

CREATION AND EXPLOITATION OF POSITIVE IMAGE OF SPORT IN SOCIAL AWARENESS

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Abstract. A positive image of sport working on purpose of its institutional reproduction is being created based on the analysis carried out by mass media. The attention is paid to the fact that the society is not properly informed about the existential problems that a sportsman faces; costs are not revealed – mostly human (physical and psychical health, life, material welfare) – concerning those who create sport – sportsmen and trainers. Sport is mostly considered as an important means of ensuring and developing culture, supporting national authority, creating people's unity, a way of manifesting personal heroism.

Keywords: sport as a sociocultural institution, image of sport, social awareness, sportsman.

Addressing to the issues of contradictory being of sport is defined by a high social request for a comprehension of its nature at the same time without serious theoretical researches of sport phenomenon. Modern literature about sport mostly focuses on popularization of sport in all its manifestations – historical and cultural, theoretical, ideological than on a serious philosophical and socio-cultural analysis.

Sport like any sociocultural institution is organized for self-sufficiency and self-reproduction in society and generations: economic, organizational, ideological. Ideological sufficiency means that in social awareness sport through its own and other means of mass information creates an attractive image, working for reproduction purposes of sport. The main criterion of that image is the ideology of sport, including the conceptions of cultural, political, social and individual importance of sport (there is no need for the conception explaining the economic importance of sport– it is determined by the market).

These conceptions, which can be also called institutional archetypes of

social awareness, work at two levels – informational and visional.

At the first level that is in mass media the cognitive aims describing all phenomena, events, scenes and sport activity in whole are realized, exceptionally from the point of view of its praising, glorifying and honoring.

At the visional level sport is an important tool for providing and developing the level of culture, keeping national authority in international society, creating national unity and to top it all it is practically the only way of demonstrating personal heroism in modern terms. At the same time costs are not properly revealed (often they are not revealed at all) – uppermost human (physical and psychical health, life, material security) – concerning those who do sport – sportsmen and coaches. As a result, the audience getting used to trust mass media is purposefully deceived, knowing nothing (and having no desire to learn) about risks connected with the sport participation and a number of sportsmen start-ups and even mature, facing failures in their “mission”, losing their health or lost, “forgotten” coaches, etc.

Statistics of such events is poor. 99% of all provided information about sport events is aimed at making the audience have a feeling of deep admiration of winners and organizers of sport competitions. Only 1% of information is devoted to tragic accidents which are impossible to hide and therefore they should be somehow acquitted (it is not difficult to do it) and moreover – to earn on sensation. Nowadays the first place in mass media belongs to information about the earnings of top-sportsmen (3), which reflect the business aspect of sport as a

social institution; selection, choice, preparation and education of young sportsmen is done under slogans of worldwide fame and highest prosperity of champions, those who could become the latest. Focus on consumer psychology has been working for already thousands of years: why not me? And what if it would be me? And why not risking? What if it works, when you push yourself to the limit and even more? Relying on a player's passion makes sport a huge pyramid where figures, put on hundreds thousands of unlucky people, have everything. For business sport as well as any other social and economic institution is only a tool of enrichment, and from the point of view of a businessman, who is wittingly out of morale sphere, all sport delight and anxiety, personal (physical and psychical) problems and etc. – is not more that a way of attracting audience, paying for sport spectacles and ensuring profitability of his investments into sport. Moreover, such kinds of events are often organized just for increasing agiotage and getting higher profits. That is business interest (mostly – totalizator) that is the reason of all violation of sport rules and laws: contractual and criminal losses. But this attitude is never flaunted and is not an essential in social opinion of sport. Public is not interested in it, and sportsmen consciously do it making the sacrifice of their reputation and health for the sake of success.

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Human, brought up with professional sport ideology is not able to prejudice the cultural value of sport even he has “failed”; it means that for social society he is just a simple “material”. Such “material” is entangled in sport from the very “tender” age with the prospect of achieving higher results; an undercover agreement between parents and coaches is concluded (4, 5, 6). Thus, 90% of parents bring their children to the trap, not realizing it; but unlucky sportsmen do not like talking about their failures, all the more – about their life crash, and such kind of statistics is not given.

Until recently the appraisals of sport failures are expressed in such verbal phrases as: «bad luck», «anything is possible», «no luck», etc., without any sense. Nowadays, when dangers of sport have become more obvious for the public, a sport ideological popularization which has to refute all negative appraisals and arguments against sport is being applied. Thus, on site «sport-kids.ru» there are two articles (at on the one page), in the first one – drawbacks of sport are set forth. O. Arnold writes: «Overloads hold up growth, mutilate figure, and disturb most organism functions. If a person gets used to heavy loads from an early age, it inevitably rivets him to sport once and for all; he has to keep fit until ripe age, train – for himself - all his life. Otherwise he will feel bad and surely put on weight – it is a physiology. »; «If your child seriously does sport, control the process constantly. Keep watch on what “vitamins” he is given, find out about their ingredients. Don't accept any hormonal “extra nutrition”! »; «Sport is considered to temper the character and in case of strong personalities it is really so.

But sometimes it breaks. For too sensible people, who are tend to feel everything keenly in their everyday life and lose heart, permanent emotional differentials, connected with competitions, lead to nervous breakdowns. Naturally, such children rarely reach sport heights – only if they are talented for certain kinds of sport, according to a trainer. Then the trainer does his best for making his trainee show necessary results, not caring of his moral health. But non-persistent natures, appearing themselves out of the picture in the twilight of sport career, simply knock themselves out» (1).

The author of the second article gives his counter-evidence, deserving a lot of interest. He writes that it is not necessary to make conclusions from particular cases and create the image of sport only based on negative moments; that risk is everywhere and sport is not exclusion: there is more risk in sport than in life as a whole. Post-sport problems of sportsmen, in his opinion, are usual problems of everyone everywhere and some of them depend on personal qualities of sportsmen who enhance their reputation by stories about their injuries. Besides, we must not accuse sport of its harmful consequences – a sportsman knew what he was going to do (and if he did not know or was he under pressure of parents, friends, trainers, sport popularization?); and it is a woman in sport who goes the straight road to family success. Emotions, in the author's opinion, are connected with victories in sport – the highest that a person could have in life (this argument, according to the author, is meant, mostly, for teenagers: that is if he does not become a champion, and what to do with emotions of losers, whose number prevails?); there are worse cases where an ex-champion or a loser is left, but “it is within our power not to admit it, right?» (but how?); of course, we should know when to stop at trainings: it is over reasonable limits – it could bring harm to a sportsman, but to learn about sportsman's abilities can be by

trying loading him more and more, - that is sport (until he falls); and it would be very offensive for a child especially in case he has bents for it to realize that having been already an adult he has lost his excellent opportunities (certainly, it is more offensive to realize in old age, that sport has ruined your life); in general, it is sport that gives a person a genuine sense of life (even it makes him a cripple); it is sport that ensures super health: «Sportsmen recover from illnesses easier than usual people— it runs in their blood. Unsportsmanlike person is defenseless in front of illnesses and aging. His “instruments” – medicine and queues in clinics. A sportsman, even an ex-one is arm and prepared. He is able to mobilize duly his extra organism resources if necessary”; only sport makes a person a real person: «Big sport is notable for its responsibility. Here the habit to work for conscience is cultivated. And one more – to create new opportunities, learn previously unknown psychology depths. An ability to work one's way up to the end and finish is created. In principle, it can be learnt without sport – by mature age. Sportsmen, as a rule, are familiar with it from their youth – and that is why they have an advantage over ordinary people» (2). Another argument intended for teenagers: die in a fight on the ring, at a finish line of a track race, on a tatami, under a bar, etc.

That is a demagogy that is used by mass media to make a fool of teenagers and uninformed adults, worrying about their children's future.

Since the time immemorial the image of a sportsman-hero has been considered as one of the most respected in any cultural tradition and all the people divide into those who would like to be famous sportsmen and those who worship them (supporters and fans). Till the middle of XIX century the social “image of a sportsman” and his professional way of life was not compared: it was considered as something dishonorable and his secrecy

increased his status. But since the middle of XIX century, when sport started having its own professional and economic fundamentals, became a business, everything has been changed. It has been required to ensure all possible conditions for a victory, mostly from a sportsman himself, including his utmost physical development in a certain kind of sport at maximum training. It has given birth to shocking disproportions in sportsmen's bodies (which were easily accepted by public: a winner is not judged), following by a number of professional sport diseases (namely, "sport of high achievements generated such phenomena as "overexertion" and "overtraining" of sportsmen). The next step of commercialization – "image of a sportsman", that is his promo image, which currently prevails not only his professional one, but his personality as well.

Thus, the integral focus of sport moves from the personality of a sportsman to profits and revenues from his "performances", as a result, the "image of a sportsman" is now defined not by a naturally formed personality, but purposefully projected: appearance, manners, behavior, speech and etc. All these things somehow or other contradict with a sportsman's habits, psychic and world outlook. If earlier only utmost effort of will was required from a sportsman – during trainings and at competitions for mastering better skills and physical shape and the main problem was injuries, professional diseases and poor retirement, but now it has stopped being the most important: contest can be purchased and a sportsman will win in spite of his real sport qualities. It means the degeneration of proper heroic qualities in a sportsman-human that leads to a crisis of his personality, neuroses and psychoses and even suicides.

If earlier, all these problems were not taken into attention, currently the "image of a sportsman" has been significantly enriched: now, apart from usual

advertising images, it also includes his artistically treated professional and sport biography, as well as suitable elements of his personal biography; for increasing the image of a sportsman different kinds of scandals among his encirclement are used and even organized, - for mass media any sensation is good and for sportsmen – it is a reason for pay rise. Of course, a tragic fortune of a sportsman is difficult to name a sensation, but nowadays it can also be stuff for mass media.

Thus, only enlightenment of society about what sport is really is can decrease the harm it brings to people involved in it.

For many years there has been an argument about what happens with human health society wide: medical statistics says about its mass decrease, increase of morbidity, appearance of new diseases and others. The reasons for such state of things are very different phenomena – from global environment pollution to the influence of aliens, but when the question arises – how to resist this destructive tendency, sport declares its claims: only joining to sport can strengthen human health. At the same time it is not usually defined if the matter is about high achievements of sport, regular exercises or any other activity involving physical loads. That recognition is explained only by researchers who criticize sport; those who really praise it, distortedly attach the progress in treating people, who just do their regular exercises.

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