

## SPORT AS SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL PHENOMENON

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### INTRODUCTION

Sport is a socio-educational phenomenon. Isn't it something that is a perceptual and scientific thought interested in? Is it necessary for a teacher, sportsman, coach, pedagogue, social psychologist, sociologist, pupils and students to acquire knowledge of sport, its social reality and perception of it as an educational fact? These days, sport has become a part of everyday life, although much more as a entertainment and "waste of time" for sport audience on sport fields as well as in personal homes in front of television sets and radios, than it has become an integral part of educational and upbringing practice of everyday life. Why? Answer on this question should be looked for in the framework of understanding sport as a scientific, social and educational phenomenon. To achieve this, it is necessary, first of all in BH sociological studies, to approach more intensively to development of anthropology of sport, to foundation and development of sociology and pedagogy of sport as well as to development of theory of sport.

Within scientific context in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is evident that we are at the beginning of developing, in sociological thought, a sociology of sport, as a sub-sociological scientific discipline, which will, in scientifically relevant way, explain sports and sport activity as a social and educational phenomenon and, on the basis of that knowledge, realize sport reality as an educational activity, too. The aim of this work is to initiate development of sociological examination of sport activities as social contents, as well as contents of educational activities on all levels of educational process.

#### **Sport as (an Attractive) Social Fact**

For more complete understanding of sports as both, social and scientific fact in the era of industrial and post-industrial realization of social life, it is necessary to "get out of" traditional mono-disciplinary categories and concepts of understanding social reality dynamics. Why it should be done? It's because sport is a specific activity, dependent on human society, which is situated mostly on the other side of production

necessity. Sport, as an independent and specific part of society and a social fact, has, in addition to anthropology and subjective component, willing, esthetic, emotional, cultural, educational, religious, moral components or, in other words, entire social environment. What are the questions to which sociological study should give answers in order for us to understand sport as a social and educational fact? First of all, here, we will mention those issues we consider the most important from the theoretical perspective of sociology of sport.

Sport activity, regardless of how it is has been organized, has always been a multi-dimensional social phenomenon because it encompasses several aspects for studying. In addition to its social aspect, there are also some other important aspects to be considered, such as: political, ideological, moral, economic, educational and cultural.

Sport as an integral part of entire social environment can be seen as an important political phenomenon, not only on local levels, but also as a global tendency in the world. It is an undisputable fact, proved by everyday sport practice, that sport has been an important political phenomenon suitable for exerting influence on the masses, especially young people. Therefore, we can conclude that sport activity has had a significant role in affirmation of every country and its political ideology. In addition to that, it has also been a unique policy, especially at specific organized levels (state, local, group, individual). Finally, on the basis of the above said, it can be concluded that an official authorities use their privileged status and structural organization to impose on sport activity, especially on some aspects, their operational and strategic decisions in the form of programs, resolutions, laws and other documents.

Sport activity has been significantly related to production, with economic activity of society because of the fact that development of sport activity depends on the level of socio-economic development of society. In underdeveloped countries only some activities can exist, such as football, basketball etc, while others are neglected, not so popular and financially unsubsidized. However, it doesn't mean that kinetic activity,

specially organized as sport, can't have a significant influence on economic development of a country. If some sport performances attract a huge number of spectators, especially people from abroad, it can bring some profit, not only to a sport club, but also to hotels, transportation companies, as well as to government, because if there is a rise in transportation or sale of merchandise, it contributes to the rise of sales taxes. Investments of capital in manufacture of sport equipment, profit from advertising, etc. represent an economic aspect of sport activity.

Educational and moral aspects of sports are directly linked to educational programs and all educational practices in schools. This aspect of sports has an influence on development of moral and good character traits of young people, especially on development of strong will, as well as a range of other positive character traits of a person. The situation is quite different in professional sports. In addition to development of positive character traits, professional sports can cause numerous negative aspects, such as: violence, conflicts on the sport fields, desire to win at any price, etc. This happens outside individual will of a sportsman. However, in spite of these setbacks, there are possibilities for professional sports to develop those positive character traits of players, coaches and spectators which will help to develop collective consciousness, creativity, friendship, and companionship. A society that is not developing general educational values won't be developing them in sports as well, because it depends on general social relations and level of civilization and culture of society how will moral develop in sports or to which moral characteristics will organized sport activity turn.

Sport is one of the positive perspectives of the society under scientific and technological revolution, which force human beings to engage in more and more automatic and impersonal relationships. Sport, as a cultural phenomenon and a part of general culture of a society, has had a humanizing role. Sport is a part of social environment which has had huge potentials for forming and developing new humane creations of a mankind.

Sport is one of numerous practical and conscious activities of human beings which depend on entire social communication and opportunities. Therefore, sport should be considered as socio-historical, spiritual, cultural, and educational phenomenon, which is innate quality of human beings. There are some philosophers and scholars who claim that every human activity is influenced by interest, passion and fear. Something we are

particularly interested in is the characteristic of a human being which defines him as a being of a game (*homo ludens*) because sport, or a sport game, has primarily been a part of human self-determined creation, will, desire, consciousness, determined by specific laws that are part of a structure of social, cultural and spiritual life of a social community in which particular sports activity has been realized. In that sense, phenomenon of sports represents a sphere for demonstration of not only sport rules and regulations, but also of entire socio-cultural regulations and norms, as well as educational reality as an important part of a social reality in general.

To realize all those values and norms in humanistic context, it is necessary to put more emphasize, within entire sport reality, on educational aspect of sport. Sport education, besides its function and meaning, has a function of shaping our society esthetically and artistically. This universal dimension of sport education has always exceeded an individual context, because it, by its nature, represents simultaneous engagement of a huge number of people. Indeed, it wouldn't make sense to be engaged in some sport, the same as it wouldn't make sense to paint, compose, and write, only for yourself. Finally, every human creation, including sports and sport education, can reach human horizon or, in other words, make sense only in communication with other people.

Human being has always been, first of all, a social being. Sport education of a human being can be individual and social. On individual basis, it should be understood as "confirmation of social life" because a human being can "be alone", differentiate themselves and become a "name" only in a company with others. On social basis, if we abstract biological and anthropological dimensions, sport education should be seen as planned and meaningful activity because sport doesn't originate only from nature of human being as an individual. Among other functions, the function of sport education is also to develop human personality in the process of going toward realization of its totality in a concrete social circumstance of living.

### **Upbringing and Sport**

Upbringing is a social process within socialization which enables us to adopt various behaviour values and norms which are products and results of collective social consciousness. Upbringing is a core of socialization process because it is the socialization, although in much narrower sense. "There are two types of influence on a person,

which contribute to their growing up into mature and complete psychological, social and cultural human being. On one side, there are so called contextual factors which spontaneously affect person from within a structure of a society, including everyday activities which a child or adolescent sees and takes part in (life in family or local community). On the other hand, there are factors of conscious direction whose characteristics are systematization, methodology and organization. According to prevailing opinion only those later factors can be considered as training (upbringing, remark by authors)."<sup>1</sup>

In various aspects of socialization process there are processes which are spontaneous and accidental but upbringing is a consciously directed activity led, first of all, by aims of society. Those aims are, first of all, ideological and ethical and directed toward socially desirable values. In its ontological sense, upbringing leads to good.

To realize process of upbringing successfully or, in other words, to be able to realize upbringing tasks, such as: intellectual, moral, esthetic, working, health, and physical tasks, it is necessary to include education in the process of upbringing. Fundamental function of education is realization specific upbringing tasks.

Sport<sup>2</sup> in these modern times has exceeded meaning of a pure game, understood as entertainment. Therefore, it also includes some other values of society, such as, for example, various economic, cultural and other social values. Because of that, the process of sport education should include these dimensions, too. Sport and sport education by their very nature have general value, because they, as free creative activities, have been present in all societies (developed and underdeveloped, mono-national and multinational, secular and sacral). General social value of sports arises directly from the fact that it belongs to the sphere of free human activity. Sport "steps across" cultural borders, and if it is in the broader sense a part of culture, it also steps across borders of different countries and ideologies. Moreover,

sport steps across limits of human attachment to nature and geographical limitations. In other words, sport is a universal phenomenon. Overall social value of sport arises from its diversity and complexness, as well as its actuality and attractiveness. To this aspect of sport, if we examine it from a sociological perspective, general laws of sport development and process of sport education are dialectically linked.

Development of sport is inseparably linked to development and advancement of society in general. Sport evolution (evolution of sports) depends on technical and technological advancement of a society itself. At the same time, advancements in a development of sport practice, as a specific, structured and well-organized activity, reflexively affect development of a society. The same as technical and technological development of society affects development of sports, sports reflexively influence increase in heterogeneity of social groups or, in other words, increase level of stratification of social reality in general. At the same time, these two interrelated processes are followed by development of sports, as a specific type of educational process in general. Sport education, as a process of constant advancement, dignifying, coordinating, motivating methods and techniques, has been integral part of sport activity. It is necessary to understand that social value of sport education functions as one of the main elements (segments) of entire physical education.<sup>3</sup>

It has been known, more or less, to all of us that a fundamental function of physical education is preservation, improvement and advancement of human health because health, besides life and freedom, has always been one of universal social values. Life, as the greatest gift to humankind, can be protected by taking care of health. Health is a

<sup>1</sup> Sociological lexicon, p. 728

<sup>2</sup> There are various definitions of sports, often contradictory and paradox. Vagueness of the term "sport game" and claims that sport is a game contribute to that. One group of researchers claim that sport is a fight of a man with themselves, other man or natural obstacles (forces of nature). Others emphasize that sport is educational social institution permeated with game, whose aim is physical and spiritual perfection of a person. Third group of scholars see sport as rational activity, entireness of achievement in specific aspect of social life, etc. (D. Kokovic, *Sociology of Sport*, Sport Academy, Novi Sad, 2000, p. 21.)

<sup>3</sup> "Term physical education used here has broader meaning than the school subject with the same name and sphere of educational process in primary and secondary school. This notion presents total educational activity whose purpose is assuring correct physical growing up and developing, improvement of health and raising overall physical ability." (Vukasinovic, *Pedagogy*, second expanded edition, Zagreb, 1991, p. 81). Let remind ourselves that upbringing, as complete social and spiritual process, besides physical, also includes intellectual, moral, esthetic and working upbringing. These types of educational processes have been named "fundamental educational processes" by pedagogues. Educational process, as a social practice, happens in concrete social groups and social institutions, such as: family, pre-school institutions, schools, sport collectives, groups of peers, universities, social institutions, institutions for free-time activities, institutions for special education and upbringing, institutions for mass-media productions, etc.

fundamental living condition. Therefore, sport education, as an integral part of educational process in general, has universal and primary role. Sociologists, pedagogues and social psychologists claim that physical education has been "prerequisite for other educational spheres. Therefore, in this way, it by its very nature comes first because it is necessary, unavoidable base of every successful educational practice."<sup>4</sup>

As we said, a human being is the most complex and developed living creature on the planet Earth. Among all living creatures on the Earth, only human beings have been able to construct, comprehend, cooperate, evaluate, improve, compete, etc. Thanks to those abilities, we have developed philosophy, science, art, culture, sport, moral, etc. For that reason, through sport, besides overall social values and health, sport education influences development of human values, such as: honesty, goodness, beauty, justice, dignity, fair play, chivalry, etc. Most scholars claim that sport has been an inseparable "companion" of human beings. It can be said that it has existed since the first days of humankind. In the broadest sense, sport and games have existed in all times and cultures because, even in prehistoric times, human beings organized sports competitions, entertainment and cult games. Socio-educational value of sport, as a value of education in general, has been a universal social value, present in all societies and times. This was recognized even in classical period of history.<sup>5</sup> "Upbringing in Athens was divided into gymnastic and musical upbringing. Goal of gymnastic upbringing was to develop beauty and body strength, flexibility and beauty of motion while musical was used to cover areas of intellectual and esthetic upbringing."<sup>6</sup>

Socio-educational aspect of sport has lied not only in acquiring practical sport skills and habits, helping development of psycho-mobility skills,

learning necessary sport knowledge, but also in development of certain lifestyle and attitudes towards world and society. Acquiring those sets of knowledge about meaningful attitudes towards the world, society, and human existence represents social and valuable aspect of sport education. Knowledge has been one of the fundamental values of human life and our imperative obligation. Without acquiring new knowledge, human beings wouldn't be able to survive or, more exactly, wouldn't be able to adapt in natural environment and wouldn't be able to create rational and purposeful social organization.

"The field of upbringing we are talking about here has been in the need of knowledge about basics of hygiene, anatomy of human body, physiology, biology, knowledge about healthy lifestyle, place and importance of physical education in our lives, influences of natural phenomenon on human organism, health importance of particular aspects of physical exercise, harmful consequences of engaging yourself in some activities, about negative consequences of nicotine, alcohol, narcotics, and other intoxicating substances, first aid knowledge, etc. Besides knowledge, physical education develops numerous skills and habits. We will primarily mention skills and habits which have broader practical application in everyday life and work, such as: walking, running, jumping, catching, aiming, climbing, creeping, squeezing, lifting, carrying, pulling ... etc."<sup>7</sup> Besides educational and health values, sport, as a socio-educational phenomenon, develops one more important value, so called active reaction. Every person needs to rest and refresh after hard physical or intellectual work using energy and crating fatigue. Sport, through its educational aspects, directs a person towards active rest and healthy recreation. It has usually been achieved by those forms of sport exercises which don't impose so much physical effort on our organism.

Today, sport understood as a socio-educational phenomenon has exceeded all simplified definitions of sport as merely sphere of entertainment, leisure and spending. Socially valuable aspects of sport have superseded old biased interpretations of sport activity and present it as an integral part of an entire process of reproduction. These days, sport and sport education present distinct types of social activity in overall social distribution of labour. Development of sport and sport culture has influenced internal differentiation within increased social need for sport structuring.

<sup>4</sup> Vukasinovic A, cited work, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> Historical and scientific description of upbringing has showed that Pythagoras (about 580-500 B.C.) was the first thinker with clearly defined thoughts on upbringing. He founded a boarding school in the town of Kreton (south Italy) in which he used to educate children in accordance with his teachings. First educational system was developed and set by Socrates' student Plato (427-348 B.C.) on the foundations of Spartan and Athenian model. He explained it in his works *The Republic* and *The Laws*. In his works *The Politics* and *On Upbringing*, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) explained his theory of upbringing but only parts of those works has been preserved. According to Aristotle, fundamental purpose of upbringing is moral perfection – achievement of strength – wisdom. Aristotle differentiates between three types of upbringing: physical, moral, and intellectual.

<sup>6</sup> Vukasinovic, cited work, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

Development of massive and professional sports, their scopes and achievements, have had an influence on their differentiation, their status in the society and appropriate position in social distribution of labour. For those reasons, it is now necessary to emphasize, through sport education, that first-class, competitive sport has exceeded the limits of mere entertainment and game and has become an independent socially valuable activity. At the same time, professional sport has become one of the perspective social resources of every social community.

By including value categories and notions and premises based on them into sport, it is understood as a part of a complete development process of social totality as well as its position within a system of general social relations and values. Together with understanding the place and role of the sport in social reality, we understand and make critical and value judgments and opinions about type and character of social relations which are being established in sport itself.

In modern days, it is important to emphasize economic aspects of relations in sport. The law of profit (benefit) is becoming one of the most important elements of sport activity, as one of the laws of market in general. To be honest, this law "has come" to sport from a life of market way of functioning of work and capital. From all above said we can precisely conclude that in the field of sport and relations within it some socio-historical and socio-economic laws have been working and they, eventually, define its socially valuable essence.

### **Sport Education as a Human Capital**

Sport as a socio-educational process has been an inseparable part of a whole process of socialization of an individual. Process of socialization is happening during whole life, though various forms of human activity and in different social groups. On the process of socialization an individual learns about culture of their social community, adopts social values and norms and forms goals. In that sense, socialization represents "a complex interactive relationship between an individual and society, linked to the process of adopting knowledge, attitudes, values and norms, behaviour patterns, necessary for participation of an individual in social life."<sup>8</sup> Through family, group of peers, school, mass-media production, sport collectives, etc society has been shaping skills and motives of its members. What is, then, difference

between educational process and socialization? Education/upbringing is a systematically organized and institutionalized process. He directs growing up through learning, acquiring knowledge, development of physical, mental and working skills, often toward an ideal goal set by society itself. Socialization is universal process of social formation of a personality of an individual as a member of: society, family, local community, politics, culture and sport or some other social group.

Sport as an educational process, itself, possesses its own value. It contributes to development of human personality and surmounting life problems. Therefore, sport has been a useful good. In the process of education through sport activity we can talk about an investment that gives individual returns, bigger income in the future, which represents a productive energy whose existence is needed for labour and modernization. In industrialized countries, people, during "educational revolution" have understood that school diploma represents the biggest investment in the future of their children, so they are doing their best to gather various diplomas. Talking about sport, in modern times, it is realized that it is one of the best investing values, because children from "higher classes" have better chances not only in school, but also they show appropriate character traits, value orientations and "directions", motivation to succeed in oral and expressive capabilities, cognitive and emotional skills in sports, too. Transferred educational contents in a complex society with a distribution of labour can't be so easily differentiated as they were in 19<sup>th</sup> century, when one part of youth were educated for subsequent progress to positions and the other part was raised for obedience: today, there is a need for a differentiated shaping of individuals. However, it means that class influences have less importance and school, in addition to other youth groups, is becoming more important for "marking" of an individual.

Socialization has always meant a process of including a human individual into society. It has always been happening primarily within activities of social groups. As a sport group (team, collective, group, fan group) is a part of a social space and reality, rule by particular social norms and codes of behaviour, at the same time, it has been one of the important factors of entire socialization of an individual. Sport group, through sport education, represents a particular behaviour pattern, which has been verified as an acceptable social model. Each sport group, through various codes of behavior and conduct,

□ Žiga J., Dozić A., *Sociology*, BKC Sarajevo, 2004, p. 88

such as, for example, aspects of symbolic communication, set codes of behavior, influences the process of socialization of its members or more exactly participates in development of individual character traits of its members, which, at the same time, are socially acceptable. According to numerous sociologists, these days, sport as an educational process, through sport activity, sportsmen, sport audience and its behavior, has been more important factor of educational as a human capital than some traditional factors of socialization.

## CONCLUSION

Sport as a socio-educational phenomenon represents, not only aspects of sport rules and norms, but also an expression of all socio-cultural rules and norms, as an important part of a social reality in general. These days, realization of sport activities or simply sport as educational practice represents the most valuable human capital of society. Today, sport understood as socio-educational phenomenon has exceeded simplified understandings of sport in the terms of merely: entertainment, leisure and spending. Socio-educational aspects of sport have superseded one-sided interpretations of sport activity and see it as

an integral part of entire social reproduction. Sport, understood as a socio-educational phenomenon, represents a special type of social activity within the framework of entire social distribution of labor. As a part of a branchy network of social distribution of labor, besides its sport function, sport in these modern times has an educational, esthetic and artistic function in a shaping of a society.

Development of both, massive and professional sports, their scopes and achievements, has influenced their differentiation, their status in society and appropriate position in social distribution of labour. For those reasons, today, it is necessary to emphasize, through sport education, that first-class, competitive sport has exceeded limits of mere entertainment and game and has become an independent socially valuable activity. At the same time, a professional sport has become one of respective social resources of every social community. In order for sport to be realized as a human capital of a society, it is necessary to affirm educational value of sport within entire sport reality. It is necessary to include in sport activity, as its integral part, some educational values such as: dignity, goodness, chivalry, justice and equity, honesty, health and beauty.

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