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SPORTS: SOCIAL INCLUSION OR RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA?

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Introduction: Violence and Racism in sport under the spotlight

Sport federations, academics, politicians, and NGOs alike are sounding the alarm over the increase in violence and racism linked with sport events. In recent years we have seen many manifestations of racial intolerance and violence at football matches, converted into stages for *regional and identity conflicts*: (1) In Spain, racist right-wing supporters mocked and taunted black players. (2) In Greece, an Albanian fan was stabbed to death by a Greek at a qualifying match for the World Cup. (3) A referee was slashed by a missile at the Champions League match between Roma and Dynamo Kiev. (4) In the Netherlands, Dutch fans threw a smoke bomb into the Portuguese goal and firecrackers on to the pitch, hitting one of the players at the UEFA Cup match between Feyenoord of Rotterdam and Sporting Lisbon of Portugal. (5) German police used clubs and riot gas to arrest 46 fans after a minor regional league match between SSV Ulm of Germany and visiting FC Normannia Gmuend of Switzerland. (6) The violence in Milan, when two bitter rivals, Inter and AC, played in the quarter-finals for the Champions League, the top European club tournament, and (5) riots, such as those in the cities of Leipzig (Germany) and Catania (Italy), are the reason why the EU ministers responsible for sport are now closely studying the issue of sport and violence.[4]

Instead of focusing on enjoying sports, teaching youth pro-social attitudes and values through sports, or in reaping physical benefits, and instilling a lifelong involvement in athletics, we have been witnessing a notable increase of violent behaviour in stadiums, dehumanizing racist and xenophobic attitudes, hooliganism, doping, corruption, cheating, wheeling-and-dealing, political interference as well as the influence of big business, the media, sponsors, etc. Has sport lost its fun, and its positive social impact and values? Is it geared exclusively toward winning at all costs, and supporting obsessive competitiveness that leads to violence and racial conflicts? Has its

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[4] The Council of Europe, in the framework of its campaign 'All Different, All Equal', organised an international conference on 'Sports, Violence and Racism in Europe' on 2-5 April 2007. (In: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/4/story.cfm?c_id=4&objectid=10120724)

prominence in the media given rise to violent expression? Does the sport-business-politics relationship—that also include as a universal model the 'glorification' of high performance, victory at all costs— lead to exclusionary practices? Is the obsession with competitiveness and winning far more pronounced among sport officials, managers, coaches and even parents rather than the players? Do sponsors, the media, club owners, and sport officials refuse to discourage violence, because it attracts spectators, high profits and high ratings? Not to mention invisible forms of violence in the stands— such as dehumanizing racial and religious obscenities and labelling, including abusive sexual remarks against women. Is this a manifestation of the escalation of violence in our societies, including 'invisible' forms of violence, such as racism and xenophobia.

Needless to say, the alarming impact of globalization on racism and xenophobia—which has also affected the sport expression— has generated international discourse concerning the mainstreaming of cross-cultural understanding and dialogue around the globe. The results of a recent EU survey (2007) on perceptions of migrants and migration are rather disturbing for those concerned with issues and measures for social integration and tolerance in Europe. Specifically, a survey, carried out as part of the EU funded "Needs for female immigrants and their integration in ageing societies' (Femage project)[5] examined the views of 21,000 native citizens in eight European countries: Austria, Germany, Finland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia. (Cordis, 2007:13) In all countries, respondents were found to have more negative attitudes towards foreigners than positive ones. In eastern Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, over half of those questioned believed that foreigners take away jobs from the native population. In the Czech Republic and in Estonia only 30% of respondents aligned themselves with the statement that 'the presence of foreigners is positive because it allows an exchange with other cultures. In particular, the study showed that respondents with a lower level of education or a lower income were more likely to have negative views of migrants and migration. "People with weaker educational capital or economic situation are more prone to fears of the economic competition that comes from foreigners," states the Femage report. (Cordis, 2007:13) Additionally, the survey found a correlation between traditional conservative views of gender roles and migration. Namely, "the more individuals advocated the traditional position of women in the family, the more they express negative attitudes towards immigrant in all countries studied", reads the report. (Cordis, 2007:13) According to another survey conducted by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia[6] (EUMAC) and the RAcism

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[5] Funded under the 'Research for policy support' section of FP6.

[6] The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) was established by Council Regulation (EC) no 1035/9 of 2 June 1997 which was amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1652/2003 of 18 June 2003. The primary task of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xeno[phpbia (EUMC)—which commenced its activities in 1998— is to provide the Community and its Member States with objective, reliable and comparable information and data on racism, xenophobia, islamophobia and anti-Sematism at the European level in order to help the EU and its Member Sates to establish measures or formulate courses-actions against racism and xenophobia. The very core of the EUMC's activities is the European Information Network on Racism and Xenophobia (RAXEN), designed to collect data and information at national as well as at the European level. This is accomplished via 25 National Focal Points, contracted by the EUMC to collect, coordinate and disseminate national and EU information in close cooperation with the EUMC. (See EUMC websites: www.eumc.eu.int, www.eumc.net, www.eumc.eu.int/index.php).

and XEnophobia Network (RAXEN)[7] one in two Europeans is xenophobic and one in three is racist.

Inevitably, the sport expression has not remained untouched by the socio-cultural globalization processes. New technologies of mass communication have created unprecedented global audiences for 'mega' sports events. The positive social impact of these events—such as the promotion of racial-ethnic diversity and gender equity, cross-cultural cooperation and peaceful coexistence— has been overestimated and overrated. Consequently, the EU ministers responsible for sport are now closely studying the issue of violence and racism in sports. The Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr Wolfgang Schäuble opened an informal meeting of EU sport ministers in Stuttgart under Germany's EU Council Presidency. Moreover, at the beginning of a two-day meeting in the capital of Baden-Württemberg, Schäuble said: "Sport has a huge social impact and represents values. Together we want to strengthen the role of sport in Europe and resolutely fight threats such as violence and doping". Delegations and ministers from 26 member states followed the invitation of the German sports minister. The Council of Europe, in the framework of its campaign 'All Different, All Equal', organised an international conference on 'Sports, Violence and Racism in Europe' on 2-5 April 2007 in France. The EU is promoting international research and projects related to sport as a means to social integration, namely focusing on sport as an excellent tool and means for achieving social integration, while highlighting the concept that sport knows no language barriers. (http://www.sportsviolencesracisme.com).

Specifically, in the framework of its campaign 'All Different, All Equal' the Council of Europe organised an international conference on 'Sports, Violence and Racism in Europe' at which workshops and round-table discussions focused on intercultural dialogue for the fight against racism, violence prevention strategies, and the educational role of sport. The purpose of the conference was to provide politicians, government officials, experts, researchers, academics, NGO representatives, sport federations as well as UEFA an opportunity to compare current practices and evaluate public authorities and sports organisations' perspectives on the problem of violence in sport. The subjects discussed at the conference included: (1) *the economic effects of sport*: its role in the national economy and, above all, its impact on the labour market. (2) *Sport and Violence*: discussions included social and integrative activities such as fan projects and police measures. (3) *Integration through Sport,* (4) the *EU White Paper on Sport*, and. (5)*combating Doping.*[8] Such efforts—and not only— are absolutely necessary, in order to address the phenomenon of 'dark' social capital in sports (Kamberidou &

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[7] The EUMC-RAXEN-DATABASE is a relational database, which contains data and information on organisations addressing the issues of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, their activities and publications. The information covers the fields of employment, education, housing, racist violence and crime and related legislative provisions. The collection of the data information is carried out by the information network operated by the EUMC and know as the RAcism and Xenophobia Network (RAXEN) composed of 25 National Focal Points in each Member State of the European Union. (http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/index.php) See: EUMC Annual Report, 2005 in www.eumc.eu.int   The report looks at the evidence of discrimination in education, and other social areas, and at measures being taken to combat this.

[8]   In: http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/March/0312BMIEroeffnung.html (Retrieved, Saturday June 2, 2007, 5:48PM NZT) The first day of the conference started with a review of the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Under this agenda item, the prominent guest speaker and World Cup OC President Franz Beckenbauer, together with OC Vice-President Wolfgang Niersbach, presented the World Cup campaign with the motto "A time to make friends". The background to their deliberations was the possible general implications for the organization of major sporting events. (http://www.sportsviolencesracisme.com).

Patsantaras, 2006), explicitly practices of exclusion, such as the systematic disregard for Olympic values: the goal of global understanding, ecumenicalism, the construction of a cosmopolitan identity,[9] social cohesion, respect for ethnic-cultural diversity and gender equity.

Olympic values: "Sport has a huge social impact and represents values."[10]

The systematic misinterpretation, or rather misuse of Olympic values indicates that sport has not yet evolved into a form of *social capital*[11] which can be nurtured and reproduced to raise social cohesion and eliminate social exclusions. Why have Olympic values been neglected and the goal of global understanding receiving only token attention?

As a social phenomenon, the Olympic Games have a self-dynamic evolution that often has uncontrolled impact that cannot be restrained by the Olympic Charter. They are connected to power relations in society as a whole, and cannot be separated from the complex economic and *socio-cultural globalization* processes, even though they were originally designed to promote a sense of the national and global unity and coexistence. Olympic sports do not exist in a social void but in interrelation with a plethora of other social spaces, such as politics and the economy. As a result they change with new developments in government, the media and technology, and with new ideas and theories on culture, race, ethnicity and gender (Macionis, 2005: 59-61) that inevitably influence the structure and the organization of the Olympic movement. It seems that Olympic sports have become a means, a tool or an instrument for the globalization processes. Globalization is not exclusively an economic phenomenon, a product of economic changes and market processes. It is also a complex socio-cultural phenomenon that entails, as a condition for integration, the elimination of cultural-ethnic identities.

To illustrate, the sport migration phenomenon or the 'global migrant athlete', a result of the commercialization of Olympic activity in the last two decades, is a contradiction to Olympic values. As in the case of the global migrant labour force, athletes from less privileged countries have been changing their nationalities and adopting new sport identities in return for economic benefits. This global sport mobility, which usually applies to high performance or elite athletes, has raised new socio-political issues, such as: (1) the effects of global sport migration on the less privileged or less developed nations who have been deprived of their high performance athletes, (2) the impact of global sport mobility on patterns of personal, cultural, national, cosmopolitan or global identity formation, along with (3) social prejudices, various forms of racial bigotry, intolerance and social exclusions, and 4) the economic and organizational dynamics of labour mobility.

Research interest in the migration of athletic talent or sports labour— in the movement of transnational sports migrants or elite athletes within and between nations, including the implications of athletic talent migration for various sports— has grown in the past 20 years. However, there is a lack of

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[9] According to Pierre de Coubertin's conception of "Olympism", cosmopolitism was the only effective measure for the peaceful coexistence of the peoples of the world. (Coubertin, 1904)
[10] See: Sport and violence in Europe (2005). Dominique Bodin, Luc Robene, Stephane Heas. In: http://www.sportsviolencesracisme.com
[11] With regard to the concept of social capital, as well as that of "Sport as Social Capital" see: Kamberidou & Patsantaras, 2006; Putnam, 2000; World Bank, 1999; Coleman, 1988.

sustained academic analysis on the migration patterns or the mobility of non-western sports stars, including those from Asia and Africa. Most researchers agree that athletic talent migration involves the study of processes that are evolving and developing. (Takahashi & Horne 2006:79,85) Studies have been focusing on the implications of athletic talent migration on conceptions of identity, on the impact of athletic talent migration on both host countries and donor countries, on the role of intermediaries such as sports agents, the effects on sports fans and athletes, and the changes in regulatory sport frameworks. Moreover, according to Takahashi & Horne (2006: 80): "Nationally developed players may no longer represent the route to success for teams, and there are also implications for coaching, training and national teams." Consequently, such factors could give rise to resentment towards foreign players, such as in the example cited earlier in the EU Femage report according to which the respondents showed negative views towards migrants and migration, in other words they were more prone to fears of economic competition that comes from foreigners. (Cordis, 2007:13)

Secondly, developments in new technologies of mass communication have created unprecedented global audiences for 'mega' sports events. For instance, "the 2004 Athens Olympics were watched by an estimated cumulative total of 3.9 billion people in 220 countries and territories: making them the most accessed in history, and the most watched sporting event in the world at that time." (Falcous & Maguire 2006: 61) The positive social impact of such events— such as the influx of corporate sponsorships as an important source of income for host cities and international organizations— has been overestimated and overrated. An 'imaginary-plasmatic' national economic development is depicted, as was the case during the Athens 2004 Games. (Patsantaras and Kamberidou, 2006: 374)

The interrelations between sports and television have resulted in the adaptation-modification of Olympic activity to commercial principles. Olympic sports have frequently made changes in their regulatory framework in order to accommodate the mass media's commercial principles. The IOC sells the rights for the Olympics to the media, who instead of using the games to visualize and promote a global community constructed around respect for cultural diversity, focus the viewers' attention on consumerism and egocentric sport achievements, consequently contributing to the socioeconomic globalization value system, and not to that of universalization or cosmopolitism. In other words, with regard to today's Olympic phenomenon, consumerism, capitalization or the exploitation of our social capital in sports have become a priority, i.e. in the mass media, in the commercial market, in high performance sports through doping and intensive training for 'victory' at all costs. (Kamperidou & Patsantaras, 2006) The IOC is clearly dependent on commercialization. Cities spend enormous amounts of money to assemble and submit bids to host the Olympics. Prospective host cities, companies and nations frequently use financial incentives or exercise various forms of pressure to gain the votes of IOC members in the bid selection process. The agreement for hosting the games usually includes contracts with specific international construction companies, and consequently the games often become a means of legalizing or conveying illegal capital.

Needless to say, elite competitive sports have always been used to promote specific social values, to foster particular or occasional global interpretations, to endorse the superiority of a political and economic system, to establish a nation's legitimacy in the international arena and to promote a country's national identity to the world. Nations have used the Olympics to pursue their own interests and political agendas, rather than the collective

goals of global communication, understanding, solidarity, friendship and peace. Consequently, the modern Olympics are an international phenomenon, and not an ecumenical one, as they are incorrectly defined by many researchers, since they were and are still used to internationalize and globalize western cultural values and the western world model at the expense of the sport traditions of less-privileged nations.

Certainly Olympic sports have always been associated with public diplomacy and nationalism, particularly during the periods of colonialization and the cold war. Powerful western powers used their national games to introduce their own cultural values and traditions to the colonized peoples around the world, and as a result the games of wealthy and powerful nations became the sports of the world (Espy, 1981)— one of the reasons that the native or traditional games of other cultures are not part of the Olympics today. The internationalization of a specific kinetic-sport culture, as was the case during the periods of colonialization, exercised greater influence over the kinetic cultures of the occupied or 'less-privileged' countries. As a result, the games have been characterized as a means to "cultural imperialism". (Rummelt, 1986: 82-95) As Coubertin points out, a culturally 'superior' race has the right to restrict or limit the privileges of a culturally 'inferior' race. (Coubertin, 1903) Evidently, his views on colonialism conflicted with the theory on the social equity of the races (Coubertin, 1904) that the Olympic movement and he himself strove for. For instance, in the beginning Olympic sports excluded from their institutional positions, not only women, but also men from third world countries. (Patsantaras and Kamberidou, 2006: 374)

Concluding remarks

It is time for the IOC to put into practice the ideals of the Olympic Charter, especially in view of the fact that the Olympic Games capture the attention of over one-third of the world's population, and could be used for something more than global marketing and the political agendas of wealthy nations that can afford to produce medal-winning athletes. A major justification for a nation's enormous investment in competitive sports is that sports build character, teach team effort, teamwork, and encourages sportsmanship and fair play. However studies indicate that youth involved in organized competitive sports show less sportsmanship than those who are not involved, and value victory— believe that winning is everything— more than non-participants, who place more emphasis on fair play.[12] Undeniably, new role models and mentors are needed— to teach youth *pro-social attitudes* and values through sports, instead of the obsessive competitiveness that leads to violence. Contributing to this crisis is the mass media (television), which introduces violent athletes as role models and focuses on racial conflicts in order to increase ratings.

Firstly and primarily, the IOC— and not only athletes, sport officials, etc— is in dire need of Olympic education/peace pedagogy (Olympism). Moreover, the IOC could use its funds from sponsors to develop an appropriate education program for its members. Additionally, in the countries hosting the Olympics the IOC could, in collaboration with the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), prepare specific educational programs— directed to sport federations, clubs, organizations—designed to 'reactivate' Olympic values. Furthermore, the games should also be held in the less

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[12] Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace (2007). Sports: When winning is the only thing, can violence be far away? In: http://www.peace.ca/sports.htm#Athletes%20as%20Role%20Models (retrieved June 2, 2007).

privileged countries of the world and not only in the wealthy or developed ones.

Recommendations

1. In order to promote pro-social attitudes and values through sports, including respect for diversity, the Olympic movement (the IOC and Olympic Education/Pedagogy), requires allies and networks. Namely, the continued development of wide-ranging networks, collaborations, partnerships or joint efforts with organizations and institutions such as Peace Games,[13] WINPEACE,[14] universities, schools and communities.

2. Social integration through sports, requires multi-cultural interdisciplinary research. The establishment of an international, inter-cultural network of researchers from the social sciences, the humanities, sports studies, sport sciences, gender studies, etc., in order to: (a) explore the ways that an ethos of peacemaking or non violent conflict resolution practices can be created, reproduced and sustained, (b) examine complex patterns rather than isolated behaviours so as to identify measures to assist coaches, sport officials, federations, clubs, parents, and athletes in non-violent conflict resolution practices, (c) explore how pro-social literature and curricula can be an effective part of a holistic academic model that builds self-esteem and integrity, (d) formulate a 'conduct code' to be signed by coaches, athletes, players, etc. with repercussions/measures/punishments (i.e. if they use 'invisible' forms of violence, such as insulting or offensive language or remarks against an individual's race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc.), and(e) prepare and organize a widespread campaign to change attitudes with new mentors and role models, the opposite of those promoted in the mass media today.

3. The institutionalization or incorporation of Olympic Education (Olympism) which is Peace Education, as an integral part of the curricula in the EU public schools, beginning in kindergarten or pre-school. To reiterate, to teach youth *pro-social attitudes* and values through sports, instead of the obsessive competitiveness that leads to violence and racial conflicts linked to sports.

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[13] In regard to non-conflict/violence prevention programs, see the holistic academic model, "the Peace Games In Action (Program Model)" of the international non-profit organization known as Peace Games. In: website: www.peacegames.org Additionally, see: Peace Games (2006). "Civic Engagement and Service-Learning with Young Children: Intergenerational Peacemaking Projects By the students, volunteers and staff of Peace Games". Issue Paper Civic Engagement and Service-Learning, Denver, CO. In: www.ecs.org.

[14] WINPEACE is a network which was originally launched by women from Greece and Turkey in July 1997 in order to spread a culture of peace: to promote non-violent conflict resolution and sustainable peace and friendship between the two countries. Analytically see the Winpeace peace education model (for the prevention of violence) in: www.winpeace.net

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