THE GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURE AND IMPLICATIONS IN SPORT

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Abstract: The processes of sports globalization and development are parts of the global sport nowadays. The current trends are focused on specific cultures. Sport and media are interdependent parts of the global system. In this article we tackle the culture media - sporting goods production, the sporting goods form and content, the media and political and economic aspects of consumption series.

Keywords: culture, civilization, history, sport, media

Globalization is most strongly felt in sports as, nowadays, sports are highly spotlighted, advanced and advertised. In recent years, the football team *Universitatea Cluj* was present on television, both in the country and abroad, in the company of renowned teams from Belgium, Switzerland and Norway, to name only some of them. During the sports broadcastings where the student's team was performing, one could hear the sports commentators uttering sentences such as: "the Polish centers, the French player shoots, the Brazilian misses the interception" and so on. These commentaries are therefore the consequence of globalization. The foreign athletes who perform for this team defend the club's colors without having any particular relation with the country that the club represents. The number of nations meeting under the umbrella of the Cluj club may be beneficial, because national ambition and motivation develop just under the circumstances where native athletes are in minority. Despite the fact we have foreign players, the level of our performance is still very low, if we consider the latest edition of the European cups championships. Just a few players from the domestic championship play for the Romanian National team, most of them being *stranieri* - athletes performing abroad. Young Romanian players end their careers at clubs in Bucharest, others become trade merchandise for some more experienced foreign clubs, more recently for Arab teams and, for others, luck is called Ajax or Inter. There also came the fashion of foreign coaches who try to develop a professional mentality with their players. Coach Dragan Petricevici, former champion of Romania with *Universitatea Cluj* in basketball, also trained the clubs in Timişoara, Tîrgovişte, Constanţa, Iasi, and, at present, he won the championship of Africa, with Etoile Sportive du Sahel. Actually, the Bosnian stated: "I'm in love with Romania forever... One thing is certain, half of my heart is tricolored and it will always remain like that. I love Romania unselfishly. I realize that when I speak with people in Tunisia, Morocco and Angola, I hear my voice saying «in our country, in Romania, in my city, in Timişoara». Then I know where I will return"[1].

Under the influence of globalization one can notice a tendency that our youth manifests to increase the number of sports consumers to change their look. Therefore, globalization has a

[1] Duşmănescu, Oana, *Drumuri africane! » Dragan Petricevici povesteşte despre experienţa lui tunisiană*, Gazeta sporturilor, 04 ianuarie, 2012

strong impact on the Romanian governing models and Olympic movement. During the First World War, the Romanian sports activity was almost completely reduced.[2] Soccer clubs are real traders of clothing and accessories for their supporters and they regularly change their teams' equipment in order to maintain demand at a high rate. Entertainment has also become common practice in marketing specific equipment. Special attention has been paid to specific cultural and global trends[3].

In Romania, as it is the case with all countries, the phenomenon of globalization manifests itself at every level because Romanians could not remain outside the trend[4]. At the cultural level the growing tendency to borrow customs and holidays from all over the world is noticeable. Let's take as an only example the fact that for more than ten years Romanian cities have been celebrating the white nights of the museums. At the opposite side, that of distress not entertainment, there are the Romanian funeral customs, that in some places, mostly towns, have entirely changed, because of the regulations the European Union imposed undertakes to organize ecologic funerals services for their clients. Nevertheless the wedding, New Year, Epiphany and Christmas traditions (except for the slaughtering pigs rituals) as well as several other less known autochthonous customs remain untouched especially in Transylvanian villages that completely ignore the change tide that the globalization entails. At the beginning of the last century even church – considered as the oldest global institution in history[5] although sports and culture were regarded as the first fields where globalization manifested long ago[6] – appeared to be very much affected by globalization as the role the church used to play in the process of shaping culture obviously decreased. As to sport it has become a way of life, a dimension of globalization and of society in motion.

The processes of globalization and the development of sport as parts of a global system have been examined and considered in their interconnectedness.

The direction media-sport has been identified as a crucial part of this interdependent system. Three aspects of media-sport production complex have been examined: the production of cultural media-sport merchandise, the form and the contents of sport products in the media and the political and economical aspect of serial consumption. The main actors involved in the media-sport complex as well as the sport organizations, advertising companies and the staff in media, especially radio broadcasting, television and journalists have been identified and analysed.

The interwoven relation between elite sport and media can hardly be ignored. Elite sport competitions - to mention only the Olympic game, the World Cup in football and the Super Bowl in American football - are global media entertainment shows. In order to understand this phenomenon one faces two tasks: on one hand there is the nature and the level of interdependence implicated in the media-sport complex that should be determined. On the other hand, this relation should be localized within the scope of some larger global evolutions. That is, the processes of globalization used to play, and they still play a crucial part in the media-sport development. Those who will undertake these tasks should start from the existing knowledge

[2] Firică, Jean, *Istoria educaţiei fizice, sportului şi olimpismului.* Editura SITECH, 2011
[3] Maguire, Joseph, *Globalization, sport, development and the media-sport production complex,* Sport Science Review, Champaign, D, SUA, 2, 1993.
[4] Bocşan, N., Bolovan, I. *Călători români în Occident.* Institutul Cultural Român, Cluj-Napoca, 2004.
[5] Marton, József, Catolicismul transilvan şi globalizarea. Poziţia bisericii romano-catolice faţă de globalizare în special cu privire la situaţia din Transilvania. *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Theologia Catholica Latina*, 2002, XLVII, 1.
[6] Chikán, A., *Coordonarea globalizării şi a activităţii economice.* In: Ezredforduló 1, Ed. GLATZ Ferenc, Bp. 24, 2001.

about the interdependence between media and sport events that are an important catalyst mainly because they have become such a large television and media centered phenomenon.[7]

Competitive cultural trends

There is an undeniable fact that people, goods, knowledge and trends move from one place to another. References to cultural imperialism have become commonplace in order to explain the essence of these trends. The effects that a solid, strong, great culture has upon others are widely admitted. The culture and civilization of ancient Greece represented for the European space an essential part of its spiritual identity.[8] Terms like "westernization" or "Americanization" have been used to depict aspiration towards homogenization. In the same sense, different aspects of folk culture including sport have been examined[9]. Different key aspects of this approach can be identified in order to understand cultural global trends.

Cultural trends reflect the activities of national representation and/or of multinational corporations. These activities represent a form of domination of one culture over another.

The essence of the problem is the power, control and the capacity of the autochthonous population to interpret, understand and/or defend themselves from cultural manipulation and domination. Media seem to have a crucial role in these processes. The idea of invading an autochthon culture by some foreign culture is the simplest way to present the implicated processes[10].

There are two main emphases when describing cultural imperialism in cultural global trends. The first emphasis, in this sense, points to a world made up of various nations that compete with one another. One of the examples is so called *Yankee imperialism*. It is considered that the hearts and the minds of some foreigners are involved in the game. This feeling is evident in Klein's study on basketball in Dominican Republic, realized between 1989 and 1991[11].

In some other elaboration the world is seen as a politically and economically integrated system of global capitalism. Here the emphasis was placed on the activities of multi and transnational corporations[12]. No matter whether the attention is focused on the imperatives of multinational capitalism or on spreading a system of specific values of a nation, a trend towards homogenization can be identified. In spite of the numerous discussions on the field and the rhythm of this process, the idea of general movement towards the convergence of cultures has been accepted. This is where sundry problems appear. They boil down to several evaluations concerning cultural imperialism.

What is the essence of and what are the problems raised by "westernization" and "Americanization" and what implications they have after having entered the conscience and the subconscious of people, how complex this phenomenon is and what is the extent of the ability to understand an autochthon culture threatened by a foreign one, these are all the problems referred to by some researchers trying to contribute to the analyses reorientation[13].

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[7] Larson, James F., *Global television and the politics of the Seoul Olympics*. Westview Press, 1993.

[8] Firică, Jean, Zaklina Nicolic, Petar Durdevic, *Sport, artă şi cultură.* Serbia, 2011.

[9] Kidd, B., *The Olympic Movement and the sports-media complex*. Proceedings of the conference on the Olympic Movement and the mass media: past, present and future issues, Calgary, Hurford, 1989.

[10] Tomlinson, John, *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 1991.

[11] Klein, Alan, *Culture, Politics, and Baseball in the Dominican Republic.* Latin American Perspectives, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1995.

[12] McKay, J., Miller, T., *From Old Boys to Men and Women of the Corporation: The Americanization and Commodification of Australian Sport*, 1991.

[13] Featherstone, M., *Consumer Culture & Postmodernism.* London, Sage, 1991.

From the cultural point of view globalization is regarded as a more or less coherent or orientated process. In other words, the processes of interdependence and interconnection of global areas took place in a less determined way in comparison to what was claimed. Globalization appears as a result of a complex dynamics of political, economical and cultural practices. They do not involve immanent global integration, but they still produce it. Thus, the effects of globalization boil down to the weakening of cultural coherence and national states. Globalization includes those nations that are more powerful within interdependent world[14].

When the idea of global culture is emphasized there is a threat of exaggerating the roles of homogeneity and integration. This tendency could be to some extent explained by a potentially erroneous association of the idea of global cultures and the culture of one nation. The tendency of dichotomous contemplation on global cultures is also inadequate. Instead of endless arguments on whether it is homogeneity or heterogeneity or integration or disintegration that are conspicuous, these processes should be treated as interwoven. This is a problem of balance and combination.

If the analysis is orientated to what Sklair used to call transnational practices[15] then it is better to notice that there is still something beyond the influx between nations. Transactional practices, which take different cultural forms, get certain amount of relative autonomy on global level.

Relating to the so called trans-social processes, Robertson[16] claims that they are the forces that support changes and the influx of the goods, people, and pieces of information, knowledge and imagism. Using the terms like "transactional" and "trans-social", both Sklair and Robertson aim at passing the limits of a single nation that used to be considered the only reference point for international integration understanding.

For some of them, the complex media-sport is a component of a general process. We should think of technological progresses involved in advertising through the instrumentality of media of the modern Olympic Games, and how some satellites broadcast images throughout the world concurrently. For Real, these images, no matter how short and superficial they were, they reflected and contributed to the appearance of global culture.

The existence of those transnational, relatively autonomous practices, which apparently posses their own dynamic, should be admitted. But we should not neglect some other key characteristic of this global media-sport complex. Transnational practice is subject to control and manipulation, implying the actions of transnational agencies or individuals, like the International Olympic Committee, the International Federation of Amateur Athletics, the International Advertising Group and the Association for Sport and International Recreation, which aim at regulating the access to cultural influxes. Some members of the transnational capitalist class are involved in the activities of those associations, since they are the main actors whose plans are interwoven in the attempt to develop the media-sport complex. Such interventions determine cultural conflicts of various kinds and at different levels.

The analysis of interconnectedness between sport and mass media should not aim at examining the desirable aspects of its development as it should examine the undesired ones. Deliberate actions of the representatives of transnational agencies or transnational capitalist class are potentially significant for short periods. However, on longer terms, the unintentional

[14] Tomlinson, John, *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction.* Continuum International Publishing Group, 1991.
[15] Sklair, Leslie, *Sociology of the Global System,* The John Hopkins University Press, 1995.
[16] Robertson, Roland, *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, Ed. Mike Featherstone, London, SAGE Publications, 1990.

transnational practices, which are relatively autonomous, are those that prevail. Those practices design the plans and subsequent actions of transnational agencies and of the transnational capitalist class.

Confusion, insecurity and a sense of lack of power of the people involved in these processes can be overcome. The processes of globalization imply a combination of both intentional and unintentional practices as well. Even though people should respond to the problems of interdependence produced by globalization, the fact that these processes are relatively autonomous gives them the opportunity to intervene. Global practices are still connected with human activity. In order to stop those interventions and not to waste so many lives and resources, it is necessary to have "realistic" knowledge[17].

Unfortunately, sport and the associations which organize mass sports competitions have recently been under the increased threat of global terrorism, considering the great attention of the media and the huge influx of spectators and sportsmen taking part in sport events.

For instance, the priority at all Olympic Games organized in latest decades, more precisely, since Munich 1972 was security that came first; and since the tragic events at the Olympic Games in Munich new security measures were taken. However, the recent tragic events caused by terrorist attacks in America and Spain left a deep imprint, and influenced the organization of many contemporary sports manifestations. Namely, due to the possible threat of terrorist attacks, the Olympic Games organized in Athens in 2004 had the highest possible security level ever.

Theorizing on sport as a part of global system

We would understand sport theory better if we looked into the problem of the development of sport and global development.

Global and trans-cultural processes appeared between XVth and XVIIIth centuries and gained importance at the beginning of this century. On the other hand, the development of sport is closely linked to the process of accelerated globalization. Important characteristics of this process include: the development of global communication forms, the increase of the number of international agencies, the development of global competitions and prizes, the evolution of standard terms that refer to rights and citizenship, which are more and more standardized on international level.

Several aspects of sport development clarify the interconnections of this process and globalization. The last century witnessed the appearance and spreading of sport, the establishment of international sport organizations and the increase of competitiveness between national teams. During the same period, the rules that control particular forms of sport and global competing manifestation were accepted. These rules refer to the Olympic Games, Football World Coup and other world championships. They are illustrative for globalization in sports world. Until the middle of the last century, there was a competition in the winter gaming program, called the military patrol, which has become biathlon today.[18]

Sport globalization is connected with deliberate ideological practices of some specific groups of people from some countries, but the model and the evolution of this phenomenon cannot be boiled down to these ideological practices. Out of the plans and the intentions of these

[17] Elias, Norbert, *What is Sociology?,* Hutchinson, London, 1978.
[18] Firică, Jean, *Terminologia activităţilor fizice şi sportive.* Ed. SITECH, 2005

groups there appears something that neither was planned, nor intentional: the globalization of human interdependence[19].

Modernization, closely connected with functionalism, was a dominant paradigm in sociology until the '70s. The theory of modernization, essentially interested in the way in which the transnational associations are modernized, stresses out the political, cultural, or economical and social aspects of the process. Attention is paid to political institutions that support participative decision making. The growth and the development of old and nationalist ideologies have been analyzed. The points of interest are: the division of work, the utilization of management techniques, technological innovations and commercial activities. Those changes are followed by urbanization and the decrease of traditional authorities.

Some authors[20] explain the appearance and the global development of sport, but the theory of modernization did not limit itself to sport origins. Studies on imperialism and neo-imperialism are commonly associated with Marxist texts. They try to explain the colonialism of certain nations, especially of some western states in the light of capitalistic expansion necessity. At least three dimensions of those colonial campaigns have been recognized: the search for new markets in order to sell products, the search for new resources of raw material and the search for new resources of qualified and cheap manpower. This process helps the western economy to develop while the rest of the world is becoming poorer and poorer. Large corporations, as well as state organizations, played and continue to play an important part in this evolution. With the disappearance of formal imperialistic pressure and almost simultaneous development of the states that independently govern themselves, a form of economical neo-imperialism developed. Thus, western countries found themselves in the position to preserve their upper position, ensuring the control over the development of world trade for themselves.

Some studies researched and criticized the neo-colonial aspects of the Olympic Movement. From various points of view, the theory of dependence is connected with the evidences of neo-imperialism. The theory of dependence argues that global economy cannot be outlined as a system of partners and equal trade relationships. Central superior military, economical and political powers impose the inevitable conditions of trading and the dependence on the west to the periphery. The advocates of the theory of dependence, concerned with inequity as a modality under the conditions of global development underline integrated and systematic nature of modern global capitalism. Despite the fact that the origins and the kind of dependence in the case of different nations are various, considering colonization, the states on the periphery have no benefit of either trade equality or of the fair goods exchange. These matters can be *commercial harvests* or *human harvests* in the case of sportsmen. Nevertheless, several movements have been emphasized within this theory. They include low underdevelopment dependence, dependent development and the coup of dependence. In case of the first movement, it has been claimed that the global capitalist system operates actively in favour of underdevelopment of the third world. This is largely, but not exclusively, the multinational corporations' activity. The poverty of the third world countries is a direct result of their subordinate position as compared with industrialized countries. The well-being of industrial countries is achieved on the bases of the third world countries that economically depend on them.

[19] Mennell, Stephen, *The Globalisation of Human Society as a very long-term Social Process*: *Elias's Theory*, Theory, Culture and Society. 1990.
[20] Gruneau, Richard, *Modernization or Hegemony. Two Views on Sport and Social Development*. in J. Harvey and H. Cantelon, *Not Just a Game: Essays*, Canadian Sport Sociology, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1988.

The advocates of this movement give arguments supporting the fact that development in any sense is not truly possible while such a system functions.

The movement of dependent underdevelopment, however, seems to be unable to explain the development of some countries from the third world. That is, the followers of this approach suggested the idea of dependent development. This means that the development of some countries of the third world has been confirmed, but considered to be limited. But the dependent development is so conceived that some countries can actually free themselves from this double chain of dependent development. Thus, some countries of the third world and/or institutional sectors of the third world can change the old disadvantaged relations with the countries of the developed world.

Some variants of the theory of dependence have been used exclusively in sport studies. Surprisingly, numerous studies have examined Latin America and the games from Scotland. Wallerstein's[21] theory of world systems claims that the world trade and communication systems have been developing since XVI century. This world system has produced a series of economic and politic links based on the expansion of the world capitalist economy. The author considers the capitalistic world economy through spatial metaphor. Central states dominate and control the exploitation of resources and production. Their prosperity comes from the supervision they carry out over industry and agriculture, characterized by centralized forms of ruling. States that are connected in different ways with the dependent trade are considered to be semi-peripheral in comparison to the centre. Peripheral states are the ones which depend on the sale of "harvest to be solved" in relation to central states. Consequently, the states like Bangladesh are considered to be on the "margin" of world economy.

However, according to Wallerstein there were states which, until the colonial expansion, used to be relatively "untouched" by the commercial development. Their dependency and even the dependency of the countries from the periphery of world economy, was determined and sustained by the heritage of colonialism, and these nations were involved in a network of economical relations, enriching industrial zones and impoverishing the periphery.

This approach was not extensively taken over by the scientists who study global development of sport. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to notice from this point of view the drain of sport talents from the periphery to central countries. We should only think of the recruitment of African athletes for sport programs at universities in America and Canada.

Sport is closely connected with this broad direction of globalization. Several dimensions of this global process can be distinguished.[22] Following this dimensions we can identify more easily the relations between sport, media and cultural global processes.

Sport, media and global cultural trends

There are at least four dimensions of social changes within the scope of global trends: These dimensions are:

- of technical nature (influx of equipment between countries and the flux of installations produced by transnational and national corporations and by governmental agencies)

- of ethnical nature (the movement of tourists on international plan, as well as of emigrants, the exiled and of the workers who work abroad temporarily);

[21] Wallerstein, Immanuel Maurice, *The Modern World-System. The Creation of a Geoculture: Ideologies, Social Movements, Social Science.* Duke University Press, 2004.
[22] Maguire, J., *More than a sporting touchdown: The making of American football in England 1982-1990*, Sociology of Sport Journal, 7(3), 1990.

- of financial nature (rapid money influx and its equivalence all over the world);
- of ideological nature (influx of ideas together with the ideologies and movements that can be for or against a state).

These dimensions can be followed in the development of sport during the XXth century. At the level of ethnical problems, global migration of experts and sports elite (players, coaches, professors and managers) represented a predominant tendency of sport development in the 80's. And, it is likely to continue in the next decade of the third millennium.

The influx of sport goods, sport equipment and sport complexes (golf fields, artificial surfaces for matches) from one country to another, from one continent to another, became a business of several billiards of dollars' worth during the last years. And this is what represents a transnational sport development on the level of technical dimensions. From the point of view of financial dimension, the financial influx in global sport started to concentrate not only on the international exchange of sport staff, money for prizes and for settlement but also on the sport marketing, made in different ways. The transformation of the English, European and Australian basketball are examples that illustrate the things we have talked about.[23]

Closely connected with these dimensions, a development has been recorded at the level of mass-media, as well. The complex of press and sport production projects the images of working power migrations in individual sports, different forms of sport and specific sport messages sent to enormous global public. The development of this complex has partly been the result of the actions of a new generation of agents, like those who became integrated in the International Advertising Group and in the Association of Sport and International Recreation. Entrepreneurs have established a large number of "grand prix" in various sports, including tennis and athletics. They collaborated with the actors of the media-sport production complex and they created sport shows using elite sport emigrants who participated in competitions or demonstrations.

The permeability of the media-sport-capital complex, inspired by the American practice in sports forced other sports to adjust themselves to these models.

At the level of ideological dimensions, global sport festivals, such as the World Cup in football, Olympic Games and Asiatic Games, are just means to express the ideologies that have transnational character. In our era they cultivate equality of opportunity, fairness, respect for the opponent, referees, spectators...[24].

Two problems that refer to these global cultural influxes should be understood. They are entangled so as to have a *relative autonomy* in comparison to the plans and the intentions of certain groups of people in a state, transnational corporation or sport organization within the scope of this global process. Nevertheless, such groups try to use the power they have to define and arrange their own and cultural approach of others, in these cultural influxes.[25]

Globalization and the production complex media-sport

According to studies on the media and sport the extent to which critical approaches prevail over empirical approaches can be noticed. Critical approach has a wider opening and underlines several aspects. Two of them are particularly stressed: critical political economy and cultural studies. Even though cultural studies have multiplied research in the field of media-

[23] Maguire, J., *The commercialization of English elite basketball 1972-1988: a figurational perspective*, International Review for the Sociology of Sport (IRSS), 1988.
[24] Firică, Jean, *Metodica educației fizice și sportive*. Editura Reprograph, 2007
[25] Maguire, J., *cited work*, pp. 213-237, 1990.

sport, critical political economy is, in some aspects, more capable of placing the media-sport complex in the context of globalization.

Cultural studies deal with the construction of meaning. Their followers prove how they produce meanings through expressive personal forms and how these meanings are constantly built and reconstructed by contemporary practices. The research focused on three significant areas and all attention was paid to the analysis of cultural texts. Mass-media forms are seen as mechanisms arranging meaning in certain ways. The attention is also paid to the way the public interprets the media effects and incorporates them in their life style and their environment. Consumer's creativity is underlined.

Audience is made up of active agents who make efforts to find out and give a sense to certain situations. This accentuation is part of a widely spread attempt to recover the complexity of folk practices and beliefs. The subversive act of consumption is very welcomed and celebrated. The role of folk culture is very important, both in the reproduction of social patriarchal and capital relations and in the opposition to such relations. These topics appear repeatedly in sport studies, leisure and popular culture. This approach is advantageous to sport study. It has been successfully used in some British and North American studies on media-sport in the last decade.[26]

Golding and Murdock identify some weaknesses that reduce the efficiency of cultural studies while examining media-sport production complex. They claim that cultural studies do not tell very much about the way the cultural industries operate. Economical organization, which influences the production and circulation of the meaning, has also been neglected, as well as the ways consumers' options are structured in comparison to their position in the larger economical formation. These relations are important in the study of globalization and the media-sport complex.

Golding and Murdock[27] suggest the acceptance of critical political economy. Three basic tasks of the approach can be used to form a more general view on literature regarding media-sport complex: the production of cultural media-sport goods, political economy of texts dealing with media and the consumption and the consumer's economic and political aspect.

[26] Gruneau, R., Cantelon, H., Whitson, D., *Methods and media: Studying the sports/television discourse*, Society and leisure 11, 1988

[27] Golding, Peter, Murdock, Graham, *Culture, Communications and Political Economy*, in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, *Mass Media and Society*, London, Edward Arnold, 1991

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