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Processes of Globalization and Sport Development

JEAN FIRICĂ

IN SPORTS, globalization is most strongly felt because sports are highly publicized. In recent years, *U Cluj* was present on TV in the country and abroad in the company of teams from Belgium, Switzerland, Norway. During the sports broadcastings about the student's team, we may hear the funny commentary: "the Polish centers, the French shoots on goal or the Brazilian misses the interception". It is therefore the consequence of globalization. Foreign athletes from this team defend the club's colors having no connection with the country the club represents. The number of the nations meeting under the umbrella of the Cluj club may be beneficial, because national ambition and motivation develop just in the situations in which native athletes are in minority. Although we have foreign players, the level of our championship is very low, if we compare the latest edition of European cups championships. Instead, in the Romanian National team there are only a few players from the domestic championship, the rest of them being "Stranieri" (athletes playing abroad). Our young players end their careers at Bucharest clubs, or they become trade merchandise for some more experienced foreign club, and for others their luck is called Ajax, Inter or, more recently, they play for Arab teams. There came the fashion of foreign coaches who are trying to develop a mentality of professional. Coach Dragan Petricevici, former champion of Romania with U Cluj in basketball, also trained the Elba Timisoara, the BC Tiroviste, BC Constanta, Poli Iasi, and now he is also champion 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 tricolor and it will remain like that. I love Romania without any interest. 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 Timisoara'. Then I know where I will return".

Under the influence of globalization, we notice at our youth a trend of increasing the number of sports consumers to change the look. Therefore, globalization has a

strong impact on the Romanian governing models and Olympic movement. Soccer clubs are real traders of clothing and accessories for their supporters and regularly change the team's equipment in order to maintain a high demand. Entertainment activities have also become a practice in marketing specific equipment.

The cultural phenomenon of globalization also borrows customs and holidays from around the world: Paris, Rome, Berlin, Montreal, Toronto, Madrid, Lima, Moscow. Let's take Bucharest as an example, which celebrates since 2004 the white nights, called The museums night. At the opposite pole there are the funeral habits in Romania, that have been entirely replaced, because the European Union rules required that and they force entrepreneurs to organize ecologic funerals for their clients. Yet the wedding traditions, the New Year, Epiphany, Christmas traditions (except for the slaughtering pigs rituals) and several other less known traditions remain untouched and yet those traditions still hold out in villages in Transylvania, completely ignoring the change tide that the globalization brings with it.

In the beginning of the 21st century, also the Church is in the globalized world and it is the oldest global Institution in history, although experts say that this phenomenon showed for the first time long ago in the field of sports and culture (Chikán A., 2001). It seems that globalization affects church institutions too, marginalizing more and more the religion's role in training the culture (Document of the Pax Romana Congress, 2000). The Roman Catholic Church has considered all these changes and has worked in Transylvania always in the spirit of universality. It tenaciously endeavored to harmonize faith with life, feelings with reason, and it must stick to the idea of a more righteous and more happy society which does not exclude anyone. We believe that this is the work that the church must carry out in order to support globalization.

As early as 1868, the Romanian confessional schools law, and then the Regulation of 1907 included "gymnastics on military drills" as a school subject and stipulated the obligation of the school to "maintain a place for gymnastics" (Bocsan, Leu, 2002).

Modern ideas have been formed through the work of some historians: "In the dawn of modern age, interpersonal relations have known intensification without precedent all around Europe... of course, the Romanian Countries could not remain outside these trends" (Bocsan, Bolovan, 2004). The Romanian school in Transylvania developed through some societies of whose "program and cultural actions have situated in the plan of creative activity, originality and modernization in agreement with the European trends" (Bocşan, 1994). The signatories of a vast scientific paper stated for those interested in history:

The authors of this Encyclopedia endeavored to make the servants of this discipline known to history lovers, be they big personalities, or modest workers, which with their talent and diligence have contributed to the establishment of the today's historiographic edifice.

As a complement of Romanian history research relating to population dynamics from 19th century Transylvania in the Central Europe area, we met important concerns relating to “development of rural habitat and natural movement of population—natality, mortality, problems of demographic transition in Transylvania and the European Central are, marriages (Bolovan, 2000).

We also notice the universal character of globalization in commercials using the image of the most prized Romanian sportsmen for promoting the country's image. The prominent figures in the internationally broadcast promotion video-clips belong to Hagi, Nadia and Nastase. “This is Romania, the country where people ride zebras”, says former tennis player Ilie Nastase, while the most well-known Romanian footballer Gheorghe Hagi, advocated foreigners to come to Romania and taste the culinary delicacies: “You don't really know much about Romania, do you? It's time you came and discovered real places, real experiences, real people”. These are the messages of the most powerful Romanian brands all over the world. Along with them, Lucian Bute involves himself too. Certain trademarks and symbols of global sports have become true clichés. Sport has become a way of life, a dimension of globalization and a society in motion.

More and more, Prince Charles of Great Britain is determined to promote Romania for its adventure tourism. He dared to make a joke and say: “My genealogical tree shows that I am a descendant of Vlad Tepes”. Then, the documentary speaks in the superlative about Transylvania and the “Wild Carpathia” show presents the most beautiful areas of the Carpathian Mountains and is broadcast in England too. British journalists describe: “Transylvania is a place of myth and legend, a country where the howling of wolves thrills into the cool air of the night. Here bears sharpen their claws on the bark of glorious pines”. The British team has chosen Prince Charles as “ambassador” of our country.

The processes of globalization and the development of sport as a part of a global system have been examined and considered in their interconnectedness. Special attention has been paid to specific cultural and global trends¹.

The direction press/sport has been identified as a crucial part of this interdependent system. Three aspects of press/sport production complex have been examined: the production of cultural press/sport goods, the form and the contents of sport products in the media and the political and economical aspect of serial consumption. The major groups included in the press/sport complex have been identified and analyzed, as well as sport organizations, informational/advertising organizations and the staff in the media, especially radio diffusion, television and journalists. Suggestions for further investigations have been formulated

Elite sport competitions are global mass media entertainment shows. We should only think of the Olympic game, the World Cup in football and the Super Bowl in American football. It is difficult to ignore the level of interwoven conditions of elite sport and the mass media.

To understand this phenomenon, we are confronted with two nominal tasks. The nature and the level of interdependence implicated in the press/sport complex 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 role in the press/sport development. Those who will undertake these tasks should start from the existing knowledge about press/sport. It is also necessary to be aware of the delicate problems that always used to follow the debate on globalization.

Competitive cultural trends

THE FACT that people, goods, knowledge and trends move from one setting to another cannot be denied. The references of cultural imperialism have become popular in order to explain the essence of these trends. The effects that one culture has on another have been mentioned. The terms like “westernization” or “Americanization” have been used to highlighter the implicated aspiration towards homogenization. In the same sense, different aspects of folk culture have been examined, including sport². 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. The 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 processes³.

There are two main accents when describing cultural imperialism in cultural global trends. The first accent, in this sense, points to a world made of various nations that compete with each other. 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 1991⁴.

In some other elaboration the world is seen as a politically and economically integrated system of global capitalism. Here the accent was put on the activities of multi and transnational corporations⁵.

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 current of homogenization can be identified. In spite of 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 multiple problems appear. They boil down to several evaluations regarding cultural imperialism.

What is the essence and what are the problems raised by “westernization” and “Americanization” and what are their implications having entered the conscience and the subconscious of people, as well as how complex this phenomenon is and what is the extent of the capacity to understand an autochthon culture threatened by a foreign one, are all the problems referred to by some researchers trying to contribute to the reorientation of analyses⁶.

Globalization is seen as more or less coherent or orientated process, from the cultural point of view. In other words, the processes of interdependence and interconnection of global zones have been happening 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 world⁷.

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 potentially wrong association of the idea of global cultures and a culture of a single nation. The tendency of dichotomous contemplation on global cultures is also inadequate. Instead of endless arguments discussing whether it is homogeneity or heterogeneity that is evident, or integration or disintegration, 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, then it is better to notice that there is still something beyond the influx between nations⁸. Transactional practices, which take different cultural forms, get certain amount of relative autonomy on global level.

Relating to so called trans-social processes, Robertson claims that they are the forces that support changes and the influx of the goods, people, and pieces of information, knowledge and imagism⁹. 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 production complex sport/press is a component part of a general process. We should think of technological progresses implicated in advertising through the mass-media of modern Olympic Games, and how some satellites transmit images throughout the world in at the same time. For Real, these images, no matter how short and superficial they were, reflect and contribute to the appearance of global culture.

The existence of those transnational, relatively autonomous practices, which apparently possess their own dynamic, should be admitted. But we should not neglect some other key characteristic of this global sport/press complex. Transnational prac-

tice 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 transnational capitalistic class are involved in the activities of those associations, since they are main actors whose plans and activist are interwoven in the attempt to develop the sport/ press 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 capitalistic class are potentially significant in short-period terms. However, in long-period terms, the unintentional transnational practices, which are relatively autonomous, are those that prevail. Those practices design the plans and subsequent actions of transnational agencies and of transnational capitalistic class.

Confusion, insecurity and the 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 offers them the possibility to intervene. Global practices are still connected with human deeds. In order to stop those interventions and not to waste so many lives and resources, it is necessary to have “realistic” knowledge¹⁰.

Unfortunately, sport and the organizations which organize massive 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 at sport manifestations.

For instance, the priority at all Olympic Games organized in newer history, or more precisely, since Munich 1972 has been the same. Safety comes first, and since the tragic events at the Olympic Games in Munich new safety measures have been established. However, the recent tragic events caused by terrorist attacks in America and Spain have left a profound imprint, having a great influence on the organization of many contemporary sports manifestations. Namely, due to the possible threat of terrorist attacks, new Olympic Games to be organized in Athens in 2004 will have the highest possible safety level till now. In spite of the fact that during history wars were stopped to keep the Olympic Games, the Greeks are rather disturbed before the next Olympic Games. During 16 days of The Olympic Games at least 40 000 specially trained policemen and soldiers will take care of the safety. Even the members of other safety powers and the complete police and army forces will be in the heightened state of alert. The NATO forces in the region will also be asked to help the security of the Olympic Games: the airspace over Greece will be controlled, as well as all inland and sea routes to Greece.

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 XV and XVIII century and gained importance at the beginning of this century owing to Robertson in 1990. 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 was a witness of the appearance and spreading of sport, the establishment of international sport organizations and the increase of competitiveness between national teams. In the same period, the rules that control specific forms of sport and global competing manifestation were accepted. These rules refer to the Olympic Games, Football World Cup and other world championships. They illustrate the globalization in sport world.

If Robertson is in the right, neither broader processes of globalization, nor the problems that have been identified in this text as being connected to sport, are not the direct result of the processes between states. In fact, these processes can be described in terms proven to function relatively independently of conventional processes accepted by society as socio-cultural. 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 groups appears something that neither was planned, nor intentional: the globalization of human interdependence¹¹.

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, puts the accent on 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 subjects 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 authors¹² explain the appearance and the global development of sport, but the theory of modernization did not limit itself to origins of sport.

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 role 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 has been developed. In that way, western countries have been put in a position to preserve their superior position, ensuring the control over the development of world trade for themselves.

Some studies have researched and criticized the neocolonial 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 the global economy cannot be outlined as a system of partners and equal trade relations. 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, occupied by inequality as a modality in the conditions of global development underline integrated and systematical nature of modern global capitalism. In spite of the fact that the origins and the kind of dependence in the case of different nations are various, having in mind the level of colonization and the colonialist, the states on the periphery do not have any benefit neither of this trade equality nor of the correct goods exchange. These matters can be “commercial harvests”, like sugar, and “human harvests”, in the case of sportsmen.

Nevertheless, several movements have been emphasized within this met 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 favor of underdevelopment of the third world. This is largely, but not exclusively, the matter of the activity of multinational corporations. The poverty of the third world countries is a direct result of their subordinate position in comparison to industrialized countries. The well-being of industrial countries is obtained on the account of the third world countries that economically depend on the first ones. 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 incapable to explain the development of some countries from the third world. That is, the followers of this approach have 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. South Korea and Taiwan would be good examples, and both countries produce sport goods, for example tennis shoes and racquets.

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's¹³ theory of world systems claims that the world trade and communication systems have been developing since XVI century. This world system has produced a serial of economic and politic links based on the expansion of the world capitalistic 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 center. Periphery 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.¹⁴ Following this dimensions we can identify more easily the relations between sport, media and cultural global processes.

Sport, press and global cultural trends

THERE ARE at least five dimensions of social changes within the scope of global trends. These five 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);

- 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).

All these five dimensions can be followed in the development of sport in XX century. Even though we are, before all, interested here in the nature of mass -media, this dimension of global social changes should be understood in its connectedness with other related dimensions. Thus, 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 milliards of dollars worth in the last couple of 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 itself 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 (for example, American). The transformation of the English, European and Australian basketball are examples that illustrate the things we have talked about.¹⁵

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 executors of the press/sport production complex and they created sport shows using elite within the sport emigrates, who participate in competitions or demonstrations. An illustration for this would be the tennis match between Jimmy Connors and Martina Navratilova, which took place in Las Vegas, at the end of 1992.

The permeability of the press/sport/capital complex, inspired by the American practice in sports (football, basket, baseball) forced numerous sports, for example soccer (English football) to adapt themselves to these models.

At the level of ideological dimensions, global sport festivals, like the World Cup in football, Olympic Games and Asiatic Games, are just means to express the ideologies that have transnational character.

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.¹⁶

Globalization and the production complex mass 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 sport/press, critical political economy is, in some aspects, more capable of placing the press/sport complex in the context of globalization. Let us consider this aspect in detail.

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 has focused on three significant areas and all the attention has been 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 effects of the media and incorporates them in their life style and their environment. Consumer’s creativity is underlined.

The public is made of active agents who make efforts to find out and give a sense to certain situations. This accentuation makes 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 studies about sport, leisure and popular culture. This approach has many advantages in sport study. It has been successfully used in some British and North American studies on press/sport in the last decade.¹⁷

Golding and Murdock identify some weaknesses that reduce the efficiency of cultural studies while examining press/sport production complex. They claim that cultural studies do not tell very much about the way the cultural industries operate.

Economical organization, which has influence on 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 press/sport complex.

Golding and Murdock¹⁸ suggest the acceptance of critical political economy. Three basic tasks of this approach can be used to form a more general view on literature regarding press/sport complex: the production of cultural press/sport goods, political economy of texts dealing with the media and the consumption and the consumer's economic and political aspect.



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Abstract

Processes of Globalization and Sport Development

The processes of globalization and development are part of the global sport today. Current trends are focused on specific cultures. Sport and the media are interdependent and part of the global system. In this article we examined: the production of culture media / sporting goods, sporting goods form and content, media and political and economic aspects of consumption series.

Key words

culture, history, sport, media, economic