



GENERAL ASPECTS OF SOCIALIZATION THROUGH SPORT AND PSYCHICAL ACTIVITY

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Abstract

Recent studies have shown that social life developed within athletics or around them is important for the process of socialization.

This writing presents an approach of professional literature studies, covering- in an attempt to clarify the main problems- to what extent and in what way can sport and physical activity be a medium of socialization. The difficulty to measure the evolution of socialization is fairly obvious; the process itself is too complex, depending on many functional factors, observable only along periods of time.

Approaches in professional literature are wider, including on the one hand, the empiric studies, and the process of socialization, on the other hand, because some aspects of the personality development constitute the basis of socialization and represent the coherence between mental and physical development of every individual.

Keywords: socialization, sport, physical activity, process

JEL classification: I10, I19

1. Introduction

Socialization is the process through which people acquire customs, attitudes, values and behaviours that allow them to participate as members of the society they live in.

Giddens defines socialization as „a process wherethrough the helpless child gradually becomes a self-conscious, intelligent person, integrated in the type of culture in which he/she was born. Socialization is not some kind of cultural programming where the child passively absorbs the influences he comes into contact with. [1]

Socialization through sport is equally targeting the child and the group, and is taking place when the individual acquires attitudes, values, conceptions or types of behaviour specific to the group or sport community, for the purpose of his adaptation and integration.

Socialization is nothing but a form of adaptation to the rules of the group. It has to be tackled from two points of view, more specifically /scilicet (lat.) the socializing effects of athletics and sport on the one hand, and the socialization in

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athletics and sport, on the other.

Many studies emphasize the positive influences on the personality and health of those who exercise. From a moral point of view, the ambiance where you exercise is playing a modeling role. Appreciating moral values, fair-play, a pro-social behaviour in general, are acquired through sport. The advantage of sport consists on the influence the body and mind exert; this way, sport contributes to socialization through movement and its effect on the personality development, and also the nature of social contacts offered by various sports.

In sport, the body communicates, it is expressive, it carries states, feelings, attitudes, meaningful intentions. Given the fact that body contact is so frequent, language codes have been imposed within sport groups. People think that the involvement in sport activities develops positive social attributes of personality.

Many consider that keeping up sport games settles „a favourable environment for attitudes, values and socio-personal behaviour appropriation on the cultural plan, and what is learnt through physical activity is also transferred in the life span. [2]

For the purpose of full socialization at the adult age, 8 objectives are defined in youth development:

- accepting your own body;
- understanding the role of men and women;
- building a relationship with other people;
- emotional independence;
- preparing towards a profession and a family life;
- social responsibility;
- creating a system of values;
- human behaviour.

In France, Parlebas made a very interesting research. Two groups were invited to join a mountain camp. One of the groups was harmoniously built, whereas the other was uncoordinated. The groups have had to accomplish 5 types of tasks: verbal, psychomotric, sociometric, competitive, and cooperational. Sociometrics has been used in order to measure differences, especially with regard to groups cohesion. Research results lead to the conclusion that, in case of favourable group structure, under physical activity, interpersonal relationships suffered changes, which determined a significant improvement in the socio-emotional structure of the group.

Indeed, motor behaviour can change interpersonal relationships, yet those changes are neither systematic, nor usefully produced. Parlebas notices that group antagonism favours the increase of cohesion within sport games. [3]

The statement that performance depends on group cohesion seems, in the worst case scenario, a truth unanimously admitted, unless an axiom. The analysis carried out by Martens on basketball teams, rule out the idea that *performance* = *cohesion*, and state out „too much cohesion is harmful ” [4]. In some cases, it seems that lack of competition and some different opinions between team members



make them less involved and more likely to accept possible failures without looking for a culprit.

Cohesion is born and built of positive preferential relationships and depends on a series of factors: number of team members, age, sportsmen character, team structure, motivation.

Thill carried out a 27-month-long research. He compared personality features (including sociability and cooperation) from 9 groups of people practicing and non-practicing sport. The conclusion reached indicates is indicating that sociability and cooperation have been greater within sportsmen teams. [5] „Group cohesion should allow full communication between group members at all times of activity, in order to achieve professional, social, sporting performances etc. [6]

In an article published by Sonstroem regarding physical exercise practice and self-appreciation, the following reasoning has been reached: hesitating, shy and demotivated people have the chance to meet other people through physical activities or within sport groups, to communicate with one another in a setting in which a low level of self-esteem (at the workplace or at school) is not so important, that contributing to the development of the global self-concept and ease of social interaction. [7]

Somebody can create his self-image by joining a group. „People’s self-image is less determined by the objective traits of their personality, and mostly by the mirror the group, the society is giving them to look into. This self-mirror serves as a reference system along people’s lives”.

Long time ago, sociological observation revealed that „birds of a feather flock together”, they come closer naturally, mutual valencies being found in attitudes, skills, and similar traits of character. It’s about spontaneous affiliation, through empathy.

Another researcher places emphasis on team sport’s intake in cooperation. Sportsmen have to work together and to build cohesion. He speaks about good communication, mutual respect, the feeling of closeness, atmosphere of friendship, contributing to the quality of trainings, movements, and competitions.

Different changes in the socialization of the participants in sport and physical activity can take place only by social learning, a learning dimension having as object the pattern of activities and behaviours, and being held both verbally and non-verbally, when interacting with other sport participants. The requirements of modern society continues to change, to encourage further measures to promote sport and physical exercise as a major factor in raising national education standards and make full use of the opportunities offered by community programs regarding mobility at all levels education, training and lifelong learning.[8]

Sport is an uncertain and ambivalent factor of socialization, working parallelly with other socialization processes; things are the same when it comes to the problem of transference in other spheres of life, sometimes conflicting and full of emotional expressiveness. Baltz refers to education, believing that, when there is



a proper leading, sport and physical activity can contribute to socialization.

Sport doesn't mean active involvement only, but also involvement as onlooker, especially because of his importance in info-media.

People's participation in sport events, as onlookers or supporters, enable them to communicate, to develop relationships, and implicitly to socialize.

If the modern human is somehow convicted to loneliness, then certainly sport manifestations debunk this myth. They give the image of a social crowd, not living in isolation. Sport could be a target, medium, and context of socialization. By this, the sport process has a strong identity dimension: it can create individual and group identities.

There is data according to which the sport activity performed by the onlooker, and his reaction toward sport competitions are psychologically and comportamentally corelated.

Conclusions

The fundamental question „To what extent can sport and physical activity be a favourable medium of socialization?“ cannot be answered with YES or NO. Many authors tend to give a positive answer. No longitudinal study has been carried out in order to follow up the process of socialization through physical activity, and almost no observation to bring up a causal explanation.

In light of all studies considered, the majority of authors bring out data to support the folowing conclusions:

1. Physical activity and sport offer through their dimensions a unique opportunity to meet other people and to communicate with, to acquire social skills (like tolerance, respect for the others etc.), to live emotions hard to feel in other spheres of life, to accept some of the positive elements of lifestyle, to adapt to the team objective (through cooperation, cohesion etc.) and to socially become active through the performances of the others.
2. Because from the point of view of socialization, sport and physical activity refer to the oneness of body and mind, the matter of personality development also has to be taken into consideration. There is clear evidence about the positive effects of physical activities on self-concept, self-appreciation, anxiety, depression, blood pressure, and stress, self-confidence, energy, mood, and well-being.

All in all, the abundance of data given by practice, including research findings, plead in favour of this fact.



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