however, that critics see it as a driving force for social injustice.

Sport political Challenges

What could be the necessary consequences for future sports policy? What should be paid attention to, if sport wants to prove successful also in terms of sociopolitical aspects? Three facts of current sports politics are noteworthy:

Those who, like many sports organizations, follow the idea of doing sport individualistically, have to understand first that in society, thrusts of individualization are to be valued only partly as liberation. Individualization is a conflicting process. On the one hand it is a liberation process—on the other hand it is the result of economic and social plight. Individualization is no self-chosen individualization of individuals. It is the result of economic necessities and therefore has its central consequences especially in economics. Those who assist value pluralism have to understand that the cultural and pedagogical values of sport are changing along with it. There is the danger that important values are getting lost. Flexibility in respect to virtues and values is no ‘tremendous social cardinal virtue’, as many social agencies currently recommend: ‘The mere social automat that always reacts to present relevances only, does not just lose the remaining rest of control over its own fate, it will always be coming too late, as well. The mockery of the hedgehog is certain to the hare that runs pantingly behind’ (ENZENSBERGER 1990, 980). Who does not wish for creativity, personal responsibility and tolerance today? Who will seriously question fun and pleasure in sport, the need for well-being through sport? Nevertheless the danger of one-sidedness seems to exist today, especially at the level of values. For some years now the sport-pedagogical spirit of the times has been focusing on the values fun, well-being, pleasure and self-realization. The clubs and associations have followed this trend. Fun is increasingly becoming a substitute for sense. ‘I want to have fun, simply fun’ has become the higher motive structure of sport. Yet fun merely obscures the fact of a universal deficit in sense in our society. Fun in the so-called leisure sport is increasingly brought about by ‘fun machines’ produced by the consumption industry. ‘Fun production intensifies the destruction of sense intending to help getting over it’ (PARMENTIER, 1989, 113). Free time therefore does not mean available time, it is cost-intensive time. Leisure sport is initiated and modernized directly or indirectly for the sake of profit. Leisure sport is, strictly speaking, consumption sport. In free time, sportsmen and sportswomen stand frequently under the rule of consumption (PARMENTIER 1989).

Secondly one has to point out that an ever stronger mass sport conception based on a biological function of doing sport which is based on health, is heading for a critical situation. Horst Eberhard RICHTER has rightly indicated that our current health discussion is closely linked with an egocentric elbow mentality, connected with a reduction of social sensitivity and introverted contemplation. Individualism does mean self-centredness, but it also means getting one’s way combatively in rivalry against others, which means a weakening in social sympathy and in caring for others. The present situation of our society is therefore characterized by relentless competition. Those who lag behind are shaken off. Those who want to take part need to play tough and cannot afford the luxury of self-critical brooding and social feelings. Not least because of this, fitness and health have become a dominant topic of propaganda for the economy and the government. The danger is becoming increasingly clearer that our society is following the model of a psychoathlete, whose fitness and potential cannot be harmed any more by any stress and impositions. Reasonable physicians have at all times resisted excessive demands from medicine by inappropriate expectations. Our current sports policy seems to know little of this understanding. Today in sport there is much too often a notion of health in use that excludes the understanding of illnesses for a society that wants to overcome its weaknesses and limits by continuous progress. Therefore the remarks of a pioneer of psychosomatics like Hans MÖLLER-ECKHARDT are the more meaningful today. He believes that probably the most human, important and necessary contribution of man is that he can be ill; illness could contain more wisdom and truth than the health of official medicine (MÖLLER-ECKHARDT; quoted according to RICHTER 1990).

Some concepts of sport, however, cover up understanding of the sense of illness. Large parts of our fitness culture aim at a society that is characterised by the loss of the ability to suffer. We hide suffering and illness so as to appear fit and youthfully fresh in rivalry. But along with the ability to suffer there also dwindles the strength to feel sorry for someone. Even more radically than RICHTER, Ivan ILLICH expresses his criticism of such a health ideology: ‘Health is our own responsibility: No, thank you’. He declares his active resistance to the new ethics of personal responsibility for health. He demands self-limitation which has to be seen as a contrast to fashionable self-realisation. In illness and in not being the healthiest (insult) he sees chances for finding one’s self. He values the understanding of health the way it exists in modern society as a break with the galenic-hippocratic tradition. Propaganda for hypochondria in the past 15 years has made the rich in the USA smoke less, eat less butter and jog more. At the same time the USA has exported more tobacco and more butter into the rest of the world. Worldwide the propaganda of medically defined health went hand in hand with the concrete impoverishment of more and more

people (ILLICH 1991, 490). ILLICH's attitude must certainly not only be perceived approvingly. It can, nevertheless, serve as an example of how paradoxical the situations have become. But one item seems to be hardly disputable: If health is limited to an individualistic and hence private phenomenon, then its association with economic, social and cultural modernisation is misjudged. At the moment this is reflected in sport in some of the measures taken. Some emphasise health education, others believe that the problems will take care of themselves, as soon as there are enough sports advice centres and sports therapeutic institutions. The historical development and the social connections that the health problems of our times have evolved from, hereby remain out of focus.

If—as it is practiced by many sports associations at the moment—a modernisation of club work is striven for, then thirdly, one has to be aware of the fact that unexpected effects are possible whose consequences cannot be desirable. An increasing number of clubs and sports associations are defining themselves as part of a general sports market that works according to economic rules. Clubs frequently regard the rest of the suppliers in the sports system as competitors. Therefore they strive to prove their worth in this competitive situation and want to offer appropriate new services competitively. The co-offering clubs and associations of sport as well as the commercial and municipal suppliers are seen as competitors in this matter. Hence the clubs increase their activity potential and the voluntary staff are selected according to this logic. A club tries to acquire full-time staff, to adapt the sport grounds and not least a new financial and legal structure of the club comes into being. In the daily routine of the clubs this means that a football club offers volleyball and gymnastics for women in addition to football. Fitness studios are built in big gymnastics clubs and breathing exercises are offered in sport clubs in a similar way as they are in adult education programs. Clubs also intend to be places where one is 'in', where there is something going on, where fitness is home, where man and woman can be seen in the latest leisurewear. They do not want to be burdened any more with the odour of being old-fashioned. They have a tendency towards becoming a supermarket for sports activities; not few call themselves service-oriented enterprises. Some of these clubs are working with the public relations concepts of the advertising sector. The style of leadership of the new part-time and full-time generation in such clubs follows the rules of management. The sport-for-all idea, wrapped up in new marketing strategies, becomes the allegedly necessary survival concept. Target group offers for all ages and all groups of people in our society are elaborated.

What is the consequence of such policy?

The differentiation of the sport system does not only cause a change in which sport clubs offer, in the first place it produces a creeping adaption. Therefore our thesis is: The organizations that offer sport in our society are becoming more and more similar. This is true in respect to their form of organization as well as to their content and offers. This becomes clear if you compare the clubs among themselves or submit them to a comparison with commercial suppliers and with municipal and federal sports organizations. Formerly sports associations and sports clubs were characterized by making their members divergent sport offers that differed because of contrasting ideologies and because of contrasting sense orientations. Now the differentiation of sports systems in general and the adaptation processes in sports organizations in particular have lead to an increasing blending and levelling of the differences that have existed between gymnastics and sports clubs and the rest of the sports suppliers. The reason for this development is, in the first place, an expansion of sports supply as well as an addition of new sportive services. The process of adaptation is a process in which the clubs primarily adopt the ideas and objects of their supposed competitors. These are partly copies of the new sport patterns that have been developed by the free sports market or in the municipal and federal field.

This standardisation can have considerable negative effects for sport in clubs. There is the danger that the degree of autonomy of the clubs becomes even less than it already is. Club work is displaced by influences that are only as an exception registered reflexively. There is no institutional sensorium for this and in the existing decision makers of the clubs there is a lack of time, competence and experience to ensure the necessary reflections. Secondly, due to the convergence tendency in the clubs and associations of sport, new forms of rationality for decision processes come into being and hence also new leadership styles. These conflict with the existing democratic procedures and checks. There seems to be the danger, too, that the present self-image of voluntary sports organization, namely working without selfish profit motives, can only be upheld with difficulty. The sports organizations are probably becoming increasingly dependant on the selling of goods and services on the market and thus on changes in the market. This means they will have to think like private, profit-minded organizations. Consequently they are in a transformation

process towards new forms of organization. This process will hardly take a smooth course, but nobody is able today to forecast its exact progression.

Those who bear responsibility in sport today are almost daily confronted with the fact that we are living in a time that questions almost everything that seems obsolete to us. In this context it is of special importance that the idea of planning, especially the concept of central control, is heading towards an, at least temporary, end. The disintegration of established, hierarchically structured class and rank conditions has brought about a dynamic situation in which there is reproduced and changed planlessly (ENZENSBERGER 1990, 978). In this situation governments have lost the power of self-assertion, but also the economy is not at all as powerful as it seems on the outside. Acceleration and lethargy, liquefaction and inertia are the processes that characterize our present situation. Ambivalences and paradoxes are the phenomena that we have to live with in sport, as well. The following statement is ENZENSBERGER's wording: 'Pluralism spares nothing, also the future is not immune to it'. The slogan 'no future' does not count any more, rather are there numerous variations of the future.

All these phenomena are to be found in sport, as well. If the future of sport is at stake, the answers of the sports politicians and sports officials are no less marked by helplessness than those of the intellectuals. Readily accepted helplessness more and more takes the place of future-oriented attempts at guidance. In sport also, living now becomes an end in itself. 'Intellectual effort is getting increasingly disgusting. Pleasure is in demand. Pretty-making is the slogan and the deluge after us. Some are already not really grabbed by stopping the deluge. Theory is out, practice is in, interest focused on realization—so what.' Here a trend can be realized that is substantially marked by a refusal of any attempt to help man (ENZENSBERGER 1990, 975—980).

Especially in sport it is a matter of opposing this trend categorically. Future sports policy will have to be judged by whether it can contribute a share. If those responsible strive to do that, then their sports political actions will have to be described by the following: In sport also, the individual must be seen as the architect of social matters and in sport, too, the individual must have the chance to become the architect of his own community and world of life. The club can be the ideal place for this because clubs are one of the few places in our society where social sense is created and cultivated.

The biggest danger in the present development can be seen in the increasing loss of this social sense. Therefore one also has to talk about a basic threat to our democracy today. Individualism is apparently the godchild of freedom. One day, however, it could fall behind in this field. Perhaps it could be supplemented by what TOQUEVILLE calls the collective individualism, the mutual jealousy and stranger groups that behave like individuals. This danger already exists today. More and more our society disintegrates into the rich and the poor, the employed and the unemployed, taxpayers and receivers of alms, beneficiaries and losers of the economic reorganisation. The horizon of a future that one tried to reach commonly has long since been obstructed by an enormous number of competitors who are all merely trying to save their own skin. Instead of making external suffering their own, people leave themselves to the law of indifference: 'It's his own fault', 'I'm as good as anyone else', 'everybody is as good as I am'.

When the healthy and the strong begin to look down at the sick and the weak in a disgruntled way, when the employed suspect that many unemployed do not want to work at all, when the employed population envies the pensioners their carefree retirement that they co-finance without having high hopes themselves, when public opinion gives in to these hard feelings and even encourages them—then these are all signs of the weakness and not of the strength of democracy. In the long run democracies cannot flourish without the feeling of undoubted solidarity, without our willingness to put others again and again into a position that is more or less equal to our own, even though this may cost a share of personal prosperity. First the perception of a common nature disappears, then—because we do not recognize ourselves in others any more—the active participation in their fate and finally the desire to be equal among equals. Today therefore the question comes up, whether the historical compromise of capitalism and democracy could fail exactly at the moment when the alliance between capitalism and history seems to be completed.

Accordingly it is an open question if modern societies increasingly lose their social and political cohesion and whether their social asset declines. The latter is distinguished by the social networks and by the relationships that exist among people. This asset forms an important resource for each individual and guarantees social cohesion. Various networks are to be contemplated: Family, friendship or other networks are equally part of it as is the case for the integration of the individual into associations and clubs. Voluntary unions especially can support the social and political integration of the community. They enable participation in social and political life. Hence the extent to

which members of society can take part in social and political life by means of membership in organizations of interest is important for the evaluation of a society's quality.

The sports club as social network

Social networks are of central importance for the psycho-social well-being of man. A sports club can be considered as such a network. Emotional support can be provided and self-esteem gained and practical daily help can be received in it. In the future it will therefore be primarily a question of making the idea of the club positively clear to its members. A part of this will be that the club is seen as a place like home. It has to be a place of successful communication and socialisation as well as a protest against a uniform world. It must be the place of non-alienated social relations. All this does not come by itself, but has to be worked hard for and be proven daily. There are conclusive findings showing that availability, quality of help and support from our own network of relationships are decisive for how we get along with our problems. Social nets form a kind of escort towards social dangers—they can be understood as social cushions. But the socio-economically underprivileged and socially marginalised groups especially have particular deficits in the stability of their networks. They are especially not able to work on relationships in initiatives of their own. The St Matthew-effect is functioning: 'For the man who has will be given more, till he has enough and to spare; and the man who has not will forfeit even what he has'. Those in our society who can dispose of more income today and more education, will not only have more helpers, but also more contact partners. Hence, those who have more financial means and more knowledge and can employ them more for the cultivation of their relationships, will also have more helpers at the hour of need and more contacts in everyday life. Therefore social-political programs to promote networks are indispensable. Sport must be judged by whether it contributes anything to this matter. As necessary as financial prerequisites like sports grounds and funds for the execution of sport are, it is equally important to promote more tolerance, patience and readiness for sharing. In the interest of a liberally, steadily and socially balanced development of our society we have to have a particular interest in the readiness for integration and ability of integration of our citizens and the social institutions in charge. Sport is called upon to contribute its share, otherwise we have to expect conflicts that we have not known so far.