

SPORT AS QUALITY OF LIFE (Case: The Young)

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Abstract

The issue about working with the young in sport is current from the aspect of some recent international charts, initiated mostly in the European Council and in researches and considerations which could be traced in a number of scientific and expert reviews. Humanisation of the work with the young is one of the permanent social topics, irrespective of the momentary characteristics of the existent society order itself.

Working with the young in sport is, for example as in the case of human rights, more often defined in words than realised in practice. That is why humanity will have to put humanism as a civilization movement continuously on the civilization daily agenda not only in theory but also in practice.

The highest axiological principle of sport should be: *human popularity of its essence*. This is also considered to be *the highest value*, because only when being in possession of this value we can practice the processes of true humanisation without the fear of slipping into sports ethical utopia or vulgar market pragmatism which leads to the dehumanisation of a sportsman's results and consequently to the dehumanisation of his or her personality.

We see the mentioned processes as the only effective means of overcoming the various -isms: biologisms, kinesiologyisms, biomechanicisms, methodologyisms... and others, which are scientifically correctly determined as "one-sidedness". Within the field of sport it is obviously the holistic approach that is offered to us as the only correct possibility.

Keywords: sport, the young, holistic approach

Zusammenfassung

Sport als Lebensqualität (Fall "Jugendliche")

Das Problem - Umgang mit Jugendlichen im Sport - wird aktuellisiert, besonders wenn man es im Hinblick neuer internationalen Sportabkommen betrachtet, die von der Mehrheit im Europäischen Parlament veranlasst wurden, wie auch durch Untersuchungen und Einnahmestellungen, die in einer Anzahl von wissenschaftlichen und Fachtexten zu lesen sind. Die Humanisierung der Arbeit mit Jugendlichen ist eins der ständigen gesellschaftlichen Themen, ohne Rücksicht auf die Merkmale der entsprechenden gemeinschaftlichen Beziehungen.

Die Arbeit mit Jugendlichen auf dem Sportgebiet - ähnlich wie mit Menschenrechten - ist öfters durch Worte ausgedrückt als in den Tat umgesetzt. So hat sich die Menschheit auf die Dauer nach der Humanismus als einer gesellschaftlichen Bewegung zu richten und sie auf "Zivilisationsprogramm" zu setzen - nicht nur in der Theorie, sondern auch in der Praxis.

Der höchste axiologische Sportprinzip sollte heißen: humane Popularisation des Sportwesens. Das sollte gleichzeitig als höchster Wert verstanden werden, weil nur wenn man diesen Wert in sich hat, kann man die Prozesse einer wahren Humanisierung in den Tat umsetzen, ohne über die Angst hinweg blicken zu müssen, dass man dadurch in den sportlich-äthischen Utopismus oder gemeinen Marketingpragmatismus hineinfällt, der zur Dehumanisierung der Sportleistungen eines Leistungssportlers und dem entsprechend zur Dehumanisierung seiner Persönlichkeit führt.

Der erwähnte Humanisierungsprozess verstehen wir als einziges Erfolgsmittel zur Überwindung von verschiedenen "-ismen": Biologismus, Kinetikismus, Biomechanizismus, Methodologismus, u.ä., die wissenschaftlich als "Einseitigkeit" zu definieren sind. In den Sportrahmen scheint der holistische Zugang als einzig richtiger zu sein.

Schlüsselwörter: Sport, Jugendliche, holistischer Zugang

Introduction

For the entry of this contribution we will, among many possible statements, take two, which are confirmed in many researches (Cheffers, 1993).

- It is an undisputed fact that the youth (0-18 years) is decisive for creating the grown-up and personality image, part of which can be formed only by the means used in sport - these are specific motor activities.

- Too small a presence or complete absence of motor activities in education of a growing youth cannot be completely substituted later on, because the influence of sport stimuli is less and less with the advancement of childrens' growth and maturation. As it is seen from the researches the most successful influence of sport stimuli is between 0 and 3 years of age, successful between 3 and 6 years of age, and then it gradually decreases (Šturm, Petrovič, Strel, 1990).

Why were these two statements used? Both statements are in various forms well known to all and they hit the heart of the matter: the transformation of abilities and characteristics of a young human, so that we can at least conditionally say, that we know *where we are*, but both statements are essentially demanding, not that we only ask, but that we also more precisely define, *where we should go*. We are of course aware of our incapacity to know where we are going without knowing all the other segments of the development, among which we have to confront first the question 'how' (doctrine, values, aim, means, methods). The crucial moment of humanisation of working with the young in sport is often not emphasised, which could, expressed in some kind of humanistic imperative, be worded: *regardless of the direction and ways of how we are going to develop the sport as the activity of the young, the aims and the paths to those aims have to be human*.

Humanisation of working with the young

Humanisation of working with the young is one of the permanent social topics, irrespective of the momentary characteristics of the existing society order itself. In connection with the afore mentioned it is at first necessary to reject the opinion of some people, that we are today the first to discover and the first to put the humanisation of working with the young on daily agenda of the most current, not only sports, but also general social processes. Questions and answers about this topic appeared periodically, in the distant, as well as in recent past, and they are still appearing at present, in various social systems, and are scientifically serious and worth considering.

At the same time this means that working with the young in sport is on the one hand very sensitive, and on the other it is on the whole a very important component of everyday life for the society. The possibility of abuse is therefore large. But the determination of the possibility of abuse, according to the authors view of life cannot be excluded, and even less excepted as the criterion "bona fide". Working with the young in sport is, from the point of view of the estimations of authors from different countries and various society systems, similar to human rights, more often defined in words than realised in practice. That is why humanity will have to put humanism as a

civilizational movement continuously on the civilizational daily agenda, not only in theory but also in practice.

The end of the second millennium which every day appears to be more and more cataclysmical (ecology, violence, crisis of values, out of perspective working with the young, socio-pathologic phenomena among the young - violence, doping, hooliganism...) nevertheless carries in itself positive experiential initiatives from the past. In times like this, mankind looks maybe more seriously and consciously into itself and it searches for solutions as deeply and in such a range, as large as the crisis is. Each segment of human existence has in the demanding and testing processes its mosaical value. Processes of humanisation appertain to those whose values increase with their development. Humanisation, as the process of humanising human beings, in this respect appears as a distant objective at which humanity is continuously aimed.

When we speak about the processes of humanisation in sport, we should in accordance with scientific cognition, first emphasise that youth, as the most burdened life period, is "conditio sine qua non" of sports as a planetarian cultural phenomenon of all the known civilisations. The sport (and of course not only sport) for the young is an important constituent of sport in general. That means that the humanisation of sport is not possible without the humanisation of the lives of the young. Humanisation of life (of the young as well as the old) is impossible without the humanisation of family, school and society as a whole (=humanisation of occupation, media, politics, public, global system of values). To emphasise: it is everywhere necessary to consciously make the first and the most serious effort, especially with the young who are the most exposed ones, and at the same time the least guilty and the most vulnerable ones - by working with them in such a way as to be directed towards them. Treading on their dignity, it being one of the basic human rights articulated in the basic charters of human rights and privileges, tortures without pain, which, because of the frequency of microtraumas, the young as such do not perceive; moreover these are often noticed, but not overcome phenomena, even when attempted by the most talented ones to realise their desires for excellence. These phenomena are in an appropriate way manifested in sports recreation and sport education in schools as well (Petrovič, 1989).

Values and morals are according to the opinion of some theoreticians (Pediček, 1972, Polič, 1969), the necessary constituents of the different ways of comprehending the humanisation of any theoretical, humanism-oriented deliberation about doing practical work with the young. As theoreticians emphasise, it is, according to everything previously stressed, necessary to take into account that the highest axiological principle of sport should be: *humanity of the essence of a human*. Simultaneously this is also the *highest value*, because only when in

possession of it in our consideration and evaluation as such, when we have this value in front of our eyes, can we practice the processes of true humanisation without the fear of slipping into sport-ethical utopia, or even worse, vulgar market pragmatism which leads toward the dehumanisation of a sports person's result and consequently to the dehumanisation of his or her personality.

In this sense we see the mentioned processes as the only effective means of overcoming (equilibration) the various -isms: biologisms, kinesiologisms, biomechanicisms, methodologisms... and others, which are scientifically correctly determined as 'one-sidedness. Within scientific disciplines and the possible developmental directions within the field of sport, it is *the holistic approach* that is obviously offered to us as the only correct possibility.

Sport includes general and specific estimation coincidences. They move transparently from positive to negative ones, but there are more and more people who think that true sport is the only one which is deeply moral in itself. Recognising this conviction reveals larger and larger deviations and inversions in contemporary sport, as well as tendencies that sport should return to and/or develop its basic values together with the cultural richness which it does or should develop. According to this, moral recognition can only be put into words and it is more and more often possible to see the absence of effort for the realisation of moral values, or even double morality. The basic effort for the humanisation of sport - and of sport for the young is derived from the afore mentioned supposition.

The processes of humanising the human are enforced continuously in endless ways and at various levels through the actual social climate, but they are unfortunately too often enforced in the wrong way everywhere and constantly, *and at a time when they are not at the top of the values of man = human (humanum) and humanity = (humanitas).*

The present and the future of humanisation

Imperatives of time and circumstances demand the estimation of where we are at this moment and especially what we can do tomorrow for the humanisation of the work with the young on the whole, and in sport. For this it is necessary to have knowledge and actual estimates. To be informed and to inform is one of the important human rights, which should not be one-sided either in demonstrating the negative aspects or the positive ones, as the more advanced, more humanised ones. After all, both the scientific and other information are based on our estimates, holistic cognition, and also on behavioural patterns. Without being in the know, without scientific - expert verification, we would be acting in a wrong way.

As an example it should be said that the sports activity of people, the youth in particular, despite all that has been stressed, appears less and less as merely sport for... (of some application utilitarian value especially in its sports-recreational and sports-educational form), but it is more and more often revealed as "quality of living (life)" (Trstenjak, 1989) or "sport on the level of worthwhile creativity" (Pediček, 1970). This fact is confirmed by the large number of researches in Slovenia, as well as abroad. In this sense there have been some especially encouraging results of some researches in the last few years. The trend of results more and more clearly points out that this kind of consideration is probably not present among many Slovenes, but still they live in the process of their sports activity. On the basis of these results we can follow three developmental phases, which should be shortly expressed as (Petrovič, 1992):

- ANTI-sport relation (especially avoiding sport education)
- sport FOR... as sport which is to serve some application aims
- sport AS the way and the component of "quality of living (life)" (new experiential worlds, higher level of comprehension of life and existence...)

All three development points should be seen as an evaluation process.

A few words should be also said about research activity and its epistemological orientation. Successful humanisation of the work in sport depends both on intangible variables (happiness, joy, beauty, playfulness, creativity, enthusiasm,...) and on measurable ones (sports branch, technique, success of work or achievement or result...).

Taking into account such an approach determines the empirical researches and the approach towards those considerations derived from scientific imagination within the field of sport.

Such an orientation of our cognitional efforts will perhaps ascertain that for further effort of the development of theory and practice it is necessary to take into account that sport, as an important and expansive field of life, should have its *own doctrine* (specification of sense, existential point of view, philosophy...). Practically this should mean that the field of sport, especially sport education at all levels, should, on the basis of its own doctrinal guidelines, create, develop and support its own (sport) policy, which would render the impossible excessive subordination to general (national...) politics and so proportionalize common and sport interests, which are in a way, more favourable for sport. In this sense, the doctrine - i.e. that which is taught - would be a linked glance at standpoints with an immediate practical character. But because the doctrine has no characteristic of a scientific theory or system, a lot of attention should be paid to its dynamical

development, which would consequently lead to the impossibility of its petrification, so it would not be turned into doctrinism.

Doctrine dictates the global (planetarian) civilisational processes (third world orientation, uniting of Europe, regionalization...) where sport will have an important role. This role is (for sport itself or for its most valuable part - sport for the young) unfortunately too often more negative than positive. So the main task of work with the young in sport should change this role. It could be said that it goes for a carmic (socio-genetic) warning at the crossroads of our existence.

Especially in the last few decades (individual cases have appeared earlier in the past) an enormous number of, afore all, socially, but also mentally immature children (Cohen, 1993) appeared both abroad and at home in high performance sport (swimming, figure skating, rhythmical and sport gymnastics, tennis, skiing...). Many children, especially those who would need sport for their spiritual, mental and physical development are still immature. That is why it is indisputably one of the important factors for defining the humanisation of sport, which can be found in the well known sintagma - *nothing is so unequal as equal treatment of unequals*.

Conclusion

According to all that has been written until now and otherwise known in the world of sport, it is obvious that the phenomena are revealed in all their extensions only if they are analysed in their extreme variety. That is why it is a part of the space destined for the young in high performance sport. However, in the case of high performance sport, we have to, because of the young, include in it the considerations about the possibilities of the humanisation of work. Coubertin wrote that there have to be ten people capable of high performance, if a hundred want to be engaged in sport. Unfortunately, some teachers transmit the negative patterns to those hundred who are mostly the young. And that is where more attention should be paid to the development of sport - also in Slovenia - than until now.

High performance sport, sports recreation, school sport... are sports activities of various levels according to their development and aims, both the realised and the unrealised ones. But they also have, where it is least expected, certain common characteristics which are derived from the often uncritical copying,

especially of the negative phenomena from high performance sport into the other two fields.

Finally, we would like to speak about the issue of the glorification of victories, from school to high performance sport. The victory is, in its own way, imminent to sport (Wenner, 1989), and as far as the value of sport and its moral are concerned it has to be taken into account, because that is one of the most sensitive problems of the thing that we would like to name humanisation of the work with the young. Too often it is shown in inverted varieties. The apotheosis of victories, sometimes also "at any cost" should be the sooner the better, retermed "a cultural achievement (A. Trstenjak, 1988). Of course, it goes for the process which has and will have its extensions in the dynamics of time and conditions. Today even in the U.S.A., where the glorification of victory was the most intensive in the past, more and more scientists consider a too hard endeavour for victory to be a mental disease. Therefore, to win and to defeat is necessarily counted as a phenomenon needed to be experienced by children, the sooner the better, at the level of normal emotional response.

When the top level is reached in certain sport, the key factor is the level of consciousness of the athletes. The more the sportsperson is talented, the bigger successes he or she achieves, and the more important is his or her moral orientation which would enable him or her not to be an object of manipulation to a large extent.

The children and the young can develop extraordinary motor potentials and in a larger and larger number of sports they can meet the wishes (demands) of various authorities, from parents to coaches, to achieve top results. From an educational point of view, the following question appears: Do they HAVE TO bear all that they CAN bear (V. Stojilkovič, 1980). In other words, is a certain sports result really so important for the majority of the young? And to continue, is it worth it, from the educational, psychological and sociological point of view of the development of the youth? Is it worth fighting for such a top result and if so, by what kinesiological and above all, educational means? Another question is: For whom is the sports result (of the young) as important as it is important for the young themselves?

Let's add another question: Does the aim, set by the "priests" especially of high performance sport, but also in sports recreation and sports education, justify the present means or at least a larger part of those means which we meet especially in practise?

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