



Social Values of Competitive Sport

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1. Introduction

The supreme aim of competitive sport has always been victory or sport success, over personality and health being subordinated to this aim both axiologically and instrumentally. This specific bias of competitive sport has found its most articulate expression in the theories of training and pedagogics of sport which are aimed at least in their praxeological approach at maximizing sport results and performance alongside with personality and health development geared up adequately to the requirements of sport success. This fact does not, however, exclude a possibility of some positive effect of competitive sport upon one's personality and health in the course of training. Unlike in recreational, mass scale and entertainment sport, health and personality development as conditioned by competitive sport can hardly be considered as a matter of fact socio cultural values per se.

Competitive sport may lead to excessive development of the physical sphere and one's excessive preoccupation with this sphere as compared with the idealistic and relational spheres. As a result, despite spectacular achievements due to superb physical performance there may come about a phenomenon of one's negative disintegration. One's personality may then deteriorate if it is not reaffirmed in social relationships and further achievements. However, unlimited willingness to break records may as well lead to degradation of one's health.

The opinions that "theory of competitive sport implicit and practice of sport explicit have led to over estimation of bodily values, excessive exposition of physical sphere as compared with the ontic spheres of a subject" (Kosiewicz, 1984; p.29) have become commonplace. The result is the excessive somatization of sport training at the cost of its humanistic correlates, conflict with one's own body which is treated instrumentally, ruthlessly and uncompromisingly. Some research into effects of competitive sport upon one's health provide most disquieting conclusions in this respect (Foldesi, 1984; p.37)

The negative correlates of competitive sport makes us reflect on the contents of education of youth in physical culture. The education in physical culture may be carried out by applying the following two "programmes": the "somatic" and humanistic one. The first assumes stress upon the biotechnical or biological version of physical education, while the second one makes use of sport, its theory and its practical elements for the sake of

harmonious development of one's personality. Only the latter programme affirms not only the physical limits of a man and his need to develop and perfect his body, but reaffirms sport activities as a socio-cultural value.

Competitive sport as a socio cultural relationship can be as well regarded as a set of organic oppositions, such as: competitiveness cooperation, individualism collectivism, organization spontaneity, work play, creation recreation, necessity freedom, professional ismamateurship, hostility sympathy, harmony deformation, victory failure, joy bitterness, emotionality rationality, strategy and tactics risk and uncertainty, humanization allienation, sportsman spectator and others.

In practice, competitive sport attempt to integrate these seemingly incompatible oppositions. As the latter refer not only to sport, but to the reality we live in as well, competitive sport play a major role in information metabolism of today's world as a means of social integration (Lis, 1984; p.67).

1.1 The Role of Competitive Sport in Promotion and Development of Other Social and Cultural Values

In order to determine the respondents' opinion on how they evaluate sport events (watched either directly at a stadium or indirectly on TV) as socially and culturally positive or negative, they were asked to answer Question No. 35 of the Questionnaire. They were also asked to point out some particular values (out of the list of 11 options) they associate with international competitive sport (Question No. 38). Tables 91 and 92 below show the obtained results.

Table -1: The respondents' opinion on the socio—cultural meaning of sport events (at a stadium or on TV) (%)

Significance Details	Sum n=600	Sex	
		Male n=300	Female n=300
Both positive and negative	35.17	37.00	33.33
Rather positive	33.00	29.33	36.67
Positive, without reservation	16.33	17.00	15.67
Hard to say	8.33	6.33	10.33
Rather negative	5.33	7.67	3.00
Negative	1.67	1.17	0.50
No answer	0.17	0.17	0.00

Table: 1 accounts for the fact that only 16.3 per cent of all the respondents have claimed to regard competitive sport as seen at a stadium or on TV as having only positive socio—cultural significance. It is symptomatic, that more than one third of them would attribute both positive and negative socio—cultural significance. It is also noteworthy that a relatively significant number of the respondents have entered “hard to say” option which fact may be due to rather ambivalent type of question for the secondary school youth.

The X^2 significance test as applied to find out whether there exists any significant statistical relationship between the respondents’ options as presented in Table 91 and their respective socio— demographic characteristics has revealed that there exists no such relationship.

Table 2: The socio—cultural values respondents associate with international competitive sport (%)

Details	Sum n=600	Sex	
		Male n=300	Female n=300
Country's prestige	75.17	73.67	76.67
Peace	64.00	69.00	59.00
Friendship	58.33	57.67	59.00
Success and fame	38.67	41.33	36.00
Consequence in reaching aim	32.67	31.33	34.00
Confronting human limits	29.17	33.67	24.67
Fair play	26.00	30.00	22.00
Courage	24.17	25.33	23.00
Fair prize for talent and work	19.00	22.67	15.33

Table 92 accounts for the role the respondents have attributed to international competitive sport in promoting a given country's prestige upon international arena, international peace and friendship. It is noteworthy that the respondents have clearly favoured

the values of international and social dimension than those of individual significance which fact may account for international competitive sport as a means of social and international integration.

1.2 The Future of Olympic Games and Competitive Sport

The vast literature on the Olympic idea shares two basic views. One of them is that Olympic Games highlight sport competition by enabling sportsmen to confront and compare their physical abilities as they strive to transcend their human limits. The other is that Olympic Games have always brought together people for whom sport have not been ends in themselves, but a means to accomplish definite social tasks, human ideals and distinctively humanistic values.

The Olympic Games are not simply the largest and the most representative sport contest. It is a completely unique phenomenon of human culture. Its quality is only due to the fact that it always makes an astonishing, breath-taking, highly emotional spectacle. The ceremony of opening and closing the Games, the Olympic competition, seasoned with a wide-ranging cultural programme have always been an inimitable interplay of emotions, colours and experiences which have an essential favourable impact upon man's spirit, his perception of the world, his moral values and his aesthetic tastes.

The phenomenon of the Games consists in the joy of intercommunication, sharing emotions and dedication by the people of different colour, creed and political views. The Olympic flag brings together competitors from almost all countries. Joint living in a friendly atmosphere of the Olympic village make an essential contribution to consolidate mutual understanding between the nations. This is particularly important nowadays, at time of international tension. The Olympic flame, the oath as well as the atmosphere of a fair and just contest during the Games, all of them contribute to shaping noble traits in competitors and spectators alike. The raising of national flags, playing national anthems, marking victories and the ceremonies of handling prizes to winners, reinforce the feelings of love for their homelands. The Olympic Games have always been a strong stimulus for the development of mass sport.

On the other hand, the growth of highly professional and commercialized sport has been accompanied by the relative decline of amateur sport. As pecuniary interests have increasingly become the dominant concern of those involved in sport, all the more voluntary, informal and spontaneous qualities of sport diminish and the social, economic distinctions between amateurs and professionals have become more and more blurred. Even the Olympic Games, supposedly one of the strongholds of amateur sport has been affected by the pressure of commercialism and professionalism. The question about the future shape of the Olympics remains: will the Games retain the lofty, humanistic spirit that has been preserved for the millennia, or will they shrink to a spiritless, commercialized event of professional sport?, will the Games continue to set up the standards of fair-play and justice, will they demonstrate the best of physical and moral traits of people, or will they fall prey to the people who perceive them only as a means of getting rich ? Will they become an arena of pharmacological doping in all the more refined form ?

Question No. 36 has concerned the significance the young respondents attribute to the Olympic Games. Table 93 below reflects whether the respondents watch the opening

ceremony of the Olympic Games alone or whether it is a social event that involves family circle and friends, or whether they watch it at all. The opening ceremony embodies the most festive components of the Olympic movement and its traditions as well as symbols.

Table 3 : Do you watch the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games on TV ? (%)

Details	Sum n=600	Sex	
		Male n=300	Female n=300
Alone/Company			
With family	62.17	54.00	70.33
With friends	18.00	20.67	15.33
Alone	13.50	18.00	9.00
Never	6.33	7.33	5.34
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 93 accounts for the importance the respondents attribute to the Olympic opening ceremony as 62.2 per cent of all the respondents would watch the ceremony on TV with the family member, i.e., considering it a social event that can bring together different generations together and the symbolic as well as the idea of the Olympics being understandable for all of them. It is noteworthy that the festive and symbolic components of the opening ceremony seem to appeal more strongly to the female than male respondents and they would much more willingly share this experience with other family members rather than friends.

The X^2 significance test has revealed that there exists a significant statistical relationship between the respondents' options as presented in Table 93 and their sex characteristics.

Table 94 reflects whether the respondents watch TV broadcasts of the Olympics everyday or almost everyday, alone or in company.

Table 4 : Do you watch the Olympics on TV everyday or almost everyday ? (%)

Details	Sum n=600	Sex	
		Male n=300	Female n=300
Alone/Company			
With family	48.50	45.00	52.00
With friends	23.00	24.00	22.00
Alone	18.67	23.00	14.33
Never	9.83	8.00	11.67
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

It can be noted from Table 94 that almost half of the respondents would watch TV Olympic coverage every day or almost every day with their family members, regarding it as a family social event. Relatively fewer female than male respondents would watch it alone.

The X² significance test has revealed that there exists a significant statistical relationship between the respondents' options as shown in Table 94 and their sex and type of class attended.

Table 95 reflects whether the respondents watch some selected TV coverage alone or in the company.

Table 5: Do you watch some selected TV coverage of the Olympics?

Details	Sum n=600	Sex	
		Male n=300	Female n=300
Alone/Company			
With family	45.50	39.34	51.67
Alone	25.33	23.33	27.33
With friends	22.83	30.00	15.67
Never	6.34	7.33	5.33
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

(%)

As it can be seen in Table 95, 45.5 per cent of all respondents would watch some selected TV coverages of the Olympics with their family members. It is noteworthy that markedly more female than male respondents would choose this particular option and

relatively more (twice more) male than female respondents would watch the selected coverages with their friends.

The X^2 significance test has revealed that the respondents' options as shown in Table 95 have been statistically significantly related with the respondents' sex and the type of class attended.

Question No.37 has concerned the respondents' opinion on the future shape of the Olympic Games. The results have been presented in Table 95 below.

Table .6 the respondents' opinions on whether the Olympic, Games will continue in XXI century and in which shape? (.)

Options	Details	Sum n=600	Sex	
			Male n=300	Female n=300
	Will develop expand in quality and range	58.00	58.00	58.00
	Will continue in today's shape	25.33	25.33	25.33
	Will shrink both in participation and range	3.50	5.00	2.00
	There will be no Olympic Games, only world championships in each discipline	2.17	4.00	0.33
	Both sport and Olympics will become out-of-date	0.67	1.00	0.34
	Hard to predict	9.67	6.33	13.00

It is evident that over 83 per cent of all the respondents either think that the Olympic Games will continue in today's shape or will expand in both quality and scope in the XXI

century. The other pessimistic options have played only a marginal role which fact reaffirms the major role played by the Olympics in the eyes of the surveyed youth.

Conclusion

Watching the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games on TV has proved to be a family highlight for 62 per cent of the respondents under survey. The festive and symbolic components of the opening ceremony seem to have appealed more strongly to the female than male respondents and they were more likely to share this experience with other family members rather than friends. Nearly half of the respondents would watch TV Olympic coverages everyday or almost everyday, together with their family members. It is noteworthy that markedly more female than male respondents would watch TV Olympic coverages with their family members more selectively and twice as many male than female respondents would watch selected TV Olympic coverages with their friends.

The Olympics still seem to play a major role in heralding and towering over competitive sports in the eyes of the surveyed youth, as over 83 per cent of them have claimed that the Olympics will either continue in today's shape or will expand both in scope and quality in XXI century.

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