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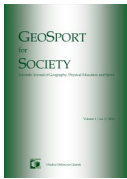
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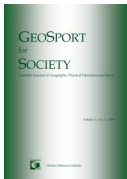
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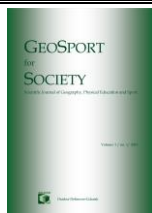
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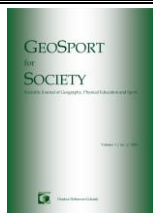
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Romanian athletics in numbers-a brief analysis

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Abstract: Sport system is a very complex mechanism whose proper functioning depends on the efficient operation of each component. "Functional requirements (a.n.: of a system) describe the desired end function of a system operating within normal parameters, so as to assure the design is adequate to make the desired product and the end product reaches its potential of the design in order to meet user expectations". ¹ The qualitative and quantitative evolution of some aspects that define the organization and functioning of the Romanian athletics system can be viable instruments for determining the potential/resources of evolution, as well as indicators for possible adaptive measures correlated with the tendencies. We have carried out a quantitative analysis of the evolution of some components of Romanian athletics system, of the number of clubs and athletes in the National Athletics Championships (by age/categories and events), the stability of the competitors over several years, and the evolution of recorded performances in order to identify progress and trends. The statistically processed information comes from the database of the Romanian Athletics Federation. ² In this context, we mention that the period covered by the research (2009-2017) was limited by the limited content of the mentioned electronic archive.

Keywords: quantitative analysis, trend, clubs, athletics, events

Introduction

No matter where it was placed - education, culture, leisure, health etc. - sports with its many implications, "has experienced an ever-ascending development during its existence, reaching unpredictable odds at its beginnings"

¹ www.whatis.techtarget.com

² www.fra.ro

(Dragnea and Mate-Teodorescu, 2002), thus justifying the interest we give to this phenomenon with global implications.

More than 2500 years ago, the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) said: "Search the past if you want to predict the future", which underlines the importance of historical-documentary analysis (Marinău and Suci, 2015). The reason of this introduction in the form of a brief incursion into the past/history of Romanian athletics, is the hope that this will create prerequisites for the development trends, which in turn will become tools for optimizing the organization and functionality of the system and for predicting future performances (Tatem et al., 2004). Everything comes in the context in which, in recent years, "sport has broadened its participation framework from young people to the elderly, from men to women, from school activity to leisure time, from hobby to profession, succeeding ... to model the physiognomy and human behavior" (Popa and Mihăilescu, 2012).

Although the official birth of Romanian athletics took place with the establishment of the "Running and Contests Commission" within the Union of Sports Federations in Romania 105 years ago (1912), the main chronological references that have marked the evolution of athletics as a sport have their roots long time before. Thus, history holds that the first Athletic Competition organized in Romania (Bucharest) took place in 1882, with the participation of the students from the "Saint Sava" and "Matei Basarab" High Schools (Marinău et al., 2010) and that the first athletic competition, popularized by a printed poster, the street run in Bucharest on a route between Mogoșoia Bridge (Calea Victoriei) and the Outside Market (Calea Moșilor) (Boriga et al., 2012). In the same context, the first international participation of Romanian athletes was recorded in 1911, in a competition organized in Turin, Italy (Marinău et al., 2010).

Over time, the number of athletic associations or sport clubs with athletic sections, as well as dedicated competitions multiplied, culminating with the organization in 1914 of the first edition of the National Athletics Championship, to which 15 titles of National champion have been granted.

Throughout its history, evolution is labeled with emblematic names and spectacular performances: Lia Manoliu, Iolanda Balaș, Mihaela Peneș, Viorica Viscopoleanu, Argentina Menis, Gheorghe Megelea, Natalia Andrei (Mărășescu), Maricica Puică, Doina Melinte, Anișoara Cusmir and Vali Ionescu, Cristieana Cojocaru, Paula Ivan, Gabriela Szabo, Ionela Târlea, Lidia Șimon, Constantina Diță Tomescu, Marian Oprea and others on one hand, and on the other hand, the multitude of performances that brought countless medals at the Olympic Games (35), World Championships (97) and European Championships (136).

In the same frame of evolution, there are also some "waves" that have led to major changes in the structure of the events system, the evolution of materials and equipment,³ as well as the changes that generated the current Athletics Competition Regulation, some authors wondering whether the technological advance in the development of sports equipment is indeed an evolution or an attempt of fraud.⁴ The answers are elusive and seem to impose a stricter regulatory framework.

³ <https://ojs.ub.uni-konstanz.de>

⁴ www.lawinsport.com

In the last few years, sport has become a phenomenon of a planetary level, with special implications in economic, social, political, etc., the study of the implications and consequences being the subject of specialists from many fields (Gonçalves et al., 2013; Ilieș et al., 2014; Bale and Vertinschi, 2014; Buhaș and Dragoș, 2017), their number and diversity proving the importance of the subject. "Sports, through its organization and manifestation forms, through its built specific infrastructure, has become an inseparable part of society in general, the differences being of quantitative and qualitative nature and whose value is generated by the involvement degree of each actor as part of society" (Ilieș et al., 2014).

Progression of results in athletics is a reliable mean to assess the evolution of these sport which also reflects the evolution of society (Lippi et al., 2008). In order to understand the need for intervention at the level of the components of the Romanian sports system in general and especially athletics, we mention the evolution of the last results achieved by Romanian athletes in the international competitions (European championships) in the last few years:

European Athletics Championships (seniors): 2018 – 27th place on nations, winning 1-4th place, 3-7th places (11 points); 2016 – 29th place on nations, winning 1-4th place, 1-6th place, 1-7th place, 1-8th place (11 points); 2014 – 25th place on nations, winning 1-5th place, 1-6th place, 3-7th places, 2-8th places (15 points).

European Athletics U23 Championships: 2017 – 16th place on nations, winning 1-1st place, 1-2nd place, 2-4th places, 1-6th place, 1-7th place, 1-8th place (31 points); 2015 – 10th place on nations, winning 2-1st place, 1-2nd place, 1-3rd place, 3-4th places, 1-6th place, 1-7th place (49 points); 2013 – 10th place on nations, winning 1-1st place, 3-2nd places, 2-4th places, 2-5th places, 1-6th place, 1-7th place, 2-8th places (54 points)

European Athletics U20 Championships: 2017 – 18th place on nations, winning 1-1st place, 1-2nd place, 1-3rd place, 1-5th place, 1-8th place (26 points); 2015 – 18th place on nations, winning 1-1st place, 1-2nd place, 1-3rd place, 1-6th place, 2-8th places (26 points); 2013 – 17th place on nations, winning 2-2nd places, 1-4th place, 1-6th place, 3-7th places (28 points).

European Athletics U18 Championships: 2018 – 26th place on nations, winning 1-3rd place, 1-5th place, 1-6th place, 1-7th place (15 points); 2016 – 8th place on nations, winning 2-1st places, 1-2nd place, 3-3rd places, 1-5th place, 2-6th places, 2-7th places, 1-8th place (56 points).

The downward trend is evident from one edition to the next, but mostly when the athletes passes from one age category to the next; what happens to the medalists, when they pass to next age category and what happens to the athletes who have reached the seniority?

We will try to identify some of the systemic causes, by answering the question "what is happening?", not the question "why is it happening?".

Materials and methods

Research has taken place over a limited period because of limited information opportunities from romanian official sources (2009-2017). In order to do this, we used information on the number of clubs that provided athletes (by age and gender category) involved in the National Athletics Championship in the open air as well as

their achievements, collected from the official website of the Romanian Federation of Athletics. Other very important information has been obtained from official sources such as the website of the National Institute of Statistics and the French Athletics Federation.

To achieve the goal of the paper, the data obtained through the documentary method were processed, transformed into tables and graphs, analyzed and discussed.

Result

Starting from the premise that Romanian sport in general and athletics in particular is organized and functions within a functional system, we consider that at least some of the components defining this system need to be identified and analyzed (Buhaş and Dragoş, 2017). We have to say that the order of approach is random, it is not the order of importance we give to one or other of the components.

Funding

Although there is a lack of official information on the basic funding of sports clubs, being an important component of the sports system in Romania, we will make some references to the main aspects. Thus, it is a well-known fact that the amount of funding relates to two criteria: the number of legitimate athletes and the value deducted from the accumulation of points awarded to athletes for the first three places in the national championship and the top eight at the continental, world championships and the Olympic Games. In this way, the loisir, mass and veteran sports activity is minimized, or even ignored and the performance activity seems to become an end in itself.

By way of comparison, the French Athletics Federation grants licensing/legitimation titles to all categories of athletic practitioners for a fee, the income thus obtained contributes to supporting the activity, and those involved becoming community supporters of the clubs; as a compensation measure, all licensed athletes have access to the sports infrastructure of the club they belong to. Moreover, the basic funding is based on the same criteria as in Romania, but with another basis of support: we speak of a number of 307.952 licensed athletes practicing on 31.08.2017, ⁵ which represents a percentage of 4,62 licensees per 1.000 inhabitants of France, compared to 7.299 practicing athletes in Romania, representing 0,36 licensees per 1,000 inhabitants. ⁶

Just as an example, from the very limited information on funding, we can refer to the discrepancy in the budget allocation for sport: in 2015 in Romania, the state budget allocation for the Ministry of Youth and Sport was 82.250.112 € representing 0.052% of GDP or 0.87 €/inhabitant (Buhaş and Dragoş, 2017). By comparison, in most EU countries in the same year were allocated between 27 and 67 € per inhabitant (Andreff and Szymanski, 2006).

In the opinion of some specialists (Buhaş and Dragoş, 2017), other identifiable causes of underfunding of the Romanian sports system might be the lack of a well-balanced law of sponsorship that supports and stimulates infusion of capital in

⁵ www.athle.fr

⁶ <http://statistici.insse.ro>

sports on the one hand and the direction to financing sports of a more consistent part from the revenues earned by the Romanian Lottery and the charges paid by sports betting operators.

Infrastructure

Unfortunately, although an essential component of any functioning system such as sport, we can see that there is a lack of official information available from public sources on infrastructure as well as other issues. However, from the analysis of the official calendar of the Romanian Athletics Federation, ⁷ several aspects can be highlighted:

- athletics indoor competitions were organized in only two cities (Bucharest and Bacău), being the only ones to "host" athletics halls; it should be mentioned that the training of athletes in the autumn/winter season can be carried out, several universities in which there are faculties or departments of physical education and sports having in the structure of the material base athletic halls (in which, however, there is mainly the didactic activity specific to the discipline Teaching of athletics bases and technique);

- the finals of the National Athletics Championship for all age groups were organized in the following cities: Bucharest, Pitesti, Cluj Napoca; there are also some stadiums with synthetic athletics track (Constanța, Piatra Neamț and recent date, Arad), which until now have not (Constanța is an exception) hosted official final competitions, probably not meeting the conditions for approval;

- the lack of adequate conditions for organizing the preliminary (local, county and zone) stages of the Indoor and Outdoor National Championship, at least for the zone stage, even they are provided in the official timetable of the Romanian Athletics Federation, makes the number of competitions compiling the internal calendar of the federation either extremely small, depriving athletes – especially children – by one of the most important motivation factors: competition.

Without any irony, it seems very little for a country like Romania and for a sport like athletics in terms of declared intentions and real-life actions, taking into account that 75% of the all infrastructure for sports is at the level of the 1980's.

Internal organization

First of all, we must note that the sports activity is coordinated by three central structures: the Ministry of Youth and Sport, which through the Sports Federations coordinates the sport activity in general, the Ministry of National Education, which through the School and University Sports Federation coordinates the sport activity in the school units and in universities and the Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee, which as an independent structure - affiliated to the International Olympic Committee - coordinates the sport activity for participation in the Olympic Games. From the current experience, it seems that the three categories of structures do not always cooperate very well.

On the other hand, the actual activity is carried out within sport clubs with athletic sections and we need to pay more attention to them. Being such an

⁷ www.fra.ro

important component, we can analyze the evolution of the number of clubs with athletic sections as a whole and by category. In order to be able to compare with the age categories classified in other countries/athletics systems or in the international competitions, inside the table we will find the age of each competition category.

So, although the number of athletic sections in the sports clubs reached 252 - the maximum of the last years (according to National Institute for Statistics Annual report) in 2016, at least four aspects can be observed (table 1):

Table 1. Evolution of the total number of clubs and athletes registered at the National Athletics Championship by category

(source: The official site of Romanian Athletic Federation)⁸

| Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total number of clubs | 237 | 242 | 244 | 252 | 224 | 237 | 245 | 252 |
| Number of clubs by age category | | | | | | | | |
| S+T/Seniors+Youth (over 23+20-22 years old) | 105 | 115 | 73 | 74 | 78 | 77 | 97 | 90 |
| J1/1st junior (18-19 years old) | 92 | 81 | 93 | 92 | 94 | 106 | 84 | 93 |
| J2/2nd junior (16-17 years old) | 100 | 104 | 101 | 106 | 107 | 105 | 117 | 117 |
| J3/3rd junior (14-15 years old) | 98 | 97 | 98 | 105 | 103 | 101 | 106 | 105 |

- although the trend is positive, the number of athletic sections is low compared to the current population of Romania: one section to 78.414 inhabitants (according to the NIS in 2016 the population of Romania was 19.760.314 inhabitants); just by way of comparison, we exemplify the example of France whose athletic activity is organized in 1.917 athletic clubs for a population of 66.628.000 inhabitants (at the 2016 census, after Wikipedia), which means an average of one club for each 34.756 inhabitants (more than double as in Romania);

- the discrepancy between the total number of clubs and the number of clubs providing athletes participating in the Romanian National Athletics Championship for all age groups (outdoors);

- the oscillating evolution of the number of athletes by age, the lack of any correlation between the number of clubs and the number of athletes and especially the small number of athletes in the small categories, which distorts the pyramidal form of sport performance and which we consider to be a defect in the internal organization of the sport system;

- knowing that in Romania there are no clubs dedicated to age groups (one club legitimate athletes in all categories), it is surprisingly large the difference between the total number of clubs affiliated to Romanian Athletics Federation and the number of clubs represented at the finals of National Athletics Championship.

⁸ www.statistici.insse.ro

Human resources: athletes

Although in the order of analytical approach is not the first, we consider athletes to be the most important component of the sport system anywhere in the world; if there were no athletes, there would be no coaches and no sport in the most general sense. Therefore, the concern to attract and retain young people but not only within the sporting phenomenon - no matter what form of sport is practiced (loisir, mass sport, performance sports or sports for veterans and the elderly) - should be a major concern of any national government.

In order not to confuse the age categories, we mention that in the statistics and rankings of the FRA (Romanian Athletics Federation), the upper age categories (seniors and youth) appear in tandem, because given the small number of senior athletes who are legitimate, they could not organize competitions only for this category (seniors). Also, in order to be able to compare with the age categories classified in other countries or in the international competitions, as in the previous table, we will also find the age of each competition category in the next chart.

In Romania during the analyzed period, the evolution of the number of athletes legitimated in the target age categories was anarchic, apparently random, which seems to highlight a lack of concern for maintaining the youth within the sport phenomenon or a lack of strategic vision on long-term.

Thus, we can observe (figure 1) a steadily ascendant evolution only for the seniors, the other categories exhibiting a oscillating or descending evolution, which in time will lead to a failure, a lack of continuity between categories. It is hard to find an explanation for the numerical difference - sometimes very large - when moving from a lower to an upper age (taking into account the stagnation of two years in each category); we can see that over two years (2015, 2016) more than 600 athletes participated in the J2 national championship, and in 2017 only 351 of them are in the upper category (J1). It is obvious that almost half of them have abandoned their sport activity or have turned to other sports disciplines.

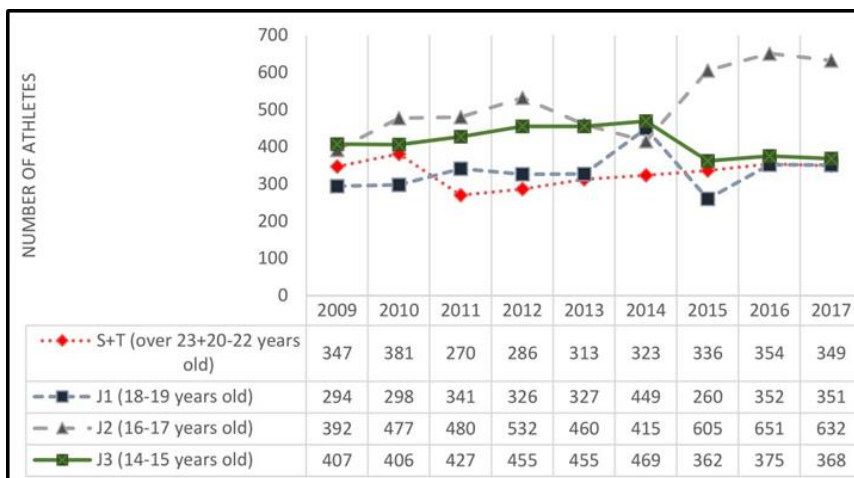


Figure 1. Evolution of the number of athletes on category in the Romanian National Athletics Championship (outdoor)
(Source: official site of Romanian Athletics Federation)

Without looking into the criteria and particularities of selection (Weinek, 1983; Manno, 1994; Dragnea and Mate-Teodorescu, 2002), most specialists place the primary selection for athletics at the age of 9-11; although they are close to the age of selection, we did not introduce in the analysis categories of children 3, 2 and 1 (ages 8-9, 10-11, 12-13 years) because there is an information lack on the FRA site for the period analyzed. However, in this context, we can state that in the year 2016 a number of 1.225 athletes participated in the final stage of the National Athletics Championship - category children 1, 2 and 3 (a much smaller number than the total number of athletes allowed at these categories, because the participation in the final stage is conditioned by the fulfillment of the participation scale); because the total number is not broken down, we cannot make a comparison between categories. We can, however, say that not a late selection can explain - especially for the situation of the last 3 years - the quantitative difference with the almost spectacular increase of the number of J2 compared to the number of athletes registered in J3 category (over 600 J2, versus 360-370 J3). It is evident once again the oscillating evolution which besides other causes can also mean a lack of pro-active involvement of the decision-makers in the sport field.

One explanation could be if we would consider the situation of migration from other sports to athletics, but the reality is different: changing the perception of the role and contribution of athletic training in building the motricity base for all dynamic sports, probable has made some parents to guide their children to athletics first, then to guide them to other sports (especially football). By trying to identify possible causes, without arguing that there is "unfair competition" of sports games or the migration of athletes from athletics to other sports, we can try an analytical intake in the evolution of the number of athletes legitimated in other sports disciplines, especially in the field of sports games compared to athletics.

From table 2 we can identify and analyze some aspects (with Bold characters, we highlighted the maximum number reached in each sport):

Table 2. Evolution of the number of legitimated athletes in different sports

(Source: official site of National Institute of Statistics)

| Year/Sports | Athletics (*% of total population) | Football (*% of total population) | Tennis (*% of total population) | Basket-ball (*% of total population) | Handball (*% of total population) |
|-------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 2009 | 5.047 (*0,25) | 127.015 (*6,42) | 16.528 (*0,83) | 11.456 (*0,57) | 7.440 (*0,37) |
| 2010 | 5.764 (*0,29) | 109.463 (*5,53) | 18.103 (*0,91) | 13.219 (*0,66) | 7.620 (*0,38) |
| 2011 | 7.402 (*0,37) | 119.741 (*6,05) | 18.308 (*0,92) | 14.667 (*0,74) | 7.900 (*0,39) |
| 2012 | 7.459 (*0,37) | 120.520 (*6,09) | 3.262 (*0,16) | 17.169 (*0,86) | 10.525 (*0,53) |
| 2013 | 8.880 (*0,44) | 122.417 (*6,19) | 3.262 (*0,16) | 18.454 (*0,93) | 7.845 (*0,39) |
| 2014 | 10.135 (*0,51) | 117.328 (*5,93) | 3.370 (*0,17) | 20.170 (*1,02) | 7.845 (*0,39) |
| 2015 | 11.458 (*0,57) | 132.922 (*6,72) | 3.370 (*0,17) | 21.663 (*1,09) | 7.845 (*0,39) |
| 2016 | 7.299 (*0,36) | 118.040 (*5,97) | - | 22.957 (*1,16) | 7.268 (*0,36) |

- even if the information is official and the consistency with a small increase in the number of tennis athletes in 2012-2015 is reasonable, it is almost inexplicable "collapsing" from 18,308 athletes in 2011 to 3.262 athletes in 2012, which is why we will not refer to these data; on the other hand, the relatively small number of tennis

athletes on the performance level (we do not include the number of children involved in tennis as a loisir activity and who are not legitimated) can be explained by the high expenses involved in preparing and participating in tournaments (costs of equipment and materials, tennis courts, coach, travel expenses, accommodation, meal, taxes etc.);

- a steady increase in the number of licensed athletes by 2015 and a decrease of 4.159 athletes in 2016 compared to the previous year (a decrease of 36,29% compared to 2015);

- an oscillating increase in the number of football players with a peak in 2015; the share of football players in the total population is huge compared to all other sports analyzed (6,72 players per 1,000 inhabitants, compared to 1,16 basketball players, 0,57 athletes or 0,53 handball players);

- steady growth - which seems to be sustainable and a consequence of a development program - in basketball; the contribution of private capital, the infusion of foreign players and thus the increase in spectacularity, which made sport visible on media channels and attracted more spectators in the stands;

- despite the tradition and the performances achieved (in the last years especially by the clubs and national female teams), the low attractiveness evidenced by the number of players compared to the basketball for example.

Thus, we can reaffirm that team sports are not a "threat" to athletics (perhaps only football through the social and media impact it generates) and that attracting young people to practice athletics must become an objective of the policies promoted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports by the Romanian Athletics Federation.

Human resources: trainers/coaches

Although it is an important component of a functional system that highlights the potential of athletes, because we do not have a solid basis for qualitative analysis and sufficient information for a complete quantitative analysis, we will just summarize some aspects.

In theory, the effectiveness of sports training is conditioned by the optimal number of athletes that a coach prepares simultaneously, obviously making the necessary differentiation between individual sports (such as athletics) and team sports. Normally, hiring coaches inside sports clubs is the result of a "staff policy" promoted by governing bodies, taking into account, at least, the reality and prognosis of the evolution of the number of athletes/players.

Analyzing the data (table 3), we can see that:

- in athletics, the athletes/coach ratio progressively increased to nearly 20, as the number of coaches involved in sports training remained constant until 2015, after which it decreased, with the number of athletes doubled between 2009-2015, which could be counted as one of the factors of performance decline;

- in the case of football, the variation in the number of coaches (between 1.261 and 3.771) and the invoked ratio (between 31,75 and 87,56) is very high, obviously there is no correlation between the number of coaches and those of the athletes involved in the sports activity;

- observing the situation of the other three sports disciplines, we can see a relative stability in evolution for all the analyzed criteria, the amplitude of the variations being a moderate one.

Table 3. Evolution of the number of coaches and athletes/coach ratio
(Source: official site of Romanian National Institute of Statistics)

| Sports | Items | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|------------|----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------|
| Athletics | No. of coaches | 601 | 601 | 601 | 601 | 601 | 601 | 601 | 554 |
| | Athletes/coach ratio | 8,39 | 9,59 | 12,31 | 12,41 | 14,77 | 16,86 | 19,06 | 13,17 |
| Football | No. of coaches | 2.093 | 1.262 | 3.771 | 1.918 | 2.209 | 2.277 | 2.510 | 1.348 |
| | Athletes/coach ratio | 60,68 | 86,73 | 31,75 | 62,83 | 55,41 | 51,52 | 52,95 | 87,56 |
| Tennis | No. of coaches | 259 | 259 | 259 | 258 | 258 | 258 | 258 | - |
| | Athletes/coach ratio | 63,81 | 69,89 | 70,68 | 12,64 | 12,64 | 13,06 | 13,06 | - |
| Basketball | No. of coaches | 553 | 553 | 595 | 595 | 605 | 504 | 504 | 467 |
| | Athletes/coach ratio | 20,71 | 23,90 | 24,65 | 28,85 | 30,50 | 40,01 | 42,98 | 49,15 |
| Handball | No. of coaches | 414 | 414 | 406 | 476 | 402 | 402 | 402 | 402 |
| | Athletes/coach ratio | 17,97 | 18,40 | 19,45 | 22,11 | 19,51 | 19,51 | 19,51 | 18,07 |

Discussion

Among the less studied aspects, which are not found in the present study, are the issues of motivation of all those involved in the sports phenomenon and of the ways to keep young athletes inside the sport system after graduating the high school or academic education. In the latter case, we refer to the issue of "double career".

All these objective data can be interpreted "in the mirror"; may be opinions that motivate the current state of Romanian athletics, but we believe that the decline cannot be denied. Identifying the causes is the easy part, the difficult part is the implementation of the efficiency solutions and this is the responsibility of the government authorities. It seems obvious that the issue of well-targeted funding and the collaboration of sport structures at all levels - including the components of pre-university and academic education - can produce positive effects in the sense of increasing the performances and the place that Romania can occupy among the nations of the world.

Conclusion

Jack W. Duncan (quoted by Buhaş, 2015) define management as "a conscious process by which individual and group activity is coordinated in order to achieve the objectives of the organization, stating that management performs acceptable tasks and objectives in terms of values of certain societies". According to the same author (Buhaş, 2015), sport is a system to be managed because "is an evolving component of the modern social life, with a national and international structure of its own, with a specific material support and a large group of technical and specialized staff, with organizational structures based on systems, rules, theoretical principles, national and international institutions and bodies, which are aiming to train and improve the

biological, material and spiritual elements of practitioners and of participants in sports activity”, being also one of the most dynamic phenomena in post-communist Romania (Herman et al., 2016).

Summarizing the previously captured aspects and the opinions of the cited authors, we can say that for having a good overview and systemic organization of sports activity, including athletics, it is necessary to combine the efforts of all "actors" involved in the sport phenomenon to develop a medium and long-term strategy that includes the previously analyzed components but not only. By making an analogy between all the above-mentioned aspects and the SWOT analysis method, we can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Romanian sports system in relation to the opportunities and threats existing in the context of contemporary evolution.

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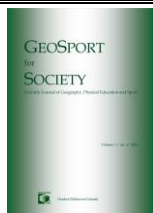
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Aspects regarding the physical training level of "CSL Sporting Lugaş" female football team during the competitive year 2017-2018

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Abstract: This study was designed to determine the evolution of the physical training level of the "CSL SPORTING LUGAŞ" female football during the competitive year 2017-2018 by conducting two tests before and after the physical training program, and using Gacon and Yo-Yo tests. These tests are an element of novelty in Romanian football overall and in female football especially, as they introduce a certain level of competition, generating emulation and desire to compete. These tests have a high degree of difficulty. In this regard, we can also highlight athletes' desire to complete the tests with best results.

Keywords: football, physical training, feminine football, physical effort capacity, motricity skills

Introduction

Football is one of the most spectacular sports activities, a unique, complex, novel, and sometimes a paradoxical game. A worldwide mirage, an imposing and exciting show of air and movement (Buhaş, 2015a; Herman et al., 2016; Buhaş et al., 2016).

The high level of technical and tactical expression in football is conditioned by the quality of players' physical training in all its forms (Dunbar, 1997). The

technological and methodological development, as well as the innovative impact of young coaches, led football to a high level of representation (Buhaș, 2015b). The development of female football tried to keep up with male football. However, there are still major differences regarding the level of technical expression in feminine vs. male football (Buhaș, 2015c). On this background, we aim to quantify the importance of physical training in the practice of female football (Ilieș, 2018). Through specific research methods we will assess the level of physical training of a female football team and the way it influences the level of technical expression (Buhaș, 2015d). Female football, although it is a "man's" sport, manages to be a spectacular game full of dynamism. Female football, as well as male football, is defined by a succession of intermittent efforts. The soccer player manifests on the ground based on his/her physical and technical training, to the height of performance (Herman et al., 2016). From a physiological perspective, football is predominantly a dynamic activity in which the continued struggle to get the ball takes place under intense effort throughout the game, including the most varied motricity skills: walking, running, sudden stops, jumps, twists, and so on (Pantelis, 2011). Therefore, football requires good technical and tactical training, as well as a high physical training (Marinău, 2017). The rational dosage of the effort under supervision can ensure the success of this training (Goto, 2004). It is more than just a ball game; it is the sportive discipline that is most widely spread in most countries around the world. Not accidentally, it was and is a game of all possibilities and surprises, also called "the King Sport" (Reilly, 2003; Buhaș et al., 2018).

In what regards female football, it has begun to develop very much, with numerous competitions for all categories, starting with juvenile football and continuing with the high performance game (Marinău, 2016; Marcu, 2011). Both its quantitative and qualitative development has progressively increased, and the level of play has reached a very high level of performance. Research demonstrates a continuous improvement of the female football game (Dumitrescu and Deac, 2009).

In year 1994 I. Motroc said about physical training that: "the entire system of means that ensure the functional capacity of the body through a high level of development of motricity and specific qualities, ensures the increasing of the morpho-functional indexes on a background of a perfect state of health" (Motroc I., 1994, pag. 68).

In the practice of female football, physical training is based on two important components - general physical training and specific physical training, both of them enabling an increase in the level of player's expression, both during the game and the training (Ciolcă S., 2015; Sooneste, 2013).

Team sports require three major skills: strength, agility and speed. The most common terms of strength is the ability to act on force in the shortest time possible. The development of physical abilities in team sports consists of two stages: the first stage is the improvement stage when players' skills are developing rapidly according to the adjustment of the organized training. This process can last several years until reaching the maximum performance. The second stage is the capping stage in which athletes must continue to improve their physical qualities so they can be more competitive, run faster than their opponents or become more agile. The

only way to continue improving these qualities is to follow a training aiming strength and force. Today's players are stronger than the ones from the past due to better training and, as a result, matches have also reached a higher rate of rapidity with increasingly aggressive players (Bompa, 2006; Thomas, 2010).

Physical training (the training and the football game) is a decisive element for team functioning, contributing to the development of the morphological and functional abilities of the players' body. Actions without the ball represent about 87 minutes of a match, while the movements implying the ball are accurately executed at appropriate times under the conditions imposed in the game (Şiclovan, 1977). An important factor is also the way athletes are socially interacting (Lucaciu et al., 2014).

General physical training aims at: "adapting the vital functions of the body to effort"; "multilateral and proportional development of all parts and body segments"; "developing players` general motricity"; "developing the background of basic and specific motricity skills and abilities" (Ciolcă, 2015, p.17). In order to achieve good results during the game it is necessary to form physically, technically and tactically balanced players. An important role is also played by the motivation (Dragoş, 2014).

Both general and specific physical training ensure the player a good growth and a harmonious development of motricity skills adapted to football game, laying the groundwork for the development of appropriate techniques and tactics during matches. During the game the effort is not uniform and prolonged, alternating with the low effort. There is a close relationship between these two types of physical training, from particular to general, both aiming at conditioning the athlete`s performance.

Research methodology

In order to undertake the present study both internal and external literature review regarding specific methods and techniques for highlighting the evolution of the training level was developed. Therefore, two tests were used to determine the physical training (Gacon and Yo-Yo) of the CSL "Sporting" Lugaş feminine football team in the competitive year 2017-2018. The research was conducted over eight weeks, during which 3 training sessions with a duration of 80-100 minutes were performed per week. The total number of subjects was 12 and they were ranged between 13 and 24 years.



Figure 1. Game snapshot

Results and discussions

People practicing sports at any level, in our case feminine football, present a permanent risk of injuries, but regular medical check-ups can reduce these risks. During the medical check-up made at the beginning of the training period, the athletes were measured for height and weight, heart rate, oxygen saturation and also other measurements were checked as it can be seen in the table below. Athletes have also been subjected to questions such as: the existence of serious family illnesses, diseases that they have or may have at present, if they have undergone surgery, if they have had moments of dizziness or irregular breathing during trainings, etc. Medical check-up (which gives the right to play - medical visa) is important to identify whether the athlete is experiencing some health problems that may occur during sporting competitions.

Table 1. Morpho-functional indicators of players` physical training

| No. | Player's initials | Age | Weight | Height | Biacromial diameter | Bitrohanterian diameter | Blood pressure | Pulse | Oxygen saturation |
|-----|-------------------|-----|--------|--------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 | C. D. | 15 | 57.5 | 167 | 31 | 26 | 100/60 | 61 | 99 |
| 2 | G. G. | 18 | 51 | 160 | 34 | 27 | 100/60 | 65 | 99 |
| 3 | T. A. | 24 | 57 | 177 | 36 | 28 | 100/60 | 70 | 99 |
| 4 | C. A. D. | 17 | 48 | 155 | 35 | 26 | 111/65 | 68 | 99 |
| 5 | H. D. A. | 20 | 44 | 160 | 32 | 25 | 100/60 | 88 | 98 |
| 6 | J. A. | 13 | 45 | 165 | 37 | 25 | 110/60 | 100 | 99 |
| 7 | N. E. I. | 21 | 68 | 166 | 36 | 26 | 100/60 | 90 | 99 |
| 8 | D. C. | 25 | 52 | 160 | 34 | 26 | 110/60 | 65 | 98 |
| 9 | Z. R. E. | 22 | 59 | 159 | 35 | 25 | 110/60 | 80 | 99 |
| 10 | D. D. | 16 | 58 | 165 | 34 | 27 | 110/60 | 60 | 98 |
| 11 | S. S. | 19 | 48 | 166 | 30 | 25 | 100/60 | 100 | 99 |
| 12 | I. R. | 18 | 56 | 167 | 31 | 24 | 100/60 | 80 | 99 |

The medical check-up outlined that athletes are within the accepted limits regarding the measured parameters. Body mass index (BMI), which is defined by the ratio between the height and the square of the height, lies within optimal parameters. Scientific theory places the optimal BMI between 18.5 and 29.9. In our case the average value is 21.15. Optimal blood pressure is considered to be below 120/80 mm Hg. In our case, the measured values are normal for the performance sport, the average value being 105/60. In terms of heart rate or pulse, it has an optimal value ranged between 60 and 80 pulses/minute. In our case the average is 77 beats/min, which is an ideal value. Although football is a team sport, each athlete has to be seen in his/her individuality. Physical training must take into account the

individual parameters of each athlete (differences are noted in the table above), and he/she should be customized in order to achieve optimal results.

Following the medical check-up, the physician gives the athlete the agreement to practice high performance sports by applying the stamp with the "medical visa" on the athlete's badge card. This certifies that the athlete is able to practice high performance sports and is capable to maintain a high level of effort.

In order to improve morpho-functional parameters and develop physical capacity, athletes follow a differentiated training program depending on the time of the year, but also on the goals set by the coach. The level of physical training is decisive in maintaining a performance activity. It must be determined and measured very precisely, must have a scientific character so that results can be generated accordingly. For our study we have chosen to use two tests to determine the physical training level - the GACON test and the YO-YO test.

The GACON test is named after its inventor, the famous physical preparator of Olympique Marseille. It is a test that determines the level of physical training and has been more and more used also by the Romanian teams. This test consists of running on a certain distance for 45 seconds, followed by a 15 second break and has 25 stages. Initially, the distance to run is of 125 meters and after each tour, this distance increases by 6.25 meters, while the running time remains unchanged (45 seconds), and in the end the total running distance reaches 5000 meters. It is a difficult test, rarely being completed by all players. In the table below, we provide the results obtained by the team's players, both in the initial testing and in the final testing.

Table 2. Testul GACON

| No. | Player's initials | Initial Testing | | Final Testing | |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | Tour no. | Speed (km/h) | Tour no. | Speed (km/h) |
| 1 | C. D. | 19 | 17 | 20 | 17.5 |
| 2 | G. G. | 21 | 18 | 23 | 19 |
| 3 | T. A. | 18 | 16.5 | 20 | 17.5 |
| 4 | C. A. D. | 17 | 16 | 19 | 17 |
| 5 | H. D. A. | 20 | 17 | 21 | 18 |
| 6 | J. A. | 15 | 14.5 | 16 | 15.5 |
| 7 | N. E. I. | 18 | 16.5 | 19 | 17 |
| 8 | D. C. | 18 | 16.5 | 19 | 17 |
| 9 | Z. R. E. | 20 | 17.5 | 20 | 17.5 |
| 10 | D. D. | 19 | 17 | 20 | 17 |
| 11 | S. S. | 20 | 17.5 | 22 | 18.5 |
| 12 | I. R. | 21 | 18 | 22 | 19 |

An important phase of physical training is the one that focuses on developing the maximum aerobic speed. The players managed to do very well during the test, achieving satisfactory results. Table 2 shows the results obtained both in the initial and final testing, resulting in an improved maximum aerobic speed compared with the initial test. However, the athletes did not manage to end all 24 laps. This aspect is

not very important because our study was conducted on an amateur team with an average level of performance. What is relevant, however, is the progress and the fact that their physical training has improved following an upward trend.

The YO-YO test provides a very good opportunity to estimate the ability of a subject to maintain high intensity efforts, determining thereby the resistance in a speed activity. This test implies a 20-meter speed run and return, in ten seconds, followed by a ten-second pause. This race is repeated 45 times. The purpose of this test is to evaluate the individual's potential to perform a high-intensity interval running in a short time of returning, over a long period of time. It is used in various sports, including football (Tudor, 2005). This test has a direct link to VO₂ max which is the maximum aerobic capacity, i.e. the highest level of oxygen consumption achieved in maximum effort. Bangsbo, in 1998, published the formula for estimating VO₂max (ml/min/kg) following the Yo-Yo test results: $VO_2\text{max} = \text{Yo-Yo distance (m)} \times 0.0084 + 36.4$ (Bangsbo, 1998). This test was designed to evaluate the level of physical training of athletes who practice team sports, especially football players. We used this test in our study to determine the level of resistance during a speed activity. The results obtained from the measurements can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Testul YO-YO

| No. | Player's initials | Initial testing | | Final testing | |
|-----|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| | | Last running phase Km/h | VO (2) Max | Last running phase Km/h | VO (2) Max |
| 1 | C. D. | 10.11 | 47.4 | 11.11 | 50.9 |
| 2 | G. G. | 12.12 | 54.2 | 14.3 | 58.1 |
| 3 | T. A. | 12.2 | 54.5 | 14.3 | 51.4 |
| 4 | C. A. D | 10.11 | 48.5 | 11.11 | 58.1 |
| 5 | H. D. A. | 13.2 | 54.9 | 13.12 | 57.7 |
| 6 | J. A. | 10.6 | 45.7 | 11.11 | 50.9 |
| 7 | N. E. I. | 11.8 | 49.9 | 13.1 | 54.2 |
| 8 | D. C. | 10.11 | 47.4 | 11.1 | 49.9 |
| 9 | Z. R. E. | 13.6 | 56 | 14.3 | 58.1 |
| 10 | D. D. | 12.12 | 54.2 | 14.3 | 58.1 |
| 11 | S. S. | 13.6 | 56 | 14.3 | 58.1 |
| 12 | I. R. | 13.2 | 54.9 | 14.3 | 58.1 |

We used this test to pursue the development of maximum resistance in conditions of speed. The athletes obtained more than satisfactory results, given the difficulty of the test, but also the level of training and performance of studied team. There is an interval between 10.11 and 13.6 of the running speeds, with an average of 11.9. Regarding the maximum aerobic capacity, we have a range of 45.7 to 56, with an average of 51.96 (during the initial testing). After the final testing the average speed was 13.03 and the average of the maximum aerobic capacity was 55.3. The final testing showed an increase of the movement speed and of maximum aerobic capacity. The effort is much better dosed and assessed during the final testing than during the initial testing.

Conclusions

We aimed at determining the level of physical training and also the increase rate of sporting performance in two directions: by testing the aerobic maximum speed and the resistance in conditions of speed by using the mentioned two tests (GACON and YO-YO test). If the first tests used to determine the maximum aerobic speed showed favorable results for the initial testing, as the number of executions increased the results started to improve. These aspects can be observed from the results of the final tests, even if the athletes did not finish all 25 laps. The assessment of resistance in conditions of speed reveals a sustained growth rate, both the movement speed and maximum aerobic capacity being improved. These results are also influenced by the way athletes were involved. The novelty of tests determined them to overcome the difficulties.

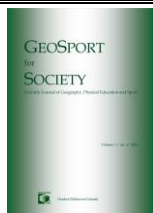
It is highlighted that, following a well-organized training, the women practicing women's football at CSL "Sporting" Lugaş have had very good results, not only in the tests proposed for determining the level of their physical training, but also at the level of team performance.

We realized that this activity is an important means of communication and socialization, decisive aspects regarding team work. Football, as a team game, generates strong social connections, highlighted by a good work atmosphere. Tests results were satisfactory, the players being seriously involved in the activity. We appreciate the quality of the means used to increase the level of physical training. As a result of the training one can see an increase in the efficiency, fluency and level of play, this aspect reinforcing our working hypothesis.

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European societies' access to sport – the European Union actions

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Abstract: Sport is gaining importance both as a social and economic phenomenon, contributing greatly to the strategic goals of the European Union. Sport and physical activity stimulate important values such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and the fair play principle. Not only is sport important for improving European citizens' health, but it also has an educational dimension and plays a social and cultural role. The European Union is keen to follow the various challenges facing sport in Europe and deals with these issues on a regular basis by launching a number of initiatives (e.g. by promoting a slogan "Sport for all") and encouraging member states to take various actions. However, sport is facing new threats and challenges that have emerged and intensified especially recently, such as doping, racism, violence, corruption, but also giving up systematic sports activity in many communities. The purpose of the article is an attempt to analyse the issues in question and to show them with reference to Poland.

Keywords: football, sport, European Union,

Introduction

Sport and sports activities play an important role in the social life of the European Union, constituting an important factor in bringing people together, thereby contributing to increased social integration (Buhaş et al., 2017, 2018; Granero-Gallegos et al., 2014; Ilieş et al., 2014; Tătar et al., 2018; Kobel et al, 2015; Vella et al, 2016). Sport gains importance as a social and economic phenomenon, largely contributing to meeting EU's strategic objectives, such as solidarity and prosperity, promotion of peace,

understanding between nations and different cultures, and the upbringing of youth. The availability of sport should be guaranteed to everyone, regardless of age, social background, sexual orientation, religion, sex, disability, and thus contribute to the awakening of such values as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance, the principle of fair play, and promotion of active and healthy lifestyles. All citizens of the European Union should have access to sport; therefore, the specific needs and situations of groups which are not sufficiently represented and excluded from such access should be addressed.

An overview of selected activities related sport conducted by the European Union

Already in 1966, the Council of Europe introduced the concept of “sport for all”. As Maszorek-Szymala says, “This concept was considered as advertising for sports, but it was transformed into an idea that we can combine with the notion of movement throughout life. Currently, the slogan functions in the official terminology of physical culture. It is equivalent to the notion of continuous education in a comprehensively understood system of education. The importance of physical activity in the modern world confirms participation in sport for all” (Maszorek-Szymala, 2010).

The document which first focused on the vital role of sport was the report “Citizens’ Europe” from 1985, prepared by the Adonnino Committee.¹ In 1991, on the basis of the announcement “The European Community and Sport”, adopted by the European Commission, the European Sport Forum was established, which worked until 2003. The Forum gathered representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, ministers of sport from member states, National Olympic Committees, and non-governmental sports organisations.

One of the documents facilitating access to sport for Europe’s citizens is the “European Sports Charter”, which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 24 September 1992 (changes in 2001). Its main motto is Pierre de Coubertin’s words: “Sport is part of every man and woman’s heritage and its absence can never be compensated for” (European Commission, the White Paper on Sports, 2007). The Charter provides guidance for members of the Council of Europe on how to improve the existing legislation, shows how to develop a comprehensive framework for action in the field of sport and aims to “ensure the development of a sport based on ethical principles, safe and healthy, accessible to all, through the most widely understood cooperation and appropriate distribution of competences between government institutions and NGOs” (Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej, 2018).

According to the document, “sport is any form of physical activity which practiced, whether sporadically or in an organized way, aims to express or enhance physical fitness and well-being, to foster social bonds or to achieve results in competition at all levels, and can contribute to creating jobs and economic growth and recovery, especially in poorly developed areas” (Europejska karta sportu, 1992).

Until recently, sport was not taken into account in the European Union’s legislation and was rather treated as the so-called “soft law”, which does not have legally binding force or is weaker than the traditional law. Fortunately, in recent years there

¹ <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>

has been a change in the perception of sport as an important factor in strengthening cooperation between member states.

The social function of sport was mentioned in the “Treaty of Amsterdam” in 1997, which emphasized its role in shaping the sense of identity and its importance in the process of bringing people together. Sport can serve as an effective tool in integrating citizens into society; it develops such capabilities and traits as teamwork, tolerance, fair competition; it plays a significant role in fighting racism and all kinds of discrimination. Increasingly, the importance of sporting activities is seen as a factor in facilitating the integration immigrants into societies and as a catalyst for intercultural dialogue.²

The document which also emphasises the important role of sport in social inclusion is the “Nice declaration on the specific characteristics of sport and its social function in Europe” (2000), which stresses women’s and men’s equal access to sports activity, according to their individual aspirations and capabilities, and which indicates the importance of sport for the development of personal talent, rehabilitation, social inclusion and solidarity in order to create a “sports family”.³ The document indicates: “In our multicultural societies, sport can and must become a tool to be used in formal and non-formal learning. Account should be taken of the particular role that sport can play for young people, people with disabilities and those with less-advantaged backgrounds. Sport can also foster the integration of immigrants and foreign people into society and promote intercultural dialogue. Sport promotes a sense of shared belonging and participation in society, so that it can become an important tool for integrating immigrants. Granting access to sports facilities and promoting related activities is essential in this context in order to enable positive interaction between immigrants and the host community”.⁴

Among others, this document also reads:

- community programmes, such as Progress, Lifelong learning, Youth in action, Europe for citizens, as well as programmes of the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the European Fund for Integration, should be used with a view to deepening social inclusion and fighting against discrimination in sport;
- promotion of dialogue and exchange of the best practices in the fight against racism and xenophobia in sport should be encouraged;
- promotion of a multidisciplinary approach to the prevention of anti-social behaviour, with particular emphasis on socio-educational activities (e.g. working with fans to shape positive attitudes that eliminate violence in sport) should be encouraged;
- regular and structured cooperation between law enforcement services, sport organisations and other stakeholders should be strengthened.⁵

The year 2003 was designated the “European Year of People with Disabilities (EYPD)”⁶ by the European Commission, and 2004 – “The European Year of Education through Sport” (EYES).⁷ As part of these celebrations, many activities promoting sport were launched and various sporting events in many

² <http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu>

³ <http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu>

⁴ <http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu>

⁵ <http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu>

⁶ <http://www.europa.eu>

⁷ <http://www.publications.europa.eu>

European countries (Germany, France) to promote equal rights and opportunities as well as social inclusion were conducted.

In 2005, the European Commission organised a conference “The European Union and Sport: Matching Expectations” and a meeting of Experts on Equal Opportunities in Sport. The goal of the events was, among others, to draw attention to the social role of sport, to present and disseminate an example of good practice in the field of sport activity by people with disabilities and to combat gender discrimination in order to create a basis for future cooperation of member states in this area and to recommend appropriate actions at the community level.⁸

The European Commission’s “Common Agenda for Integration - Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union”, approved in September 2005, is part of the process of social inclusion through sport. It becomes important in its context to provide an appropriate field of action for sport and the related activities in order to develop mutual positive relations between immigrants and their host communities.⁹ In 2006, the European Commission adopted the “Roadmap for equality between women and men. 2006 – 2010”, which details the priority areas for gender equality, including the fight against stereotypes in sport.¹⁰

Sport engages all citizens and there is no place to manifest racist and xenophobic views. In February 1999 an international network Football against Racism in Europe (FARE) was established in Vienna. Every year it organizes FARE actions week, during which football stars and fans manifest their objections to racist incidents in stadiums.¹¹

As noted by the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism: “The Council of Europe has extensive achievements in the all-European cooperation in the field of sport. The CDDS – Committee for the Development of Sport operated in the Council of Europe between 1977 and 2005. However, the all-European role played by the Council of Europe has made the member states look for new, creative solutions. Based on this, European countries considered implementation of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) to be the most effective. The new system relies on the preservation of both of the existing sports conventions (the Anti-Doping Convention and the Convention on spectator violence and misbehavior at sports events and in particular at football matches), the introduction of new structures of Partial Agreement and on the creation of an appropriate mechanism for ensuring ministerial meetings. The basic documents that create the standards on which the European vision of sport is built include: the European Sports Charter (1992), the Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehavior at Sports Events and in Particular at Football Matches (1985), the Anti-Doping Convention (1990). These three documents have become a reference point for all European governments in their efforts to develop or improve policies on sport, both competitive and sport for all. To coordinate the tasks following from both Conventions, the Standing Committee on Spectator Violence during Sports Events (T-RV) and the Monitoring Group of the Anti-Doping Convention (T-DO) were appointed.¹²

⁸ <http://www.europa.eu>

⁹ <http://www.europa.eu>

¹⁰ <http://www.europa.eu>

¹¹ <http://www.farenet.org/campaigns/european-projects>

¹² <http://www.msport.gov.pl>

In March 2006, the European Parliament adopted the Declaration on tackling racism in football, which condemned all forms of racism both in and outside the stadiums. Fighting racism and xenophobia is tackled by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), established in March 2007 from transforming the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).

Promoting a healthy lifestyle through active participation in physical culture (regardless of age) is also an area in which the concept of sport is manifested. It is shown here as a factor in preventing chronic diseases and obesity. Sport attracts European citizens, most of whom regularly practice it. According to a Eurobarometer survey, “about 60% of Europeans regularly play sports in 700,000 sports clubs or outside of them, and these clubs belong to a large number of associations and federations. Most sports activities are conducted for amateurs” (Eurobarometr, 2018).

In addition, sport is treated as a specific educational tool – the time spent on sports activities at school or at university brings benefits to the health and education of many young people. Considering sport in social terms, it is necessary to mention its impact on young people. It awakens their desire for personal development and also arouses a sense of group belonging. In the European Parliament, there is the Committee on Culture, Youth and Education, which is responsible for sporting affairs and activities directly addressed to the young generation.

However, sport is also facing new threats and challenges that have emerged in European societies, such as commercial pressures, the use of young sports players, doping, racism, corruption and violence. In order to counteract the negative phenomena mentioned above, the Commission points out, in the White Paper on Sports, the following actions addressed to the member states:

(1) It is suggested that the programmes, PROGRESS, “Lifelong Learning (Erasmus+)”, “Youth in Action” and “Europe for Citizens” support activities promoting social inclusion through sport and fighting discrimination in sport, using it as a tool conducive to social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities;

(2) access to sport and sports infrastructure should be provided for people with disabilities. Specific criteria should be adopted to ensure equal access to sport for all pupils, especially children with disabilities;

(3) Access to sport should be ensured for immigrant women and women belonging to ethnic minorities; women’s access to decision-making positions in sport should be ensured;

(4) Resolute action must be taken against doping in sport, violence and racist behaviour during sporting events through exchange of experience and cooperation between international sports organisations, law enforcement agencies and others (e.g. supporters’ organisations and local authorities), and cooperate within the network “Football Against Racism in Europe” (FARE);

(5) Sport and physical education should be promoted as essential elements of high-quality education and as a means of making the school attractive and of increasing the attendance of children and young people in the classes (especially girls to help them gain self-confidence and social inclusion (European Commission, the White Paper on Sports, 2007, pp. 9-11).

Participation in physical culture of the European Union citizens and the citizens in Poland

Physical activity and sport play a very important role at all stages of our lives, positively affecting health and the quality of life. There is a growing awareness in this respect in many European societies.

As Hodan notes, "physical activity as a fundamental element of physical culture takes part in raising the quality of activity in all spheres of life, creating and satisfying vital needs" (Hodan, 2002). This activity, especially determining the development of children and youth, is conducted in schools as a subject Physical Education. It is at this stage that "fashion for a healthy lifestyle" and "fashion for physical activity" in adult life it is formed in the young generation.

According to the European Union guidelines from 2008, "Physical Education in schools is the most widely available source of promotion of physical activity among children and adolescents" (Wytyczne Unii Europejskiej dotyczące aktywności fizycznej, 2008). Physical Education (PE) is a compulsory subject in European schools; however, similarly to Poland, it is considered to be less important than other subjects. In many countries, there are different recommendations for the length of such classes (e.g. in the school year 2011/2012 schools in France realized the yearly PE lessons in the amount of 108 hours, while in Ireland only 37 hours), so an insufficient number of hours is devoted to these classes. The most popular sporting disciplines practiced in European schools during PE classes include in the following order: team games (25% of PE time), athletics and gymnastics (15%), and music-movement exercises (10%) and swimming (10%), health education (from 4 to 15%).¹³ Research also points to some still worrying phenomena in this regard: decreasing interest in physical activity among children and adolescents, thereby a declining level of physical fitness of the younger generation.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon concerns not only the young generation, but also the population of adults – EU citizens. This phenomenon is intensifying from year to year, which is confirmed by research conducted in 2004 and 2009 by the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2004 and 2010) on representative groups of 1000 people from each country. Below selected results are presented, based on the data:

- 2004 – Eurobarometer 213/62.0 "The Citizens of the European Union and Sport", a study conducted on citizens of 25-member states;
- 2009 – Eurobarometer 334/72.3 "Sport and Physical Activity", a study conducted on citizens of 27-member states.

The first one relates to the frequency of practising sports and taking up physical effort. In 2004, 38% of all the surveyed indicated that they were practicing sports at least once a week, while in 2009 such responses amounted to 40%.

The study also shows the motivation for sports, declared by citizens of the EU countries (including Poland). The changes that took place in Poland after 1998 not only concerned economic or social transformations, but also those in the fields of physical culture, sport, recreation and leisure time, tourism, active lifestyle. This resulted in definite changes, especially stemming from the patterns in this respect copied from the societies of the developed countries. There was a dynamic development of local

¹³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

communities, focused on sport and all types of physical activity, associations promoting sport, associations of physical culture, organizations, clubs, etc. Therefore, such phenomena should result in positive changes in the activity of Poles. Unfortunately, the Eurobarometer surveys do not support this anticipated trend.

Table 1. Comparison of the motivation for sport, as indicated by the surveyed population from countries of the European Union and Poland, in 2004 and 2009 (%)

Source: Own study based on the European Commission 2004 and 2010

| 2004 (25 EU countries) | | | 2009 (27 EU countries) | | |
|--|----|--------|--|----|--------|
| Motives | EU | Poland | Motives | EU | Poland |
| Improved health status | 78 | 75 | Improved health status | 61 | 62 |
| Improved physical condition | 46 | 68 | Improved physical condition | 41 | 40 |
| Need to relax | 43 | 27 | Need to relax | 39 | 22 |
| Need for fun | 39 | 32 | Need for fun | 31 | 25 |
| Spending time with friends | 31 | 19 | Improved physical appearance | 24 | 17 |
| Increased self-esteem | 24 | 14 | Improved physical fitness | 24 | 11 |
| Meeting new people | 19 | 12 | Weight control | 24 | 11 |
| Achieving the planned goals | 18 | 15 | Spending time with friends | 22 | 8 |
| Acquiring new skills | 16 | 16 | Anti-ageing | 15 | 8 |
| Building personality | 15 | 21 | Increased self-esteem | 10 | 7 |
| Sense of rivalry | 15 | 15 | Acquiring new skills | 6 | 5 |
| Integration into society (among others, assistance for people with disabilities) | 10 | 6 | Sense of rivalry | 6 | 4 |
| Getting to know other cultures | 9 | 6 | Meeting new people | 5 | 2 |
| Other | 1 | 1 | Integration into society (among others, assistance for people with disabilities) | 3 | 2 |
| | | | Getting to know other cultures | 2 | 2 |
| | | | Other | 8 | 5 |

The main reasons why the subjects practiced sports (both from the European Union countries and from Poland, in 2004 and 2009) were, in particular, the need to improve the health status and physical condition as well as the need for relaxation and fun. In the 2009 survey, there were also completely new reasons and motives inclining EU citizens to practise sports: weight control (24%) and anti-ageing (15%), while such motives as achieving the planned goals (18%) and building personality (15%) were missing.

Another study addressed the problem of not taking up sports activities by the European Union citizens.

According to the figure above, it appears that in the 27 examined countries (in relation to the phenomenon of not taking up physical activity by the inhabitants), the most negative results were recorded, among others, in Portugal (decrease in activity by 11% in the compared period), Luxembourg (by 8%), Belgium (by 8%) and Hungary (by 7%).

During the period in question, there was also an increase in the interest in sport among residents of some EU countries, such as Denmark and the UK (an increase of 1%), Estonia (2%), Poland, Finland, the Czech Republic (3%), and Greece (10%).

Also the reasons for not undertaking sports activity were examined.

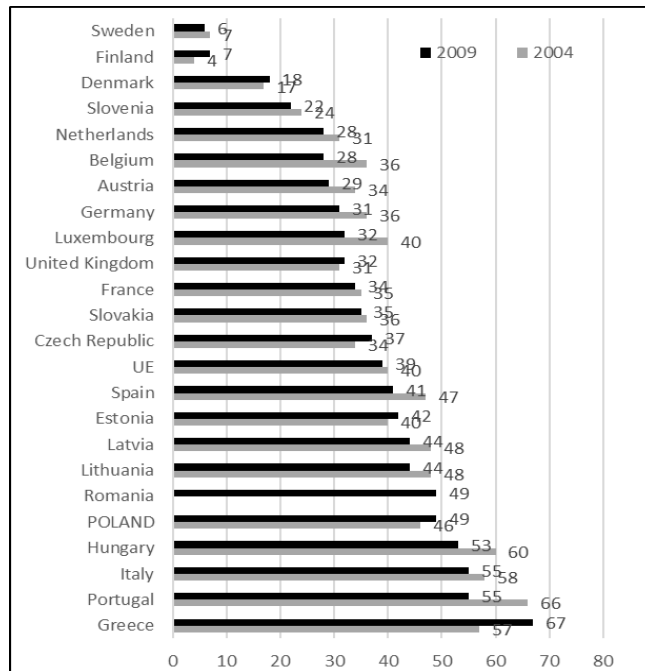


Figure 1. Percentage of people declaring lack of sports activity in selected European countries, comparison of data from 2004 and 2009 (%)

Source: Own study based on the European Commission 2004 and 2010

Table 2. Selected reasons for not practicing sport by the surveyed population (%)

Source: Own study based on the European Commission 2004 and 2010

| Reasons | 2004 | | 2009 | |
|---|------|--------|------|--------|
| | EU | Poland | EU | Poland |
| Lack of time | 34 | 36 | 45 | 46 |
| Lack of interest in sport | 25 | 26 | 24 | 20 |
| High costs associated with practising sports activity | 4 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| No access to sports infrastructure in the nearest neighbourhood | 3 | 6 | 3 | 5 |

The most important reasons for not practicing sports (both for the citizens of the European Union and for Poles in 2004 and 2009) was the lack of time (this reason was indicated as the most important in the following years), lack of interest in sport, too high costs associated with sport activity and lack of access to sports infrastructure in the nearest neighbourhood.

Positive aspects of physical recreation are widely known, but in Poland many people still irregularly participate in recreational physical activities (cf. the results above). Drabik points to the most common reasons for Poles giving up physical activity: “lack of time, lack of motivation and progress, small influence of participants on the exercise program, too high costs, too much distance from the venue, excess body weight, smoking tobacco, high risk of injury, and lack of awareness of the importance of movement for health” (Drabik, 2003).

Unfortunately, in our country, the term “sport” is associated more as a sport achievement, sporting competition, combat, while in Western countries this term means

all physical activity, also at leisure time. Not participating in physical activity by Poles can result, among others, from a lack of leisure habits which are shaped at an early age, e.g. by school. According to the author, this is where one should see the adverse attitudes of Poles to the idea of sports activity.

Places where EU and Polish citizens practise sport were also studied

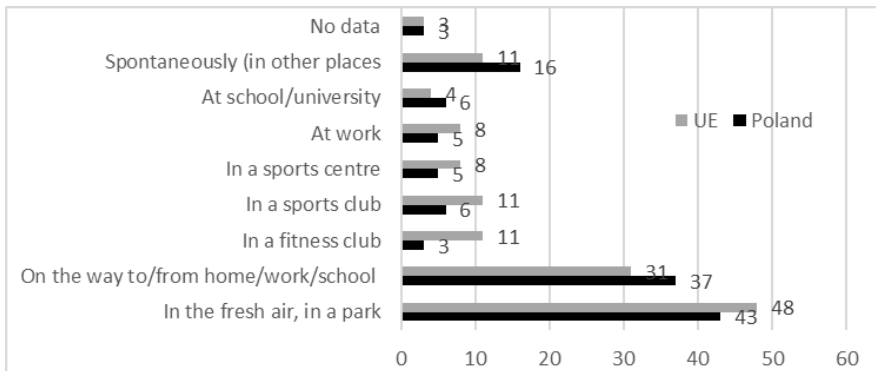


Figure 2. Places of practicing sports by European Union and Polish citizens

Source: Own study based on the European Commission 2004 and 2010

For EU residents, places where they practice sports activities the most often are outdoor places, among others, parks (48%), on the way to or from home, work, school (31%) and sports and fitness clubs (11% each). For Polish residents, such places also include those located in the open air (43%), places on the way to or from home, work, school (37%) and the fact that they practise sport spontaneously (16%).

EU projects promoting sport that are implemented in Poland – selected examples

At the same time, the EU cooperates and supports many projects and programmes promoting sport among European societies and encourages sport and physical activity through a variety of political initiatives in the field of education and training, including through the development of social and civic competences. Below there are some examples of such activities in Poland.¹⁴

1) The Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus +)

Among others, the main objective of the program is to promote volunteering and active civic attitude through sport (team membership, respecting fair play rules, adhering to game rules, respect for others, solidarity and discipline, and organizing amateur non-profit and volunteer-based sports clubs (European Commission, the White Paper on Sports, 2007).

In Poland, this program was implemented, among others, as part of the Grundtvig Partnership Project, “European Women of the Centre of Life” (2009-2013) by the Zielona Góra University of the Third Age. It was coordinated by Ost-West-Europaisches Frauen Netzwerk e.V. from Berlin and an organization from Latvia. 400 women participated in sport and recreation activities in Zielona Gora.

¹⁴ <http://www.tenissuu.com/frse/docs/raport>

2) "Euro for Sport" project

This nationwide project (2007-2013) was launched by the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism. "The development of the European dimension of sport is done by promoting fairness and accessibility in sport competition and in cooperation between organisations responsible for sport".¹⁵ The main objective was to present opportunities for financing sports-related activities from the European Union funds. Participants in workshops and seminars included athletes with disabilities, sports club representatives, sports activists, representatives of sports and recreational organisations and representatives of local governments.

3) "The European Sports Week"

Promotional activities in this area are conducted by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Poland, which has been involved in this project since 2015. This is the European Commission's initiative to promote sport and physical activity across Europe. "This all-European campaign realised with the #BeActive slogan aims to encourage citizens to an active lifestyle during the celebrations of the Week and throughout the whole year".¹⁶

4) Projects conducted by Social Welfare Centres

Activities in the field of sport, recreation and tourism "can definitely contribute to the actions including the so far marginalised people in the normal life of society" (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2018, p.19). Such actions concerning, among others, the unemployed, the homeless, large families, children and youth, the elderly and the disabled are successfully carried out by the Centres. Some of the recent activities in the field of popularization of sport among persons in their charge with a use of EU funds were implemented in 2008–2015. According to Olszewski-Strzyżowski, who studied 2480 such centres in Poland, 341 of them conducted such programs. Out of the total number of 1652 programs, 150 were implemented in the field of sport and recreation, and 140 in the field of tourism. Most of them were sports and recreation activities (e.g., gym, swimming, sailing, or football), sports festivals, and sport-integration events. Especially seniors, unemployed people and families with children were the most numerous groups participating in such activities (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2018, pp.134-135).

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¹⁵ <http://www.euronasport.pl>

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The international trends of inner wellness and its feasibility in the North Great Plain region, Hungary – a systematic review

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Abstract: In the 21st century there is an increased need for physical and psychological well-being. Inner wellness is a new form of wellness, which primarily focuses on active meditational practices and techniques in order to reduce the stress associated with daily living. The primary purpose of our study was to examine the international trends and current status of popular inner wellness activities such as Yoga, Tai Chi and its feasibility in Hungary's North Great Plain Region. The secondary purpose was to briefly investigate and summarize the mental and health benefits of Yoga and Tai Chi through systematically reviewing relevant literature, using scientific databases (Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science). Yoga and Tai Chi retreats have become more and more attractive among travelers. It would be necessary to establish several more resorts such kind in Hungary, in order to fulfill the needs of domestic and international visitors. After systematically reviewing related literature, we may conclude, that most of the studies found in major databases, examining Yoga or effect of Yoga therapy were conducted in a clinical setting. Traditional benefits of Yoga therapy are well-documented, however more high-quality, evidence-based research would be necessary to conduct in the future. In addition to that, these investigations should involve populations from recreational settings too, in order to examine the effect of Yoga on overall health status, and quality of life.

Keywords: Inner wellness, trends, yoga, tai chi

Introduction

In the 21st century, there is an increased need for physical and psychological well-being. Traditional ways of services such as spa, sauna and other medical therapies are still popular among wellness tourists. Inner wellness is a new form of wellness which primarily focuses on active meditational practices and techniques in order to reduce the stress associated with daily living. This way one may increase self-awareness and enhance emotional intelligence, mindfulness. Wellness hotels are trying to offer new activities for visitors seeking inner peace such as Yoga and Tai Chi. Today, a number of spas and wellness hotels transform into an eco-lodge or Yoga, Tai Chi retreat, and further develop a wide range of wellness, rehabilitation, beauty treatments and activities related to psychophysical relaxation (Scopel, 2011). Yoga and Tai Chi sometimes called either mind-body practices, therapies, interventions or fitness in the related literature (Chaoul et al., 2014; Kozasa et al., 2010; Morgan et al., 2014; Woodyard, 2011)

A brief history of yoga

Yoga has gained its conceptual origin from ancient Indian philosophy. It is a complex system comprises physical postures and movements (asana), relaxational and meditation practices (dhyana) and coordinated breathing techniques (pranayama) to improve overall health. One of the great benefits of yoga is the increased awareness of our body, reduced level of stress, which may be achieved by utilizing active meditational techniques. The complex beneficial effect of Yoga as described by a number of authors. According to Atkinson - Permuth-Levine (2009) „Yoga is recognized as a form of mind-body medicine, that integrates an individual's physical, mental and spiritual components to improve aspects of health, particularly stress-related illnesses". Yoga is more popular than ever, not only in Asia but in the Western World too.

A brief history of tai chi

Tai Chi, sometimes also called Shadow Boxing, is a form of traditional Chinese soft martial art. Ancient Taoism provides a philosophical background for Tai Chi, which stresses the perpetual balance, the complementary nature of the two opposite elements of yin and yang. Tai Chi is an exercise system equally balanced between yin and yang, and in the 21st century, its popularity has not diminished yet, especially in Asia and across the World. The practitioners of Tai Chi may feel increased self-awareness, enhanced mindfulness - a so-called active meditational state - through executing slow, balanced and harmonic movements (Tai Chi for Health Institute, 2018).

Methodology

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of our study was to examine the international trends and current status of popular inner wellness activities such as Yoga, Tai Chi and its

feasibility in Hungary's North Great Plain Region. The secondary purpose was to briefly investigate and summarize the mental and health benefits of Yoga and Tai Chi through systematically reviewing relevant literature, using scientific databases (Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science).

Data sources

Among the two selected movement and philosophical systems, Yoga has the highest representation in the relevant literature. First, we conducted a comprehensive abstract, abstract title, a keyword search using the Scopus database. Key search terms included Yoga, Yoga therapy and Tai Chi. Search strings such as Yoga or Yoga therapy resulted in 7674, Tai Chi 2740 documents. A secondary search conducted on biomedical database PubMed resulted in 4518 hits for the search string Yoga or Yoga therapy the word Tai Chi resulted in 1970 hits. Finally, the results of another search involving Web of Science was also assessed. The tendencies were very similar as previously observed, Yoga or Yoga therapy was highly represented with 4512 hits, searches associated with the word Tai Chi yielded 2312 documents. We were specifically focusing on review articles on the topic of Yoga or Yoga therapy and Tai Chi.

Exclusion and inclusion criteria

After reviewing relevant literature, we decided to exclude the term Tai Chi while executing various searches. The reason for the exclusion was the relatively low representation of Tai Chi practices or classes in the Hungarian recreational and wellness setting. We further narrowed our search and focused in peer-reviewed abstracts or journal articles available on Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science as this electronic database were found the most comprehensive, suitable for our goals. We only retrieved open-access, articles published in English. First, we included search terms Yoga and review, later we refined our search by adding the word recreation, in order to limit our investigation to the health and recreational setting.

Results

There is an increasing number of wellness facilities in the World transforming into so-called eco-lodges or Yoga, Tai Chi retreats. These facilities beside offering traditional wellness options such as spa, massage, sauna etc. also have some active meditational classes or sessions. According to the results of recent database searches, there are only a very limited number of wellness facilities offering Yoga and Tai Chi classes or a kind of retreat in Hungary especially at the North Great Plain region (Bookyogaretreats, 2018). The results of our own questionnaire also supported the above-mentioned assumptions. Yoga is represented predominantly in some large wellness hotels in Western and Central Hungary (Danubiushotels, 2018), among them, facilities in Budapest and Héviz are the largest of its kind.

Review of related literature

Our first search using Scopus database including the terms Yoga and review resulted in 1842 documents. Out of them, according to the exclusion and inclusion criteria, 112 were further analyzed. By adding search words health and recreation,

we found two open-access records, but none of them were eligible for our future goals. We revised our search strategy and focused only on PubMed and Web of Science database records.

The Yoga, recreation, review search strings resulted in 13 free full-text review article records, using the PubMed database. These articles are specifically focusing on the possible benefits of mind-body therapies related to the nervous, musculoskeletal, immune, or metabolic systems of the body. Only a limited number of records may be related to either general health promotion, well-being or quality of life. A comprehensive review by (Woodyard, 2011) was intended to explore the therapeutic effect of Yoga on the quality of life. The author concluded, that Yoga is indisputably designed to improve physical and mental health, through achieving inner-peace and overall well-being. After reviewing relevant literature Lauche et al., (2016) examined the effect of Yoga practice on changing body-composition. The researchers suggested, that Yoga is considered a safe and effective method to reduce body mass index in overweight adult individuals.

Finally, a similar search was conducted on the Web of Science database, two records were found to be eligible for our study. One of it by Kerr, Dattilo, and O'Sullivan (2012) was investigated the impact of recreational activities such as Yoga on coping chronic stress and other mental health disorders. Another study was conducted in China, examined the role of urban community spaces on physical activity behavior patterns. The examination using questionnaire method was intended to set up preferences among recreational activities such as walking, cycling, jogging or Yoga (Wu, Qin, and Zhou, 2018).

Out of all review articles, Jeter et al., (2015) provided one of the most in-depth overviews of Yoga therapy research in clinical populations between 1967 and 2013. The researchers conducted a comprehensive, bibliometric analysis, ten major electronic databases a total of 486 articles were systematically examined. These studies represented 28.080 participants from 29 different countries. Jeter et al. observed a three-fold increase in a number of publications in the past 10 years. A total of 63 percent of the studies published were using controlled trials, the majority of them were randomized too, a smaller proportion, 37 percent were an uncontrolled examination.

Conclusions

The fast pace, the increased level of stress involved in our life makes active meditational options, mind-body practices, Yoga and Tai Chi retreats more and more attractive among travelers. It would be necessary to establish several more resorts such kind in Hungary, in order to fulfill the needs of domestic and international visitors. According to the Hungarian Society of Yoga Instructors currently there are 263 certified instructors available, but of course, that is not the complete number of persons teaching yoga in Hungary (Magyar Jógaközpontok Szövetsége, 2018). So available personnel teaching Yoga classes is not a problem when establishing a new facility. It is difficult to provide realistic numbers about the number of professionals teaching Tai Chi in Hungary. Several kinds of styles exist (Chen Tai Chi Chuan, Yang Tai Chi etc.) available sessions and classes sometimes mixed with other martial arts. As Yoga has gained a

significantly higher popularity, than Tai Chi, the authors suggest, that the number of instructors in Yoga also greatly outnumber, the ones teaching Tai Chi in Hungary.

After systematically reviewing related literature, we may conclude, that most of the studies found in major databases, examining Yoga or effect of Yoga therapy were conducted in a clinical setting. They are specific in nature focusing on particular aspects of mental and physical health status (Büssing et al., 2012; Cramer et al., 2014; Khalsa, 2004; Kirkwood et al., 2005; Smith and Pukall, 2009). Traditional benefits of Yoga therapy including a complementary treatment option for depression, anxiety, various musculoskeletal, immune system, and metabolic disorders are well-documented, however more high-quality, evidence-based research would be necessary to conduct in the future. In addition to that, these investigations should involve populations from recreational settings too, in order to examine the effect of Yoga on overall health status, and quality of life (Jeter et al., 2015). More research is needed to compare data originated from other regions across Central Europe.

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The sport, vector of regionalization / globalization Case study: International Volleyball Federation (FIVB)

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Abstract: The present study aims at highlighting some of the defining aspects of how sport, in this case the volleyball represented by the Federation International Volleyball (FIVB) plays a decisive role in shaping and substantiating the concepts of globalization and regionalization. In this respect, two essential aspects were analyzed, one on the institutional organization of volleyball as a sport and the other on global competitions.

Keywords: globalization, regionalization, volleyball, sports, sports organizations

Introduction

Since ancient times, sport played an essential role in the crystallization of inter-human relations and in the definition of regional and global issues. The overall character of the sports competitions organized in honor of the Gods Zeus, Appolo, Poseidon, etc., derives from the selection of competitors, as the leading representatives of the Greek cities, while the regional character was conceived with the victory of a single participant as a representative of a city. At present, sport through its structure

and organization is becoming increasingly prominent as a vector in consolidating regional and global issues.

Globalization and regionalization are two complex and controversial concepts that transcend from the very nature of the human being and have evolved constantly over time. It is enough to recall the confrontations between the global aspirations of great leaders to unite all nations under the same banner under the same leadership, the same state and the regional ones represented by local leaders who opposed this desideratum. Virtually the entire history of humanity has been marked by this struggle between the global and the regional, but it seems that this phenomenon has never been as visible as it is today. A contribution to this is achieved by the technological advances achieved in the last period of time and the social mutations occurring on them (Appadurai, 1996; Giddens, 2018; Herman et al., 2017; Levitt, 1993; Robertson, 1992).

"Globalization and regionalization are two complementary concepts that cannot exist independently. Both concepts reflect an economic, political, social and cultural phenomenon. The difference between the two concepts lies in the coverage space" (Herman et al., 2016, p. 50). The idea of regionalization was circulated for the first time in the European Parliament Resolution of 18 November 1988. The principles of the regionalization process were laid down in the "Community Mapping of Regionalization". Against this backdrop, in Europe "regions" have been created "as a spatial or territorial level for the implementation of regional policies and their respective programs and as a condition for access to resources" (Cândeia et al., 2006, p. 58).

As a result of this, we can say that globalization is an economic, political, social and cultural phenomenon characterized by a spatial expansion in the whole of the earth globe (Baylis and Smith, 2001; Held et al., 1999; Holm and Sorensen, 1995; Indra, 2016; Rodhan, 2006). Regions are structural units of the global system that define a certain area from an economic, political, social and cultural point of view. Regionalization is the process of fragmentation into structural units of different types and dimensions according to certain economic, political, social and cultural particularities (Clark, 1997; Herman and Grama, 2018; Indra, 2016; Kacowicz, 1999). Therefore, we can not talk about globalization in the absence of regionalization, of dividing the whole into its structural parts, with a role in the proper functioning of the global system. Just as the world is made up of people and their occupations, so globalization is made up of regions and their peculiarities. Moreover, it can be noticed that there is a growing trend in the world in adopting a new system of organization at global level, it is the complex system of international relations that currently stands and which is in a continues spatial-functional evolution. This trend somehow prefigures the transition from the national states to the single global state (a single state, a single management, a command center with multiple regional execution centers).

In this context we can emphasize that sport, through its structure, organization and way of development, contributes to the assertion of regionalization (Bale, 1986; Ghena, 2015; Henry et al., 2003; Ming, 2006; Higham and Hinch, 2009; Miller et al., 2001; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007; Lechner, 2009; Andreff, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to emphasize the role of the vector of sport in strengthening the globalization / regionalization concepts as distinct and complementary elements at the same time.

Working methodology

In order to highlight the role played by sport, namely the volcano in the crystallization and the definition of the concepts of regionalization-globalization, a research focused on two supporting pillars was carried out: the organizational structures, regarded as associative-restrictive entities on the one hand, and profile competitions, analyzed from the perspective of their role as an organizational framework in which the activity of organizational structures takes place, on the other. Organizational structures and related competitions have been analyzed from a structural, temporal and spatial point of view.

The database was composed of textual information (names of continents, competitions, confederations, federations, hidronyms, etc.), graphs (shape files, graphs) and numerals (Baiaș et al., 2010; Grama et al., 2016; Ilieș et al., 2014, 2016, 2017; Romocea et al., 2018; Szabo-Alexi et al., 2016; Tătar et al., 2018a,b). In the development of the analytical charts on the International Volleyball Federation structure and the International World League competitions, the World Grand Prix used as the background map the "World Topographic map" over which were overlaid textual, numerical and shapefile information (line and polygon) (figures 1, 3, 4). Their processing was done in ArcMap Version 10.6.

Organizational structures

The organizational structures, together with the competitions organized within and under them, are an important pillar in shaping and consolidating global and regional identity elements. "The international organizations are superior forms of association between states on the basis of a common agreement of cooperation (status, pact, charter, convention) in order to achieve specific objectives through a judicious, continuous and steady coordination of the resources and actions of the Member States" (Herman et al., 2016, p. 49). From an organizational point of view, volleyball is represented globally by the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), while at the regional level it is represented by five Asian Volleyball Confederation, the South American Volleyball Confederation and the Norceca Volleyball Confederation) and 222 federations (figures 1, 2).

The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) was founded in 1947 by representatives of 14 founding countries, namely Belgium, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Uruguay, The US and Yugoslavia. The first world volleyball championships were held in 1949 for men and 1952 for women. Since then, FIVB has constantly evolved both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative aspects are related to the planning and organization of sporting events, the involvement of the society in the sport life, the development of the game and the achieved performances, etc., while the quantitative ones are related to the number of participants and organized sporting events, etc.

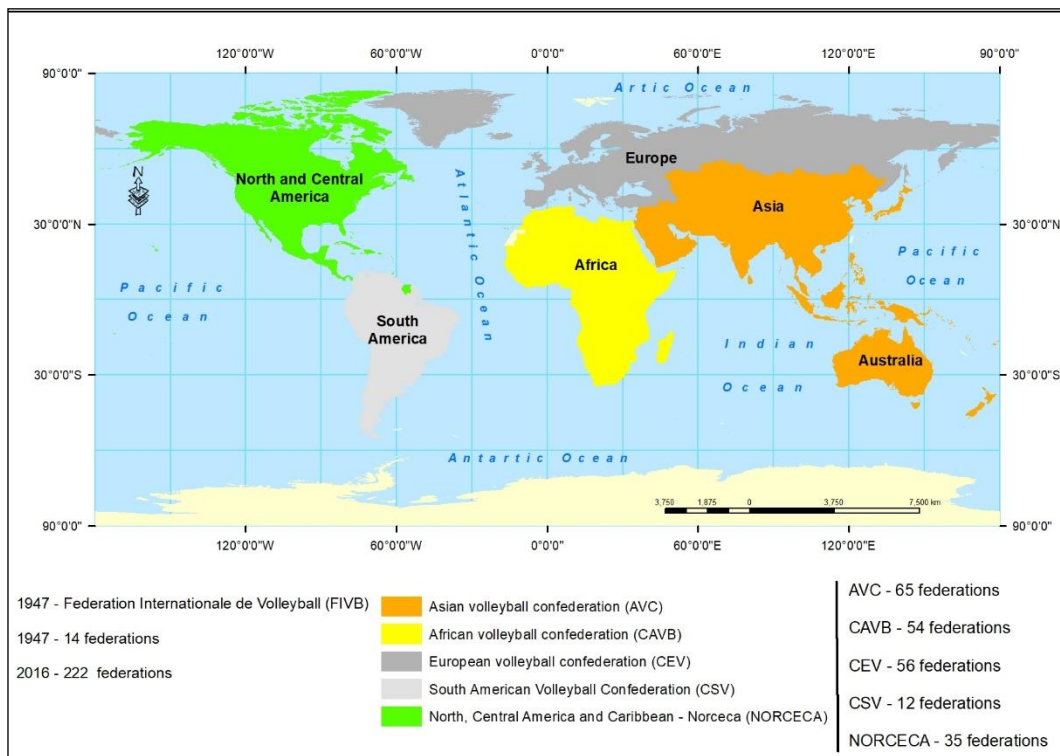


Figura 1. Federation Internationale de Volleyball
 Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ¹

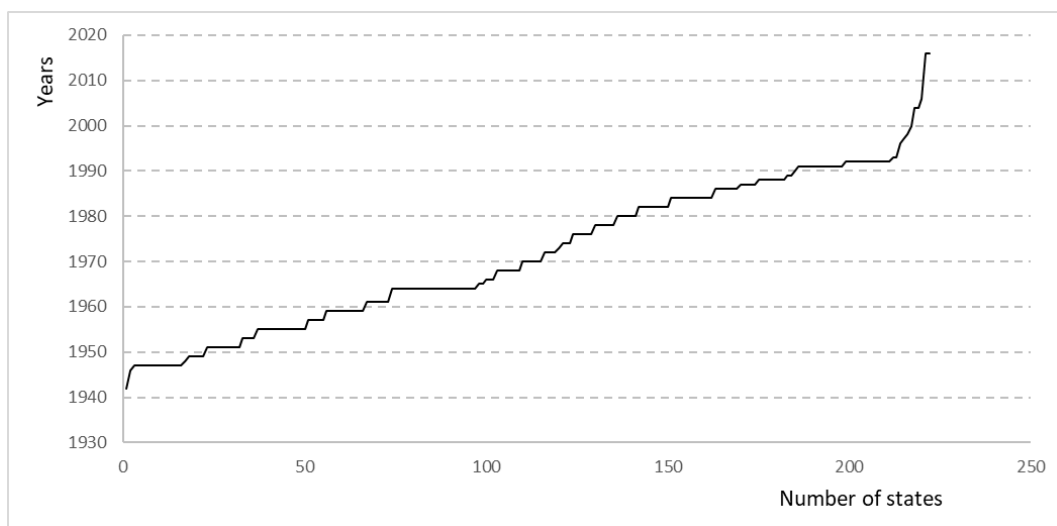


Figura 2. The evolution of the number of states adhering to the FIVB
 Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ²

¹ <http://www.fivb.org/EN/FIVB/ListFederations.asp>

² <http://www.fivb.org/EN/FIVB/ListFederations.asp>

The temporal analysis of the states that joined the FIVB indicates the existence of a relatively steady ascendant trend, defined by the existence of the highest accession peaks, as was the case with the 1964 accession of 24 states and a minimum adherence period for the years 2000 - 2018 when only six states joined. The last states that joined the FIVB were Kosovo and South Sudan in 2016 (figure 2). Therefore, at present the FIVB, through its spatial and relational dimension, FIVB is a sporting organization with global leadership.

Global competitions

Global competitions, through form of organization and representation, represent the second pillar with a defining role in the crystallization of the concepts of regionalization / globalization. Among the most representative sporting events organized under the auspices of FIVB we mention: Annual events (World League, World Grand Prix, Club World Championships), quadrennial events, senior (Women's World Championship, Men's World Cup, Women's World Cup, Men's World Grand Champions Cup, Women's World Grand Champions Cup and Olympic Games), biennial events, age-group categories (Men's U23 World Championship Open, Men's U21 World Championship, Women's U20 World Championship, Girls' U18 World) and the Quadrennial event, youth (Youth Olympic Games).³

Each of the aforementioned competitions is defined by a series of peculiarities, of which the importance of the concept of regionalization / globalization is presented in terms of organization and representation.

For example, the FIVB Volleyball World League is a global sporting event, reached the 28th edition. In the year 2017, the World League took place in Brazil between June 2 and July 8, with 36 federal federations representing the confederations of which they are: Asian Volleyball Confederation (8 federations, 22%), African Volleyball Confederation 2 federations, 6%), European Volleyball Confederation (22 federations, 56%), South American Volleyball Confederation (3 federations, 8%) and Norceca Volleyball Confederation (3 federations, 8%) (figure 3).

Another example is the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Prix, the global sports event, reached the 25th edition. In the year 2017, the World Grand Prix took place in China from 7 July to 6 August, with 32 federal federations representing the confederations of which they are part: the Asian Volleyball Confederation (6 federations, 19%), the African Volleyball Confederation (2 federations, 6%), the European Volleyball Confederation (13 federations, 40%), the South American Volleyball Confederation (5 federations, 16%) and the Norceca Volleyball Confederation (6 federations, 16%) (figure 4).

³ <http://www.fivb.org/EN/Volleyball/Archives.asp>

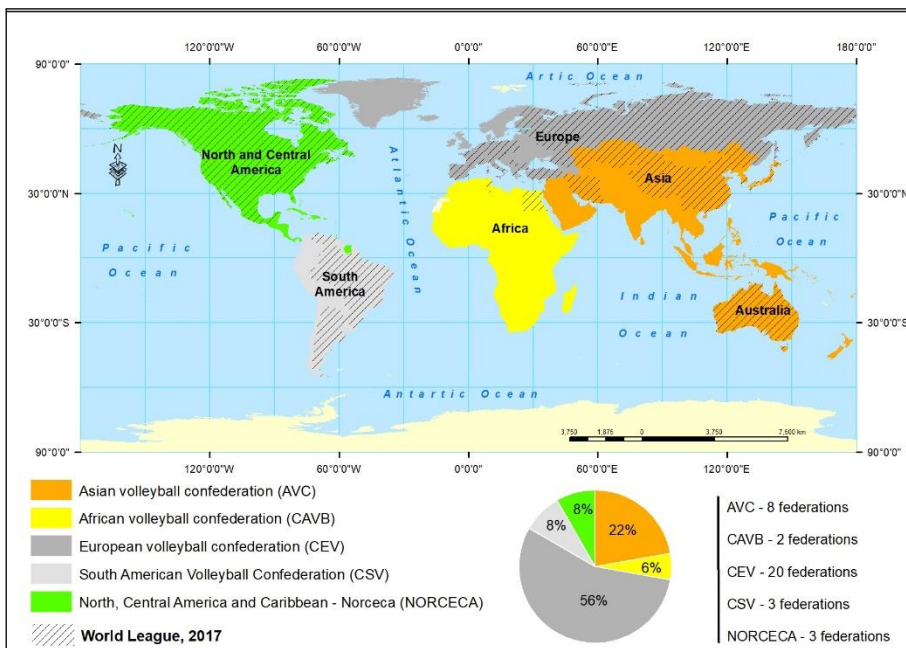


Figura 3. World League
 Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ⁴

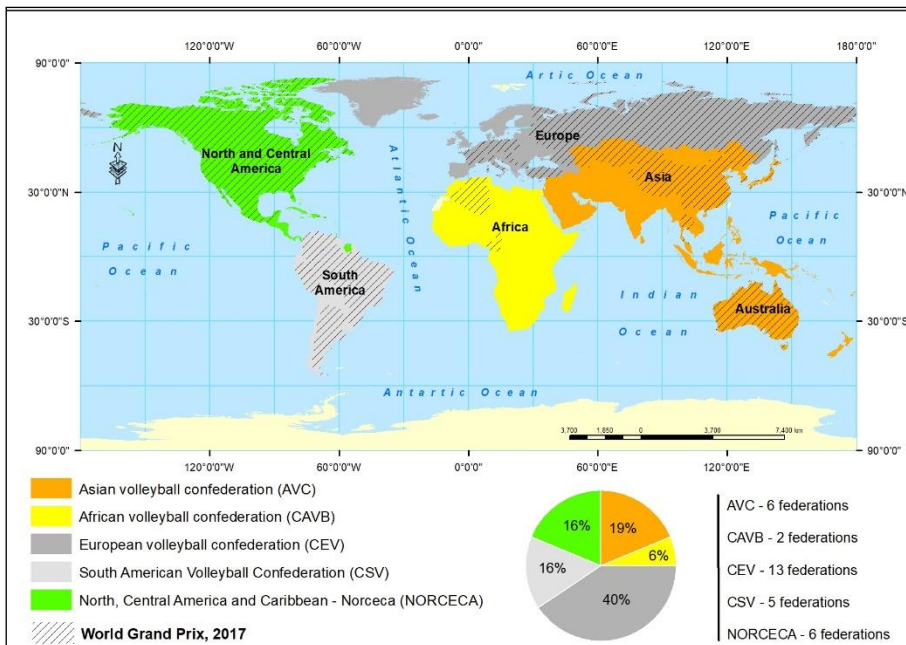


Figura 4. World Grand Prix
 Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ⁵

⁴ <http://worldleague.2017.fivb.com/en>

⁵ <http://worldgrandprix.2017.fivb.com/>

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), through the form of organization (in confederations and federations) and the area of representation, is a decisive vector in promoting the concepts of regionalization / globalization. The competition for the first places (places I, II and III) is a global one, with all participating federations aspiring to these positions in the ranking. The positioning of federations (states) on a certain level in the ranking is related to the individualization of that federation, thus emphasizing the concept of regionalization as an integral part of the larger concept of globalization. Each federation represents, indirectly, a state a region. Confederations are an intermediary link between federations and the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB). All together aim to "develop Volleyball as a major world media and entertainment sport through world-class planning and organization of competitions, marketing and development activities".⁶

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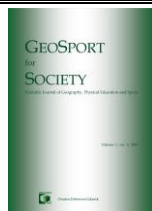
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Racism in sports: A brief review

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Abstract: In today's society people from different backgrounds are living together but due to different reasons sometimes they have to deal with racism. We are living now in a very diverse society where people of all races, colours and backgrounds are working, studying and enjoying life together. Unfortunately sometimes different forms of racism appear and have a negative impact in some people lives. Sport is not immune to racism and especially black athletes are subject to discrimination in access to professional sports. It is highlighted that most cases of football racism cases are related to race (668), more than 50% of the total number of cases. The next type of racism is faith-bearing (235), followed by sexual orientation (217), gender (107), and disability (43).

Keywords: racism, sports, football, kick it out organization

Introduction

In today's society people from different backgrounds are living together but due to different reasons sometimes they have to deal with racism.

We are living now in a very diverse society where people of all races, colours and backgrounds are working, studying and enjoying life together. Unfortunately, sometimes different forms of racism appear and have a negative impact in some people lives. Now racism describes virtually anything having to do with racial conflict (Bowser, 2017)

Sport attracts people of all races and lifestyles and offers an opportunity to build social and cultural bridges based on common interests (Ilies and Bulz, 2017).

Successful sports clubs break down racism by focusing on inclusion, teamwork, and developing individual and team skills. Racism can have a strong impact on people's involvement in sports. It can affect motivation, joy, participation levels and, if not verified, can lead to inappropriate, potentially dangerous or violent behavior (Whitman, 2017).

When talking about racism and discrimination in Romania we are not talking about ample campaigns or an action of the whole society, we are not talking about documented, analyzed and debated cases on a large scale. From time to time public information about discriminatory actions, generally when authorities sanction institutions, organizations or public figures for racist, xenophobic or violent events. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to also discuss this sensitive subject, which can change our attitude towards the phenomenon of racism.

Ideology based on racist practices often involves the idea that people can be divided into distinct groups that are different due to their social behavior and innate capacities and the idea that they can be classified as inferior or superior. Historical examples of institutional racism include the Holocaust, apartheid regimes in South Africa, and slavery and segregation in the United States. Racism was also an aspect of the social organization of many colonial states and empires.

While the concepts of race and ethnicity are considered to be separated in contemporary social science, the two terms have a long history of equivalence both in popular use and in older social science literature. "Ethnicity" is often used in a sense close to that traditionally attributed to "race": the division of human groups based on qualities that are supposed to be essential or innate to the group (for example, a parent or common behavior). Racism and racial discrimination are therefore often used to describe discrimination on an ethnic or cultural basis, regardless of whether these differences are described as racial. According to a United Nations convention on racial discrimination, there is no distinction between the terms "racial discrimination" and "ethnic discrimination". The UN Convention further concludes that superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally, unjustly and dangerously socially condemned, and there is no justification for racial discrimination, anywhere, theoretically or in practice (Newman, 2012).

What is Racism?

According to Oxford Dictionary racism is: "the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012).

"Racism is a complicated problem, and a complete solution requires careful consideration of all its complexities" (Moore, 2007). Governments have the responsibility to tackle racism and all other forms of discrimination but their policies (if in place) are relatively slow to be implemented. Many countries are comprised of citizens from different ethnic groups and sometimes discrimination and racism are much impregnated in the society with resentments based solely on ethnicity. "The

categorization of ethnic groups, especially by officialdom, is not just a matter of social classification practices: it has consequences" (Aspinal, 2007) that divide people and countries and can escalate to interethnic conflicts.

Generally speaking, linguists agree that it comes from English, but there is no such agreement on how it entered the Latin languages. A recent proposal is that it is derived from the Arabic area, which means "head, beginning, origin". Generally, theorists considered that some breeds were inferior to others, and therefore believed that differential treatment of races was fully justified.

Generally speaking, linguists agree that it comes from English, but there is no such agreement on how it entered the Latin languages. A recent proposal is that it is derived from the Arabic area, which means "head, beginning, origin"(Online Etymology Dictionary, 2016). Generally, theorists considered that some breeds were inferior to others, and therefore believed that differential treatment of races was fully justified (Garner, 2009; The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2013).

These early theories have led to pseudo-scientific research assumptions; collective efforts to properly define and properly formulate racial differences are generally termed scientific racism, although this term is a wrong name due to the lack of any real science that supports the claims.

Today, most biologists, anthropologists and sociologists reject a taxonomy (science of classification of living organisms) of races in favor of more specific and / or verifiable criteria, such as geography, ethnicity, or endogamy (Patrinos, 2004). history. Until now, there is little evidence in human genome research, indicating that the breed can be defined to be useful in determining a genetic classification of humans. Racial and racial relations are notable fields of study in sociology and economics. Much of the sociological literature focuses on white racism. Some of the earliest sociological papers on racism were written by the sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois, the first African American to obtain a Ph.D. degree from Harvard University. Du Bois wrote: "The 20th century issue is the issue of the color line" (Du Bois, 1903; Turda, 2005). Wellman, 1993 defines racism as "sanctioned cultural beliefs, which, irrespective of the intentions involved, defend the advantages of others because of the subordinate position of racial minorities. More (more hidden and less detectable) forms of racism - which can be considered embedded in social processes and structures - are more difficult to explore and challenge. It has been suggested that while in many countries explicit racism has become more and more taboo, even among those who display attitudes of equality, an implicit or aversive racism is still maintained subconsciously. This process has been extensively studied in social psychology as implicit associations and implicit attitudes, a component of implicit knowledge (Turda, 2005). Implied attitudes are assessments that occur without conscious awareness of an object of attitude or self. These assessments are generally favorable or unfavorable. They come from different influences in individual experience (Devos, 2008). Implied attitudes do not consciously identify (or incorrectly identify) traces of previous experience that mediate sentiment, thought, or action that is favorable or unfavorable to social objects (Greenwald and Banaji,

1995). These thoughts, feelings or actions have an influence on the behavior on which the individual cannot be conscious (Gawronski and Payne, 2010).

Consequently, subconscious racism can influence the visual processing and the way our mind works when exposed to subtle faces of different colors. In crime thinking, for example, social psychologist Jennifer L. Eberhardt (2004) at Stanford University claims that "blackness is so associated with crime that you are ready to choose these criminal objects." Such exposures influence our minds and can cause subconscious racism in our behavior towards other people or even objects. Thus, racist thoughts and actions can arise from stereotypes and fears we do not know (Belenko and Spohn, 2014).

Forms of racism

There are four forms of racism and according to (Moore, 2007): "First, racism is a form of dominance in which one racial group enjoys control over the outcomes of another racial group. Second, the beliefs that sustain and rationalize group dominance presume the superiority of the in-group and the inferiority of the out-group. Third, racism is a multilevel phenomenon that is expressed by individuals (micro level), is critically influenced by institutions (meso level), and deeply embedded in the entire culture (macro level). Fourth, racism contributes directly and indirectly to persistent racial inequality".

At the individual level "racism has three components: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination" (Moore, 2007) and is based on one's attitudes, feelings and perceptions. As individuals we are influenced in our behaviours by society, educational and historical background and the environment we are living in. The most common way of dealing with individual racism is through education strategies where people are learning about other groups, their cultures, problems and challenges and the fact that racism is wrong. "Symbolic racism is a new expression of prejudice that has developed in the United States based on the belief that blacks violate key American values, particularly the idea of individualism, the belief in working hard to get ahead in life" (Moore, 2008).

Racism in Sport

Sport is not immune to racism and especially black athletes are subject to discrimination in access to professional sports. Sports are one of the main attractions of everyday life and are an integrated part of what we call entertainment. People are aware of the health benefits of sports and are directly involved in sport activities but even more people are 'sport consumers' as spectators or followers of different sports and teams. Due to the increased demand for sports and their entertainment value athletes of all colours and backgrounds are moving between teams, clubs and countries with the purpose of improving their quality and chances of winning trophies.

"Many also believe that the sports world is a model of race relations for the rest of society. Through television and other media coverage, fans see that on the playing

field it does not matter whether you are black or white, what matters is your ability" (Anderson, 1996).

Sport is considered an avenue where racism, discrimination and racial barriers do not exist. This is a false representation and reality shows that racism and discrimination is very much present in sport as it is in the society as a whole contrary to the view that "sports are often used as a paradigm of how an integrated society should look" (Anderson, 1996).

"In USA black players were excluded from professional sports until 1940's" (Kahn, 1991) and it took them a long time to be accepted as equal employees in sports clubs. It can be said that everything happening in sport mirrors the society and "as in the larger society, patterns of race discrimination in sport are rampant. These patterns, including evidence of institutional racism, receive far more attention than any other topic in the area of race relations and sport" (Washington and Karen, 2001; Dovidio and Gaertner, 2004).

"The system is a sort of vicious cycle, as black student-athletes are encouraged to focus on athletic success from all sides and are not given proper aid to succeed academically (Anderson, 1996) and after the end of their athletic career their chances to be employed as coaches or in management are very slim but the "success of black coaches disputes any notion that they cannot be successful, and the overwhelming number of players who are black shows that there are many candidates" (Anderson, 1996).

Athletes are somehow isolated in the society due to the huge effort they put in training and competitions to be the top in the world and "they do not feel racist attitudes in professional sports; however, at the same time they think that "whites generally received favoured treatment in their sport" and "that blacks were far less likely than whites to be allowed into team management after their playing years" (Anderson, 1996).

There have been cases of racism in various sporting disciplines, both in collective sports and in individual sports, including tennis, athletics, basketball, boxing, handball, basketball, volleyball and football.

Scope

We propose a brief analysis of racism cases in English football, information obtained from specialist articles and from the Organization's Kick it Out reports, with reference to Premier League, English Football League (EFL), Women's Super League și non-English leagues, starting with the 2014-2015 competitive season and ending with the 2016-2017 season.

Discussions

Race cases have not been unsanctioned, for example: Luis Suarez, has been suspended 8 stages and fined £ 40,000 for racist remarks to Patrice Evra; Ilie Năstase is suspended from any official role in the ITF (International Tennis Federation), Team or Individual ITF awards until December 31, 2020, because he offended a British journalist, but also the player Johanna Konta and Britain's captain, Anne Keothavong;

Giorgos Katidis suspended at the national team of Greece and from the club for the Nazi-style salute¹.

The sportive discipline with most of the racism cases encountered is football. This is reinforced by the establishment of "Kick It Out" in England, which signals / informs the institutions responsible for racial cases in football to take the necessary measures / sanctions.

According to the Kick It Out Organization, in the 2014/2015 English football season, 393 incidents were reported, covering professional and local football as well as incidences of discriminatory abuse that appeared on social media. 225 cases related to race, 35 cases related to gender, 15 related to disability, 68 related to the faith and 50 cases related to sexual orientation were encountered.

In the next competitive season 2015/2016 there were 408 incidents. There were 216 cases related to race, 28 cases related to gender, 12 related to disability, 84 related to the faith and 68 cases related to sexual orientation.

In the competitive season 2016/2017 there were 469 cases. Those related to the race were 227, 44 cases related to gender, 16 related to disability, 83 related to the faith and 99 cases related to sexual orientation.

It is highlighted that most cases of football racism cases are related to race (668), more than 50% of the total number of cases. The next type of racism is faith-bearing (235), followed by sexual orientation (217), gender (107), and disability (43) (figure 1).

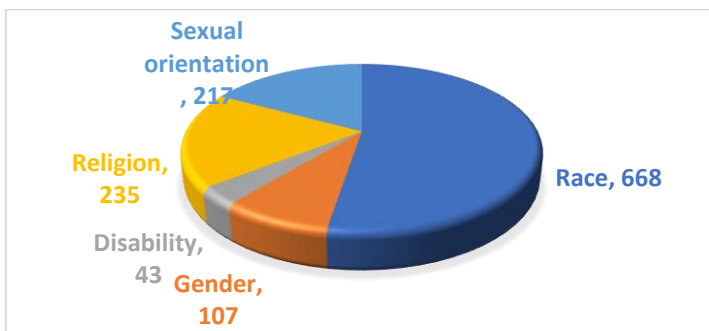


Figure 1. Total cases of racism in football, 2016/2017 season

Conclusions

Over time, there have been reports of rasings in most sports (tennis, golf, boxing, basketball, volleyball, handball, athletics and football), due to lack of interest, some cases have been overlooked, but there are incidents that have marked the sport in question, which has been reflected in the future actions / competitions and the regulation.

Football being the most popular and publicized sport in the world, racist cases are equally very common. In the fight against racism in sports, comes the Kick It Out in England. This organization wants equality and inclusion of football

¹ (<https://www.rt.com/news/nazi-salute-ban-football-396/>)

in all sectors of education and community to challenge discrimination, encourage inclusive practices and promote positive change, the organization is funded by the Football Association (FA), the Association of Professional Football Players (PFA), the Premier League and Football League (EFL). At international level, Kick It Out has close links with FIFA, the European Football Union (UEFA) and the European Racism Network in Europe (FARE).

According to this "Kick It Out" organization, following the incidents reported during the 2014/2015, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 seasons, there is a season-to-season increase in the number of racial cases encountered in football. In the 2015/2016 season, 15 incidents were reported in addition to the 2014/2015 season, and in the 2016/2017 season there were 61 incidents in addition to the 2015/2016 season. In these three seasons the total number of cases in English football was 1270.

It is also worth mentioning that technology has evolved over the last few years, and incidents can be very easy to report. To signal a case of "Kick It Out", you can use the free phone line, "Kick It Out" available on iPhone and Android devices in England and online on the organization's website.

Probably in the past, racism has often happened, but the lack of technology has meant that these cases have not been omitted and so have been overlooked without taking action against the aggressors (clubs, officials, players or supporters).

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