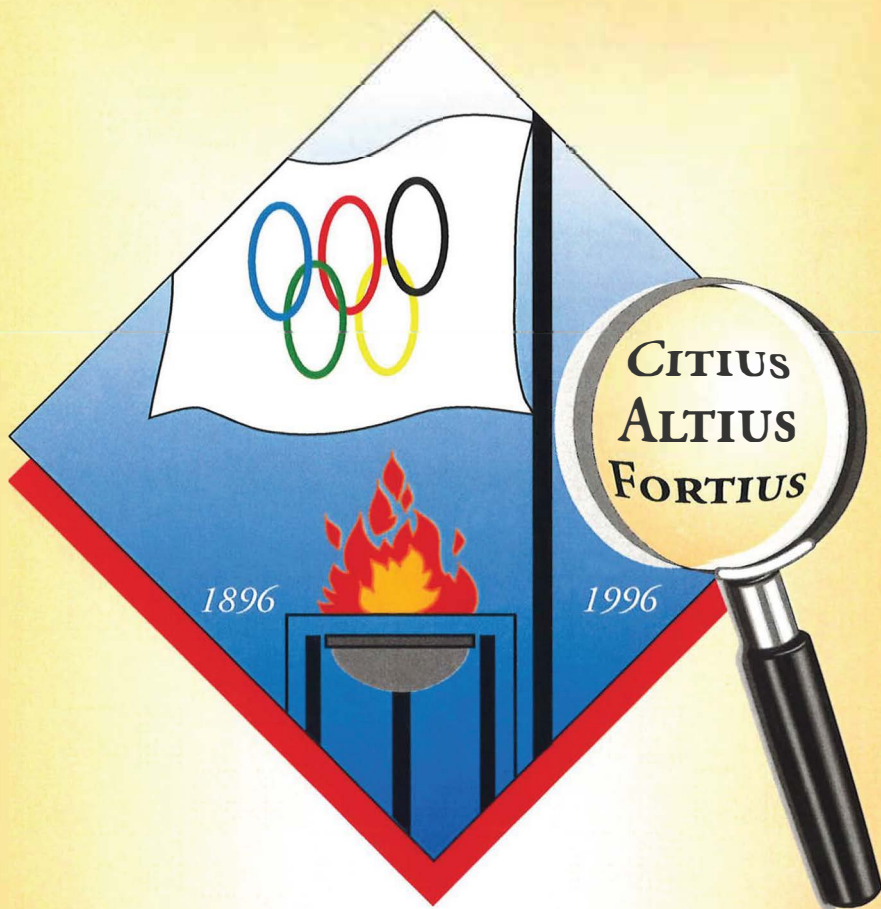


*Kalevi Heinilä*



**CENTENNIAL  
INTERNATIONAL SPORT  
IN CRITICAL FOCUS**

  
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With particular reference to the Olympic movement

Kalevi Heinilä

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# Foreword

Sport tends to be an integral part of the modernization of societies. Closely bound to the modernization of societies sport as an invention of social renewal began its remarkable conquest of the world a century ago. Today it is one of the most popular social movements and almost all nations all over the world are affiliated with the international sport movement and with its peak happenings, the Olympic Games and the World Championships in soccer. Due to this popularity, elite sport has been afforded such a high prestige that it as such tends to escape and reject any critical evaluations. This is well evident even in sport congresses irrespective of organizers: congresses organized under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or some scientific society tend to share the common credo on the high legitimacy of elite sport in modern society. Consequently the majority of congress contributions are well in conformity with the *citius, altius, fortius* – faster, higher, stronger – as the ultimate pursuit of sport. Under these circumstances there is hardly any room for any critical, let alone dissident, thinking and evaluation of elite sport. However, any social institution needs such critical approach and problematization of its conventional affairs for its sustainable development.

Elite sport is the flagship and most visible part of the physical culture of a society. No wonder it has also been the major focus of scientific studies; *peak performance* as a core of elite sport has been most penetratingly elaborated in scientific terms. On the other hand, elite sport as a social system and process in a social context has to a great extent been ignored as a topic of scientific exploration. In science in general and in sport sciences in particular, the fragmentary problems and themes have high priority; hence we learn to know more about tiny, specific

topics but remain perhaps quite ignorant about elite sport as a social totality or *configuration*. Evidently there are many serious methodological problems involved in the study of such complex entities. Despite those methodological barriers attempts to cope in scientific terms with the complexity of sport is needed, if we want to understand sport as a totality and as a process. Being well aware of the pitfalls and shortcomings involved, the author has ventured here to embark on such an attempt.

In social sciences in particular, the value judgements of scientists are always embedded in their endeavors, if not elsewhere, then at least in the choice of subject for their studies. Such is the case here too. In my career as a scholar and University teacher, my value frame of reference has been to look for the common good implemented in and through sport and physical activities. I am expected to know how to write a scientific report strictly in scientific terms, but since I want here also to stimulate critical thinking and provoke interest in further and more sophisticated critical studies on elite sport as a most conspicuous global social invention, I have taken the liberty also to make a number of provoking and critical comments. It is important for everybody affiliated with sport to accept the simple fact that sport as a human endeavor incorporates into its totality shortcomings as well as assets. Aldous Huxley has eloquently pointed out:

*Like every other instrument that man has invented, sport can be used either for good or for evil purposes. Used well, it can teach endurance and courage, a sense of fair play and a respect for rules, co-ordinated effort and the subordination of personal interests to those of the group. Used badly, it can encourage personal vanity and group vanity, greedy desire for victory and hatred for rivals, an intolerant esprit de corps and contempt for people who are beyond a certain arbitrarily selected pale.*

*Aldous Huxley*

The manuscript was completed already in 1997. Since then I looked for a while for any company abroad willing to take a risk in publishing it, but in vain. In those futile efforts I got the impression that the critical approach applied in my dealing with trends in international sport is not in favour at all. The approach is far away from the mainstream of sport literature which glorifies sport without due concern of the increasing number of problems involved in and concomitant to the international sport today.

Sport has become "*the biggest small thing*" in the world. The huge popularity of sport as a mass entertainment with the great vested interests of powerful media is usually seen as a sufficient legitimacy for sport today. True, bigness as such in any field of human life is often a solid shield against any critical explorations or intervention. To play safe e.g. in sport sciences, it is advisable to adhere tightly to the traditional premise of international sport well manifested in the Olympic motto: *citius - altius - fortius*, and to make use of science for that purpose. But this has not been my approach as a scholar when I have studied sport since 1950th and when I still deal here with the important issue of what is going on in international sport.

All human endeavours with their legitimate purposes are liable also to malfunctions, with their unfortunate side-effects jeopardizing the sustained development on each particular field. In order to avoid those malfunctions, all endeavours call from time to time for some critical evaluation of their operations in terms of pros and cons. In this respect sport is not any exception as a human endeavour. Elite sport in general and international sport in particular are entering the stage of development when such an over-all critical scrutiny and evaluation becomes a necessity, at least if we want to ensure *their sustained development* in future.

Failing to find any publisher abroad the manuscript was left untouched in files for a couple of years. Inspired by a success in publishing two books in Finnish I dug out the dusty manuscript, reread it and found it still rather up-to-date. But a fallacy is implicit here, due to my age and deteriorating capacity to conceive properly anything in the complexity of modern sport. This final assessment of my capacity I leave, however, for the reader if there is any.

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# INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE IN SPORT

**I**n the global network of nations mutual communication tends to increase, which is well evident not only in politics, trade, culture, tele-communication, and tourism but also in sport. Until the turn of the 20th century, sport used to be mainly a kind of folk sport practised with local traditions and rules by common people as a pastime or a kind of modern form of chivalry practised by the upper class. From this modest outset sport has become one of the most extensive international movements and a field of lively cultural exchange. Yet this most significant international contact evident in sport was greatly underestimated by the high representatives of the 35 participating states of the *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe* at Helsinki in 1975, which devoted only the few lines to follow and no further thought for the potential contributions of sport:

*In order to expand existing links and co-operation in the field of sport the participating States will encourage contacts and exchanges of this kind, including sports meetings and competitions of all sorts, on the basis of the established international rules, regulations and practice (CSCE - Final Act, 116).*

In fact, the international network of sport co-operation covers all continents and almost all nations in the world., which is well manifested in the statistics on the membership of the international sport federations in the most popular sports like football, track and field, basketball and

volleyball (Hietanen & Varis, 1982, 97-100). It is worth noting that the increasing number of countries affiliated with the international federations indicates not only the globalization of sport movement but also reflects the emergence of a number of new nations founded after the World War II due to disintegration of empires and the Soviet Union. From the international point of view, it is most significant that almost all countries are affiliated with a number of non-governmental international organizations promoting sport, organizing joint events and imposing *common* rules, standards and a code of conduct as the vital prerequisite for any genuine cooperation and intercommunication in sport. The escalation of the international exchange in sport is not only due to the number of nations involved, but it is also due to the constantly growing number of new sports emerging into the international market of sport.

Due cultural diffusion, many sports of national or regional origin have become extensively international but the assortment of sports is greatly enriched also due to novel sports emerging all the time into the common market of international sport (Heinilä, 1995, 99-109).

The Olympic Games, World Championships in soccer and track and field, the Continental Games and the Commonwealth Games with multinational participation organized biennially or quadrennially are by far the most popular single events in international sport, but the most common events are various international contests and tournaments organized almost daily in all parts of the world.

For the evaluation of the social significance of international sport, it is not sufficient to take into account only these thousands of sports events with a great number of participants from all over the world. Nor is it enough to consider the cultural exchange and cooperation taking place in hundreds of international organizations and conventions with a magnitude of common issues pertaining to the management, regulation and doping control of sport, sport sciences etc. It is also necessary to pay attention to the billions of spectators all over the world with their vicarious engagement in international sport and the powerful mass media feeding the public interests in sport.

All in all, in terms of international exchange and co-operation the sport movement today cannot be considered as a kind of 'trivial pursuit' but a most significant international institution with most important

social repercussions not only for international relations but also within the national context.

Conventionally sport has been conceived of as the magic "horn of abundance" of the fairy-tale, capable of producing nothing but a good, e.g., in terms of international understanding, peace and friendship. However, the history of international sport has proved that sport, like any other human endeavour, under particular circumstances can also be used for selfish exploitation and may be also conducive to some unfortunate or detrimental outcomes in international relationships. Someone has cynically stated that international sporting contests can even provide the opportunity for the maximum degree of international misunderstanding in the minimum of time!

There is no doubt that international sport is a most significant social movement, not only in quantitative but also in qualitative terms, and one with many political, cultural, economic and even juridical reflections. The main concern of the international sport authorities of late has been the accentuated problems of expanding hooliganism in conjunction with spectator sport and the common abuse of drugs by athletes. Curiously it has not been the sport authorities proper but rather governmental organizations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union that have contributed most in probing critically the contributions of international sport and the problems involved.

As early as in 1959, the international conference organized in Helsinki by the Government of Finland at the request of UNESCO underlined in its recommendations the responsibility of sport in promoting international understanding:

*"Seriously concerned by the political world tensions and the menace of death and destruction brought by deadlock of modern armament and in face of the historic fact that the youth of all nations has in the past so often offered its life on the field of battle, the Conference calls the sportsmen of the world to live heroically on the playing fields as ambassadors of the peoples they represent in order to promote goodwill and human understanding, to fight courageously the supravolent battle for peace and to propagate the true brotherhood of all mankind"* (Report of the Helsinki Conference 1959, 19).

## Fertilizers of international sport

The modernization of societies during the 20th century with scientific-technological progress, effectiveness in the flow of information and transportation systems has facilitated the international exchange in trade, science, culture, tourism and sport. Apart from this general progress facilitating international communication in all human affairs, there are also some factors and circumstances which particularly tend to favour the expansion of sport all over the world.

### 1. Achievement as core value of western civilization

Competitiveness along with a pursuit for excellence and achievement is the core element of western civilization and the very idea of sport is conspicuously in accordance with this core value. In the *achieving society*, as David C. McClelland called it in the title of his famous book (New Jersey, N.Y. 1961), competitive sport with its pursuit for superiority also has a most fertile soil for growth and expansion. As the *Guinness Book of Records* proves, almost all 'achievements' and performances of excellence are worth pursuing and recording in an achieving society. This is particularly true of sport. It is noteworthy that many traditional non-competitive human activities have been transformed into competitive sport in the West. A number of martial arts, but also hunting, skiing, walking, sailing, rowing, dancing and rapids shooting, etc. have been exposed to such *sportification* (see, e.g., Theeboom et al, 1995, 57-69).

*Lauri Pihkala, the grand old man of Finnish sport used to discredit walking as a competitive sport with the analogy to the fictional contest in whispering: a winner is the one who whispers loudest.*

The high attraction of competitiveness and the pursuit for achievement is also well materialized in the sport for handicapped people: the Paralympic Games and Championship sports with records have the most conspicuous share in their physical activities.

The expansion of sport movement is well rooted in the core values of western civilization as also Johan Galtung has underlined:

*”Competitive sport in general and international competitive sport in particular carries a message through its very structure, and that message is more important than anything else. It is a clear expression of the basic aspects of western culture, precisely in being competitive, in rating nations, teams and individuals. Western deep structure and culture is a set of firmly entrenched patterns and beliefs, usually unconsciously held and rarely challenged except from those outside that civilization (Galtung, 1984, 12).*

## **2. Public recognition**

The high public recognition of sporting achievements has enhanced the socio-political significance of international sport and in this way facilitated its expansion in the world. Participation in international sport has always some *symbolic representations* ; athletes and teams do not merely represent themselves in international contests but always also their nationality and even their race apart from their own ambitions. This representation is often accentuated with national symbols in the ceremonies of international sport events. This participation, but especially great achievements in international sport, affords public recognition for athletes but also for their countries in the mass media. and in the consciousness of the public all over the world. This international recognition of sport achievements also has its impact upon nations involved, contributing to national cohesiveness and unification. The history of international sport gives plenty of evidence of the significance of achievements in international sport for the nation-building process especially in new and developing countries such as Finland, Estonia, GDR, Etiopia, Morocco, Kenya, Algeria, Nigeria, and Cuba. At their time the *Flying Finns* such as Hannes Kolehmainen and Paavo Nurmi ran Finland ”onto the map of the World”; more recently runners like Abebe Bikila, Emil Zatopek, Alberto Juantorena, Said Aouita, Nouredine Morcelli, Moses Kiptanui, Frankie Fredericks, etc. have done the same for their countries.

### 3. Ranking of nations

In his sophisticated theory on the social comparison process Leon Festinger postulates that human beings are driven to evaluate their abilities – as well as their opinions – by comparison, respectively, with the abilities – and opinions – of others (Festinger, 1955, 164-165).

The process of the social comparison of the athletic abilities of participants is strongly articulated in sport; it is the very essence of any sport competition. A social comparison is the way in which people can evaluate their standing in reference to others, and depending on the outcomes of this evaluation, it is conducive to social satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Due to the prevailing social comparison, a modern society is structured by various ranking orders including political, cultural and social reflections. Obviously such social comparison also promotes the dynamics and progress in society, and extended to the international level it results in various *ranking orders of nations*. According to Johan Galtung, the ranking order of nations has many important implications not only in terms of peace but in international relationships in general (Galtung, 1980, 152-204). The great significance of the ranking order has also been evident in the pursuit of superpowers for the superiority in sport, as is well manifested in the common statistics on the ranking orders of achievements in international sport. The ranking of nations is foreign to the fundamental idea of the Olympic Games; yet those ranking systems are very real and serve the participating nations in their evaluation of success vs. failure and also have their impacts upon the national pursuits in international sport. Thus, sport venues provide a setting in which countries can define their aspirations for high status or prestige among other nations and seek visibility and recognition in the international community (Frey, 1984, 5-6). According to James H. Frey, sport competition is a forum to demonstrate the physical, social, political or economic powers of one system over another and thus it manifests superiority rather than understanding (ibid 5-6).

In social comparison in general, and also in the evaluation of achievements in sport, *the frame of reference* chosen for the base of evaluation is of high importance. In the past it was evident that e.g. GDR and BRD used each other as reference for evaluating their sporting achievements. Due to the long common history and proximity, Sweden



has always been in sport the "*dearest enemy*" for Finland and *vice versa*. The social comparison of national achievements in international sport and the ranking order of nations with their particular frames of references are likely to be of great importance for the dynamics and expansion of international sport.

#### **4. The Olympic movement**

Achievement as a core value of western civilization, social comparison of capabilities of athletes and nations as a human drive and internationalism as a common interest are all realized in the Olympic movement ingeniously revived and modernized by Baron **Pierre de Coubertin** (1863-1937). From the modest beginnings in Athens in 1896 with some 295 participants from 13 countries it has grown into a global movement with all nations involved, and the contest among some thousand participants have become the greatest media event in the world. In the Olympic Games of today, athletes from all over the world compete for fourteen days in a variety of sports for the fame and fortune of being the best in the world, and the glory of victory is globally recognized and transferred into national pride. While the Olympic movement itself has its roots in the soil of the modernization of societies, the Olympic institution in turn has greatly contributed to the expansion of international sport. The prestige of the Olympic Games as an international institution with its noble ideals and aims to promote international friendship and peace instigates world-wide interests in sport in general and in participation in the Games in particular. No doubt a victory in the Olympic Games is the highest dream of athletes everywhere. No doubt, also the Olympic movement is the most effective agent in marketing sport and particularly international sport all over the world.

#### **Changing international sport in focus**

The Olympic movement, and concomitantly international sport in general, celebrated their centenary in 1996. One century in human history is a short period but the 20th century with its scientific-technological

development has contributed to the most penetrating and revolutionary changes in human culture. Sport as part of that culture has been exposed to those changes. As a result, sport in general and international sport in particular, is today quite a different human endeavor from what it was at the beginning of this century.

*This exploration purports*

- 1) to describe those changes in international sport with particular reference to Olympic sport,*
- 2) to delineate the processes going on in elite sport but also*
- 3) to trace those main social factors and circumstances which contribute to this most drastic metamorphosis of sport.*

Any human cooperation for the implementation of some common aims often tends to generate also some unintentional outcomes or side-effects. This is evident also in international sport. Concomitantly with the expansion and transformation of sport, some undesired outcomes also tend to emerge, accentuating problems of regulation in the sport movement. It is possible that only by knowing those forces molding sport better the problems of regulation might also be better resolved. Yet, the attempts to probe those sources of change have been insufficient; thereby also the control of emerging problems has been rather unsatisfactory.

Sport as a personal engagement is by and large a relatively simple human affair covered by some constitutive rules of sport, but when transformed into elite sport with all the international implications it has evolved as the most complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which in its totality is difficult to conceptualize properly, let alone to explore empirically. Nevertheless, I attempt here to conceptualize international sport as a complex social entity and process relying on my long participant observation, studies and fragmental information in the literature. As a scientific exploration this work is far from adequate, but at best it can provoke some ideas and give stimuli for further and more sophisticated research. As a focus of social research, elite sport with its international references is not only important but also most challenging.

# INTERNATIONAL SPORT AS A COMPLEX SYSTEM

**T**he social system as a term refers to any social entity or configuration composed of human actors in interaction. A *dyad* – two people in interaction – e.g. an athlete and a coach – is the simplest social system in action. The more complex systems are composed of units or components which as such are social systems themselves. The core system in sport is a competition proper with athletes, managers, umpires and other functionaries interacting with each other, and taking care of that, the very purpose of sport is implemented. But international sport as a system is more like the supersystem composed of many complex subsystems since it is, in fact, an extension of national elite sports.

The so called *international* sport event is, then, an *inter - national* event with athletes/teams representing different countries and testing their athletic prowess against each other. Strictly speaking there is hardly any *international* sport event proper; all events are in essence more like *extensions* of national elite sports. Closest to internationality proper are the ATP -tennis circuit with professional players living permanently abroad and speaking the common language of English. Despite their cosmopolitan profession the players seem, curiously enough, to carry their national identity in reports throughout their careers.

As an extension of national elite sport the international sport system looks like an iceberg: only the top part of it is visible as a sport event proper while the major part remains hidden as national elite sport with all the circumstances necessary for proper participation in international sport. Thus e.g. a high level of performance in the national league of, say, soccer or in other ball games is the prerequisite for any likelihood of

success in the international sport arena. In that sense international sport is just the extension of the national sport and the level of achievement in international sport is well related to that in national sport.

The iceberg analogy has its reflections also in national sport: only one fraction is visible, as sport events, while the major part is hidden, as a pretraining stage of contest. It is worth noticing that to some extent even this invisible part of training takes place under the control of international sports authorities, as is seen later. In this invisible realm of elite sport, also a number of experts - coaches, physicians, physiotherapists, etc. - are involved in training with their special services for the promotion of high performances by athletes and teams.

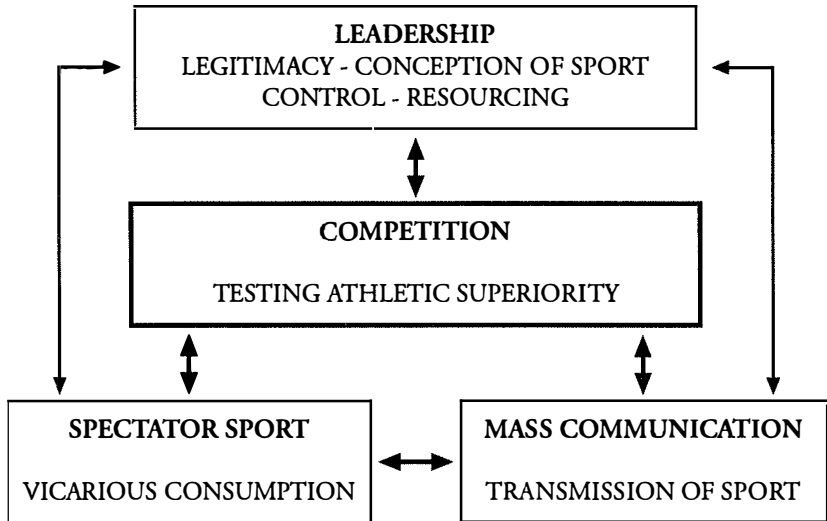
Thus, even with respect to competition proper, international sport is a complex system configuration, extending to the national systems of sport of the countries taking part, and even to the invisible training of single athletes and teams.

Conventionally sport as a system is conceived mainly to be composed of athletes/teams in action and officials taking care of the management business of contests. This concept is far too simple to cover adequately all relevant components and the complexity of international sport. On the other hand, a social reality with all cultural diversities and multifactor causalities is far too complex to cope properly and adequately with scientific methods; hence the only way to approach this complexity of reality is the method of simplification: the complexity has to be broken into some core factors or components of basic significance for what happens in reality. The main problem is to find out those core factors and to trace their effects upon international sport. For this purpose the following model of international sport as a complex social system was constructed with four core components covering the main processes of sport (Figure 1, next page).

It is assumed that these four components are the most fundamental for the continuance and understanding of the changes which have taken place in international sport during the past. The adequacy and the validity of the model remains, however, to be proved through further scrutiny and studies.

In the model used, international sport is conceived as a complex system composed of a number of groups of actors in concerted action with each other:

*Figure 1. Elite sport as a social system*



1 LEADERSHIP

2 COMPETITION

3 SPECTATOR SPORT

4 MASS COMMUNICATION

Sport leaders

Staff members of sport organizations

Referees, umpires, other officials of contest

Athletes

Auxiliary staff: coaches, managers, etc.

Spectators and fans

Sport journalists

Each group of actors have their substantial role in the smooth functioning of the system, but they also possess some specific potentiality for changes of the whole system as will be described later. But let us have a closer look at the different constituents and their role in the functioning of the system.

## 1. COMPETITION PROPER

The very idea of international sport is materialized in contest proper with *athletes / teams* representing various countries and competing for victory. The basic rationale of any sport contest is the social comparison of participants' athletic capacities for ranking them in terms of athletic superiority, or to give a more sophisticated definition following Rainer Martens:

*In competition the comparison of an individual's performance is made with some standard in the presence of at least one other person who is aware of the criterion for comparison (Martens, 1989, 33).*

Since the superiority or the victory is the prime idea of any contest, a draw as a result is in contradiction with the very purpose of contest. To avoid that kind of an anathema, the contest as a rule is continued until a winner is screened out. For this reason, competition in sport is often perceived as *a zero-sum game* with just one winner but many losers. No doubt sport has the character of a zero-sum game; yet some high achievement apart from the very victory, e.g., in the games for a World Championship, can also be conceived of as a success in comparison with the past achievements or the actual expectations of athletes/ teams involved.

Contest in sport as the test of the social comparison for athletic superiority poses questions about validity and reliability.

### **1.1. Problem of validity**

A contest has a high validity if it tests properly the athletic superiority of athletes/teams in specific sports concerned. Two conditions are crucial for the high validity of a contest as a proper test of athletic superiority.

Firstly, athletes/teams in contest should make their best efforts in their pursuits for success. Obviously that validity is distorted if athletes are not committed with their full capacity to seek for a victory (Fraleigh, 1984,59). Not only the validity but also the tension of contest as a vital source of the attraction of contest to spectators are distorted, if some athletes do not put their maximal efforts into the game, which is often apparent if there is too great a variation in the athletic capacities of participants or if athletes are doomed at the early phase of contest to face failure in their pursuits for success. The international popularity of British football is at least to some degree based on the total effort of players until the very last minutes despite the prospect of a lost game.

The illegal distortion of the principle of full efforts by means of bribery or pre-contracts of parties involved concerning the outcome of the contest jeopardizes the very idea of sport and as such is the ultimate threat to proper sport.

Secondly, a contest can be a valid test of athletic superiority only if it is carried out under the circumstances of *equal terms*, in such a way that no parties in contest have any advantages over the others with respect to means and venues. Similarly Warren P. Fraleigh argues that a contest is fair if opponents face the same test and have the same means available even though they can select different strategies according to what appears to them to be their best advantage. When athletes do not face the same test, the contest results may not be an accurate representation of their true abilities and someone may be deprived of a success he/she deserved (ref. Kretchmar, 1983, 25). The late curator of the International Olympic Academy Otto Szymiczek, the distinguished advocate of fair play used to underline the application of the rule to compete on *equal terms* as "a matter which is foreseen and imposed by special regulations, but ...must also prevail in the training for participation in the Games"! (Szymiczek, 1962,115).

The proper sport contest is supposed to test the athletic superiority of participants. Now it is easy to see that any deviations from the terms of equal condition invalidate a contest as a fair test of athletic performance: a more favourable start order, better equipment or sport outfit, fluctuations in weather conditions, partisan referees, etc., are all such "conditions" which might deteriorate the validity of contest. Now it is also clear that the validity of a sport contest is hardly ever complete, but rather, it is a matter of some variation. If nothing else, at least spectators as a particular condition of contest tend to favour one party over the other parties in sport. This *social facilitation effect* on the performances of athletes is equalized e.g. in ball games by tournament systems with equal number of home and away games (Zajonc, 1965, 269-274). Despite the variations in the implementation of the principle of equal terms, it is necessary to maintain some reasonable level of acceptance if we want to preserve sport as a contest for athletic achievements proper. Some sports, e.g., most outdoor sports, are subject to the fluctuations of environmental conditions which makes them more prone to the problems of validity than some other sports.

The technical rules in sports are meant to provide equal conditions for each participant. Thus in most sports the equipment, venues and even sport outfits, if they affect the performance, are highly standardized in technical rules and are strictly controlled in contest. It is not in

accordance with the basic purpose of sport that athletes/teams would be superior in a contest because of their superior equipment but only because of their superior athletic performance.

For this reason also the strict compliance of all athletes to the rules in the contest is also an imperative condition for the validity of sport as a test for athletic superiority. The history of elite sport can recount many stories about the abuse of illegitimate equipment in the athletes' pursuit for success. The tight standardization and the tight control at the site of the contest are the most effective countermeasures to such abuse.

Almost all sports have their particular problems for the implementation of the principle of *equal terms*. In alpine and Nordic winter sports the order of starts involves that problem: as a rule an early start in alpine sports favours the skiers but in the Nordic cross country skiing usually the late start is more favourable. In combat sports and weight lifting the very source for the unequal conditions lies not in any external conditions but on the athlete's genetic habitus itself. In those sports the effect of the variety of athletic habitus on the performance has been equalized by means of different weight categories.

*Sports such as volleyball and basket ball clearly favour athletes' height as a particular physical characteristic. The very sporting meaning of contest might be jeopardized if some player has some extraordinary advantage because of his/her tallness e.g. in basketball: such a player needs only to stand by the basket, wait for the pass of the ball with hands up and drop it into the basket as has happened at the very top level of women's basketball in the past. By the way, those sports clearly favour the countries with large populations; a small population does not provide a sufficient number of tall and talented players for national teams in volleyball and basketball! Only some limitation on the number of tall players allowed in teams gives small countries with fewer tall players available a better chance for any success in international contest.*

Any interferences from the changing weather and track conditions with some effects on the outcomes of contest mean some distortions in the validity of the contest as a fair test of the *athletic superiority* of participants. But in some sports it can hardly be avoided as was noted above. If and when such distortion of the validity takes place it has to be



considered just as a drawback or as an unavoidable feature of that sport or sport event.

## **1.2. Problem of reliability**

A contest for athletic superiority has some reliability as a test if the outcomes of a contest are not mainly due to pure chance. If chance is the only determinant of results, it is actually a lottery - not sport anymore.

In sport the reliability of a contest is, however, always a matter of degree. The element of chance is an inherent ingredient in sport with some effects on the outcomes of contest. This is most accentuated in games like soccer and icehockey in which the scoring is more difficult than e.g. in basketball and tennis. It is commonplace in soccer that the inferior team with poor past records beats the superior team "by surprise", i.e. by sheer luck or, if some cup system is concerned, a good chance in the drawing of adversaries might help some inferior rivals to advance further than their superior partners. Though a lucky strike might occasionally interfere with the outcomes of a contest in most sports in the long run, however, it is athletic performance proper that should be the main determinant of the final order if sport is supposed to have any sense as a test of athletic superiority and is not transformed into a mere lottery.

It is obvious that in different sports the effect of chance on the outcomes varies. There are different types of chances involved but due to lack of research we do not know the factual role of chance in sport (de Wachter, 1985, 53-55). Does it have something to do with the varying attractiveness of different sports? From the point of view of spectators the uncertainty of the outcome is one source of attraction and accounts for the maintenance of tension in contest. Chance element involved tends to uphold that uncertainty until the very end, at least in even contests. Chance might also have some role in maintaining some playfulness in sport distinct from the serious rationality of work with well foreseen outcomes. The substantial reduction of the element of chance might degenerate sports into a purely scientific measurement of physical and strategic qualities of athletes in contest and it would merge into the world of labor, as Frans de Wachter argues (de Wachter, 1985, 60).

## 2. LEADERSHIP

### 2.1. Leadership structure

For the organization of sport events and for maintaining the proper order as a necessary condition for the steady development of international sport there is the complex network of sports organizations (see Figure 2) in charge of a number of tasks involved.

When international sport is conceived of as the *extension* of national elite sport, the local sport clubs are also the basic organizational units of international sport. The basic concepts of "*law and order*" as a necessary condition for any concert action, and thus also in international sport, with common rules and codes of conduct, are learned in sport clubs or in other basic units of sports. Here athletes also get acquainted with the high demands of performance in international sport and are socialized – or not – into the progressive career in sport with great international success as their ultimate goal. Furthermore, most international events are actually organized by sport clubs – alone or in concert under the direct or indirect control of a respective international federation. Thus sport clubs often act also as basic organizational units in executing the very idea of international sport.

But the principal agents of international sports in various countries are the national sport federations promoting specific sports and supervising the enforcement of international rules and norms in national sports. Likewise the national olympic committees oversee that the rules and norms of IOC are complied by the national sport federations associated with NOC.

The international sport federations have the highest authority



olympic committees established in 1968 their own umbrella body of ANOC (The Assembly of National Olympic Committees) with their continental associations. Though the new body has no vote in the IOC it can, as an important partner, exert quite a lot of pressure on the business matters handled by the IOC. For dealing with the shortcoming embedded in the authoritarian structure of the IOC, also the Olympic Congress after 43 years of deadlock was once again in 1973 revitalized as an open international forum for consultation and discussion about the actual common issues of international sport in general and the Olympic movement, in particular (The Olympic Movement. IOC, Lausanne 1984, 66-69).

## **2.2. Main responsibilities**

From the point of view of the controlled functioning of the system the following issues are seen as the most significant in the agenda of the sport authorities – sport federations and IOC – promoting international sport:

- 1. Maintenance of the legitimacy of sport*
- 2. Maintenance of the proper conception on sport*
- 3. Maintenance of the proper order in sport*
- 4. Supply of resources*

No doubt the agenda of sport federations promoting elite sport consists of a number of other issues but it is assumed here that the chosen four tasks of maintenance are of prime significance for the understanding of the changes and processes in international sports. Some further arguments for the choice are surely necessary.

## **The legitimacy of sport**

All social endeavours in society need some legitimacy for their continuance and this need for legitimacy is accentuated with the growth of any such endeavours. Societies cannot in the long run permit any

endeavors which jeopardize their very continuance or the institutional pattern of life. Thus legitimacy is afforded by actions which are strictly congruent with the frame values, morality and conventions in society. According to traditional conventions, sport was meant primarily for the male population and considered inappropriate for women. It has taken a long time and a great deal of effort for women to have established at least some legitimacy for their interest in sport even in the most emancipated countries; the legitimacy of womens sport is for instance in Islamic countries still highly controversial today.

With the international expansion of the sport movement and with the delicate political issues of international relations involved, the issue on the legitimacy is also accentuated. If international sport runs into any controversy with the proper conduct of relationships, the very legitimacy of sport is easily challenged by legitimate political authorities. Evidently the issues of abuses and misbehavior in international sport have emerged into the agenda of governmental organizations but also their factual intervention in sport tends to be increased as has happened e.g. in soccer due to the alarming expansion of hooliganism. The late Director-General of UNESCO René Maheu underlined the importance of the ethical legitimacy for sport by stating that

*"but just as no sports contest can be without desire for victory, so none can be without rules and ethics. It is these rules by which it is governed, these ethics by which it is informed, that distinguish sport from the savage struggle for life whose name is war" (Maheu, 1963, 3).*

High legitimacy is of vital significance for the steady development of international sport; hence its promotion is one of the prime tasks of the international federations and the IOC. Any changes in the legitimacy have also some impact upon the reality of sport as seen e.g. in womens' sport.

Sport used to be conceived of in the past as the sovereign reality of its own, but it is no longer true. It is just one part of society and it exists and lives, prospers or suffers, based on the high or low legitimacy society provides for it. But the constitution of the legitimacy can be composed of various elements. The fundamental elements of the constitution are the official norms of national and international laws, directives and human

rights. Any violations of those norms jeopardize the legitimacy of sport. For this reason the legitimacy of sports permitting violent contact are from time to time challenged at least in public discussion.

Why is fist fighting in the streets illegal but not in the boxing or ice-hockey ring? In sport any violent action is regulated by rules and takes place under the control of referees which tends to give even for boxing sufficient legitimacy in society. It is also possible that such sports permitting violent contact with adversaries has particular appeal to the youth of the *street corner society* and due to sport many youngsters have been saved from delinquency and the poor fate of life in the streets.

*In the scientific congress held in Waterloo, Canada, in 1972 a young Canadian sociologist and former professional football player posed the provocative question on the legitimacy of American football: how is it possible that such a sport which causes annually a great number of severe injuries and even some deaths is permitted in contemporary societies? Twenty years later the same question was posed once again in the Olympic Congress in Malaga, Spain, and still without any answers as the author attending both occasions could testify. Hardly any civilization process to be seen?*

Sport is always a reflection of society and as such is contaminated by the values, norms and conventions prevailing in society. Thus scholars have proposed that the popularity of American football is the reflection of the values and patterns of life in society (Riesman & Denney, 1981, 678-693, Guttman, 1978, 117-136). With reference to the social tolerance of violence in sport it can be assumed that it is high particularly in societies whose structures are vulnerable to generating social deprivations and cleavages. If it is true, then the legitimacy of violent sport can stem from the very structure of society. But all societies with their structural constituents are in transition. If there is any *civilization process* going on in societies, as postulated by Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, the tolerance of violence in the long turn tends to be decreasing with concomitant reflections also in sport. Is the increasing popularity of oriental budo sports as sign for this trend – or on the contrary a sign for responding to the increasing insecurities in contemporary urban societies with violent deep structures?

The legitimacy of sport in society is not only based on the compliance to laws, norms and cultural patterns but, by and large, also on promotion of the common good cause and human ideals in and through sport. Due to its great appeal to youth, sport has been used in all societies not only as one of the effective means in reformative and political movements but also in education. There are hardly any human ideals or common good purposes that sport has not been harnessed to implement, such as health, fitness, prowess, fairness, honesty, peace, friendship, perseverance, beauty, chivalry, bravery, eloquence. In any case, sport has a great potential for the implementation of a number of human ideals, but apart from the actual outcomes, the very purpose to implement those common good causes tends to also contribute to the legitimacy of sport.

The application of some common good cause for legitimizing affairs of diverse kinds in society is well known in human history: "right or wrong – my country". In his studies on beliefs Nigel Harris makes the important distinction between the *non-operative* and *operative* beliefs: the non-operative beliefs are used as mere appeal without any reference to implication proper whereas the operative beliefs have their implications in praxis in guiding operations (Harris, 1968, 232-233). It is obvious that both types of beliefs or common good causes are common for the legitimization and marketing of international sports.

### **Proper conception of sport**

Sport as a concept is most comprehensive and as such also most ambiguous covering as diverse human actions as Formula I, sailing, bridge, boxing, dance, horse racing, mountain climbing, bobsleighbing, high jump, triathlon etc. As a frame of reference for any study such a vague concept of sport is useless. Here the term sport refers mainly to those sport disciplines which are *competitive and in which the human motion and muscular power are the prime components of athletic performance*. These types of most popular sports such as track and field, soccer, wrestling, swimming, cross country skiing, weight lifting etc. are also included in the Olympic Games program. However, some Olympic sports as bobsleighbing, riding, sailing and shooting should be considered as borderline cases from the point of view of the above definition – e.g. in

shooting it is not the human motion but rather the motionlessness which is the most significant component of a successful performance!

Any sport discipline is a human invention and a cultural artifact. Just like cultural products sport is also liable to change. The changes reflect well these various interests and pressures in the sport market. To understand the impacts of those pressures upon sport, some elaboration of sport disciplines as a cultural entity is needed.

### *Figure 3. Identity structure of sport discipline*

<b>Constituent of the identity</b>	<b>Definition of content</b>
1. THE BLUEPRINT	The constitutive rules of sport defining the sporting purpose and the formal pattern of the sport discipline
2. THE MOTIONPRINT	The visible movement pattern distinctive to each sport with respect to e.g. speed, power, virtuosity, risks, duration, equipment used etc.
3. THE CULTPRINT	The cultural reflections and imprints distinctive to each sport: the code of conduct, values, jargon, myths, legends etc
4. THE LIVEPRINT	The distinctive constellation of affective experiences as outcomes from participation in particular sports as athlete or spectator

Each sport has its particular identity, distinct from all others, which is composed of the following interrelated components:

The diversity of sports is amazing and new sports as products of human imagination and invention emerge in the passing of time. All new sporting activities tend to be sooner or later institutionalized in terms of the formal rules which define the common "language" or equal conditions complied in each sport all over the world. These constitutive rules are the prime determinants of the distinctive identity of sport. This is easy to see by means of the thought experiment: e.g. the very visible identity of boxing is drastically changed if punches in the head as the most delicate center of a human being would be prohibited and instead



the buttocks as the best buttressed part of the body is prescribed as the main target for slapping!

Any sport discipline as an action pattern is a rather complex and living entity recruiting its different devotees according to their different supply of experiences (i.e. liveprint content) as well as to their different sporting patterns and demands (i.e. motion print) and also to their different cultural content (i.e. cultprint). The author has specified these distinctive constituents of sport disciplines further in the following terms (Heinilä, 1995, 101-105).

**1. Blueprint or constitutive form.** The constitutive rules of a given sport discipline as a blueprint define the sporting purpose and the legitimate ways of pursuing the purpose as well as the social setting, the standards for the space, facilities and equipment of contest. The constitutive rules give the distinctive form for the different sports, and with the varieties of different sporting purposes also the sporting capabilities and demands of performance qualities for athletes competing for the superiority vary accordingly. Due to this large diversity of purposes and requirements of sport program sport is capable of recruiting athletes with a great variation of sporting talents and bodily constitution.

**2. Motionprint or movement content.** The basic unit of conventional sport is body movement. The great variety of various purposes of sports is defined in terms of the various body movements such as running and jumping events, swimming events, Alpine and Nordic winter sport events, gymnastics, skating etc. but also in terms of the physical objects used in sports. Due to the different constitutive rules, also the motion content varies in different sports in terms of degree of freedom: there are, on the one hand, sports with a low degree of freedom in motion like track and field events, skijumping, skating etc., and, on the other hand, there are such sports as gymnastics, ball games, figure skating, and some combat sport with a high degree of motion freedom. Curiously enough, there are in the international program of sports also events with the minimum amount of motion involved - shooting and archery. Constitutive rules are often the prime determinants of the most effective technique of the performance in sport but also the tactical and strategic considerations shape the movement pattern especially in team sports and ball games.

**3. Cultprint or cultural content.** Social interaction in sport creates in the long run some distinct subculture differentiating various sports from each other. Evidently constitutive rules dictating the very sporting purposes and the interaction pattern of sports have also their impact on their distinctive subcultures. There are many elements contributing to the cultural identity of various sports such as jargon and slogans, playfulness, joking, ethical code of conduct, legends and heroes, body language, symbolic representations etc.

**4. Liveprint or lived content.** The blueprint and the motionprint are the constituents of the form or the formal structure of a sport discipline but the liveprint is composed of the meanings generated by a sport event for athletes in contest or spectators in audience. The meaning content e.g. of the marathon run is likely to be very different from that of tennis, the content of ice-hockey is different than that of figure skating etc. The meaning content of various sports is likely to vary greatly both in quality and intensity. In terms of quality, sport is prone to generating various affective, aesthetic, ethical, social, and cognitive meanings apart from various psycho-physiological bodily meanings with varying intensity. It is highly plausible that each sport discipline has its distinctive liveprint determined by its formal structure as well by its cultural content. In probing and changing the formal structure e.g. by revising the constitutive rules it is possible to affect the meaning content of a sport e.g. to make it purposefully more attractive to athletes and/or spectators alike. The meaning content of sport is likely to be the most significant source of attraction and engagement in sport but also serves as vicarious interest in sport. Due to the diverse meaning contents various sports recruit their athletes as well as their spectators from different strata of population.

The rules of various sports are under the jurisdiction of the international sport federations. The constitutive rules define the formal frame of reference for the real "living" identity of different sports composed of their distinctive cultural, motional and affective contents, With their jurisdiction over the rules the international federations also control the proper conception on sport. Similarly, by means of rules of the Olympic Charter the IOC can implement also its conception

on sport proper and maintain the distinctions between amateur and professional sports as has happened in the past.

Being human inventions also the conceptions of particular sports can be changed by means of human intervention. It is well known that the revision of rules in such sports as boxing, icehockey and soccer have also modified their movement pattern and affective contents and made them less violent and risky.

*In the 1960s Lauri Pihkala modified the rules of Scottish rugby and a new game called lightning ball was born in Finland and in 1976 it was also introduced with demonstrations to Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II during her visit at the University of Jyväskylä "as the non-violent Finnish game modified from the rough Scottish rugby into so a tame game that girls and boys can play together!"*

Due to the fear of loosing some attraction or the traditional image some sports with glorious pasts like soccer, basketball, tennis, icehockey, boxing etc. tend also to be the most conservative and reluctant to revise their rules even if it is evident that there is some dilemma. It is medically well proved that heavy bounces to the head in boxing might cause severe damage to the brain but a long campaign was needed to approve headcovers in amateur boxing.

The sport discipline is meant as an artifact for the sport market. From this point of view the primary task of the management is to make that artifact as attractive as possible to the consumers. For this reason the demands, expectations and tastes of various consumer groups are carefully taken into account. By probing and revising the rules, the image of sports with respective change in contests is modified according to the demands in the market. In this respect especially the expanding market of women's sport constitutes a great challenge to the management of international sport.

Female emancipation has contributed to the boom of womens' interest in sport. But due to male hegemony and cultural lag the supply of proper sports is far from balance with the enhancing demand. Women sports are still tightly diffused with male sports and their constitutive rules are almost plain copies from male sports. With the increasing involvement in the management business of international federations

women can contribute more effectively to the differentiation of sports according to their particular interests and expectations. Until then women as athletes and males as spectators have to enjoy the female contests in triathlon, boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, rugby, ice-hockey and other traditional sports invented by males for male interests. But sport is not a unisex human venture, or is it?

## **Proper order**

The proper order as a contrast to a chaotic state is a necessary condition for the predictable functions of any social organization in society – including the society itself. The *order* makes actions in social organizations predictable and in so doing facilitates their co-ordination in the pursuit of the common goal. In any chaotic state the predictability of actions in social organization is low making any concerted functions difficult and even the organization itself vulnerable to disturbances, even disintegration.

Consequently also international sport as a complex organization can function smoothly only under the proper order executed and maintained by the management. The demand for a proper order is accentuated here because sport as a competitive action system is related to zero-sum-games - what one wins the others lose - as such it is vulnerable to disturbances and to problems of control. R.B. Alderman describes the competitive process in psychological terms as follows:

*Sport competition, by its very nature, aggravates and intensifies aggressive tendencies...one's opponents are out there to frustrate one from reaching one's goal; frustration leads to anger, which leads to aggression, which often results in violence (Alderman, 1974, 245).*

The conflict potentiality of a competition is known in sport and was excellently highlighted by Carolyn Sherif in the Olympic Congress in 1972 (Sherif, 1973, 60-70). Apart from a competition proper there are a number of other functions in quest for a proper order for the smooth functioning of international sport as a system: the division of tasks in management with respective duties and rights, decision-making, time

coordination of the overall program as well as the program of the single event of international sport, proper financing, accommodation, media and medical services etc. Without the proper order in all these affairs pertaining to the control of the international sport federations and IOC, international sport as system faces some disorders in its continuance and further development. Here the attention is focused mainly on maintaining the proper order in competition as the prime and most delicate task of the management.

Apart from the proper programming of a sport event the proper order in competition has the following three determinants:

- 1) *all athletes/ teams are exposed to equal terms*
- 2) *the rules of sport are strictly complied by athletes*
- 3) *the outcome of contest is just*

In fact the proper order in competition purports nothing less than to maintain the high validity of contest as a fair test of athletic superiority.

How the proper order is implemented in society is a matter of social control. There are a great number of instruments used in social control with a variety of enforcement powers and a variety of applications in different organizations; thus social control is different in the army and in universities, in professional and amateur sport etc. The instruments used for social control vary from brutal physical force to soft persuasion. Both polarities of social control are implemented in sport but the more relevant distinction in sport is between the *external* and *internal* control. Internal control means that athletes themselves self-regulate their conduct according to the rules proper of sport. This presupposes that athletes have learnt proper conduct in and through the socialization process. The official rules but also the informal conceptions of fair play are learnt in sport clubs; later in the athlete's career these conceptions can be modified according to the demands in the market of elite sport.

At the lower level of sports the self-control of athletes is by and large the prime instrument for the maintenance of proper order in contest but this does not apply to elite sport let alone international sport. A number of instruments of external control is needed for executing the proper order in elite sport, for example:

- 1) pre- and in-checking of equipment and outfits used in contest*
- 2) umpires, referees, juries etc. as agents of rule enforcement and justice in sport*
- 3) use of electronic devices for the control of fair outcomes of contest*
- 4) sport federations with expert bodies for rule enforcement*
- 5) law enforcement agents of society: police, courts etc.*

There is no doubt that internal control is of great importance for maintaining of proper order also in elite sport, but due to the high pressure for success the role of external control tends to take priority in the execution of the order. The effectiveness of the external control over internal control stems, first of all from the power of sanctions available for the control agents. Illustrative of the vulnerability of elite sport to control problems in pro-tennis, there are in the tennis court more referees than players. but still more rule enforcement by means of high fines is needed!

## **Supply of resources**

For the steady continuance of elite sport it is not enough that the management of sport federations takes care of those "spiritual" tasks of maintaining a proper conception on sport and its legitimacy in society and those "disciplinarian" tasks of maintaining the proper order in the system. Yet the continuance of elite sport in general and in international sport in particular is dependent on the vital materialistic conditions.

At the local level the implementation of sport is possible by and large with relatively modest material investments mainly in facilities, in sport equipment and outfits, but with the rising level of performance and with the extending group for social comparison of athletic achievements, also the expenditures rise. In a national survey on the sport clubs as a social organization it was discovered that the sheet balance of competitive sport was negative – the costs exceeded the incomes from sport – in the majority of clubs (68 %, n = 573) engaged in other than local sport (Heinilä & Koski, 1991, 90).

When the geographical circle gets enlarged, as happens in elite sport, also the question about the sufficiency of financial resources is

highlighted, not only because of increasing travel costs but also because of the increasing costs of producing high performance in sport.

Especially elite sport lives out of success; thus losing in sport without any success means failure for athletes/teams and for their sport clubs in their pursuits, and results before long in gradual withdrawal from the system. Since success has such a priority in elite sport, the issue of how to finance the rising costs is of great importance especially in the agenda of national sport federations and sport clubs promoting elite sport. For the same reason, the pursuit for a success can often be carried out also without any due concern for high costs. In business proper the incomes with some profits must cover the costs of production or, in other words, the costs of production should be well within the limits of expected incomes. This canon is hardly valid in elite sport in which the high costs far exceed the gate money paid by spectators as the main consumers of sport entertainment.

A social organization of international sport acts and develops under the conduct of human intentions materialized in sport federations and clubs as actions of the management. It has been proposed above that from the evolutionary point of view, the most essential actions of the management are 1) the maintenance of a proper concept of sport, 2) the high legitimacy of sport, 3) the proper order in sport and 4) the supply of resources. This cluster of management tasks seems to match rather well with Parson's famous model on the four types of functional dilemmas posed to any social organization as is illustrated below (Parsons, 1967, 192-219).

**Figure 4. *The functional dilemmas of leadership in international sport***

<b>ADJUSTMENT TO ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>GOAL ACHIEVEMENT</b>
SUPPLY RESOURCES FOR SPORT	ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN SPORT
<b>PATTERN MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>INTEGRATION</b>
MAINTAINING PROPER CONCEPT AND LEGITIMACY OF SPORT	MAINTAINING PROPER ORDER IN SPORT

Parsons' model attempts to conceptualize the complexity of social systems and seems to cover well the main tasks of sport federations and sports clubs responsible for the promotion of elite sport and international sport in particular. However, this convenient fit as such only proves the validity of the model to the degree that those functional dilemmas or tasks are related to the evolutionary problems of elite sport known in the past.

As was already noted, international sport is a complex system composed of the subsystems of national elite sport and of a number of distinct organizations. All subsystems of international sport – although devoted to common purposes and norms in sport – act as functional entities and as such are subjected to the same functional dilemmas which require their own management. But when international sport in its complex entity is taken into consideration there is likely to be some priority of functions between the different sports organizations involved: the international sport federations and IOC have the major responsibility for the tasks of "pattern maintenance" and "integration" while the national federations and sports clubs are faced with "environmental adjustment" and "goal achievement" dilemmas as their main concerns.



## 3. SPECTATOR SPORT

There is no elite sport in modern sense without the interests of the spectators. Already in the ancient Hellenic Olympic Games spectators had an important role to elevate the events to a very impressive and memorable climax. Virtually, sports are possible without any spectators - such events are arranged everywhere - but not elite sport: elite sports exists primarily for the spectators and, likewise, the spectators exist due to elite sport. In a Finnish study on the sports conceptions of sports leaders it was noted that 72 % (n = 1599 ) agreed with the statement ” *Public makes sports meaningful: without public sports are dead*” (Heinilä & Kiviaho, 1970, 23).

### 3.1. Changing role of the spectators

According to traditional conceptions sports used to be organized for athletes and the athletes played the main role even in elite sport. Although spectators have always been welcome to events due to their festive but also financial contributions, their role in the system remained more like that of bystanders. It was very exceptional for sports federations in their promotion of elite sport to pay any attention to the role of the spectators, let alone to the particular promotion of spectator sport at that time. Of course, in early professional sports, such as in boxing, the role of the spectators was of primary interest for the sports managers who organized those events to make profit. With the increasing popularity of spectator sport, also the role of the spectators has become extremely significant. In fact, in elite sport spectators are becoming of primary concern, and, at the same time, elite sport is transformed into mass entertainment for

the public. Eric Dunning expresses the same idea in different terms: players and spectators are interdependent groupings which form a *single figuration* but both are crucial for the proper understanding of the top-level sport as a totality (Dunning, 1986, 42).

This spectator-orientation means also that elite sport has more similarities with various *performing arts* – theater, concerts, circus etc. – meant to entertain the audience. Under these circumstances spectators are no more subordinate bystanders in sports but, rather, the main consumers in the sports market.

The changing role of the spectators in elite sport is well manifested even in the constructions of sports arenas: already in the ancient Olympos, there were 14 000 seats for spectators but, today, there are stadiums with seats for over 100 000 spectators. In the Olympos the spectators sat on the stone benches but today the comfortability of the spectators is taken into account as well.

*The Olympic Stadium in Helsinki was renovated in 1996 with new wooden seats for the spectators. Unfortunately, the new seats do not comply with the directives of UEFA and must be replaced with seats with back rest if the Stadium will be used in international matches.*

### 3.2. Attraction of sports

A typical characteristic of sports is its great variety of meaning contents, already referred to in the short analysis of the various aspects of sport. Due to this diversity, sports can appeal to participants with very different interests and orientations; for the same reason it can also attract spectators with diverse interests.

**Sport as drama.** As a display, a sports contest transmits a great variety of symbols and meanings to the spectators to interpret and digest. Spectator sport is sometimes called passive sports, yet, at least mentally, it often occupies fully the minds of the spectators. Sports contest offers spectators a real drama with moments of excitement, heroic pursuits, hilarious experiences of success but also traumatic disappointments in failures under the tension pertain to the uncertainty of the final result of the contest. But different groups of spectators look for different display

which different sports events can provide: some like the aggressiveness involved in combat sports, some the virtuosity of gymnastics, some the hectic interplay in ball games etc. However all different sports, which display the common elements of drama, belong to the very essence of a contest: all want to win but in contest only one can. In the Finnish study on the affective experiences in basketball, it was discovered that the affective content of the match for both the spectators and the players was similar in qualitative, but different in quantitative terms, because the affects of the spectators were, in general, stronger than those of the players! The spectators are able to enjoy the game comfortably in the audience without any "risks" while the players often have to make most exhaustive "investments" for the enjoyment in matches, which moderates their positive returns (Heinilä 1995, 103-104).

Also the cognitive elements of knowing the basic rules, particular skill demands and challenges of sports in question are significant for the attractiveness of sports to spectators. In some sports these cognitive elements are rather simple and well visible as in track and field, swimming, Nordic skiing, shooting etc., whereas in soccer, wrestling, basketball, cricket, tennis, budo sports etc. they are more complicated and not so easily detected. The real expertise – knowing the deep code of sports with various tactical options, risks involved and delicacies of performance etc. – contributes to the deep understanding of the display at venue. By and large such expertise is usually learned through own experience in sport. Hence the very core of the spectators consists of ex-athletes and people who are still engaged in that particular sport. For ex-athletes spectator sport means revitalization of their earlier experiences in sport and reiterations of the feelings attached to contests and high performances in sports. The famous French actor Jean-Louis Barrault has described vividly the feelings and meanings in high jump performance as follows:

*Let us look at the athlete who is preparing to clear a horizontal bar. He stands absently his hands, lightly shaking, hanging at the ends of his arms like strangers to him, his eyes introspective. And, suddenly, there he is – gone. He did not leave – he found that he had left. He bounces slowly, he is approached by the bar more than he rushes towards it, of a sudden he rises into the air, and there he is recumbent upon the bar,*

*which moves to seize him. By reflex action he avoids it, and there he is, in the sawdust, on the ground, amazed. He awakes. Between him and the bar there has been intimacy, communication, identification. He has been "the bar". And if "to love, it is to become the thing loved", he has loved the bar. If, on the other hand, he had fixed his eyes on the bar, as if to hypnotize it, he would have struck it down. (Barrault, 1960, 131).*

**Collective identity.** In achieving societies everyone wants to achieve something and succeed but many are doomed to fail. Roger Caillois portrays eloquently social deprivation in competitive societies:

*Everybody has the marshal baton in his knapsack.---The majority fail in competition or are ineligible to compete having no chance to enter or succeed. The majority remains frustrated. Everyone wants to be first and in law and justice has a right to be. However each knows or suspects that he will not be for the simple reason that by definition only one may be first. He may therefore choose to win indirectly through identification with someone else which is the only way in which all can triumph simultaneously without effort or chance of failure (Caillois, 1961, 120).*

Through the identification with athletes/teams the spectators can not only share their feelings during the contest but also the sweetness of success and sourness of failure as results of the contest (Guttmann, 1986, 180-185). Particularly, their willingness to share the success with their "own" athletes/team seems to be the primary motive for spectators in their attendance in sports events (Heinilä, 1986, 36-41). The same motive feeds also the collective behavior of hero worship and admiration in elite sport. It is well known in any league that the losing teams attract, in general, fewer spectators than the winning teams. If the spectators have a poor chance to concretely taste the sweetness of winning, only the most ardent fans and real supporters of spectator sport can keep up their interest.

The identity of man is deeply rooted in and shaped through the most significant memberships: those of the family, kinship, tribe, ethnic group, community and nation. Any accomplishments and attributes of

those reference groups tend to be reflected in the collective identity of their members. This was well pronounced by an old man hearing of the great success of Paavo Nurmi in the 1920s: *Aren't we Finns really great!* The *Flying Finns* in the 1920s with their their great success in early Olympic Games helped the young nation to rely on its own capabilities in developing the welfare of their nation. It is interesting that, due to those achievements in sports, the Finnish word *sisu*, perseverance, was transferred into universal use.

*The myth on the superiority of the Flying Finns had probably a very common origin: the Finns living in rough conditions took also their sports seriously as a work while the athletes abroad were still playing. Philip Goodhart and Christopher Chataway have said this in less benevolent way: "It was an attitude and a style (of the Flying Finns) far removed from the gentlemanly ways of most..competitors, who regarded their sport as a hobby and a recreation" (Goodhart & Christopher, 1968, 10).*

Through this kind of identification, the achievements of a few athletes are "socialized" and made collective property of all those with a common identity with the athletes. In this way the collective identity of people is fostered also in public; "sport offers an opportunity for sentiments of friendship, loyalty, and common interest to be expressed through the utilization of symbols so that a common basis for identification and integration is established" (Anderson & Stone, 1981,167). The great significance of achievements in sports for the collective identity of people is well manifested in the old statement: *athletes are collective property of public*. Adolf Hitler, the notorious leader of Nazi Germany recognized the great potential of sport in creating a national identity. Another well known leader, President Nelson Mandela was also well aware of that potential in his honorable aim to rebuild and integrate South Africa as a nation after the period of dispersion caused by *apartheid* . With personal efforts he has contributed to the international success of South Africa in the area of sports.

**Time-out -experience.** Nobel Prize winner Konrad Lorenz has proposed that, in the contemporary world, sports has some *cathartic effects*: it discharges the instinctive aggressiveness of the spectators in a

harmless way (Lorenz ,1966, 237-244). Research has not, however, found conclusive evidence for the cathartic effects of sports, and an eminent expert Carolyn W. Sherif concludes that it is a high time to eliminate the justification of sports on the basis of catharsis (Sherif, 1973, 61). On the contrary, it is more plausible that the aggressive conduct of the athletes in a contest as a behavioral model might have some transfer effects, and rather facilitate aggressiveness in the society. Nevertheless, spectator sport seems to act as a "*safety valve* " for the outbursts of worries, frustrations, aggressions, strains, stresses or grievances that people *already* might have in their mind when going to match. If a number of spectators are precharged with this kind of strong feelings, it probably facilitates also the aggressive reactions of the spectators that can be triggered by some misconduct, conflicts, clashes or mere frustration in the contest. In this case, the primary causes for the misbehavior of the spectators are rooted in the society and sports can be blamed to be a trigger for suppressed bad feelings.

Many people are engaged in spectator sport also just for relaxation, escaping the dullness and monothony of everyday life or for mere killing the time. For those people spectator sport means primarily "*time-out*", a temporary break from conventional norms and a release from a concern with conventions of life or from other restrictions in the society. If spectator sport is conceived mainly as a time-out, its manifestations vary from more or less harmless carnival types to mob behavior and even to vandalism and hooliganism.

Evidently there is a great diversity of attractions in spectator sport. It is obvious that different sports with different contents attract different people in spectator sport. Spectators are never empty minds, a "*tabula rasa*", when they enter the audience of a sports contest. They have their different expectations and conceptions of sports but also strains and preoccupations provided by the society. It is no wonder that also their behavior in the audience varies and that spectators are differentiated according to different aggregates with different conceptions on sport. It is also plausible that the type of spectator behavior varies depending on the sports as well as on societies with different stage of "*civilization*".

Society is always somehow reflected in both the good and bad conduct of the spectators. Even as basic a human right as freedom of expression has different manifestations in spectator sport. It was a

strangest experience for a foreigner to attend an international sport event in China in the late 1970s – as the author did – when the spectators had no visible or audible reactions to the drama played at the sports venue. Since then the degrees of freedom have gradually increased in China, which is naturally reflected also in the expressive behavior of the spectators as well – even as controversial forms of hooliganism!

Not only the society as a whole has its covert interventions in spectator sport as described above. Also the expansion of sport participation will probably have its affects on spectator sport. With this expansion, the core group of the spectators composed of former and still active athletes is extended and is likely to play a more significant role in modelling the behavior of the audience. This means that this core group of sports experts in the audience is of greater significance in the social control of spectator behavior.

# 4. MASS COMMUNICATION

## 4.1. Promotion of publicity

The early Olympic Games in Paris in 1900 and in St. Louis in 1904 were organized in conjunction with the World's Fair. It is told that the Games were so much shadowed by the World's Fair that the residents of Paris and St. Louis hardly knew about the Games, and that even some athletes learned this only after reading the legend on the back of their medals! The first truly representative Games took place in London in 1908 with 2035 athletes from 22 countries. With reference to the World's Fair in 1904, the World Exhibition and the Olympic Games were once again held in close neighbourhood but, in contrast to the past, the Olympic Games in Barcelona put the World Exhibition in Sevilla in the shade. Due to the contributions of the mass media, the Olympic Games are today well known all over the world and, in fact, one of the greatest events in the media. Due to the media, sports is transferred from a private sphere into publicity (Weiss 1990, 127).

In fact, without the extensive publicity in the media, the Olympic Games and international sport in general would have possibly remained in the shade of more serious business of life. The role of the media has been of great significance in making sports *the biggest small thing in the world*. Mass media has been the superagent in marketing sports and, at the same time, standardizing the sports culture all over the world. It has also created a prosperous new market for the consumption of sports, i.e. for spectator sport. The mutual interests of elite sport and mass media are accentuated especially in spectator sport: both parties prosper and live out of the interest of the spectators. This symbiotic partnership between elite sport and mass media is well manifested e.g. in the organizational



structure of the IOC: four permanent Commissions - press, radio, television and joint mass media commission - look after the interests of the mass media adhered to the events of the Olympic Games. The crucial role of the media is well reflected also in the great number of journalists from all over the world reporting the recent Games; e.g. in Atlanta some 7000 journalists were involved in this business assisted by hundreds of technicians.

Sports journalism as a profession has gradually developed concurrently with the expansion of international sport. In the beginning of the 20th century, sports journalism as a full-time occupation was an exception in the press; today sports journalists are common even in the editorial staff of local newspapers with their special sports columns.

The important role of the media in international sport is well underlined in the declaration from 1973 prepared by an expert group set up by UNESCO and ICSPE, The International Council for Sport and Physical Education:

*"(However) the way sport is presented by television and radio, and is analysed and commented on by newspapers appears able to influence its very evolution, its integration into human life and its cultural and humanistic content. The mass media have a responsibility for the future and for the safeguarding of sport"*

Due to their different capacity, each mass medium – radio, TV, press – treats sport in their own way. But all of them seem to apply consistent criteria in their selection of themes and news for their reports. Even though there is no relevant data, it seems plausible that the criteria in sports journalism come close to the common criteria of reporting news in the mass media. Peter Becker claims that the content of sports journalism manifests, on the one hand, the cultural core values of success, achievements and competitiveness but also, on the other hand, strategies for their implementation (Becker, 1983, 33-35).

In the free market of mass communication, each media aims to attract the maximum number of recipients for its message. Such criteria as "commonplace", "conventional", "similar", "equal" etc. do not provide media with the strongest appeal to a mass of people but rather such criteria as "extraordinary", "exceptional", "sensational", "deviant" and "spectacular" do. In the realm of physical culture, it is not sports for all

but sports for a small elite which best fit these criteria and, consequently, dominates the very content of the mass media.

The extensive publicity of elite sport in mass media has promoted sport and the parallel uniform conception of sports in the society. Due to this dominant conception highlighted by the media, the differentiation of physical culture as well as the differentiation of sports conceptions have been delayed and obstructed even in the most advanced countries, in which, apart from the elitist message of the media, people are learning that sports is meant for everybody and not only for a few stars.

Only with the aid of the mass media, can elite sport and sports organizations promoting it reach the consciousness of the masses as the primary consumers of the drama displayed by the athletes at the venues. The high publicity provided by – and only by – mass media is a matter of survival for elite sport in a modern sense. Without publicity there is no elite sport, but without elite sport there is no sport journalism to the current extent, either. This symbiotic relationship between elite sport and mass media is reinforced due to the other functional contributions of the media to sports.

## **4.2. Expansion of spectator sport**

The intense identification with the athletes in a contest is the very essence in spectator sport. Not only the attendance in the contest but also the portrayal of the contest in the mass media provide spectators opportunities for such shared experiences. First, the radio broadcast surpassed the press in transmitting the drama of contest for the audience to digest, but, later, TV provided sports contests almost live to entertain the people. A TV-display of a sports event is so vivid that people watching it are inclined to react like spectators at site. It is obvious that TV has been the most effective medium in marketing sports all over the world but also in promoting spectator sport even in the remotest outskirts of countries.

As an extension of spectator sport, sports journalism in mass media tends to amplify the spectators' interests by building up their expectations and excitement but also by articulating the achievements of athletes/teams they favour as the achievements of their compatriots,

and by belittling the achievements of foreign athletes. Thus, the national interests interwoven with national identities are highlighted in sports journalism (cf. Blain et al, 1993).

From the point of view of international sports, it is most significant that the great majority of mass media is bound to the business interests of their owners, which, in turn, by and large go hand in hand with the common national interests. These interests have their impacts on the range of sports and sports news, but also on the contents of reports and comments in the media. Due to this biased reporting, the national achievements are highlighted in the media everywhere, sometimes even at the cost of the common good that would promote international understanding. This difference between the unbiased and biased reporting is very apparent when we compare the broadcasts transmissions of *Eurosport* with those of any national TV channel.

### **4.3. Flow of information**

Spectator sport differs from other mass entertainment, such as circus, variety and even theater, in that to be able to understand the message of sports one has to know at least some basic rules and standards. As already said, e.g. cricket does not make any sense to those who do not know the rules of the game, let alone the standards of the performance necessary for the evaluation of the excellency of various performances. Sports journalism provides the spectators with pure entertainment but also with basic information about sports and keeps them informed about what is going on in sports and what are the prospects of sports.

Sports journalists have a key role as the informants of sport. The contents of the information seem to be amazingly uniform in different media; even the sports columns of newspapers affiliated with different political parties tend to be uniform and unified by the dominant national interest of success. This uniformity is based on the uniform conception on sports as achievement and mass entertainment and, finally, perhaps also on uniform educational and sporting background among sports journalists. There is only scarce and sporadic information available about the professional background of sports journalists. If there is anything in common in their educational background it probably is some

shortcomings in their occupational training! In Finland sports journalists are significantly less educated than journalists in general: only 16 % of sport journalists had any academic education in 1986 while 33 % of other journalists did (Arponen, 1991, 140-141). In Australia the profile is amazingly similar: 27 % of sports journalists have university degrees, compared with 36 % of other journalists (Henningham, 1995, 14).

When it comes to the personal sport background of sports journalists, the main similarity tends to be a close attachment to competitive sports. In most advanced countries the teachers of physical education need to have some university training, but hardly any occupational training is necessary in sports journalism! John Henningham does have a point when he concludes that the bulk of sports journalism still represents an older model of journalism, more in tune with the commercial imperatives of the media, less questioning the ideological and sociological role of journalism (ibid. 17). At all events, there seems to be an amazing discrepancy in the society between the significance of sports journalism and the occupational competence. The first international seminar organized by ICSPE under the auspices of UNESCO in 1971 ended with similar conclusions:

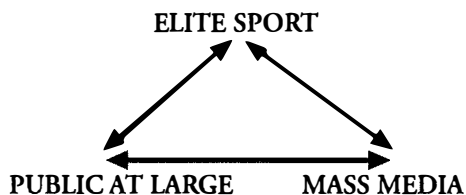
*"The influence of the reporter and presenter of sport news is immense. It is therefore important that the level of education and professional training of the sports writer and commentator should be at least as high as that expected of other users of the mass media. Professional preparation should include some linguistic training and a study of the opportunities which mass media offer for promoting international understanding through sport and, regrettably, for harming it....*

*The role of the mass media in promoting international understanding through sport is of paramount importance. It demands the highest standards of conduct and thorough professional training" (ICSPE Report, 1971, 5-6).*

#### **4.4. Promotion of hero-worship**

The main idea in sports is winning and the main attraction in spectator sports is sharing the glory of victory. These basic elements are articulated

in the reports and comments of mass media. The very core of elite sport is the strong symbiotic relationship between elite sport, public and the media (Heinilä, 1973, 117):



In this key process between these three basic components the achievements in sports are very important, which is clearly manifested also in the contents of the mass media. Due to the popularity of sport as mass entertainment, the achievements in sports get in the media much more publicity than achievements in other areas of life, e.g. science, arts, business etc. Due to this high publicity of athletes' achievements, also all other people connected to the promotion of sport – sports leaders, coaches, sports physicians, managers etc. – have an easy access to the media as the significant actors. For example, the appointment of a new coach will be reported in the main news on TV at least in Finland; likewise the scorings of Finnish players in the NHL are well reported in the media.

The mass media have contributed greatly to the public valuation of achievements in sports, which, in turn, is the most important motive not only in the choice of sport career but also in promotion of elite sport. It is no wonder that well known businessmen and politicians are more involved with elite sport than with sports for all; they prefer to deal with the achievements and publicity than with the real welfare of the people! For athletes, the increasing public recognition of the progress in their sports career is very significant for their efforts to reach the very top and to emerge out from obscurity into the public awareness and even into public "possession" as a hero. Without the publicity created by today's powerful mass media, there is no elite sport with current globality and remarkable significance; neither are there any legends or megastars such as Paavo Nurmi, Jack Dempsey, Jesse Owens, Emil Zatopek. Said Aouita,

Carl Lewis, Björn Borg, Pele, Ayrton Senna, Ingemar Stenmark etc. nor the notorious destinies of Diego Maradona, Matti Nykänen, O.I. Simpson, Mike Tyson, Magic Johnson and others alike who were exposed to overdoses of supermanship in mass media. Winners are produced in contests, but superstars through extraordinary hero-worship with mass media as its first agent.

Hero-worship as a social phenomenon is well documented in human history, but as a subject of research it has to a great extent been ignored. Leo Lowenthal's biographical study based on the content analysis of the changing types of heroes in the society in anniversary columns of *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's* in 1901-1941 used to be well known for its main findings: the heroes of the mass entertainment - such as film actors and athletes - have beaten in public recognition the heroes of more serious affairs of life, such as business, politics, war etc. (Lowenthal, 1961, 109-140).

Obviously the public heroes known everywhere have a significant role in the society in personifying the ideals of achievement for young people, but also in contributing to the cohesiveness in the society. Heroes in sports inspire youngsters to participation sports and other people to spectator sport. Therefore it is very important for the elite sport as well as for the prosperity of sports media that there are some major national achievements in sports. Great achievement is a necessary but not, as such, a sufficient condition for the rise of hero-worship, since the heroes are actually produced by the mass media. Not all great achievements are equal as the basic qualification for hero-making; it is easier to make heroes in the most popular sports that have high demands of performance - soccer, track and field, swimming - than in any sports with less participants and smaller demands. It is likely that also personal appearance or image facilitates or restrains athletes to become a great hero. Proper behavior in public and good relationships with the media are central for athletes who want to become public heroes.

The process of the mass media in hero-making includes the glorification of the athletes' achievements in the news, big headlines and photos complemented by expert comments and human-interest stories about the contributions made by *significant others* to the athletes' achievements. All the stories in the media about the athletes' doings and non-doings tend to increase the public interest in elite sport in

general and contribute to the prospects of the particular athletes for the promotion as a new star or even superstar. All in all, the hero-making of the media benefits all parties involved and not least the media themselves; heroes of sports sell best also the media for the public. The mass media act as a *primus motor* for hero-worship and admiration as cult behavior. In a country with glorious traditions in international sport, like Finland, any great success today tends to launch a social movement to celebrate the athletes/teams.

Some forms of hero-worship with continuous exposure to media and publicity tend to mix up the patterns of life to such an extent that athletes may have difficulties in recomposing themselves and maintaining their high capacity of performance. The feedback from this kind of extraordinary hero-worship may be even more serious when young athletes are concerned, because it can interfere with the steady development of their personality. It is now evident that e.g. the Olympic heroes in skijumping Matti Nykänen and Toni Nieminen were not too young to win the gold medals but far too young to cope with the hero-worship of the media and the fans which extended from their peers to the very elite of the society.

*The most extraordinary hero-worship took place in Finland in 1995, when the Finnish team won the World Championship in ice-hockey, with immense overreactions of mass media, with a number of social receptions for the team and dozens of thousands of fans around paying their respect. The Swedish coach of the team suddenly found himself to be a national superhero and the "Commander of the Order of the Finnish Lion" appointed by The President of the Republic. In press the new superhero was presented to the public with the fine ribbons around his neck, but not in a proper suit nor in a proper place; instead semi-naked and in sauna to the embarrassment of the state authorities!*

Sports, as such, are hardly a matter of life or death for anybody – except perhaps in boxing and in motor racing – but the hero-worship seems to be, at least for sports journalists, a matter of "life and death": without superstars the public interest is gone, the volume of the sport in the media is cut and many journalists face – unemployment.

Therefore it is a must for the media to create sports stars to be

worshipped by people. If there is no great success in international sports the stars are produced within a national elite sport, or the most talented junior athletes are brought into headlines as future stars. The dilemma of the shortage of superstars is solved by the media also "in retrospective" by revitalizing the great stories of sports heroes/heroines from the past. It is no accident that major sports literature deals with the heroes/heroines and is written mostly by sport journalists and not historians as one might expect.

#### **4.5. Agent of social control**

The mass media have an important role to maintain law and order in the society: they could be called the "watchdog" of the society. All kind of misbehavior gets easily into the spotlight of the media; so does also the misuse of economic and political power in the society. Particularly so called *investigative journalism* aims at revealing the covert illegalities and misuses of power. The effectiveness of the media in exercising social control varies in different societies; it is most effective in open democratic societies free from political and governmental control.

There is no doubt that sports journalism is also more or less involved in maintaining the order in sports and in looking after the common good. The mass media and the sports authorities have their mutual interest to maintain the legitimacy of sport, and especially the media has paid special attention to the misbehaviors in sports. It is probable that e.g. the doping problem would be even more common in sports without the drastic intervention of the media. As far as international sport is concerned, the strong commitment to the national interests, however, tends to refrain the mass media as well as the national sport authorities from exercising a tight control of the rules and fair play. *Right or wrong, my country!* With some exceptions there is hardly any *investigative journalism* in sports, although the need is obvious.

#### **4.6. Sponsorship**

Until World War II, the press and the radio were the primary means of sport journalism, and reporting of the sports events to the public was



conceived as the shared task for all parties involved: media provides elite sports with the publicity it needs to survive and elite sport promotes public interest in spectator sport and, in this way, also in the media. The emergence of the TV, a new, extremely powerful medium into the market of the spectator sport dramatically changed the conventional conceptions of the role of the media in elite sport.

In a way, TV acts as a substitute for being at site in spectator sport. To some extent, already the radio broadcasts have had that effect, but the TV with its live broadcasts of sport events overpowered the radio and became for the first time a serious threat to spectators' attendance at the events. On the other hand, due to the expanding popularity of elite sport as mass entertainment, TV companies are anxious to send popular sports events and are willing to pay increasing amounts of money for their franchises. In fact, the TV, which has contributed to the immense popularity of spectator sport all over the world, is today making use of that popularity for its' own business as can be seen in the statistics on fees paid by U.S. companies for the television rights of the summer Games (Real, 1996, 14):

<b>The Olympic Game</b>	<b>Fee in U.S. dollars (million)</b>
1968 Mexico City	6.0
1972 Munich	12.8
1976 Montreal	25.0
1980 Moscow	95.5
1984 Los Angeles	225,0
1988 Seoul	305.0
1992 Barcelona	401.0
1996 Atlanta	715.0

Due to the expanding market of TV sports, the income of international federations and the IOC has been multiplied. It is said that, in past the IOC used to be in debt to banks, but today it is more like a creditor and acts alike a bank itself.

## Functional interplay of the system

International sport is conceived here as a complex system composed of the key components of *leadership*, *competition proper*, *spectator sport* and *mass media* and their counterparts in national elite sport. In the description of the components, their dynamic role for the functioning of the system is evident; the various components are portrayed more in terms of process than in terms of state. All components of the system of international sports are more like *sub-systems* with a number of actors and functions.

The main point, however, is that all components or the sub-systems are interacting with each other and due this interaction any changes or functional dilemmas in one sub-system tend to affect other sub-systems and, finally, the functioning of the master system of international sports as well. Thus, if and when the sub-systems are well in balance with each

*Figure 5. Functional interplay of sport system*

	LEADERSHIP	SPECTATOR SPORT	MASS MEDIA
COMPETITION	> PUBLIC STATUS RECOGNITION	> VICARIOUS INTEREST COLLECTIVE IDENTITY SAFETY VALVE	> NEWS MATERIAL CIRCULATION PUBLIC HEROES
	< PROPER ORDER LEGITIMACY	< FESTIVITY SOCIAL RECOGNITION	< PUBLICITY POPULARITY
LEADERSHIP	***	> SPORT INFORMATION BUFFET SERVICE	> MEDIA SERVICE
		< SOCIAL RECOGNITION FUNDING	< PUBLIC RECOGNITION SOCIAL CONTROL SPONSORSHIP
SPECTATOR SPORT	***	***	> CIRCULATION PROFIT
			< SPORT INFORMATION HERO-WORSHIP EXTENSION OF SPECTATORISM

other, the whole system tends to be in steady state and in balance. Figure 5 gives a schematic illustration of the functional interplay of the complex system of international sport when in a steady state.

In figure 5 international sport is conceived as a complex social system composed of four sub-systems in exchange with each other. All these sub-systems are key components for the action of international sport; all are necessary for the understanding of international sport and those processes that transform it. The schematic figure 5 portrays international sport as well as an integrated system with relevant sub-systems in a functional interplay. However, in reality, international sport as a system can hardly reach any steady state. As a social system international sport is open to all impulses from its external environment. Hence changes in society have their reflections also in sport: the modernization of societies also "modernizes" the sport movement, scientific-technological progress has its repercussions also in sport, and so on.

Only closed systems without any external contacts can remain in a steady state as was evident e.g. in the closed societies of China and Albania with reference to their elite sport in the past. In the system of international sport there is also the peculiar structural element of *internationalism vs. nationalism* which charges the system with tension and contributes to its lability. This polarity of the international-national dimension penetrates all sub-systems of international sport, and as such is one of the major causes for the regulation problems in international sport and a severe challenge for sport federations and the IOC which are in charge of maintaining the proper order and integration of the system but being themselves also contaminated by those polar interests. The interplay of sub-systems in international sport means, thus, that any serious malfunction in any sub-systems has some reflections on the functions of other sub-systems and therefore calls for some countermeasures or reorganization. It is just the polar interests of internationalism vs. nationalism which tends to make international sport vulnerable to malfunctions and to lability as a system.

All the key groups of international sport – sports leaders, athletes, spectators and journalists – have contributed to the great expansion of international sports; in return, the expansion has enhanced the capacity of all key groups to further promote the international sport. Thus, the capacity of the organizational network of management has multiplied

in quantity and effectiveness, the major part of the entire mankind is captivated by sport media, and sport has become the most popular mass entertainment in the world. But at the beginning, one century ago, international sport as a social movement was small and modest in its capacity and extent, and sport as an activity was more like a play and hobby.

## FOUNDATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT

International sports events were known already in 1870s especially in England, the home country of modern sport, but these pilot events were sporadic and had no clear continuance. Hence, the year 1896 when the first Olympic Games were held in Athens is usually regarded as the hallmark for the beginning of international sport. The founder of the Games Baron **Pierre de Coubertin** (1863-1937) has most contributed to the growth of sports as the greatest international movement of our times.

It is well known that de Coubertin was deeply upset by the fateful defeat of France in the war of 1870, and as a philosopher he was preoccupied with the important question of reconstructing of a better world of peace and friendship. He was familiar with the sports program of the English Public School and was greatly inspired by the high valuation of sports in general and team games in particular in education and character training (McIntosh 1986).

Pierre de Coubertin recognized the great potential of sports and youth in the revitalized Olympic Games for the implementation of his noble ideas. He perceived the Olympic Games "as a potent, if indirect, factor in securing universal peace":

*"Wars break out because nations misunderstand each other. We shall not have peace until the prejudices which now separate the different races shall have been outlived. To attain this end, what better means to bring the youth of all countries periodically together for amicable trials of muscular strength and agility? The Olympic Games, with the ancients, controlled athletics and promoted peace" (ref. Mandell, 1976, 72).*

The Olympic Games were a *primus motor* for the development of international sport in general, and the ideological foundation of the Games laid by de Coubertin has its reflections and manifestations in all international sport. This first period of international sport from the turn of the century till the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 was characterized by the great ideals of humanism, not to mention their more or less successful realization. Thus, this period of international sport is called here the period of *idealism*.

# I PERIOD:

Humanism
Authoritarianism
Amateurism
Sportmanship

## IDEALISM IN INTERNATIONAL SPORT

### 1. Leadership

The basic idea of the new Olympic movement was reformative in its purpose to build a better world in and through international sport. Pierre de Coubertin was well aware that the implementation of such noble aims presupposed that all collaborators in the leadership were fully devoted to the high mission of the movement. Any democratic election process cannot, however, guarantee such composition for the IOC which is the highest authority in the Olympic movement. Since the very beginning, the IOC itself has had the crucial role in selecting and accepting new members to the Executive Board. Not only the congeniality in devotion to the noble ideals but also more secular considerations are probably involved in the authoritarian power structure of the IOC. According to Peter C. McIntosh, de Coubertin borrowed the aristocratic form of the IOC from Great Britain "with their exclusive, self appointing and self perpetuating organizations who exercised authority by virtue of the social prestige of their members" (op. cit.).

Under these circumstances it is almost a matter of course that the president has a strong trust in the loyalty of all members and, thus the presidents of the IOC can act as the superior authority of the movement. Further, this authoritarianism, which strives to maintain the noble

mission of the movement, has its advocates also in the national olympic committees: the members of the IOC are supposed to represent the interests of the IOC in the national olympic committees of their countries as appointed members of the IOC. In this capacity they are supposed to make sure that all pursuits of the NOCs and the NSFs affiliated with the NOCs agree with the Olympic Charter.

The early history of international sport as well as the documents from the archives give the impression that a number of great personalities and even great intellectuals have been involved in the mission of promoting sports, especially during this period of early development. It is plausible that the noble ideals and aims of the mission had their appeal not only to "advocates of the body" but also to "advocates of the mind". But in lack of any facts about the leadership structure and values, this is only an impression.

**Legitimacy.** The ideological infrastructure of the Olympic Movement is well crystallized by Pierre de Coubertin in 1894:

*"The aim of the Olympic Movement is to promote the development of those fine physical and moral qualities which are the basis of amateur sport and to bring together the athletes of the world in a great quadrennial festival of sports thereby creating international respect and goodwill and thus helping to construct a better and more peaceful world"* (quoted by Berlioux, 1972, 1).

This ideological constitution of international sport has today the same relevance as one century ago. It still has a great appeal to thousands of women and men working with young people in physical education classes at school and as volunteers in sports clubs. It is no wonder that Pierre de Coubertin devoted his life to the implementation of his noble aims, and no wonder that he was deeply worried and annoyed when his great idea concerning the Olympic movements was misused and exploited for wrong cause.

The high ideals were meant to guide their implementations and all ceremonies, even the accomodation of athletes in the Olympic village was designed according to them. Even the manifestation of national symbols as flags, anthems, costumes etc. was ultimately supposed to serve internationalism, because it was perceived that true internationalism has

its roots in sound patriotism. Actually, the issue remains still controversial, and the opinions vary according to the interest of the parties involved. Here it is important to notice only that de Coubertin did not mean to encourage nationalism but internationalism when accepting national manifestations in the Games as a sign of cultural diversity.

Sport deserves its social significance also as education of the youth: sport is seen as a good exercise for character building and for overall development of personality, but it is also a healthy way of life. Evidently the great potential of sports in education contributed also to the recognition of international sport as a means to build a better world. When de Coubertin believed in the great potential of sports he seemed to have been also aware of the other side of the coin: a ruthless pursuit for victory is contradictory to all noble ideals of sports. In order to prevent such exploitation of sports de Coubertin underlined that

*"the important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering, but in fighting well".*

The same idea was expressed also in 1970s when China joined the family of international sport: *friendship first, competition second*. The implementation of these noble ideals is, however, quite a different matter in the tough reality, as will be seen later.

**Conception of sport.** Sport was not only conceived as education but also as play engaged in as a pastime for its intrinsic value. This was implied in the new term of *amateur sport* applied in international sport: eligible for the participation are only athletes who are engaged in sport just for love (*amare* = love). Any profit making and financial rewards were strictly prohibited in amateur sport, and even professional coaching and teaching caused some limitations for the participation in sports and in certain affairs of the national olympic committees.

It is no doubt that the amateur conception of sports is well grounded by the very essence of *play* as universal cultural activity on its own terms. Inherently as play-like activity, amateur sport was connected to the realm of leisure, distinct from the serious world of work and gainful employment.

**Proper order.** In the period of idealism, the three most sensitive issues concerning the control were: 1) the maintenance of the symbolic



value of rewards, 2) the implementation of the amateur conception of sports and 3) the maintenance of the proper order in contests.

Consistently with the amateur conception of sports, the rewards for winners should have only symbolic value, as the commonly used medals have. According to the rules of international sports federations and IOC, the upper limit of the financial value of rewards was precisely defined. Sport was meant to be taken part in just for love and not for the possible valuable prizes. Since the celebration of victory is carried out in public, the approximate value of rewards is easily estimated and under proper control, but what happened "under the counter" remains often invisible and outside of control.

The implementation of the amateur conception of sports is the key issue in the control and the rule enforcement of the international sports authorities. While the motivation of the athletes is hardly liable to any controlling measures, it was carried out in an indirect way by a rule according to which the athletes have to have a proper occupation to make their living or a proper status as student to be eligible in amateur sport. Amateurism supposes that the athletes are mainly occupied by their jobs and only in leisure time by sport – if they still have energy. Consistently, also the maximum length of training camps consisting mainly of sports was determined in the rules. In this way these rules purport to *moderate* the athletes' efforts and investments for a sports career and keep them within the limits of proper amateurism. So far so good, but the experience proved later that any control measures are deficient in competitive international sport.

The maintenance of the proper order in contests was conceived primarily as a matter of proper behavior by athletes of their own accord. The noble aims require also a noble code of conduct in contests determined by the norms of *fair play*. The core of fair play is a strict compliance with the common rules that ensure the equality of participants in contest, but it also implies *gentlemanly conduct* and respectful behavior between the rivals with modesty when winning and dignity when losing. In fact, fair play as an ethical standard and a code of conduct is not only crucial for the proper order of the contest, but it also is the very essence of sports education. The norms of fair play were meant primarily to be norms of conduct in contests, but their relevance

was ignored by people working in the elite sport, which had most drastic consequences as will be seen later.

**Supply of resources.** In amateur sport all expenses are, as a rule, adjusted to the limited resources available, which mainly consist of gate fees. As the athletes are engaged in sports just for the sport's sake, also the management of elite sport is mainly based on voluntary work - also for the sport's sake and in dedication to the noble aims. The members of international federations and the IOC in particular were often chosen among wealthy people who were able to pay their travelling costs themselves without using the small budget of the organization. Since the income of all sports organizations from sport clubs to international federations was usually very modest, also the costs were kept under strict control. Due to this financing policy, bankruptcies were unknown in sport during the period of idealism.

## 2. Competition

Due to the famous paragraph 26 of the Olympic Charter, only amateur athletes were eligible to participate in the Olympic Games and in international sport events connected to the Olympic movement. Obviously there was fluctuation not only in the interpretation but also in the implementation of the status of an amateur – some athletes were more, some less amateur in their engagement with sports, but, in general during this first period of international sports, contests were carried out, to a great extent, in equal terms : equal partners equally leisurely engaged in sports compete with each other for the symbolic fame and glory of the victory. The crucial principle of the equal terms was implemented even in the training of athletes that was based mainly on the method of *trial and error* and on the athlete's own efforts. Due to the fact that, at that time, success in sports was primarily a matter of the athletes' individual efforts, a competition was a fair test measuring the relative superiority of the athletes' performances.

Both the amateurism and individualism implemented in the pursuit for success have their reflections on the overall ethos of sports events. Failures and successes in contests were conceived as an essential part of sports, not as the most serious matter in life. This playful spirit of games

can still be traced from the history of the early Olympic Games and from the stories and memoirs of former superstars. Of course, winning was a great experience for athletes but, for many of them, just in the frame of sports and not in the frame of the whole life. For them life was not subservient to their sport but to the contrary sport was subservient to life.

The early history of international sport also gives the impression that there was a number of great personalities involved in sports as sports heroes and heroines. It is plausible that early amateur sport with its individual challenge to test one's superiority had a strong appeal to different people including intellectuals, artists, great personalities etc., whereas modern sport with its professionalism appeals to a different category of people. This distinction between the early and modern heroes/heroines in international sport remains here, however, as an impression and not a proven fact.

### **3. Spectators as bystanders**

Since the very beginning of modern sports, spectators have had their role in the elite sport. Spectators have always created that particular atmosphere of a sports happening mixed with excitement, great expectations, time-out relaxation and festivity. This electrifying ethos of great sports events is unique and affects everyone involved; due to this collective support of the audience – called *social reinforcement* – the athletes are often inspired to superior achievements at the venue.

Nevertheless, during the period of idealism in the international sport, spectators remained bystanders while the athletes had their primary focus in trying to implement not only the basic idea of sports but also the noble aims of international sport. It is amazing how the role of the spectator sport was ignored almost completely by the sports authorities in the past. But sport was meant primarily for athletes and not for spectators. In this conception, the spectators are mere *bystanders*, yet very welcome to sports. This secondary role was usually recognized also by the spectators: aggressive interference in actions at the venue were very exceptional. Also other factors probably facilitated the proper order in the audience. To some extent, the spectators shared the amateur conception of sport with

the athletes: winning is great but not a matter of life and death! Sports was conceived also by the spectators primarily as a personal interest, associated with good ideals, open to everybody who was willing to make great efforts in order to excel in sport. Any abusive behavior or aggressive interference, not to mention the mob behavior, are under these circumstances foreign to sports. Due to this shared sportsmanship as the main source of proper order in the audience, the interference of police forces was earlier almost unknown in sports, but not anymore.

#### **4. Mass media**

During the early history of international sport the main media for transmitting news and spirit of contests were press and radio. The effect of these media on the promotion of public interest in sports depends, to a great deal, on their ability to discharge emotions connected to sports and sports heroes/heroines. In this respect radio broadcasts are superior to press reports. It is no wonder that, due to their significant contributions to sports, many radio reporters from that time are recognized even in the history of sport.

From the point of view of the arousal of emotion, the factual actions in contests are assigned by journalists with a variety of meanings, i.e. what happens in the contest is interpreted in cultural, political and evaluative terms. In this way e.g. any great performance in sports can get a high social significance and raise immense interest in public. Also the great human ideals and noble doctrines ascribed by journalists to excellent achievements in sports provide cultural meanings for sports as a worthy activity in society.

*Former minister of defence and a renowned philosopher Yrjö Kallinen once raised a rhetoric question: what real values are there if one is some fractions of seconds faster than his/her rivals? Obviously the appreciation in sports is mainly a matter of various social, cultural, political etc. meanings attached to those achievements irrespective of their intrinsic value.*

Obviously Coubertinian noble aims contributed greatly to the common idealization of elite sport also in the mass media; the universal

myth about sports as an abundant source of human good was established. Sports federations as well as the media exploited that myth for their own interests. The strong conformity to the idea of sports as a magic source of common good was well manifested also in the media: critical comments and evaluations were exceptional and concerned mainly the disappointments due the failures of the athletes. Also the abundant sports literature and especially the history of elite sport and the reports of the Olympic Games glorified sport using mainly the most positive terms. Due to this idealization, the attractiveness of sports to public and to youth tended to be enhanced.

Without a doubt, this strong idealism motivated also sports journalists in their public mission and left its imprints in their reports. This idealism is well reflected even in the first occupational code of conduct for sports press approved in 1924 by the first international congress of sports press in Paris:

*"...Sport journalists consider it their main task to foster and further all progressive and educational efforts in the service of understanding and peace among the nations...*

*Sports journalists are particularly concerned to give youth an example worthy of imitation through unprejudiced and impartial judgement. By combating the unobjective or unfair rivalry often engendered by excess of sporting zeal they seek to bring sport nearer to its higher goal - to better mankind and waken its sense of community.*

*Despite the self-evident love of every man for his native land, journalists look upon themselves as pioneers of a cultural cooperation which finds its expression in sporting competition.*

*Sport journalists affirm their faith in the principles of sporting comradeship, which are in the highest degree apt to promote the spirit of harmony, justice and mutual respect in human society".*

It is probable that without idealism, great ideals and glorification of achievements in sports, the escalation of modern sport all over the world would have been prolonged at least. The mass media – mainly the radio and press – has most effectively contributed to this mission by transmitting the good message of sports all over the world. In this mission also the foundation for the hegemony of competitive sport were established in many societies.

## Summary: Decades of idealism

The first period of international sport from the turn of 20th century up till World War II has been called here a time of idealism, implemented in the action system of elite sport which can have the epithet of *the humanistic model*.

### *Figure 6. Humanistic model of international sport*

#### LEADERSHIP

MODE OF LEADERSHIP:	Authoritarian idealism
LEGITIMACY:	Promotion of peace, friendship and international understanding Education and character building
CONCEPTION OF SPORT:	Sport as leisure interest Prime motive: love for sport
MAIN CONTROL OF ORDER:	Internal control of athletes Fair play as prime code of conduct
RESOURCE POLICY:	Costs adjusted to incomes

#### COMPETITION PROPER

MODERATION OF CONTEST:	Symbolic rewarding Proscribing professionals
TEST VALIDITY OF CONTEST:	High validity due to amateurism

#### SPECTATORS

ROLE OF SPECTATORS:	Role as bystanders Festive ethos of sports events
COMMITMENT:	To sportmanship and humanistic ideals

#### MASS MEDIA

ROLE OF MEDIA:	Transmission of sport news Invoking public interest in sport Promoting the human good in sports
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The validity of any conceptual model of international sport depends on how well the models contribute to our understanding of those complex social phenomena they represent. This, finally, depends upon the expert knowledge available for the construction of these models. Thus the more there is factual information available about international sport as a social system, the better our chance to construct a valid model. The serious dilemma here is just the lack of relevant information. Consequently, the models here, including the humanistic model already introduced, were all based on most fragmentary information and on mere unsystematic observations, and, thus, cannot be anything but tentative constructions. On the other hand, this kind of conceptual models – called also *ideal types* in sociology – can, at best, represent only an approximation of the complex whole of international sport but, as such, it can help us understand the phenomenon in question, which otherwise may remain too complex to comprehend.

The true idealism with humanistic values, ideals and objectives penetrated the entire action system of international sport and, particularly, the Olympic movement which is the *primus motor* of all international sport as portrayed in the figure (page 72).

The humanistic model of sports tends to be internally consistent: promotion of friendship and international understanding, the amateur conception of sport, the norms of fair play implemented in a gentlemanly conduct in the contests, participation, the myth of sports as an abundant source of the human good shared by the spectators and the media; these are all in harmony with each other, at least at the drawing-table. The early history of the Olympic Games proved that this model survived until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, which had most devastating effects upon "international understanding".

### **Internal tensions of the system**

International sport as an action system is a complex mixture of international and national components. In this kind of a system, there is an inherent tension between the national and international interests; the conflicts of interests are apparent if the national interests dominate over the common interests of international friendship. Nationalism as

an ideology has bipolar functions: on the one hand it brings people with common identity together and unites them; on the other hand it separates them from the others as "foreigners", "strangers" and "aliens" (Clarke & Clarke, 1982, 80). There are some vested conflicts of interest between nationalism and internationalism that are well evident e.g. in the rules of international sport: due to the national interests involved, the national federations and the NOCs have been, as is well known, ineffective in enforcing the rules e.g. on amateurism. *Right or wrong – my country.*

*Citius - altius - fortius* (faster - higher - stronger) as a motto of the Olympic Games borrowed by de Coubertin from the sign of a monastery school characterizes well the essence of competition; a competition as a test of superiority has no ultimate limits for human efforts. Thus in the period of amateurism, there exists a structural tension between the demands for moderation imposed by the amateur conception of sports and the essence of competition without any ultimate limits of performance. Due to these structural tensions, the Coubertinian model of international sport was in praxis most unstable and vulnerable to severe conflicts of interests and even to a drastic metamorphosis of the system.

The subtle balance of internationalism and nationalism in international sport was intentionally distorted already in 1936 when the Nazi government of Germany used the Olympic Games in Berlin unscrupulously to glorify world-wide the Third Reich. This political propaganda was most ingeniously interwoven with the glorification of sports and youth, which is well manifested also in the pompous but superb film on the Olympics by Leni Riefenstahl that circulated all over the world.

The distorted balance between internationalism and nationalism was expected to be restored in the next Games in Helsinki, the capital of a small country with no syndrome of superpower – save in sport. The Olympic Games in Helsinki were supposed to revitalize the noble aims of international sport to promote peace and international understanding, but the politics of the superpower again interfered and now turned the noble pursuits to the cruel realism of war: the hosts of the next Olympic Games were forced to forget sports and, at the eve of the Games, take up the arms in a fierce fight for the survival against a massive attack of the gigantic army of the neighbouring superpower!



Noble ideals of international understanding and of the common good of all mankind were buried in the ruins left by World War II, but along with peace, the willingness for international cooperation in sports recovered fast: the Olympic Games in London were held already in 1948, and Helsinki got a new chance to host the Games in 1952.

In memoirs, the Olympic Games in Helsinki are often provided with such labels as sportmanship, fairness and international goodwill and friendship proper. No doubt international goodwill and understanding are most important for a small country like Finland, and the Finns seemed to succeed in their pursuits of peace - but failed in their pursuit of medals! By the way, these two different aims of the hosts of any big international event are, under some circumstances, mutually exclusive in such a way that the ruthless pursuit of success in sports easily happens at the cost of promoting international goodwill and vice versa.

## **PRESSURE FOR CHANGE**

Childrens' play can exist on its own and as its own reality, but any social movement like international sports or the Olympic movement cannot. They do not exist in a social and cultural vacuum, but in a more or less intensive interaction with the societies around. Any social institution which falls behind the development in the society and fails to react constructively to the new challenges of life is prone to regression in its mission.

On the other hand, excessive susceptibility to all new demands and wants make a social institution too unstable for any constructive pursuits on its field; due to inconsiderate adjustments to new demands in the society, the institution in question can even lose its original identity and mission – a phenomenon known in sociology as *"replacement of the goal"*.

After World War II, most comprehensive and profound changes have shaped and re-structured most societies. The fast scientific-technological progress as well as the new configurations of political power in international relations had their major role in those changes and in establishing the new order in the world. No wonder they also had their impact on international sports.

## 1. Political interference

Political interests in terms of nationalism vs. internationalism have always been intertwined with international sports, as Paavo Seppänen, an eminent scholar on Olympic Games, has pointed out:

*"Nationalism has never been foreign to the Olympics. While the advocates have declared the creed of universal participation for the betterment of mankind, the countries of the world have interpreted the participation in the Games as an opportunity to express national feelings and national identification... The Games have been utilized not so much for international fair play, peace and understanding than for national self-interest and pride...*

*As a whole the Olympics and the Olympic system provide an excellent example of the contradiction between social dreams and social reality on cross-cultural and cross-national level" (Seppänen, 1984, 118, 124).*

After World War II, the polarity of national vs. international interests inherent in any international affairs and also in sports was materialized in the interference of superpower politics in sports. In the human history, the superpowers without a doubt, have had a crucial role in matters of international configurations. The war destroyed not only human life and culture but also the old configurations of the international network. Thus, a new configuration was in quest, and instead of the United Nation as the supreme authority of all nations in international affairs, two major political parties with contradictory conceptions of society and world order emerged: for the reconstruction of the international network emerged the socialist block with Soviet Union as the centre (Riordan, 1977, 379-384), and the "free world" with the United States of America as the centre. Except for the neutral democratic states, other countries were linked to these two power centres, in the socialist "camp" rather tightly under the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union and in the free world "camp" rather loosely under the umbrella of USA, with the major concern of the sovereignty of nations, and the free market system of the economy. The relationship between these major blocks proved to remain unstable, ranging from peaceful co-existence to the tensivity of the *cold war* with ruthless arms race for the supremacy of the world.

There is no doubt that this polarization of international politics had very significant reflections also in international sport, not to mention the unpolitical doctrines of sports as a sovereign realm of its own. But on the other hand, sports was most appropriate for the new psychological warfare as James Riordan has pointed out: it excites nationalist instincts, encourages group identification, it is superficially unpolitical and readily understandable across all barriers of race, class, religion and nationality and eventually sporting spectacles can be transmitted by mass media throughout the world (Riordan, J., 1977, 348).

Until the 1950s, the advanced countries of the Western world used to dominate the decision making in international federations of sports as well as in the IOC. Due to the new bipolar configuration of political power, all international bodies of administration in sports, sports sciences, sports journalism, occupational training etc. were exposed to reorganization; some balance in decision making between the major blocks was considered indispensable for the continuance of the international co-operation also in sports.

*This bipolar configuration of decision making in international sport brought new elements and new points of views into the decision making in international sport but made often the meetings of executive bodies also most ineffective and tedious. In quest for the consensus the points of views of both blocks should carefully been taken into account in each issue. Besides, in lack of simultaneous interpretation translations of any speeches into Russian and vice versa of personal interpreter interfered often with the effective dealing of issues on the agenda. The author had that experience e.g. as a long-term member of the International Committee of Sociology of Sport since its foundation in 1963. The bilingual working method tends to hinder also the publishing business of the Committee but thanks to the common sense of the late professor N. Novikow, the new Journal of International Review for Sociology of Sport emerged only in English with Russian, Chinese and German summaries.*

The bipolar political configuration was a significant determinant in the international contacts of the countries linked to those blocks: most contacts in sports and in cultural exchange took place between

the countries of the same block, which had the same common interests, and the contacts across the blocks were possible mainly in multinational contests e.g. for the World Championships and in the Olympic Games. By taking into account the official treaties of co-operation in sports between the various countries and also their participation in international sport events, e.g. during the period of the cold war, it would be possible to draw a reliable "sociometric matrix" on the polarized international network of sports in this era.

Although Soviet Union suffered immense losses of human life and societal resources in the war, the performances of Russian athletes (the largest team in the first Olympic Games it took part in Helsinki in 1952) were most impressive: the country won more medals and scored more points than any other participating country.

In the socialist camp sports, in general, used to be officially recognized in the education of the youth as subservient *to work and defence* whereas elite sport was pointedly subservient to the political mission for the socialistic movement in the world. James W. Jordan has specified the primary functions of elite sport as follows:

1. *gaining recognition and prestige in the world*
2. *maintaining and reinforcing the unity of the communist countries*
3. *demonstrating the advantages of the communist way of life and promoting communist foreign policy (Riordan, 1986, 36-38).*

Harnessed to political mission, sports is involved also in the confrontations of international blocks; the cold war found its manifestations also in international sport, and the great success of the socialist camp forced also the Western camp into mobilization of resources to the promotion of elite sport. Thus the *arms-race* of the superpowers had its counterpart also in sports.

Due to the political and economic submission to the Soviet Union, the political mission of sports was given a clear priority in all so called *satellite countries*. The unifying operative purpose was to prove the supremacy of socialism over capitalism in and through sports. According to James Riordan, in the twenty years in the 1960s and 1970s, over 600 Soviet coaches worked in a number of African, Asian and Latin American countries and some 250 people from developing countries graduated

from Soviet institutes of physical culture (Riordan, 1980, 157-158). Undoubtedly, the great success of socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, DDR and Cuba proved something about socialism but hardly anything about the over-all superiority in terms of the welfare of the society. It proves, in fact, only the effectiveness of the authoritarian regime in mobilizing the societal resources to any pursuit explicit given a priority by the state (or by the party in power). This effectiveness was proved in World War II with the authoritarian leaderships of countries and armies fighting for their survival. But is the international sport meant to be *war without weapons*? At all events, the *spartakiad* is undoubtedly the most effective and inclusive system for finding the most talented youth for the career in elite sports and the system with special schools provide them with progress and extraordinary rewards for their development in sports, and, finally, for their superior excellence in international sport and for the glory of socialism and *fatherland*.

For encountering the serious challenge set by the socialist camp with extensive public resources available for elite sports, the Western countries were forced to a critical evaluation of the state of the elite sport in terms of deficiencies and assets. In most Western countries, elite sport was primarily a matter of the private section. Yet most committees appointed to evaluate and re-organize elite sport were governmental and most of them also proposed increasing governmental intervention to co-ordinate work and to mobilize more resources to elite sport. The best known of the early works are the reports of the Wolfenden Committee *Sport and the Community* in Great Britain (1960) and the *President's Commission on Olympic Sport* in the U.S. (1977) Both official programs are parallel in their aims but somehow different in their "spirit". The *U.S. President's Commission* was established

*"to determine what factors impede or tend to impede the United States from fielding its best teams in international competition...The fact is that we are competing less well and other nations competing more successfully because other nations have established excellence in international athletics as a national priority .." (ix)*

The citation from the report of the Wolfenden Committee manifests well the British conception of international sport:

*"It is clearly true that national prestige is to some degree involved in international contests...But these feelings ought, in a mature and adult society, to be kept within reasonable bounds. It is not the end of the world if British teams are defeated, still less is it a symptom or proof of national decadence. To talk, as some do, as if sport could properly be used as a major instrument of international diplomacy, or as if a nation's authority and influence in world affairs at large are to be measured by its successes or failures in the Olympic Games, seems to us to reveal a serious lack of sense of proportion" (Wolfenden Committee, 1960, 73).*

Due to the political interference in the international sports underlined by the cold war and by the entrance of the totalitarian countries with a political conception of sports, politics got more and more involved with elite sport also in the West with increasing allocation of public resources (see Broom, 1986, 207-216, Redmond ed., 1984, 5-33). In reality, the Olympic Games now meant too much to too many people for the governments to stay aside, as Philip Goodhart and Christopher Chataway argue (Goodhart & Chataway, 1969, 127). Politics has entered international sport to stay.

## **2. The screwdriver effect of competition**

Not only does the *external* political interference in sports, in terms of *superpower politics* or *national vs. transnational* interests, have its impact on the system of international sports, but there are also *internal* factors inherent in the essence of sports as a competitive activity that may cause changes in the system and even modify the very concept of sport. It is called here as *the screwdriver effect of continuous competition*.

In sports, the process of competition is continuous: it is not finally finished and the winner today may be a loser tomorrow. In order to avoid that fate, the competitor has to improve his/her performance and overcome the challenge of his/her rivalries who, in turn, do their best to improve their performance in order to beat today's winner in the next contest tomorrow. Thus, *the screwdriver effect of continuous competition* – colloquially known as "*keeping up with the Joneses*" – as an ongoing process in sport tends all the time to raise *the standards of performance*

necessary for success. The most notorious proof of the screwdriver effect of continuous competition was the arms-race of the superpowers in the past, resulting in growing stock of nuclear arms capable of destroying most of the life on the earth. Fortunately, common sense halted the insane process, and disarmament of superpowers has replaced the arms-race – hopefully also as a continuous process. But this has not happened in sports: the arms-race is still going on everywhere in sports with accelerating speed, and all authorities seem to be unable to stop it - if and when necessary.

The screwdriver effect in sports gets its power to raise the demands of performances from the *social comparison* of athletic abilities as an inherent component of any competition, as Rainer Martens with reference to the pioneering work of Leon Festinger, has pointed out (Martens, 1976, 9-17). Amazingly, however, the particular consequences of the screwdriver effect of the *continuous* social comparison in sports has not attracted any attention of scholars in sports sciences.

The author appraised the screwdriver effects of continuous competition in sports already in the 1960s as one of the most powerful factor in the transformation of sport (Heinilä, 1973, 351-356).

It is feasible that there are at least two major conditions which are prone to generate the screwdriver effect:

- 1) a close contest with well matched competitors, and*
- 2) a great number of participants seeking a mutual common goal of valuable success.*

If the contestants are well matched in their capacity of performance, the drive for maximum effort and for improvement of the performance capacity is probably optimal, whereas marked inequality of contestants in this respect does not provide the optimal incentives for better athletes/teams to improve further, nor for weaker contestants to improve their capacity, by leveling off with or even beating their superior contestants. It is well known that the most effective social context for improving the performance of athletes is a joint training camp which enhances the process of social comparison of performance capacities between the athletes.

Also the number of athletes/teams involved in the pursuit of the same common goal of success affects the standards of performance in sports: the more there are contestants in pursuit of the same common goal of success, the higher the level of demands tends to be settled. The number of athletes engaged in a sports career varies greatly in different sports. In some popular sports with dozens of thousands of athletes there are in all likelihood also more talented athletes engaged than in some other sports with small number of devotees. Thus, the challenge of the success involved, i.e. the screwdriver pressure, is stronger in popular sports which naturally leads to higher standards of performance necessary for success. Accordingly, the relative level of demands is probably higher in the popular basketball than in the less popular handball, in swimming higher than in water polo, in 100 meter swimming higher than in the 1 500 meter event, in running events higher than in walking in track and field etc., although, due to the incommensurability of athletic performances in different events, it is very difficult to prove!

The significance of the number of participants for the screwdriver effect is well seen when the circle of the social comparison process in sports is geographically expanded: a local champion cannot be sure of the sufficiency of his/her performance for the championship in larger districts consisting of many municipalities, nor does the superiority in any district provide any certainty of superiority on the national level etc. With the expansion of the *group of reference*, i.e. with the increasing number of athletes/teams as referents in social comparison and as potential contestants, the higher the level of performance demands tends to raise. Likewise, the increasing number of countries involved in international sport tends to accelerate the screwdriver effect and contribute to the rise of demands in international sport. Wrestling used to be relatively popular in the Soviet Union and, thus, the level of demands in the top of the USSR used to be very high. Due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the former republics of the USSR joined the international federations of sports as new sovereign states and after this the level of performance demands in wrestling got higher in international contests.

*It is interesting to consider the issue of the level of performance demands from the point of view of the athletes/teams involved. For them, it is important to know the level of demands in advance in terms of*



*performance. In sports in which performance can be measured in absolute terms of time, length, weight etc., athletes who know their score, e.g. like 10.5 seconds in 100 metre dash, or 387 in rifle etc., can easily estimate their chance to succeed in a particular contest. Also in those sports in which the relative superiority of performance cannot be measured in any absolute terms, but only assessed by some specific criteria and scored according to a final score, e.g. gymnastic, figure skating and diving it may give rather vague grounds for the self-evaluation of one's capacity of performance. This self-evaluation is most difficult in ball games and combat sports, because the only criterion available for evaluation is the very performance of the opponents. Thus, the contests with various partners with known achievements can give some standards for the evaluation. If e.g. the basketball team has managed to beat the foreign team which managed to enter into the series of the finalists in the Europe cup in the previous year, it tells something about the chance for success of that particular team today on the European level. Thus, in ball games and combat sports, only participation in international sport and in contests or in joint training with foreign partners with known achievements can give some solid standards for evaluation of the sufficiency of one's performance capacity for success.*

The longitudinal statistics on sports records are, in general, consistent with the proposition of the screwdriver effect of continuous competition on the level of demands, but those statistics do not tell anything about *how* this effect and how the pressure of *citius - altius - fortius* is materialized in practice. Without a doubt, some anomalies can be seen in the statistics of records, but they are mostly due to changes in technical rules, but also due to abuse of equipment and even abuse of medicaments accompanying new type of supermen with equivalent appearance entering into venues of international sport in 1960s and 1970s. But it was the time of the arms-race in sports as will be seen later.

All in all, the very essence of a competition as a test of athletic superiority consists of elements of changes, and as a continuous process it fuels changes towards the trend *CITIUS - ALTIUS - FORTIUS*. Gunther Luschen points out that top-sport remains to be defined as a system of continuous growth (Luschen, 1988, 68). Due to this screwdriver effect of continuous competition, there cannot exist any stabilization of demands

and investments in sports as is assumed in the amateur conception of sports. Nobody can draw any ultimate limits for performances. Harold Connolly, the Olympic Champion in discus, expressed this lack of moderation and limits saying that some athletes are willing to take even ultimate risks for the great success in sport.

### **3. Intervention of science**

Due to the growing demands of the performances and the increasing political and public pressure to succeed in the tightening market of international sport, all production forces were mobilized in most advanced countries to produce a high performance necessary for success. The high achievements in sports which used to be in the past primarily a matter of individual effort and persistent training, became more and more like a joint venture, in which all relevant resources were utilized. This meant not only making more effective use of classical production forces of *work (= training)*, *capital (= money)* and *resources (= talented youth)* in elite sport, but also the contributions of modern production forces of *science with advanced knowhow and expertness*. This is a rather logical response to the challenge of the growing demands of performance in international sport.

The free market of the USA contributed also to the development of science and "domestic" university sport. Thus, the universities of the USA have pioneered also in sports sciences and in the application of scientific knowledge to the promotion of high performance. Since the 1950s, many European scientists as pioneers in their own countries got their basic scientific training in the universities of the USA, and with them the scientific exploration of sports has spread to all advanced countries which are anxious to succeed in international sport.

Significantly, in the progress of sports sciences the medical sciences of physiology, sport medicine and biomechanics contributing to the primary goal of high achievement have had their priority status in the West as well as in the East.

The primary importance of sports science in elite sport was well recognized also in the socialist camp of international sport, especially in the Soviet Union and GDR (DDR). Since the promotion of elite sport as

well as the allocations to sciences in the socialist camp are matters for state authorities, they are also able to most effectively release scientific resources and expertise for the mission of elite sport, if considered relevant. And it was considered relevant; hence, there was a great boom of sports sciences in the socialist camp, particularly in the Soviet Union and GDR (DDR) with Moscow and Leipzig as centres. The advanced knowledge provided by sports sciences together with the services of medical sciences were applied in training, training methods and technology and in the medical care of athletes but also in scientific training of coaches, sport physicians, managers etc. In fact, the scientific expertise used to have a high authority in the business of elite sport in the socialist camp. Meanwhile in the West the businessmen and voluntary "laymen" as the members of executive boards of sport federations executed their authorities in elite sport. Once again, the effectiveness of the authoritarian regime in releasing resources for the implementation of governmental pursuits was proved.

The scientific centres of sport in Moscow and Leipzig provided high education and scientific training also for a great number of specialists from developing and satellite countries linked to the socialist camp. In the socialist camp, this mutual co-operation to promote elite sport was far more systematic and effective than that in the Western camp, which had more sporadic and bilateral systems of co-operation. Obviously there were also differences between the two camps what comes to the secrecy of the scientific discoveries. In principle, under equal circumstances - which they never can be! - those countries which have the most advanced services of the most advanced science available for elite sport, have also the best chance for success in international sport. There emerged, however, some constraints also for the free flow of scientific information, at least as far as elite sport and the socialist camp concerned. Dieter Voigt, who used to work as a sport scientist in GDR (DDR), reports that the empirical studies in the social sciences were classified into three categories by their accessibility: the most exclusive category of research was available only to the power elite for the decision making and evaluation of the state of affairs, the next category was meant for middle and lower leaders and the third category was used for the agitation and propaganda (Voigt 1975, 12).

If a country allocates a great deal of resources to sports sciences in its pursuit of success in international sport, it is rather reasonable to use

that advanced knowhow to the advantage of the own elite sport. This is also a common code of conduct in the competitive market of business in the free world. Thus, along with the entering of sports sciences into elite sport also *business secrets* - and perhaps, also business spionage - has entered the arms-race of international sport.

#### **4. Manufacturing of high performance**

In the early years of modern sport, champions were born, or, at least, they were basically "self-made", whereas in the era of upgrading demands and sports sciences the champions are produced by the joint venture of a number of specialists each contributing to the training of athletes. Sport used to be a free interest of free men in their free time, and the achievements in sports were mainly based on the athletes' own effort and abilities. But *learning by doing* with the method of *trial and error* as the primary method of training soon proved to be ineffective considering the rising level of demands in sports. Coaches with their beliefs and tricks of knowhow entered the sports already in the 1920s and ever since their role as training experts has become most important due to their vital contributions to the achievements of the athletes, not to mention the team sports in which their contributions are of primary importance.

But the production of high achievements in sports uses not only the expertise of the coaches but all relevant resources available in society: political power in allocating the resources, the effectiveness of organizations focusing on various services in elite sport, advanced knowledge and knowhow of sports sciences, services of medical care, advanced training technology as a result of applied sport sciences, special facilities and training centres and, last but not least, most talented youth to be processed through training to champions of tomorrow. Due to the diversity of resources necessary in the pursuit of high performance, the whole process is more like industrial manufacturing with management, *division of labor* and various experts contributing to the training process of athletes/teams.

According to the revised new doctrine of elite sport, high achievement is first of all a matter of *effectiveness* of the production process in mobilizing relevant resources for the promotion of elite sport.

In this process, even the athletes are often conceived primarily as *material* – ”poor”, ”good”, ”promising”, ”talented” etc. – to be processed to reach high performance in sports. Since the quality of the human material is very crucial to the final results of the process, the search for the most talented youth is carried out often by means of scientific tests. Due to this screening of talents, the expensive resources of elite sport are not wasted, i.e. for training losers. This new conception of athletes in the production process means, in sociological terms, that sports as a channel for social mobility is transformed from *contest mobility* into *sponsored mobility*. In general terms of Ralph H. Turner:

*”The governing objective of contest mobility is to give elite status to those who earn it while the goal of sponsored mobility is to make the best use of the talents in society by sorting persons into their proper niches” (Turner, 1960).*

It is also plausible that the contest mobility type of selection process prevails on the lower level of competitive sport and , through the process, the most talented athletes are screened to the inner circle of elite sport, who then have privileges in training and services offered by the system (Heinilä, 1981, 151).

## II PERIOD:

Secularization
Politization
Scientification
Demoralization
Manufacturing

# SPORT IN TRANSITION – ANOMIE

Since the Olympic Games in Helsinki in 1952, the new challenges of the entry of the Soviet Union with its satellite countries into the international sports accompanied with the *screwdriver effect* of the continuous competition of an increasing number of countries/athletes involved in international sport, have contributed to the raising level of performance demands necessary for any success in contest. The Olympic motto "*citius - altius - fortius*" became reality in international sport. Since the pressure to keep up with the rising demands of elite sport increased, the whole system was liable to reorganization in order to cope with the challenges of raising demands. The old conceptions of sport proved to be irrevocably obsolete and new conceptions were sought for. Pressures of the market put the whole system of international sport into transition. Sport in transition signifies a stage of dissonance: old elements of amateur sport are mixed with the contradictory elements of the new conception of sport. In other words, the legitimate means of amateur sport were conceived as inappropriate and outdated with respect to the high demands of international sport. Hence the term *anomie*, the lack of clear norms, is used to characterize the period of international sport starting from the Olympic Games in 1952 to the Games in Los Angeles in 1992. Since, in reality, all the changes take place gradually and are also

often in irregular sequence, all strict delineations of the periods, however, are artificial and should be viewed in relative terms.

Sport in transition means the period when international sport, founded for the promotion of human ideals and international understanding, was transformed into more like a mock war without shooting,

## **1. Leadership in transition**

The new demands in the market of elite sport have also affected the leadership structure. In the socialist camp, elite sport is a matter of the public section; hence the high authorities of elite sport also had political commitments, submissions and authorizations. But due to the rising level of demands, the promotion of elite sport in Western countries has had the tendency to become more and more dependent on the allocation of public resources, which means at least partnership with state authorities and politics, occasionally also the recruitment of politicians into leadership in sport. Under these political circumstances prevailing at the time of the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1972, the election of a diplomat, an expert of international politics, President of IOC was a rather logic response to the actual demands in the field of international sport. And the late professor José M. Gagigal was immediately called by the new President from the the Olympic Congress in Tibilisi to Moscow for consultation. With the increasing governmental intervention with elite sport, it is plausible that also political interests are accentuated in various ways in the leadership of sport. In this respect it is significant that some of the most important multilateral governmental organizations such as UNESCO, the *Council of Europe*, the *European Union* and CSCE (The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) have taken a more and more active role especially in issues on the recent development of elite sport with increasing problems. Sport used to be a private matter and to some extent a reality of its own but with the increasing political significance as a world-wide movement and with the increasing dependence on public resources, it has lost much of its sovereignty and even got under the control of state authorities in many Western countries. Sport federations have already learned that they cannot have their own

policy which differs from the *apartheid policy*, prescribed by the UN. The members of the European Union have, among other things, learned that the *free flow of labor* as a political directive also concerns the transference of athletes from one club to another even across national borders.

High achievement is no more exclusively a matter of an individual's own effort, but instead the outcome of joint venture and a production process in which a number of experts and services but also advanced facilities contribute to the training of athletes. Owing to the increasing importance in this production process, experts in coaching, sport sciences, sport medicine and also in business are gaining more and more authority over the affairs of national sport federations as the major agents for the promotion of elite sport. This means that the leadership in these federations becomes differentiated into the role of trustees for decision making and into the role of professional experts contributing to the appropriateness of decisions.

It is plausible that especially during the transition, the role of leadership tends to be the most problematic issue due to the tensions and controversies generated by diverse interests: traditional idealism vs. secular effectiveness, educational conception of sport vs. the new conception of sport as a career, power conflicts between elected trustees and appointed experts etc. With the complete lack of studies on the leadership of sport, there is no reliable data on possible conflicts of interest in sport federations during the period of sport in transition. In Finland, the author conducted a national survey in 1967 on the value orientations of sport leaders representing national sport federations, regional associations and the chairmanship of local sports clubs. Applying the frame of reference of the American scholars Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott, sport leaders were categorized - by means of 15 different questions - according to the primary beneficiary (*cui bono i.e. for whom or for what*) of the work of their organization. The overall picture of the variety of sport leaders' primary interests was as follows (Heinilä, 1979, 64):



**Table 1. The main beneficiary of sport organization  
as conceived by sport leaders in Finland (n =1115)**

<b>The main beneficiary</b>	<b>Sport leaders (%)</b>
Rank and file members	66
Public at large	15
Organization itself	13
Amateurism proper	6
	----
	100

In this connection it is enough to note that sport leaders at that time had different conceptions of the primary tasks of sport organizations as well as different conceptions on the "right way to practise sport" (Heinilä, 1974, Heinilä, 1979, 59-74).

**Legitimacy in transition.** In the tough reality of international sport with ever-raising demands, the noble aims and humanistic ideals tend to lose their significance in the legitimacy of sport and are replaced primarily by secular values of international sport as *mass entertainment*. This profane legitimacy of the participation in international sport was well expressed also by Finnish sportleaders in the 1960s:

*"Victory at any cost! That is the feeling all Finnish people want to feel".*

Referring to Georg Simmel's thoughts, Gunther Luschen has pointed out that a competition in sport is composed of both the associative and dissociative elements (Luschen, 1970). A competition related to zero-sum -games has dissociative propensities and is prone to regulation problems but the engagement in contests with other adversaries in terms of common rules also implies associative propensities of competition.

The intervention of political interests in international sport in general and the interests of superpowers in particular, tend to make international sport more vulnerable to disintegration, as the increasing number of boycotts of the Olympic Games indicates. Also, if the superpowers, due to their arms-race in sport and their overwhelming resources have distinct hegemony and overall superiority in international

sport, the participation of other countries with diminishing chances for any success tends to lose its meaning; the purpose of international sport is not the participation as such, but success in the contest. While, due to the raising demands, the investments in sport are increasing, success is of even greater importance than before for countries involved in international sport as the main justification for their increasing stakes.

While the noble humanistic ideals and the superordinate aims to promote friendship and international understanding tend to lose their power as the primary legitimacy of international sport and remain more as a *non-operative* relics from the Coubertinian era, the very issue of the legitimacy of international sport gets accentuated. This is well seen in the recent increasing interventions of governmental organizations in the problem solutions of international sport. However, the crucial question remains open: "Are the profane associative elements, which are inherent in sport, still strong enough to overcome the effects of the dissociative propensities of international sport in transition?"

**The conception of sport in transition.** Due to the enhanced demands in international sport, the official conception of sport as a leisure activity turned out to be out of date. Sports have to be taken more as work if the athlete wants to succeed, and other interests of life have to be subservient to the demands of sport. This clash between the old humanistic and emerging new conceptions has affected the conceptions of Finnish sport leaders concerning the "*right way to practice sport*".

Due to the rising level of demands, conceptions of sport tend to be differentiated, and elite sport conceived as a career and the central interest of life gets distinguished from the traditional conception of sport as more like a hobby and subservient to more central interests of life. While the new conception of sport as a career is mostly implied in elite sport as a necessity, the traditional conception is still the main operative belief in national sport and most likely will remain so in the future. This *differentiation* of conceptions of competitive sport accompanied with the differentiation of action systems, occur everywhere and are most advanced in countries anxious to pursue international success: the high priority of elite sport in the allocation of resources inevitably facilitates the distinction of elite sport from the traditional sport. It is worth noting that this differentiation of sport does not designate actual controversies in sport; both systems can co-exist and in fact do co-exist in a symbiotic

**Table 2. The conception of the right way to practice sport held by Finnish sport leaders (n = 1198).**

”Sport should be practiced”

”Old” conception		”New” conception	Total (%)
playfully	57 %	seriously	43 % 100
by desire	16 %	determinately	84 % 100
in versatile way	71 %	in specializing	29 % 100
for joy of effort	65 %	for a success	35 % 100
as hobby	29 %	for achievement	71 % 100
for athlete himself	53%	for one’s country	47 % 100

Heinilä (1974), ob cit. 53-59.

Conceptions were measured all in all by means of 14 items - each with two choices - derived from the *pattern variables* of Talcott Parsons. The distributions in the table indicates at best the tendency for the polarization of conceptions which emerged in item analysis and in the scaling of items (ibid 55-59).

relationship: elite sport recruits the most talented athletes from the national system of sport and the national system of common sport makes use of the appeal of high achievements of elite sport in marketing sport to the youth.

The controversy of the conceptions is, however, evident if 1) the different conceptions have different proponents in the decision making body of sport federations or if 2) the official conceptions of sport in high authorities differ from the operative conceptions implemented in praxis. During the period of sport in transition the controversy of the latter type was common.

The amateur conception on sport could not stand against the market forces in international sport. Yet it had its proponents even at the very top of the IOC:

*”One of the silliest proposals which has been made is that the Olympic Games should be thrown open to professional athletes.... The thing that is not understood is that amateurism is a philosophy of life, a consecration and devotion to the actual tasks at hand rather than to the payment or to*

*the reward.... This, of course, is a strange conception in the materialistic world in which we live, where everything seems to be measured by dollars, but there are certain qualities in life, like charity, patriotism, love and friendship that are not measured in dollars. Amateurism is one of these and the world would be a sorry place without them...*

*Amateur sport is recreation, an avocation and not a vocation, play and not work. To exist and flourish it must be free, without either political or commercial dictation. Professional sport, so-called, is no sport at all, but a branch of the entertainment business like the circus; it is for the spectators whereas amateur sport is for the players. A competitor who is paid is a workman and not a player. The professional takes from sport, while the amateur gives to sport. These are fundamental truths that must always be remembered." (Brundage, 1963, 35-37).*

But in sport and in pursuits for world championships the silliest things can happen, as we all know. Despite the gradual moderations in terms of *amateurism*, the discrepancy between the official conception of sport with consistent *rules of eligibility*, and the raising demands of elite sport at the top still existed. Most athletes who wanted to have some great success in international sport were forced to make some compromises with other interests of life, particularly with their occupational career.

The dilemma between the official directives and the high demands of sport was solved more or less spuriously in different ways in different political systems of countries. In the socialist countries top athletes were adhered into the payroll of the army, public administration, the Labor Union etc. with their main obligations to excel in sport for the glory of their country. Because sport used to be primarily a part of the private section, this kind of *state amateurism* was not an appropriate solution in Western countries. Instead, the more or less spurious solution was found often in business enterprises and universities (in USA) which enrolled well-known athletes and exploited their fame and achievements for their own interest. As to the devotion to sport career, there is not any great difference between the state-aided athletes and the athletes sponsored by a private firm or organization as Lord Killanin (President of IOC in 1972-80) pointed out (Killanin, 1979, 13).

The contradiction between the official norms and the actual demands in the market of international sport with a rising level of performance

generated the social situation of *cross-pressure*. This cross-pressure of the contradictory expectations easily leads to the state of *anomie*, meaning a lack of clear-cut norms for proper behavior.

**Control in transition.** In the sport history, the period of sport in transition was contaminated by *double morality* known as "*sham amateurism*", which as a term refers to *professionalism* implemented in fake forms of amateurism. Generically, sham amateurism was a logical response to the accentuating contradiction between the demands of performance in the market of international sport and the constraints of official rules of amateurism upon the athletes to counteract these demands in a proper way. The main criteria of proper amateurism used by international federations and IOC were defined in terms of money and occupation: sport was not meant for making profit nor as an occupation. But as Christopher Brasher, the Olympic hero in the Games in Melbourne, has pointed out the main problem in professionalism in sports is not the money but "the time" – inequalities of athletes in their commitments to sport:

*"They (IOC) do not seem to have realized that the real danger to the ideals of the Olympics comes from those who forsake a normal career in order to devote themselves full-time to the pursuit of a gold-plated medal" (Brasher, 1968, 6).*

The very meaning of sport is seriously jeopardized, if partners in contest are deviously privileged in their commitments to pursuits in sport in terms of time and energy. "What this might be called, but it is certainly not sport" (ibid 7). This inequality of athletes in their commitment to sport was accentuated most during this period of transition due to the cross-pressure prevailing in the market of international sport. Brasher himself called the Olympic Games in Mexico City "the unfair Games" in the history of sport and obviously with good reason. Athletes were not only unequal with respect to their commitment to sport but also in their opportunities to being acclimatized to the high altitude of the Games and also in the abuse of anabolic steroids for enhancing their capacity of performance in an unfair way. But the history of the Olympic Games does not recognize such great distortions of the very meanings of sport. Instead, it glorifies the Games of Mexico City and the winners there as

success of international sport. Jack Scott sarcastically reminds the world of the Olympic Champion in Mexico City "who was honored as the ideal amateur athlete, but who carried "enough drugs around with him to open up a drug store" (Scott, 1971, 124).

To restore the role of the ethical code in sport The Committee of Ministers (Council of Europe) has adopted the following conceptions of *fair play* on September 24th 1992:

*Fair play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialization and corruption (The Code of Sports Ethics. Council of Europe).*

With the raising demands in elite sport, the stakes of athletes and the production systems of high achievement get heightened with a concomitant pressure for success. Under this pressure any idealistic conception, such as the one cited above, of *fair play* as the master code of conduct tends to lose some of its force in the self-regulation of athletes' behavior and is overcome by the master norm of *effectiveness*. In a cross-cultural survey on fair play conceptions of junior football players, it was evident that these conceptions are far from uniform. They tend to be differentiated between the polar norms of *effectiveness* and proper *fair play* called *idealism*, and the former mode of conduct tends to be related to a more professional and the latter to more an amateur conception of sport (Heinilä, 1984, 19-45). These findings were well compatible with the propositions of James W. Keating on the differentiation of moral conceptions according to the different pursuits in sport (Keating, 1964, 25-35). Keating highlights the inappropriateness of *gentlemanly conduct* in "athletics" which aims at victory in contest and is distinct from "sport" engaged primarily for immediate pleasure:

*"The strange paradox of sportmanship as applied to athletics is that it asks the athlete, locked in a deadly serious and emotionally charged*

*situation, to act outwardly as if he were engaged in some pleasant diversion. After an athlete has trained and sacrificed for weeks (K.H.: pro years !), after he has dreamed of victory and its fruits and literally exhausted himself physically and emotionally in its pursuits - after all this - to ask him to act with fairness in the contest, with modesty in victory, and an admirable composure in defeat is to demand a great deal" ( ibid 12).*

Due to the heightening pressure of demands and for success, even the crucial norm of the strict compliance with rules of games has lost some of its regulative power as a code of conduct of athletes' behavior. The tentative conclusion from the cross-cultural survey was that the regulation and the maintenance of integration depends more and more upon *the extrinsic control and sufficiency of the sanctions* of sports than upon self-regulation by the internalized common norms and a shared notion about fair conduct in contest (Heinilä op.cit. 48).

But the very existence of the problem of sham amateurism indicates also that the extrinsic system of control in international sport has its deficiencies. These deficiencies are to a great extent due to the very peculiar entity of international sport as a system. As an entity it is like an iceberg: only a small fraction of a true contest is visible and as such under the more or less effective surveillance of sport authorities, while the major part, e.g. most national affairs for promoting elite sport and all doings of athletes remains more or less invisible at least to international sport federations and IOC. As to the control and the execution of rules with reference to this invisible part of elite sport, the international sport authorities have to rely mostly on the surveillance of national authorities, which due to the national interests involved tend to be rather ineffective and even reluctant in their role as the *law enforcement agent* of international sport. Even the executive members of international sport federations and IOC have their national interests and loyalties as constraints in their task as agents of control.

Figure 7 illustrates the basic dilemma of the control system of international sport pertaining the long line of control and to the deficiencies of interests.

The figure on the priority of interest of control agents is quite consistent with the widely recognized dilemmas of control in international

sport but should be considered as a proposition without any rigorous empirical verification. In terms of control, the descending order of agents means the strengthening of the vested interests of nations and athletes with increasing constraints concerning compliance with common rules of international sport.

In international sport, with a rising level of demands and with the enhancing stakes, the maintenance of order depends greatly on the effectiveness of the extrinsic control. But with the increasing national interests and stakes involved, the control measures of the national sport federations and NOC's tend to be ineffective and insufficient as can be seen in increasing open and covert misuses and misconducts in sport. The cross-pressures and *anomie* jeopardize the effective executions of control. In this soil of anomie hypocrisy flourished: *fair play* was respected mainly in lip-service but not in the actions of sport authorities. Thus, in the forum of the VI General Assembly of ANOC in 1988 in Vienna with the delegates of 161 NOC's, Mr. Manfred Ewald, the President of GDR's (DDR) Olympic Committee declared bombastically:

***Figure 7. The main control agents of international sport with their priority of interests***

<b>Agent of control</b>	<b>Priority of interest</b>
IOC	SUPERNATIONAL INTEREST > NATIONAL INTEREST
INT. SPORT FEDERATION	SUPERNATIONAL INTEREST > NATIONAL INTEREST
NOC	NATIONAL INTEREST > SUPERNATIONAL INTEREST
NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATION	NATIONAL INTEREST > SUPERNATIONAL INTEREST
SPORT CLUBS	NATIONAL INTEREST
COACHES & ATHLETES	SELF-INTEREST > NATIONAL INTEREST



*"The German Democratic Republic - both the governing body of sport and the authorities - rejects any kind of doping in sport. But if we want to take vigorous action against doping we must not overlook the fact that doping is not the cause but an effect of development that increasingly affect Olympic sport: professionalism inimical to sport and the commercial abuse of Olympic sport" (Bulletin - NOC of GDR, no1, 1989, 15).*

Furthermore Manfred Ewald proposed that the sport organizations of the USSR, GDR and USA, as the most successful countries in Olympic Games in that time, should agree to cooperate in this pursuit "for gaining experience and setting an example to others" (ibid. 15). No doubt these three countries used to be the most successful in the Games but there is lot of evidence that they used to be most advanced also in the extensive abuse of drugs. The double morality of sport authorities had its most conspicuous manifestations in GDR where the President of NOC – highly honored by the IOC – reclaimed fair play and honesty in sports. Meanwhile the *misuse of medicaments* for enhancing the capacity of performance was systematically implemented as a state secret under the auspices of the Security Police of the State (Berendonk, 1991).

Hypocrisy and the problems of regulations were accentuated in the period of sport in transition.

**Resourcing in transition.** With the rising level of demands of performance, the issue on the sufficiency of resources became accentuated especially in the agenda of national sport federations and NOCs and one of the main concerns of the management. In the past, elite sport used to be more or less a self-sufficient enterprise with modest costs adjusted to the modest incomes of gate fees, but not anymore in the era of manufacturing high achievements as a joint venture of a variety of expert services.

It is the most curious fact that sport is an insignificant manifestation of human life *as such*. In the very essence, it is nothing but just running, jumping, skating, skiing and throwing, kicking or batting the ball etc., isn't it? It cannot live on its own, but depends more and more on the increasing subsidies of society at large! Are there any countries without any public subsidiaries and subventions to elite sport any more?

Hardly any – at least not among those which have had some success in international sport.

Due to the emerging new production systems with a variety of expert services and special facilities, the costs of elite sports have been multiplied without a corresponding increase of income in gate fees. Since elite sport is meant to implement national interests in international sport – *for the glory of fatherland* – it is reasonable that the public sector of the state and municipalities have their own share in the allocation of resources for elite sport: *"If we want to have any success in international sport, public resources are necessary in elite sport."* If nothing else, the great success of the Soviet Union demonstrated how the highest realization of human potential can be most effectively achieved through the planned application of the society's resources (Riordan, 1980, 160). This fact has already been well recognized also by state authorities in western countries, as it is evident in all official documents concerning the promotion of sport. However, the problem is still real everywhere and most likely will remain so due to the ever-increasing production costs of high performance in continuous competition with the rising level of demands. In the past, the ideals of sport used to be the main substance in proclamations of national sport federations responsible for the promotion of sport; today, idealism is replaced by the cry for more resources *"if we want to have a success"*. The problem of the sufficiency of resources is accentuated especially in small countries with a small market of spectator sport.

## **2. Competition in transition**

With the rising level of demands, the high capacity of performance is no more the product of the athletes' efforts alone but the outcome of the production process and joint venture which enable the utilization of a variety of resources in the training of athletes/teams to the top.

This transformation of sport from the individual's effort into the manufacturing process means that athletes are conceived as material to be processed in the same way as raw materials in industry are processed into high quality products for the market. This has challenged the conception of sport as a private interest as well as the conception of contest in sport. Ommo Grupe points out that elite sport has become a public event and

subject to social expectations and even to social pressure. It is no longer only the cultivation of private "hobbies" serving primarily personal satisfactions but is part of social life with all its problems, dangers, dependencies and derailments (Grupe, 1985, 52).

The author has called this transformation of sport *a totalization process*: for meeting the ever- rising level of demands of international sport – due to the screwdriver effect of the continuous competition – an increasing amount of variety of resources are necessary and mobilized for the pursuit of success (Heinilä, 1984).

*The term totalization of sport is derived from the term total war with reference to "war in which all resources of a country (manpower, industry, etc.) are involved" (Hornby, 1963).*

The term *totalization* has two reference points here:

- 1) it refers to athletes' efforts to submit other interests of life to sport and to make use of all his/her resources for the pursuits of high achievement in sport, and*
- 2) it refers to the efforts of sport organizations responsible for the promotion of elite sport to mobilize all relevant resources available in society for the production of high achievement in international sport.*

There are no long-term statistics available on the allocation of various resources for elite sport in different countries. However, it is obvious that with the rising level of demands, the investments of resources in elite sport have grown in countries taking part in international sport. It is also obvious that there are great deviations in the totalization process between the countries. It is highly plausible that the totalization process was most advanced in the socialist camp of countries in the past, but it is well advancing also in such a small country as Finland, anxious to uphold its glorious traditions in international sport.

The simplified picture of allocated resources in figure 8 indicates that sport federations have managed to mobilize a variety of resources not only from the private sector of society but a great deal also from the public sector. It is also evident that the totalization process has been in progress especially in the public sector which means increasing subsidies of the state to elite sport in a variety of forms.

With the rising level of demands, the totalization process tends to advance in countries which "want to have a success in international sport". Riordan notes that the nations rank differently according to the amount of interest their governments take in the organization and conduct of sport since the efficiency and the command over resources

**Figure 8. Relative allocation of resources to elite sport in Finland**  
(total amount = \* \* \* \*)

Type of resource	Private sector	Public sector
<b>For training</b>		
Special schools for athletes		****
Special units in military service	*	***
Training camps abroad	***	*
<b>For expert services</b>		
Training of coaches	**	**
Training of specialists in sport medicine		****
Sport clinics	**	**
<b>For research and testing</b>		
Applied research in sport sciences	*	***
Foundation for the Development of Sport	*	***
Doping laboratory and testing	*	***
<b>For sport facilities</b>		
Sport facilities	*	***
Training centres and sport institutes	*	***
Facilities for acclimatization, ski tunnel #	*	***
<b>For administration</b>		
NOC	**	**
Sport Federations	**	**
Sport clubs	***	*
<b>For other services</b>		
Health insurance for athletes	****	
Foundation for occupational training		****
Grants of NOC for elite athletes	**	**
Monthly state grants for top athletes		****

# These facilities called the Alpine cottage, a simulation of high altitude training designed to improve athletes' capacity of oxygen intake due to the low oxygen level, produced artificially into the air to be breathed by athletes. The facilities have been proved beneficial in training especially in any endurance sports.

The ski tunnel refers to the recent plan of the Winter Sport Centre to construct an underground skitunnel with an artificial winter climate for over-the-year training in cross country skiing. The funding of the ski tunnel is shared by the state and the municipality.

count most in success in international sport (Riordan, 1977, 349) In its search for resources, sport have penetrated into main social institutions of society in a country as Finland, which is strongly committed to international sport:

**Figure 9. Social institutions allocating resources for elite sport in Finland**

Social institution	Quality of allocation
Family	Motivation, encouragement, support
School education	Special school and curriculum for athletes
Defence forces	Special units and program for athletes
Science	Advanced knowhow and training
Mass communication	Promotion of public interest, hero-worship
Arts	Glorification of sport achievements in sport literature and sport museums etc.
Social service	Medical services, social security in sport
Leisure	Spectator sport
Polity	State subsidies, sport facilities, grants etc.
Economy	Partnership with business
Religion	Spiritual guidance for Olympic team *)

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*\*) Recently the Church has appointed a priest to the staff of the Olympic team to give athletes the spiritual guidance at request!*

*There is hardly any social institution without any contribution to elite sport in Finland – with the exception of marriage, which yet is the most significant institution for elite sport in breeding kids as "material" for sport organizations to be processed to a high achievements. It is likely that in some countries where success in international sport is taken as a matter of at all costs, sport authorities sooner or later will establish some council services for screening out the spouses who have most positive genetic DNA for breeding talented offsprings for sports careers and for the glory of fatherland.*

The totalization process entails at the same time increasing costs of elite sport: the price of the Olympic medal has been multiplied since the Olympics in Helsinki.

*Avery Brundage, former President of IOC (1952-72) was only in some rhetoric sense right when he at the 75th anniversary celebration of the Olympic movement in 1969 said that Olympic medal has to be won, it cannot be bought.*

But high achievement and success in international sport is not only a matter of the quantity of resources available for elite sport but also a matter of the quality of those resources. Big countries with vast resources available have a great advantage over the smaller countries with limited resources as the trend in recent statistics on achievements and medals prove. High achievement is, however, not only a matter of the quantity of resources available but also the quality matters, of course. High achievement is not a matter of the number of athletes engaged in sport but rather the number of talents. It is not a matter of the number of coaches but rather the competence of coaching, etc. Since sport is a subsystem of a society at large, also the quality of resources in sport depend on the quality level of the infrastructure of society: the most advanced countries in terms of science, economy, medical care, technology, nutrition etc. tend to be most advanced also in the quality of resources available in sport, as proposed in the figure 10 (Heinilä, 1989, 193-198).

***Figure 10. Sport resources as related to resources of society at large***

<b>Resources of elite sport</b>	<b>Resources of society</b>
Number of talents in elite sport	Size of population - number of talents - level of nutrition - standard of living etc.
Achievement orientation in sport	Achievement as a common frame value
Sport funding	Level of national production
Effectiveness of sport authorities	Political order of society
The quality of sport sciences	The quality of science in general
The quality of medical services in sport	The quality of medical services in general
The quality of training and coaching	The quality of higher education in society
The ecological setting of sport	The geographical frame of the country etc

Countries with relatively limited resources available in elite sport can compensate to some extent their quantitative deficiencies by the high effectiveness and the high quality of work for elite sport as is done e.g. in all Nordic countries, which are advanced not only as modern societies and in scientific-technological development but also in the production of high achievement in sport. Small countries seeking for success in international sport today should be willing to allocate their gross national products proportionally more in elite sport than big countries (Pfetsch et al., 1975, 107).

But after all, as a rule, with the rising level of demands in international sport, big and advanced countries with superior resources for elite sport have an advantage over small countries with limited resources as to the chances for success. This trend which is evident in international sport, contradicts with the early conception of sport as an antithesis to war. Thus Paul Weiss's statement: "War thrives on the possession of advantages in supply and power but a game, instead, demands an equilization of advantages", is no more valid in international sport (Weiss, 1969, 181). Due to the totalization process each party in international sport just searches for advantages over others in pursuit for success.

The discussion about the transformation and about the invisible background of elite sport is a necessary introduction to the crucial question on the changing validity of the competition in international sport: what is it supposed to measure as a test of athletic superiority and what does it in fact test?

In the earlier discussion on the validity of a contest as a test of athletic superiority, it was concluded that the prime determinant of high validity is the implementation of the principle of *equal terms* in competitions with respect to the rules, equipment, outfits, tracts etc. Any deviations from the principle of equal terms in this respect deteriorates the validity of contest as a fair test of athletic superiority. Other determinants of the validity of contest, such as the *proportion of chance* and *the reliability of the final order* as the result of a contest are omitted in discussion here because sport in transition does not have anything to do with their significance or this interference remains relatively marginal. It can even be assumed that the extensive intervention of scientific expertise into training and

sport contributes to the decreasing influence of chance on the outcomes of contest.

But the *totalization process* going on in elite sport everywhere interferes radically with the sporting purpose of international sport. Due to the totalization process international sport is transformed into the competition on *the effectiveness* of the whole national system to produce high achievement in sport! Hence it is important to make the distinction between *overt validity* and *covert validity*; the former refers to a actual contest as a test of the athletic superiority of participants in their *visible performances* and the latter refers to the pre-contest circumstances conducive to athletes' capacity of performance demonstrated and tested in actual contest (Heinilä, 1989, 193-198).

Due to the totalization process, the performance capacity of athletes is increasingly dependent on the effectiveness of the production system responsible for elite sport and on the quantity and quality of resources available. This transformation of sport as a contest between athletes/teams into a contest between national systems for superiority of their effectiveness facilitates the structural incompatibilities of international sport: while the main principle of fair contest tends to be accentuated in actual contest, the production of high performance takes place extensively on unequal terms: "each system tries hard to get some advantage over the others, for example, in training methods, devices and facilities, but also in incentives, screening talents into sport, medical services, and even in cheating and doping" (Heinilä, 1995, 170). Helmut Digel's point of view is similar:

*"Unfortunately in international top-level competitive sport those athletes or those teams are most likely to win medals that are in a position to carry out scientific research programs in wind tunnels, that have a staff of specialists in biomechanics serving as advisors, that apply modern methods of sport psychology and that, of course, can rely on the competent team of physicians who are willing to exceed the usual limits imposed by medical ethics. It is in this way that the principle of equality of opportunities in sport has been distorted. This distortion places the countries of the Third World at an especially great disadvantage" (Digel, 1988, 186-187).*



Due to the rising level of demands and totalization process success in international sport is more and more a matter of increasing inequalities of countries in their capacities to produce high achievements. Curiously enough, the epithet of C. Goodhart and C. Chataway for international sport: "*War without weapons*", seems to gain more substance also from the totalization process going on in sport.

The reciprocal reaction between the increasing demands of performance and the totalization process as a countermeasure fuels both processes and results in extending totalization and in raising the level of demands! This process is related to the armsrace between the superpowers in the past(?) and has some notorious parallels also with the past tragedies of *the total war*. This on-going process accentuates the problem of fairness in international sport: there cannot be any true fairness (or validity) in contest between such unequal partners as superpowers and small countries – as there is no fairness in war between a superpower and any minor power!

Briefly, a competition in international sport is supposed to test the relative superiority of participating athletes and teams under equal conditions and so it does but only in appearance, since due to the totalization process it extensively measures the relative effectiveness or superiority of national systems in producing high performance in sport. Hence the overt high validity of the actual contest is accompanied with the covert low validity of the "precontest" of national systems in their pursuits to produce high performance; thus the overt equality of partners in actual contest is delusive due to the covert conspicuous inequalities of national systems contributing to high performance of athletes in contest.

### **3. Spectator sport in transition**

Due to the extension of sport interest and powerful media transmitting events of sport "live" all over the world, spectator sport is the most popular mass entertainment. It is plausible, yet difficult to prove, that this excessive and even eccentric enthusiasm around elite sport well-manifested also by extensive columns of sport with banner headlines in daily papers also recruit extensively lots of people with a rather superficial

interest in and commitments in genuine sport. Hence with the extension of spectator sport, the proportion of people, who are only superficially familiar with the essence of sport and the code of the proper conduct, tend to be increased. At all events, not only the greater number of *marginal* people loosely socialized into sport but also the mere massification of spectator sport make sport more vulnerable to mass behavior and to disorders of various kinds. People in the audience seeking mainly for *time-out* experiences or *confrontations* with adversaries – whether real or indoctrinated – are potential to any interference of the proper order of contest. Gregory P. Stone has phrased this propensity of spectators more eloquently in his well-known article on spectator sport:

*"The game, inherently moral and ennobling of its players, seems to be giving away to the spectacle, inherently immoral and debasing. With the massification of sport, spectators begin to outnumber participants in overwhelming proportions, and the spectator, as the name implies, encourages the spectacular – the dis-play. In this regard the spectator may be viewed as an agent of destruction as far as the dignity of sport is concerned. There is a tension between the morality of the game and the amorality of the spectator "* (Stone, 1973, 83).

Spectators are the main clientele of elite sport; there is no elite sport in the modern sense without the vicarious interest of spectators. But spectators as a kind of *a lonely crowd* imply also some potentiality for the distortion of sport as a fair contest for victory. The rules of sport have no authority over the spectators and the less spectators are familiar with the rules of proper conduct in sports the more liable they are to any provocation for dis-play as a reaction to incidents in venue. Two other intervening factors contribute to the enhanced potentiality for the misbehavior of spectators.

First, spectators do not enter into the audience with *empty minds* but with preoccupations of suppressed aggressions, frustrations, a variety of prejudices as well as with more delightful preoccupations and expectations. There are hardly any studies on the main preoccupations of spectators entering as an audience, let alone their possible reflections on their behavior as spectators but it is plausible that the resentments seek an outlet for their expressions. In a recent survey on the football

fans in Hungary, Gyöngui Szabo Földesi found that around 20 % of the spectators, by their own account, do not particularly like or even understand football but as "quasi fans" they go to the stadium to manifest "their disobedience against society" (Földesi, 1996, 418-419).

Second, the incidents at the venue stimulate the reactions of spectators; what happens in venues are interpreted by spectators and assigned with a variety of meanings imprinted by the expectations and preoccupations of people in the audience and finally manifested in behavior – orally or/and in "body language" – which tends to have some contaminated effects on "the lonely crowd" of spectators and, at worst, may turn into *mob behavior*. The primary causes of e.g. hooliganism in football are difficult to prove: some scholars seek them from the society at large, some from the mass behavior of spectators and some from the incidents in contest proper. All these "reasons" might be present in hooliganism. Yet some particular incident or signal in the contest is often necessary – if not sufficient – to trigger reactions in the audience.

As to the actual code of conduct – or better *code of contact* – in contest, particularly in team sports, constituent on the face to face contact of parties involved, is hardly manifested in any *civilization process* in recent development. Due to the rising demands, also stakes in games are enhanced and contests tend to become a most serious struggle for victory: *winning is not the main thing, it is the only thing* that matters. Hence ruthless tacklings, nasty tricks, fist fights and even the intentional injuring of an opponent are common tools in the battlefield of sport today. Indeed, under these circumstances "acting with fairness in the contest, with modesty in victory, and an admirable composure in defeat" is no more an operative code of conduct in sport. And the "war without weapons" at the venues with the injustices perceived in the work of umpires provide plenty of stimuli for the activation of spectators to take a stand and interfere with the incidents at the venue. Due to the changes in the conceptions of sport, the potentiality of *display* tends to be accentuated in spectator sport. Especially the bilateral contests in team sports, which facilitate the strong *in-group* and *out-group* formations with respective ethnocentric and antagonistic attitudes in the audience, are more vulnerable to disorder than e.g. the Olympic Games with multinational participants and spectators (Heinilä, 1966, 174-182, Goldstein 1979, 222-327, Guttman, 1986, 83-185).

#### 4. Mass media as an amplifier

The role of mass media in promoting elite sport in general and international sport in particular has been of great significance since the very beginning of modern sport but this significance has been accentuated when the television, with fast expanding networks, entered the market of sports. The first Olympic Games televised overseas took place in London in 1948 but the TV-audience has since increased manifold from millions up to a billion in Los Angeles in 1992.

There are no elite sports in the modern sense without the concomitant contributions of mass media. Obviously, mass media does not provide any new elements for elite sport; instead it amplifies the functional power of the core components and the social significance of elite sport as specified in the figure (next page).

While media and particularly the television as the most effective media, can make any man with the exceptional capacities to master the puck with the stick in the ice-hockey ring a *superstar* and millionaire, it has also promoted the elite sport as *the biggest small thing in the world*, and at the same time as a most serious matter and a matter of state affairs and even a matter of superpower politics.

Due to the increasing stakes involved in elite sport, it tends to become more vulnerable to misconduct and dubious exploitations. Any severe malpractice in elite sport tends to jeopardize the credibility of sport – if revealed and brought into public. Under these circumstances, sport authorities are rather reluctant to any intervention: *the shield should be shiny* in public. Even the measures to restore the proper order is often awkward and cannot rectify the damages done. This can happen if e.g. the Olympic hero celebrated according to *"the ceremony of protocol"* and concomitant fame and fortune, is later proved a fraud and the true hero has remained without the due glory he/she deserves. No doubt, the number of *judicial murders* and fake heroes tends to be increasing in any elite sport and only few of them are disclosed as non-heroes?

From the point of view of sport authorities it might seem more expedient to ignore the malpractice, particularly if there are many athletes and/or a "significant" country involved than to criminalize them for the breaking of the constitutive rules of sport. Due to the alertness of the press the increasing cheating in sport has become a public issue which

## *Figure 11. Amplifying role of mass media*

Focus of influence	Effect of influence
Elite sport at large The Olympic Games World Championship etc.	High prestige of elite sport in society <i>Sport as the biggest small thing in the world</i>
Competitive sport	Promotion of interest in sport <i>World-wide interest in sport</i>
Publicity of sport events	High publicity of sport <i>Creation of champions, super- and megastars</i>
Sport as vicarious interest	Popularity of spectator sport <i>Sport as mass entertainment</i>
The proper order in sport	The implementation of common good in sport <i>Mass media as agent of social control</i>
Funding of sport	Business partnership with sport <i>Commercialization of sport</i>

in turn has made sport authorities tighten control measures. Thus, the role of media as a *watchdog of democracy* and an agent of social control is accentuating in sport in transition.

### **Summary: Sport in transition**

The coubertinian idealism in international sport encountered its major failure already in 1936 in the Olympic Games of Berlin harnessed to propagate the political might of *the Third Reich* and was superceded in the 1950s by the political exploitation. Due to immense expansion of sport all over the world, its political potentiality has become so great that it could no more countervail political exploitations. Besides, *the cold war* between the superpowers facilitated the process.

Due to the screwdriver effect of continuous competition the level of demands of performance necessary for success tends to be increasing in international sport. To keep up with the rising demands, more and more resources are mobilized for elite sport and international sport gets extensively totalized into a competition between the national systems responsible for the promotion of elite sport. Owing to the totalization

process, the national and political interests in sport are accentuated, which with the increasing stakes involved, tends to make sport more vulnerable to abuses and disorders of any kind. The *arms-race* of the superpowers has its equivalence in sport but without any attempts of *disarmament!*

International sport in transition described as a social system has its functional peculiarities which distinguishes it from the preceding coubertinian system, as illustrated (next page).

In the era of sport in transition, the old elements and conceptions were mixed with the new demands of the changing market of international sport and caused controversies and cross-pressures in the whole system. Sooner or later a such labil system with internal controversies has to find a more steady-state and internal consistency. During the period of sport in transition, such internal controversies were accentuated and the whole system was in a crisis while seeking solutions to these problems. In this attempt the noble aims and humanistic ideals of the early decades of sport lost their normative power as operative beliefs of international sport but survived as relics and empty slogans in ceremonies. Likewise, the official conception of sport was badly alienated from the hightening demands in the sports market which was forced to seek some solution to the dilemma from sham-amateurism.

Sport is, and cannot be nothing else, but a subsystem of society at large. This is true also of international sport. No wonder that the international tensions, particularly the contradictions between the superpowers, have their repercussions and even confrontations also in international sport. The politization of international sport has not facilitated finding solutions to the constituent problems of sport in transition. It has rather added their number and accentuated the old ones. Yet knowing well that the Olympics have been abused and that their own shortcomings are numerous, they still have at least the potential to offer more pleasure than pain, as Paavo Seppänen suggests (Seppänen, 1984, 125).

## *Figure 12. Sport system in transition*

### **Leadership in transition**

LEADERSHIP:	Division between trustees and professional experts Partnership with public authorities
LEGITIMACY:	Overall ranking of nations Sport as most popular mass entertainment in the world
IDENTITY:	Various type of sham-amateurism
CONTROL:	Problems of control accentuated Proper order based extensively on extrinsic control
RESOURCING:	Increasing allocations of the public sector for elite sport

### **Competition in transition**

SCREWDRIVER EFFECT OF CONTINUOUS COMPETITION:	The rising level of demands of performance > Mobilization of variety of resources for sport > Totalization of international sport > Ever rising level of demands of performance etc.
DISTINCTION:	OVERT AND COVERT VALIDITY High overt validity: athletes in contest on equal terms Low covert validity: the high inequality of athletes of various countries in their preparations for contest
CONTEST IN TRANSITION:	Contest is transformed into contest between the production systems of high performance of countries involved

### **Spectators as prime consumers**

STATUS IN TRANSITION:	Spectators as the prime beneficiary of elite sport
MASSIFICATION OF SPORT EVENTS	Sport as mass entertainment Alienation from proper sport Vulnerability to dis-play and mass behavior Accentuating problems of order

### **Mass media in transition**

MASSIFICATION OF SPECTATOR SPORT:	Elite sport broadcast live by TV to homes all over the world
AMPLIFICATION EFFECTS:	Mass media made "sport the biggest small thing in the world" with national heroes, super- and megastars
FUNDING:	Due to the symbiotic relationship, there exists also close business partnership between mass media and sport

### III PERIOD:

- Consumerization
- Commodification
- Professionalization
- Unionization
- Criminalization
- Juristification

## COMMERCIALIZATION OF SPORT

Sport in transition was burdened by controversies and cleavages between the constitutive rules and the reality of sport or between the will of high authorities of international sport and the market forces of competition. In search for a solution to the controversies of sport, the market forces proved their power and elite sport was gradually transformed from the realm of athletes' leisure to the commercial realm of the spectators' leisure.

Due to the raising level of demands, the production costs of high performance tend to be increasing all the time, and as a result, the national sport federations and sport clubs are suffering from a chronic shortage of funds. Besides an acute need of resources, some other concomitant interventions have also facilitated the overall commercialization of elite sport.

#### **Sport conceived as business**

The high publicity and immense popularity of elite sport in general and the international sport in particular has made any big sport event a most tempting occasion also for intrusive exploitations, as noted in the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, in reflections of the cold war



between the superpowers in international sport and most notoriously in the massacre by Arab terrorists in the Olympic village in Munich in 1972. Such occasions are also most favourable for business exploitations, but the curious fact is that until the 1980s the main business in sport concerned some payable services to spectators such as buffet, program leaflets, logos of sport teams, miniflags etc. This restraint from business making in sport events was a manifestation of the amateur conception of sport: making money in and through sport was odd to and even in contradiction to the idea of amateurism.

But due to the rising costs of the production of high achievements, the problem of funding got accentuated in the agendas of sport federations and sport clubs. In addition to the public subsidiaries, extra money was raised by the business of sport federations and clubs. But these business affairs were usually kept carefully separate from affairs of sport.

But not even these measures could any longer be sufficient to cover the ever rising costs of elite sport; hence new ways for raising money were needed. There already existed a prosperous sport industry, making profit in producing a variety of sport goods, equipment, outfits, facilities, sports wear etc. Partnership with business is today's solution to the accentuating problem of raising more money to cover the increasing costs of elite sport. No doubt, this partnership has been well-known in professional sport for a long time and proved beneficial for all parties involved, but was considered improper in non-professional sport.

Sports events with high publicity, thousands of spectators and competitive aims for superiority offer the most favourable circumstances for making business of any kind, and athletes who as heroes and superstars are acting as behavior models for their fans and can also transfer their high qualities as athletes into any product of business. No wonder that when the permission was gradually granted, business has forcefully entered the most sacred Stadiums and even the most intimate parts of athletes' bodies with business logos and slogans. Hence the players e.g. in ice-hockey look like living billboards and in the focus of TV cameras even the most exhausted skiers remember to pay homage to the manufacturer of their skis after passing the finish line. Partnership with business was carried out not only by selling the visible sport to the advertisement business but particularly by means of sponsorship contracts with individual athletes, teams, particular sport event or sport

federation and also by means of pool contracts with sport industry. As far as big international events are concerned, the most profitable partnership has been with TV companies willing to pay a great deal for the franchise to telecast the events (with their business advertisements!).

The Olympic Games in 1952 was the landmark for the beginning of the politization and totalization of international sport. Then it was time for business to enter the Games. According to Richard Espy, the 1964 Games produced a substantial amount of money for the first time in the history of the modern Games and business began to take precedence over the traditional orientation of sport for sport's sake (Espy, 1979, 118). Referring to the 1968 Games at Grenoble Avery Brundage, the President of IOC, was irritated of this commercialization:

*"The Games have been completely commercialized with such items as "Olympic hits, Olympic sugar, Olympic petrol..Purveyors names were attached to every item of equipment and supplies and even the entertainments. It seemed a huge business enterprise instead of another sport event" (ibid 135).*

However, the Games in 1984 in Los Angeles can be reckoned as the landmark for the commercialization of sport. Due to the effective leadership of Peter Uebcrroth and the close partnership with big business, the Organizing Committee managed not only to cover the huge costs of the Games but to make a nice profit of up to 150 million on revenue of about 619 million US dollar (McPherson et al. 1989, 136). The Olympic Movement, which used to stand as the sacred institution of immanent humanism and noble ideals, was exposed to total metamorphosis and became the most successful business and profit making enterprise.

This success in business triggered the commercialization of elite sport all over the world. For instance, it caused the boom of the number of cities willing to organize the forthcoming Olympic Games or any other big sport events.

The Finnish organizers of the First World Championship in track and field in 1983 also established the budget of the Games in Helsinki in a close partnership with business. For instance, the main entrance area of the sacred Olympic Stadion was transformed into a business market

and looked like a bazaar. But all extra revenue is needed to cover the increasing costs of big events organized in international sport.

*The critical comments in TV on this blunt business of raising money around the Stadion cherished with reverence was refuted by the Secretary General of the Organizing Committee by the rhetorical question: "Sport as well as business are each legitimate affairs in society; hence their association cannot be anything but good, can it?" A good question, isn't it?*

With reference to elite sport in the business market, it is important to make a distinction between the two kinds of business: raising money for sport and making profit through sport. In the former type of business, sport is the main beneficiary whereas in the latter type the main beneficiary is the business enterprise itself. With the expanding market of elite sport and the most popular sport concerned, sport tends to be transformed into business and making profit whereas in small countries, with limited markets and demands, business and business partnership in sport aim mostly at raising money for the benefit of sport.

No doubt in elite sport and in international sport particularly, money has always been necessary but has had a minor role in providing the material conditions for the very existence of sport. With the raising level of demands of elite sport with the concomitant increasing production costs of high performance, the role of money has become of vital importance.

*Maybe Paavo Nurmi foresaw this dilemma already in 1960s. Paavo Nurmi had a great success not only in sport but also in construction business. The leading sport federation tried to persuade him to establish the Foundation for the promotion of sport but was refuted: sport is like a swamp – there is no bottom and all sinks down there. Instead, he established, in 1968, the Foundation for the medical research.*

This was already well recognized in the era of sport in transition when the first cautious steps towards the partnership with business were taken by sport authorities. The terms of the partnership were pronounced explicitly as "*only on the condition of the best interest of sport*". But in the

secularized world and in the toughening competition of international sport, any principles and ideals are prone to lose their normativeness and it seems to have happened with the principle of the best interest of sport, too.

In elite sport, under the increasing pressure of rising costs, the management is forced to establish the partnership with business more and more on the terms of business, instead of the best interest of sport. When the best interest of sport is defined in a unified way with business on terms of profit, sport is eventually transformed into business proper and the traditional conflict of interest is solved; sport and business as *the strange bedfellows of past* are fully unified. This process of unification is going on in elite sport. In his analysis of the *economization* of sport, Bero Rigauer concludes that the "old" sport disappears and a "new" sport is born: all sports are being transformed into business in the commercial market of sport and sport becomes a *sport industry* (Rigauer, 1993, 282-299).

## 1. Leadership

Due to the increasing costs of elite sport, raising money has evidently got a high priority in the agenda of sport federations. This actual need has been the main reason for the extensive partnership with business enterprises as seen but it has also accentuated the need of business expertise in the management of sport federations. In commercialized sport, the big business is the most attractive as partners with sport federations and IOC and the big businessmen with their special expertise tend to be most desirable in the key roles of the leadership. In Finland, the proportion of the business executives has clearly increased in the leadership of the two biggest central organizations (Olin & Saukkonen, 1991). It is plausible that the most comprehensive changes of the very conception of sport in this century also have their reflections not only on the leadership structure but also on *the organizational culture* of sport federations.

*Unfortunately there are not any longitudinal cross-cultural studies available on the leadership of elite sport. The archives of sport federations could provide some basic data for such studies; federations themselves are*

*notoriously reluctant to initiate any studies, which focus on their own pursuits apart from the so called histories.*

Businessmen bring not only their expertise in making business to the leadership but all their occupational culture with values, moral conceptions, mode of leadership, manners and jargons etc. If these businessmen do not have any personal experiences in sport nor any deeper understanding of the very essence of sport, they are prone to conceive sport as a mere business and to act to make it a good business. With the increasing number of businessmen in the leadership, *the organizational culture* of elite sport tends to converge the organizational culture of business proper.

Trustees of sport federations used to have great experience in sport as their major qualification for the high leadership; today there are more trustees with meager experiences in sport but high merits in business. The sport philosopher Lauri Pihkala was worried about the trend in modern sport: "Sport used to be a play in the past but has become serious while the leadership in sport has become a play – a play of dilettantes!"

**Legitimacy revised.** In commercialized sport, the primary legitimacy is defined in terms of the demands in the market: "*people should be given what they want*". Commercialized sport is meant to be entertainment for the public at large. People yearn for the excitement of sport and for heroes to identify with; elite sport is the modern and *civilized* version of an ancient gladiators' fight and also provides "*circus for masses*".

The primary legitimacy of commercialized sport as mass entertainment is defined in terms of consumers' interests. Also all commercial business in and through sport have some legitimizing repercussions on sport. Making business by supplying the market with commodities in demand is the way the market economy works. This is also the way commercialized sport makes business in the market of elite sport.

It is obvious that when the secular demands of the market are the prime legitimacy in commercialized sport, the sacred ideals and noble aims of the past have lost their share in legitimizing elite sport in societies. Even health as the primary value in the traditional conception of sport is superseded in elite sport by the prime imperative of the maximum effectiveness. Sport also used to be an integral part of the temperance

movement and considered as the most effective means for healthy life but today commercialized sport, by making business and in partnership with liquor companies, tends to rather promote the consumption of alcoholic drinks.

*The World Championship in ice-hockey in 1997 took place in Helsinki in the new Hartwall Arena financed mainly by business companies such as the Hartwall Co - the big brewery. Beer drinking used to be prohibited in sport; today it is an integral part of the spectators' enjoyment and that of the organizers' revenue in ice-hockey.*

*Amazingly quickly the drinking of champagne or such, straight out of a bottle as a part of the victory ceremony, has been taken from motor racing into "proper sport" and even to womens' sport. When will it begin at the Olympic Games? Perhaps the sparkling magnum of Coca Cola as the major sponsor of the Games would be more appropriate and worth a million dollars?*

**Conception revised: sport as commodity.** Due to the immense glorification of sport achievements with national heroes and superstars in the powerful mass media, the exceptional performances in sport activated the market forces in sport: spectators and fans wanted to see their heroes live, face-to-face, and in this demand the organizers of sport events were more than anxious to pay some extra royalties for ensuring the participation of "wanted idols". In this way great achievements in sport were transformed into *the commodity* to be sold in the market at a price determined by the demand.

The illegal royalties paid *under the counter* was a well-known procedure in international sport already in 1920s. The famous Paavo Nurmi was one of those recipients who finally in 1932, at the eve of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, was banned from taking part in the marathon. This great champion was, however, considered qualified to carry the Olympic torch into the Olympic Stadion in Helsinki 1952 and to light the Olympic flame as a symbol of the noble ideals of Olympism.

*Paavo Nurmi enjoyed a great success not only in sport but later also in construction business. Already in sport he demonstrated his business*

*capabilities. "Erst Geld, dann laufen" – first money, then running, but in 1931 in Cologne Nurmi got only 3/4 of the money in the contract according to the story. What happened: Nurmi appeared onto the track but quitted after running precisely 3/4 of the total run. Even wallet sport should have some fair play rules! (Raevuori, 1988, 231).*

The very impetus to the commodification of sport is the rising popularity of sport as mass entertainment. This has meant some revision of the very idea of sport: sports were earlier meant primarily for athletes but today for the public at large as entertainment. Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning have argued that sport events are transformed into a spectacle played for the spectators and implemented in the precedent interest of spectators over the interests of participants (Elias-Dunning, 1986, 211).

Sport has proved to be *convertible currency* or commodity with high demands in the consumers' market of spectator sport. This commercial conception of sport as commodity to be sold for spectators in the audience and public at large via mass media has generated a number of projects for maximizing the attraction of sport to spectators. As with business at large, market research is applied for probing the spectators' taste and expectations in sport. The very identity or image of sports disciplines are modified by means of revised constitutive rules in order to make the event more attractive to the public.

Spectators' interests have a high priority in planning the programs of sport events, buffet services, extra entertainment for breaks in the contest but also in various tricks for arousing and maintaining excitement of spectators in contest: "trial for a new record", use of "pace maker", "duel of superstars", etc. The public's interest is the main criterion to be taken into account also in planning the schedule of the program and "for ensuring the fullest news coverage and the widest possible audience for the Olympic Games" (Olympic Charter, § 51) the program is well adjusted to the prime time of TV and at the request of the TV Company "paying the piper" of the Games. Athletes can be heroes of sport but the very king of the market of elite sport are *the spectators* as the main consumers of the entertainment of sport and as the primary interest group to be served.

**Execution of control.** Commercialization of sport is rooted in the expansion of spectator sport. Commercialization means the enhanced

flow of big money in sport and big money in turn always implies the enhanced potentiality for misbehavior. To allure an increasing number of spectators into the audience is the vital interest of commercialized sport since this massification of sport events facilitates the partnership with business and the flow of money into sport. But the effort to attract large audiences tends to degrade the quality of contest in a variety of ways as John J. Sewart has shown (Sewart, 1987, 171-191). Besides, the very massification of events makes them more vulnerable to the problems of control. In "a lonely crowd" of spectators, natural constraints of behavior do not work normally, hence spectators are prone to mass behavior and to over-affective reactions – *in a crowd foolishness tends to be condensed*, at least after too many beers!

Thus, the massification of sport events in terms of increasing numbers of spectators in the audience tends to make those events more vulnerable to *dis-play* and to problems of control, as evident in the attendance of police forces, in fence constructions and safety tunnels in the stadiums for athletes and umpires. It was estimated that the overall costs of law enforcement by police forces in the finals of the 1988 European Championship in soccer exceeded DM 35 million (Williams & Goldberg, 1990, 39-40). And in the final between Netherland and the USSR there were 3 799 police for the protection of the city of Munich and the stadium (Weis, 1988, 237). In massified sport the maintenance of *law and order* is not anymore a matter of sport authorities alone but calls for the attendance and even intervention of police forces. Society at large is, even in this odd way, involved in elite sport today.

The totalization process in international sport means that stakes at competitions are getting higher and higher, and success as the main compensation for high investments is sought for literally *by all means*. Evidently, as long as there have been hustlers and felons in society they have been known also in sport. Nevertheless, relatively, the number of them tends to be multiplied and forms of malpractice to be diversified in elite sport as a result of recent development. Almost all common malpractises are known in elite sport today: dishonesty, insults, cheating, drugs abuses, bribery, forgery, tax evation, violence, vandalism, hooliganism etc. and they tend to be increasing and getting more serious in the course of time.

This alarming trend in elite sport is not only the reflection of



the deidealization of sport but is likely embedded in the changing conceptions of the commercialized and professionalized sport.

The most extensive malpractice in elite sport is the medical manipulation of athletes by means of various pharmaceuticals or blood transfusion etc. for enhancing their capacity of performance artificially. The notorious break through of this malpractice took place already in the 1950s when the new type of supermen created by means of DIANABOL entered sport venues and broke all the old records in track events and e.g. transferred the 14 year old "nonbreakable" record of Jack Torrance in shotput from 17.40 meter a few meters ahead. Curious to notice how supermen rapidly shrink into normal size and how their outer appearance changes when they give up their sport career built up with their medical "make-ups".

Anybody familiar with the idea of sport surely knows that sport is not meant to measure the effectiveness of medicaments or medical manipulation, but the superiority of proper athletic performance. From this point of view, it is amazing how fast this malpractice with increasing assortments of pharmaceuticals and sophisticating methods spreads all over the world and particularly to countries anxious to obtain success in international sport. One reason for the escalation of this *capital offence* of sport was the delay of the effective counteractions of international sport federations including IOC. Obviously the delays of international sport authorities had their repercussions on the national level of elite sport as delays of any preventive measures against the malpractice, which threatens to distort the very meaning of sport as a test of athletic superiority.

When at last – or too late – sport authorities became aware of the common medical abuses in elite sport, counteractions were implemented: e.g. the global network of doping control with laboratories, doping tests and biomedical experts was established. Sport, which used to be *fair play*, is today so contaminated with dishonesty and cheating that such expensive and extensive control systems are needed just for *lie-detection*. Here we are!

Despite the preventive measures, medical abuse is still going strong in sport as the great number of disclosed smugglings of illegal drugs indicates. There are serious doubts that the control measures lag behind the advancements of abuses all the time. Obviously the Gresham law: *bad money drives out the good*, has some validity also in elite sport.

According to delayed news, some Russian athletes in the Olympic Games in Atlanta were caught in doping tests of the use of the medicament called "Bromatan" recommended by ROC to be used in the hot and humid climate of Atlanta but they were not punished anyway because that new product was not yet listed by the IOC as a prohibited medicament. This case raises some awkward questions. Are national sport authorities not obliged to ask permission from the IOC for the use of any new medicament if there are any doubts that the medicament has some beneficial effects on the performance of athletes? Is the list of the prohibited pharmaceuticals published by the IOC the ultimate criteria of doping in the final decision?

The control of doping is the most serious matter when considering the future of international sport. Obviously it is also the most delicate problem to be solved. In the question of doping the prestige of athletes as well as countries, the occupation of athletes with their many fringe benefits, but also their vital human rights, are interwoven with the many practical problems of the effective implementation of doping tests. Due to the vital vested interests of athletes involved, doping in sport has become a new type of lawsuit for courts and an expanding market for lawyers.

Due to the misconceptions of true sport, the ignorance of fair play and the great deficiencies of the control system, it is possible that hundreds of hustlers have been glorified and worshiped as heroes and winners in the Olympic Games while the true winners have remained losers in the history of the Games. The late disclosure of the medical abuses in GDR (DDR) as a system-wide procedure for producing superstars in sport, is just one story among others and one effective way to make superstars. But all "advanced" countries seem to have those hidden stories and top secrets. Jim Riordan, a noted sportsovietologist, speaks about "the most sensational revelation" on the abuse of drugs in the USSR: some 290 athletes and coaches were punished for using forbidden drugs in the three years prior to the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games according to the *Leninskoe znamya*, 28 March 1989 (Riordan, 1990).

*But there are no attempts to rehabilitate the true winners nor any postprotest of revealed abuses by the IOC and other sport authorities. This ignorance means that at least the ostensible credibility of the*

*Olympic Games is of crucial concern; the Olympic oath is still the sacred rite in the opening ceremony of the Games though a perjury for a number of athletes.*

**Resourcing revised.** Once upon the time sport organizations used to adjust their affairs to the available resources but due to the rising level of performance demands, production costs in elite sports are increasing all the time and sport organizations were forced to find new sources of resources to cover the increasing costs. This search for extra resources, badly needed in the armsrace of elite sport, resulted in the close partnership with the public sector of societies as well as with the private sector of business at large. This partnership has meant losing the sovereignty of sport federations and the intervention of politics and business into sport. Curiously enough, the intervention of politics into elite sport meant the total assimilation with public politics in socialist countries in the past, while the intervention of business into elite sport tends to result in the total commercialization of sport in western countries – sport is transformed into plain business. Is this the final solution to the cronic problem of the high demand of resources?

*In the free market of business any enterprise which makes profit on its own is considered sane. Most of the enterprises in elite sport cannot survive on their own but badly need extra support from public subsidiaries, business profits and partnership with business proper. Yet elite sport is considered a sane enterprise, isn't it?*

There are already some symptoms of the emerging conflict of interest between the public authorities and the commercialized sport and questions about the justification of public subsidiaries for the commercial sport are coming into the public issue.

## **2. Professionalization of competition**

Two circumstances have particularly contributed to the professionalization in sport: 1) the rising level of demands in elite sport, and 2) the increasing flow of money in the market of sport due to the partnership with the public sector and business. The term *professional* refers here to the full

devotion to a sports career as an athlete or an employee on the field of sport, and to earning one's livelihood out of sport.

Due to the high demands of elite sport today, athletes are forced to *totalize* their efforts in pursuit for success and submit other interests of life to the superior interest of their sport career. But this kind of total devotion or *time-professionalism*, as Christopher Brasher called it, is possible only if the problem of livelihood could be solved. During *sham-amateurism*, this was usually solved by means of more or less fake occupations or scholarships but today mostly by means of money earned in sport as royalties, awards, grants, sponsorship and as regular salaries. Owing to the increasing flow of money in sport, the majority of top athletes, at least in the most popular sports with high demands, are full-time or at least half-time professionals.

The flow of money is skewedly distributed between the different sport events. Those few sports which incite most public and business interest get the major share. As a rule, sports which via TV attract most spectators, attract also most of the money. Just some lucky punches in boxing and superiority in tennis – or a mere advantage of some players in a single tennis serve – can give some athletes a fortune of a million dollars whereas even the most exhaustive pursuits or even the World Championship e.g. in rowing, swimming, wrestling etc. provide hardly any kind of a wealthy living for the athletes. Due to the selectivity of business interest and money, the professionalization is most advanced in those sports which can excite the public interest best.

Professionalization in sport unifies it with *the labor market*: athletes are refined products and their capacities of performance as well as their images as stars are sold and bought in the sports market. This transference of labor is particularly accentuated in team sports where success is such a crucial determinant for public and business interests. In team sports at the top level, success is no more a matter of training and coaching but extensively also a matter of the labor market. Sport clubs make use of that market by hiring players from other clubs or foreign professionals as key players into their teams. Due to this exchange in the labor market of sport, the most wealthy clubs often have the best chances to hire the best players and with their stakes in the game these clubs also have the best chances for success. Thus success can be bought also with money and not only with athletes' efforts.

The cross-national barriers of the labor market in sport have, to a great extent, been removed; for instance *the free flow of labor*, as the law states it, also concerns sport in the countries of the European Union. This extensive cross-national flow of not only athletes but also coaches is a new facet of commercialized sport with, to a great extent, unknown consequences on the development of elite sport. There is some evidence that this intensive flow of athletes contributes not only to progress in sport but also to cultural exchange (Olin, 1990). On the other side of the coin there may also be seen some drawbacks as the loss of the best athletes and coaches to foreign market and the loss of incentives if and when the foreign key players occupy the key positions in teams instead of talented youngsters brought up in the club. Anyhow it is obvious that *the migrant keyplayers* of the teams attract spectators and with the increasing number of spectators and with increasing business contributions, there is also more money available for securing further success with a better capacity of performance through the advancing professionalization process. Thus, the causal circle of professionalization is complete (Heinilä, 1996, 193).

*Amazingly easily e.g. black foreign players in a "white" country like Finland are taken as "our own" with nothing else in common but the community representation. Evidently, their superior performances in games facilitate this identification process whereas their failures as the most expensive players easily result in their rejection.*

The common usage of the term *professionalization* usually refers to the changing roles of athletes in sport. In societies all affairs which contribute significantly to the continuance of life, tend to be *institutionalized* into a variety of occupational roles and a great number of occupations get professionalized. This occupational development is well seen also in elite sport. Owing to the expansion and to increasing popularity of sport, new occupations of sport journalists have emerged and owing to rising level of demands, the variety of professional services and expertise are needed in the production process of high achievement. Thus, not only the basic tasks of athletes but all key roles – let alone *the vicarious consumption of spectators* – vitally significant for the continuance of the system of elite sport, tend to be professionalized – coaching, management, communication, medical services, referring, testing, research, doping

control, business, training of experts etc. Professionalization brings about the higher achievement of athletes and the higher quality and effectiveness of services for elite sport and better services for public at large.

This overall permeating professionalization of elite sport entails not only the high achievements and effectiveness of sport today but at the same time the crucial role of big money in any success. Money enables athletes totally devote themselves to a sports career. Money provides the optimal facilities and circumstances for training – even on the other side of the earth if need be. Money provides the best services to athletes, money attracts the best athletes to competitions, money recruits the best athletes into teams in the transfer market and "bad money" buys even success. In commercialized sport, the public at large has become the prime interest group of sport, but the role of big money is the most significant but mostly invisible determinant of success.

In commercial and professionalized sport, athletes do not compete only for the fame of victory but also for money. The high prizes for success defined in terms of money or *gold* is the best appeal for the participation of superstars in competitions. The superstars, in turn, are the best appeals for spectators to attend and finally, the great publicity is the prime appeal to business partnership. In the high demand of a few superstars in the most popular sports, the prizes tend to be so high that even some superstars themselves consider them too excessive and harmful to the image of the sports in question. However, there are still some big sport events and first of all the Olympic Games which honor the winners only by symbolic rewards.

But this is not the whole truth about the prizes of these events. Most winners of those events are rewarded often excessively after they return home, for instance in terms of a predetermined amount of money relative to the color of the medal won. All in all, success in these big events sets a price for the athlete in the market of commercialized sport implemented in royalties, fees of participation and in contracts with sponsors etc. Thus, winning the Olympic gold medal as a symbolic reward is like hard currency convertible to a nice amount of money and other tangible properties.

Once again, the crucial question is: what does the commercialized and professionalized sport as a test of athletic superiority factually measure with reference to what it should measure? The early distinction

between overt and covert validity is relevant here also. Due to the high stakes involved in professional sport, it is of great importance that the overt validity of the contest is as good as possible which means, first of all, the tight implementation of the vital principle of the equal terms in contest and justice in refereeing and in the final results of a contest. The many new electronic devices used in contests have significantly decreased human errors and contributed to the overt fairness of contests. But this is only the visible side of the contest.

The invisible side of contest takes place in the various national systems of elite sport, in their efforts to recruit the most talented youth to sports careers and to create the most favourable conditions for these youth in their pursuits to the very top in sport. Contrary to the strict overt equality of conditions in contests, the national systems intentionally pursue to get some advantage over their foreign rivals not only in "human material" screened for sports careers but also in conditions for training. Here, the big money has its most significant role in contributing the great inequality of national systems in promoting elite sport. Hence, due to the on-going totalization process and the commercialization process favouring the most popular sport and the big markets of big countries, the contests in international sport indicate pointedly the great inequalities of national systems in their resources to produce high achievements in sport.

*The participants of the first Olympic Congress of IOC in 1989 in Colorado Springs had an opportunity to visit the U.S. Olympic Training Center there. The special Center for Aquatic Research with the most sophisticated testing and computer systems and swimming treadmill was very impressive but posed the question of the equality of athletes in international contests: how many countries can afford such labs for improving the training of swimmers?*

If and when sports authorities of international sport recognize the effects of totalization on the very conception of international sport and on the transformation of sport into a contest between the whole national systems, it likely means very comprehensive reorganizations of the international sport system as well as the reorganization of national

elite sport in order to find some balance to the great inequalities of the partners in the contest.

Thus, this is not yet the whole story about the problems of the test validity of commercialized sport. In an earlier reference to control measure, it was pointed out that the higher stakes involved make the commercialized sport more vulnerable to all kinds of cheating. The number of athletes as well as their managers, coaches, sponsors, even sport physicians in their joint venture for success are prone to conceive the big sport event more or less like gambling: at risk and with the aid of dubious means one can win the jackpot of winning the championship or the Olympic medal. Due to the fame and fortunes amplified in the commercialized sport, the number of hustlers and gamblers are increasing in international sport and with them, the contests also lose their validity as a fair test of athletic superiority. Thus, if and when transformed into business, the amount of covert abuse in sport tends to increase due to the vested interests of all business partners involved. Even if true, what does it matter; the main thing in the commercialized sport seems to be that the masses of spectators have a nice time?

### **3. Spectators' market of sport**

The commercialization of sport transforms sport from the the market of athletes as suppliers into the market of spectators as consumers, i.e. the market of elite sport works on the conditions determined primarily by spectators and public at large. According to Ottar Weiss, the role of spectators is becoming even more important in sport (Weiss 1990, 128). Professionalized elite sport lives only out of public interest and out of the intimate partnership with business, which in turn exploit the popularity of sport on its own account. Owing to the vital interests involved, sport federations are making forceful efforts to attract more people into the audience and in this way selling sport to public by all means, including "social drinking". And for preventing spectators' saturation, new excitements and new services should be introduced in this consumers' market (cf. Heinemann, 1985, 88-89).

Owing to the increasing popularity of elite sport as mass entertainment and to the forceful marketing of the sports federations,



the proportion of those spectators in audience who are only superficially familiar with the very essence of sport has increased (cf. Földesi, 1996, 419). In this way, the increasing number of spectators in the audience and the massification of sport events might also facilitate the vulnerability of sport to problems of disorder or at least to manifestations of display. Besides the selling of intoxicating drinks to spectators especially in connection to international sport events in team sport is tantamount to asking for trouble and the help of police forces!

In the consumers' market of elite sport, the attitudes of spectators tend to be changed from the empathic feeling with athletes in their weals and woes towards the demanding of their maximal efforts in pursuits for victory. Spectators are well aware of the flow of big money in commercialized sport and of the professional jobs athletes are doing in the venue for their wage and royalties, and therefore they want to get full compensation and full excitement for the fee they pay; otherwise they get frustrated and disappointed. David Webb points out also that wanting to win and caring about losing are being felt today more than ever before and crowds demand excitement, to be derived mainly from their teams' winning: the will and the need to win create tensions and easily provokes misbehavior (Webb, 1986, 309-311). However, these changes and transformations in spectator sport occur in terms of probability and not in any absolute terms, that is, there is some more or less strong tendency of those changes proposed above to get materialized in sport and that tendency is strongest in most popular team sports.

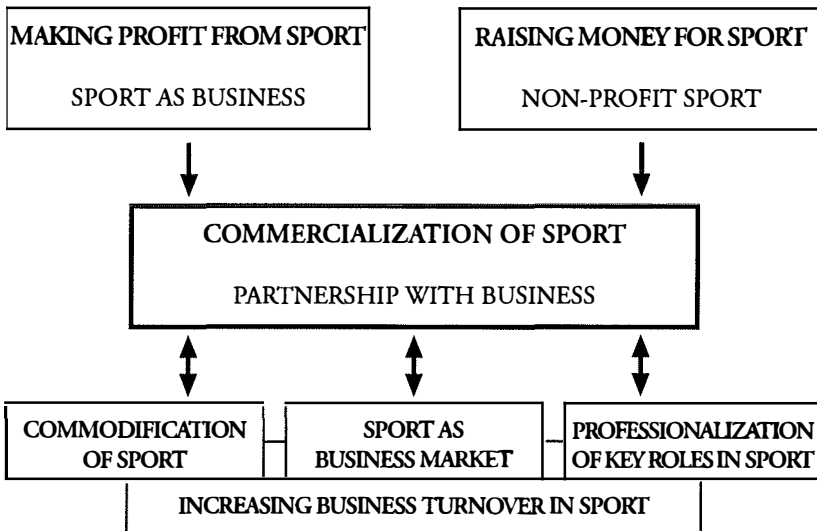
#### **4. Mass media in spectators' market**

There would be no international sport, or even elite sport in the modern sense or to the current world-wide extent, without the vital contributions of the powerful mass media. The entrance of TV has amplified the many significant contributions of mass media to elite sport and has the prime role in mass entertainment in and through elite sport. As a most powerful agent of mass entertainment, TV has concomitantly created the most favourable market not only for the media business but for business in general. Without the great publicity of elite sport via TV and other media, the current partnership with business for raising money

would hardly be feasible. Thus, TV has also played a major role in the commercialization of sport in fertilizing the market of sport favourable for business. It has facilitated the flow of big money into sport also directly by paying their price for the franchise to telecast the sport events. Due to the most significant contributions of TV for the whole system, sport tends to become media-oriented (die "Mediatisierung des Sports") and conducive to the demands of TV (Weiss, 1990, 130).

Mass media as mostly a business itself complies to the laws of the market: people should get what they want in sport. Consequently the supply of sport journalism is often characterized by star cult, superficiality, frivolity, overstatements, seeking for sensationalism without any deeper – let alone critical – analysis of social, political and medical repercussions. Thus rough play, for instance, attesting a fierce competitiveness tends to foster the spectators' interest also and the exploitation of such play by the mass media reflects, according to Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann, "a good grasp of the spectators' likes and an implicit best-seller formula for sports" (Bryant & Zillmann, 1983, 208-209). Andreas Blum even claims that sport is presented mostly in mass media one-sidedly as a spectacular show, a commercial or ideological stage; here we have *dilettantism* as

*Figure 13. The Commercialization of elite sport*



amateurism left in sport! (Blum, 1985, 116). Anyhow the uniformity of the content of mass media is amazingly high, reflecting perhaps common news criteria of sport journalism everywhere and/or the common deficiencies of the occupational training of sport journalists.

### **Summary: Commercialization of sport**

In its evolution, elite sport has entered the stage when its very existence as proper sport and the boundaries with business are obscured. Due to ever-rising production costs of high achievements, sport federations are desperately in quest for outside help. Under these circumstances, there was like "a social order" for the partnership with business. At the same time, the old ideological constraints of amateurism were refuted and the screwdriver effect of continuous competition – *citius, altius, fortius* – could be implemented without any restraints. It did not take a long time for sport federations and IOC to notice that since both sport and business are legitimate affairs in society, their joint venture cannot be anything but legitimate either. The competitive markets of sport and business have much in common and the mutual interest for raising money.

The discussion about the commercialization process going on in international sport is condensed in figure 13 (page 132).

The commercialization is an on-going process in elite sport, realized in varying degrees in various sports and various countries: it is most likely the most advanced in the most popular sports and in big urban countries with the most favourable market conditions. Concomitantly with the advancement, the commercialization process tends to facilitate the differentiation of sport systems into 1) business proper and 2) non-profit sport. The former type of commercialized sport has been transformed from the realm of sport into the realm of entertainment industry, business and professional sport proper; the latter type of a system still pertains to the realm of sport as a non-profit enterprise for mass entertainment.

Eventually, the commercialization process has its penetrating impacts upon the functions of the key components of the complex system of international sport, as seen in the schematic summary (next page).

Commercialization of sport has accelerated the flow of money into elite sport as a necessary condition for the professionalization of sport.

*Figure 14. The commercialized sport as social system*

**Leadership**

- LEADERSHIP** Priority of business expertise. Partnership with business.  
**LEGITIMACY** Popularity of sport as mass entertainment.  
People should get what they want. Joint legitimacy of sport and business.
- IDENTITY** Conception of sport as commodity. Conception of sport event as business market.
- CONTROL** Dilemma of cheating control accentuated.  
Vulnerability of spectators to disorder increasing.
- RESOURCING** Due to the business partnership, flow of money into sport is increasing.

**Competition**

- PROFESSIONALIZATION**  
Total devotion to sport as occupation and the maximal efforts for success.  
High stakes in sport: high investments and high rewards involved.  
The transfer market of labor: athletes as transfer workers.
- OVERT AND COVERT VALIDITY**  
The high overt validity well in control.  
Due to the totalization and commercialization, the inequality of national systems in their effectiveness and resources to produce a high achievement in sport get increased > low covert validity.  
Commercialization has contributed to the intervention of big money in elite sport as a significant determinant of success.  
Expanding cheating is associated with commercialized sport, with big rewards tending to distort the covert validity of international sport with increasing number of hustlers and gamblers.

**Spectators' market**

- THE PRIME ROLE OF SPECTATORS**  
Marketing sport by all means for the public at large.  
Increasing proportion of spectators only superficially familiar with the essence of sport.  
Vulnerability of spectators to disorder and display.  
Change of spectators' attitude: from empathy towards demanding of full efforts from professionals in venue.

**Role of mass media**

- THE MAJOR ROLE OF TV**  
TV transformed sport into the mass entertainment.  
TV contributed to the generation of sport market for business exploitation.  
TV has contributed to the commercialization of sport.

Due to this professionalization, elite sport is profoundly distinguished from other competitive sport with its superior training conditions, privileges for special services and medical care. Hence a competition between these professional mercenaries and common *underdog* athletes has by definition nothing to do with any fairness. Professionals and non-professionals should have their own contests in order that the *equal terms* as the crucial principle of fairness are implemented properly. Curiously enough, this principle of equal terms with reference to professionalism seems to be well implemented in other international sport today except in the Olympic Games in which the most privileged professionals of few advanced countries still "compete" mostly with underdog athletes of many developing countries. The program of the Olympic Solidarity of the IOC – established in 1972 – is meant to level off those inequalities and to provide technical assistance to the NOCs but the gap is still there and will most probably remain so.

## INTERNATIONAL SPORT IN CENTENARY TRANSITION

During the 20th century sport has become a common "language" spoken and understood everywhere in the world. There is hardly any other such a popular activity in which to overcome any cultural, racial, religious

*Figure 15. International sport in transition: stages and processes*

Stage of development	Prime determinant	Process of change
AMATEURISM PROPER 1896 – 1950s	Humanistic ideals	Idealization of sport Promotion of internationalism proper
SPORT IN TRANSITION 1950s – 1970s	Rising level of demands of performance Superpower politics	Deidealization Politization Rationalization Totalization Manufacturing Cross-pressures
COMMERCIALIZATION 1980s –	Commodification of sport	Mass entertainment Professionalization Business exploitation Illegal exploitation

or political constrains of communication in the world than sport. The centennial Olympic movement, the great idea of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, has been the prime promotor of the globalization of sport.

The 20th century with its scientific-technological progress has revolutionalized the human way of life in industrialized societies and the regression the two destructive world wars has reshaped the political order of the world. Under these circumstances it is no wonder that also sport in general, and international sport in particular, has been exposed to profound changes. Sport as a human endeavour is just one part of the common culture and as such always reflects also the common changes in the society.

I have tried to explore those major changes of sport during the 20th century and to trace their main determinants and causal connections. Obviously all changes in international sport take place gradually without any distinct steps or breakthroughs. Old and new elements coexist usually in sport institutions for a long time until the new elements are able to replace the old ones. Hence any categorical delineation of the ongoing changes in sport is more or less arbitrary. Some new interventions, however, can have such a penetrating and significant impact on the very conception of sport that it is appropriate to distinguish particular stages in this process of change. For this reason, the whole span of development of elite sport with particular reference to international sport in general and the Olympic movement in particular has been delineated here into three distinctive stages with their prime determinants and main processes of change.

Like many other reformative movements, also international sport at the beginning aimed to implement high human ideals and "a better world" to live, but as time was passing, in the realm of the tough contest, these sacred idealisms of the founders of international sport lost their operative power and were replaced by the profane demands of contest, paradoxically manifested in the motto of the Olympic Games: *citius, altius, fortius* as the prime operative norm if success is wanted. Nothing less than success is the very idea of any competition, isn't it?

The next stage of international sport called "sport in transition" was launched by the entrance of the Soviet Union into international sport with the concomitant acceleration of the "arms race" in sport. The Cold War between the superpowers has its parallels also in sport,

in "war without weapons". This arms race gave a strong impetus to the advancement of those sport sciences that contribute to the high achievement of athletes. It is obvious that in this contest of superpowers with their satellites for the superiority not only science proper but also the misuse of science in terms of the medical manipulation of athletes entered the international sport arena as a secret weapon. Due to the intervention of science and medical manipulation the traditional conception of sport in essence as a play-related activity was exposed to rationalization and instrumentalization according to the imperative of "*by all means available!*"

Due to the screwdriver effects of continuous competition, the level of performance demands gets so high in international sport that athletes/teams cannot reach that capacity of performance without the most extensive contributions of their national sport federations and the public authorities of their countries, in terms of resources and expertise. This means that the high capacity of athletes is often to a great extent due to the production capacity of the system promoting elite sport. Hence a contest of athletes/teams in international sport is totalized into a contest of the total systems for the superiority in producing key performances in venues. The reflections of the Cold War accelerated this totalization process in international sport. Owing to the totalization of competition, the great inequalities of participant countries with respect to resources in elite sport are well manifested also in the outcomes of international sport: big countries have their big share also in winning.

At the stage of transition old elements and conceptions of amateur sport encountered the new demands of the tightening competition. Hence the whole system of international sport was at the labile state of dissonance with cross-pressures between the old and new conceptions, between the legal and illegal, between realms of play and work, etc. All these controversial conceptions have their particular reflections on the very outcomes of sport contests and, if they are all in operation, contest cannot be anything but – *unfair*. For lack of common rules and conceptions of sport shared by all participants, international sport was prone to alienation from the sport proper as a fair test of athletic superiority.

Commercialization of sport is an attempt to solve the internal contradictions and to find a better steady state for international sport. The

great popularity of elite sport as mass entertainment and the high publicity of sport in the mass media made sport a most attractive market also for business. On the other hand, due to the ever-increasing production costs of high achievement including the new costs of professionalization of the key roles in sport, sport federations had the chronic problem of shortage of money to cover those costs. As the first step of the commercialization process the new partnership with business carried out most extensively from the very top of the sacred Olympic movement down to sport clubs and single athletes of elite sport has alleviated the funding problems in sport but at the same time it commercialized the very conception of sport; sport and high performance in sport is conceived as a commodity to be sold at the market for the market prize as such or/and together with other commodities of business. As the next stage of commercialization, sport as a non-profit human endeavour is transformed into business proper and for profit making, as has already happened in the most popular sports.

Commercialization instigated also the flow of big money in sport. High stakes and the big money involved tend to make elite sport today more vulnerable to a variety of misbehavior and success is sought for literally by all means. Even aggression and violence are used as "indispensable, irrevocable or inevitable behavior necessary for success" as Gunter A. Pilz concludes in his studies (Pilz, 1979, 23). As to the dubious exploitation of sport and abuses of drugs nobody knows the truth about their extensiveness; however, it is safe to assume at least that they are common and never before have so many sham heroes and frauds been celebrated as Olympic heroes as in the last decades. In commercialized sport there seem to emerge also a new type of athletes and other investors who conceive sport as a gambling: by risking of lie-detection, one can win the fame and fortune.

### **Internal and external impacts on sport**

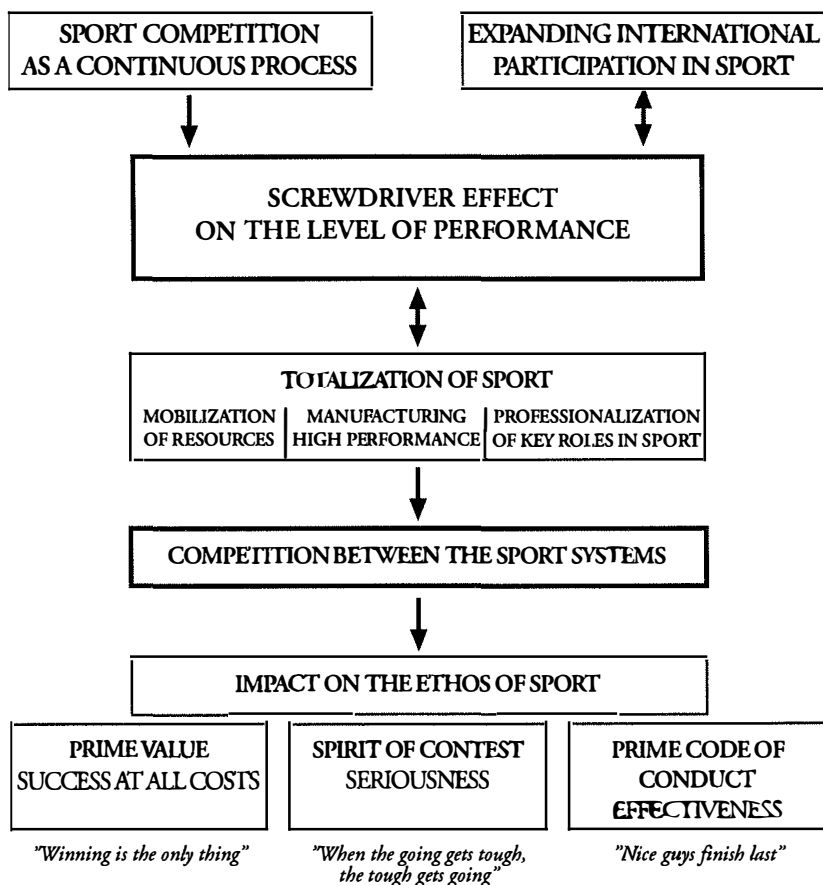
Evidently international sport has undergone a most radical metamorphosis since Baron Pierre de Coubertin established the modern Olympic Games in 1896. This amazing metamorphosis is the outcome of a number of internal and external forces shaping sport. The main purpose of the present exploration has been to specify those forces and to trace their



impacts upon international sport. An attempt is made here to sum up these forces.

International sport is an extremely complex social system composed of a number of components and a number of action levels from the international to the local and individual level of action. This complex system in action consists of thousands of different acts with different roles which are needed for the continuance of the system. If there is any single act paramount for the functioning of international sport, it is likely to be *the key performance* of an athlete/team. The very idea of sport is manifested in the key performance of athletes necessary for great success in competition.

*Figure 16. Dynamics of international sport*



Most studies exploring the causal complexity of peak performance in sport have underlined the role of individual qualifications. This type of athlete-centered study does provide valuable insight into the peak performance from the athletes' point of view but cannot tell the whole truth, because the studies usually ignore the fact that a peak performance in elite sport today is a matter of a joint venture and a matter of industry-like production.

Due to the totalization process, the whole society is more or less involved with the various resources and expertise in producing peak performance of athletes. This fact was well underlined in the popular hit of "*We all are winners*", which players and their thousands of fans were singing together in public celebration when Finns won in 1995 the World Championship in ice-hockey. This *nationalization* of success as well as failure is also well underlined by Frederick C. Hatfield who reckons that the more vested interests of states are increasing in international sport through subsidization practices, the greater are their implications in victories as well as in defeats (Hatfield, 1976, 39).

Peak performance is not a static term but a most dynamic one relating to the level of heightening demands necessary for success in the market of elite sport. And the prime reason for the heightening demands is embedded in the very essence of competition as a continuous process, called here the screwdriver effect. All goal achievement actions in elite sport are meant to cope favourably with the ever rising level of demands of international sport. Thus peak performance in the past is not today sufficient for success. Figure 16 illustrates schematically the reciprocal interplay between the rising demands of performance and counteracts by a system in coping with the challenge of rising demands of international sport

The figure hopefully needs no further elaboration. As a social system the various internal components of international sport are in circular interplay with each other maintaining the dynamics of the system and the tendencies of development portrayed in the figure.

But long term changes in international sport are not only due to the internal dynamics of continuous competition as portrayed above. Sport in general and elite sport in particular is *an open system* and as such is in close exchange with the *external* society around it. There are several *mutual interests* between sport and society which facilitate the intensity of

the exchange. Due to these interests almost all basic social institutions are linked to this network of co-operation. Amongst these external contacts or *systemic linkages*, of primary significance are those which have some real impacts on the development of sport, either in amplifying the changes in sport induced internally or in inducing those changes *externally*. These prime partners of elite sport in society are as follows:

1. *Spectators and the public at large*
2. *Mass media and sport journalism*
3. *Public authorities*
4. *Sport sciences and higher learning*
5. *Business*

The contributions of these external partners to the evolution of modern sport have been most significant. It is worth noticing that these partners have all their particular effects on sport and that they have entered the extensive partnership with sport in a certain sequence imprinting their effects on the distinct stages of international sport. In general, in the early decades the development of international sport was primarily shaped by the internal dynamics of competition while later and particularly recently by these external partners, especially by business.

From the point of view of society, the system of elite sport can be conceived of as a *black box* in which the number of *intakes* of resources from society are processed into a success in international sport for the outcomes wanted by society:

**Figure 17. Elite sport as a sub-system of society**

Intakes of society	Elite sport as black box	Outcomes for society
High potentiality of talent	Processing of high performance	Patriotism Collective identity
Variety of resources		International recognition Mass entertainment

Likewise, also all external interest parties involved have their mutual interests with elite sport, with their particular intakes and outcomes as portrayed in the figure 18, page 142.

It is significant to notice that two of those external parties, the public authorities and business, used to be banned from any intrusion into the

*Figure 18. The exchange of prime interest parties with elite sport*

Partnership	Main intakes to sport	Main outcomes in sport
SPECTATORS AND PUBLIC AT LARGE	Public recognition Hero-worship Social facilitation	Social prestige Sport as entertainment National/community identity
MASS MEDIA	Promotion of sport Hero-worship Public recognition	Public interest in mass media Flow of information wanted Profit making
PUBLIC AUTHORITIES	Variety of resources Execution of public good Politization of sport Totalization	Promotion of national interest Public recognition Manifestation of political power Ranking order of nations
SPORT SCIENCES HIGHER EDUCATION	Key knowledge Expertise in training	Social prestige Effectiveness
BUSINESS	Commodification of sport Commercialization Professionalization	New business market Flow of money into sport Industrialization of sport

realm of international sport but today all of them are, in fact, integral components of the system and their intake-contributions are vital to the continuance of the system facing the ever rising level of demands and the increasing production costs of high achievement. The figure 18 is meant to illustrate primarily those intakes of partnership which contribute mainly to the continuance of the system of elite sport and to the problem resolutions of the functional dilemmas of the system. Obviously the different partnerships may also generate a variety of intakes which can be *dysfunctional* to the continuance of the elite sport. Thus the flow of big money tends to make sport more vulnerable to cheating, the intervention of sport medicine has contributed not only to the effectiveness of training but also to foul playing with dopings etc. In sport, as in life in general, the options between good and evil are always available. Furthermore, all partnerships attempt to shape sport in the direction of their particular interests, accentuating the problem of *the pattern maintenance*, that is, the preserving the proper identity of sport. Have the high authorities of sport succeeded in this respect?

## UNSTEADY STATE OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT

This is where we stand today in international sport: not only still going strong but it seems to be in many respect more prosperous than ever. The Olympic Games attract more participant countries, more athletes and more spectators than ever before. Never before has the contest for hosting the Games been so tough, resembling in spirit the "by all means" approach to the contest of athletes. Due to the number of novel sports, the program of international sport has been multiplied and women are campaigning for equality in the opportunities of participation. New groups have also entered international sport: handicapped people and even the older people who still find some attraction of being amongst the best within their age cohorts. And everywhere emerge the mammoth colosseums and most sophisticated training centres which are primarily meant to serve the purpose of international sport. And the last but not the least manifestation for the great attraction of international sport is the fact that His Excellence Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the IOC was anxious to stay in the limelight of the IOC until the age of 80 years!

Thus the visible appearance of international sport communicates the good news to the public at large about the current state of international sport. Yet there are a number of invisible dilemmas pertaining to this ostensible prosperity, which might interfere, if not properly recognized and resolved. The main mode of the action policy of sport organizations is characterized by the short-term perspective and the reconciliation between market forces and mainstream models. Any critical evaluation of the current state, let alone any long-term delineations for the development, is rather exceptional in the agenda of sport organizations. In hectic modern sport only issues of *here and now* are of significance. Are there any national or international sport organizations posing profoundly those basic issues on the socially and environmentally *sustainable development* that all societies and all institutions are supposed to be concerned with all over the world, for "meeting the basic need of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life", as stated by the *UN World Commission on the Environment and Development* (Our Common Future 1987, 44)? Evidently the high authorities of international sport still believe that the arms race in sport is safely in the right track of sustainable development, but is this really so?

There is plentiful evidence for the unsteady state of elite sport in general and international sport in particular, posing the serious problems of dissociation and regulation. Hence this story on the transformation of international sport cannot be concluded with any happy end but with a probing of most acute problems in sport today. An open recognition of the current dilemmas in elite sport and their proper resolutions are of crucial importance for the future development of international sport.

Therefore, their delineation here as the conclusion for this exploration on changes in international sport is justifiable.

## 1. Dilemmas of legitimacy

High legitimacy contributes to the continuance of any social business. Also international sport needs that legitimacy recognized by the legitimate governmental authorities concerned with the common good in international affairs. It is important to notice here that governmental authorities have in sport, as well as all the other affairs of international concern, their legitimate interest in the follow up of the implementation of common good; hence it is not enough that e.g. international sport authorities alone claim the high legitimacy of sport as such without the recognition of the proper governmental authorities. Sport with its humanistic ideals used to be a highly legitimized *peace movement* in the past but has been transformed into commercial mass entertainment and the issue of legitimacy tends to be accentuated. This is evident in the increasing intervention of various inter-governmental organizations with the actual problems of regulation in sport such like doping, violence and hooliganism.

This demand for action to counter the threats to peace in international sport was well highlighted also in the resolution on "Sport and Peace" passed by the German Sport Federation (DSB) in 1983:

*"..All over the world brutality in competition, aggressive spectator behavior, nationalistic pursuit of success, the sporting version of the arms race, excessive influence of commercial interests and misuse of sporting events for political purposes offend the essential sporting values of fair play, friendship, justice and solidarity. This can only compromise sport's contribution to peace..." (Hansen, 1985,218).*

When sport is transformed into mass entertainment *the popularity* of sport tends to become the primary criterion for the legitimacy: people should be given what they want. In societies with free market systems the demands of consumers legitimize the business of suppliers to a great extent – also in the most violent sports. But international sport always concerns not only the entertainment interest of spectators but also the vital common interests of inter-national relationships. For the legitimizing of international sport, sport authorities have given the priority to the popularity of sport as mass entertainment whereas the governmental authorities have been more concerned with the impacts of sport on the common good of international relations.

There is no return to any coubertinian era when international sport was conceived of as an instrument to build a better world and to educate the youth for friendship and international understanding. There are hardly any sport leaders except in the IOC who still claim that international sport as mass entertainment is meant to build a better world and to promote better international understanding. Instead, due to high popularity, international sport has been exposed to a variety of political, commercial, chauvinistic and illegal exploitations jeopardizing its legitimacy as an international affair. There are already symptoms of the dilemmas of the legitimacy in international sport and they are prone to become more pronounced if sport authorities are incapable of coping with the problem properly. Those symptoms are well manifest in Howard L. Nixon II 's portrayal on the Olympic Games:

*"The Olympic Games are a highly commercialized enterprise dominated by international politics, by almost frantic efforts by nations to outdo each other on the athletic field and in the staging of the Games and by athletes and coaches who seem intent on doing almost anything necessary to win "* (Nixon II, 1984, 152-153).

A competition related to the zero-sum game – what one wins the others lose – is prone to problems of regulation and as such not the most appropriate way for promoting international exchange, The author has probed the semantic meanings of some basic terms of values and implementations in international sport – e.g. "international friendship", "human rights", "peace" vs. "competition", "victory", "championship" –

and found that they are incompatible and even contradictory with each other (Heinilä, 1985, 240-248). These findings are well in accordance also with the "Olympic paradox": Olympic competition primarily intensifies nationalism while simultaneously endorsing internationalism (Hargreaves, 1992, 127).

But a competition is composed not only of dissociative but also of associative elements, and the very integration of the system is based on the absolute compliance of participants to the common rules of sport and to the shared conception of sport as a test of athletic superiority. Frans de Wachter is more specific in this when he states that the proper order and the promotion of goodwill is based in sport on terms of fairness: 1) the respect for the game-constitutive rules, 2) the respect for decisions "not on the basis of their truth, but on the basis of the legitimacy of the authority", and 3) the acceptance of the opposition and rivalry, since "without a loser there is neither a winner" (de Wachter, 1983, 255-267).

Due to the increasing commercial, political and chauvinistic exploitation of international sport, those associative elements of sport may be proved insufficient for the coherence of the system or "for an efficient control of conflict" in sport as Gunther Luschen points out (Luschen, 1981, 203). Carolyn W. Sherif referred to this possibility already in her keynote address in the Olympic Congress in 1972:

*"Sports do provide a model for cooperative institutionalization and regulation of potential intergroup conflict. The limitations of the model are related to the undeniable fact that, while sport is important in the real life of people, it is certainly not the dominant concern of the larger communities and nations of which sport teams are parts. As a result, the cooperative intergroup model for regulating competition is potentially threatened by dissolution whenever more important divisions become focal for the larger units"(Sherif, 1973, 68).*

Under these circumstances, international sport is more vulnerable to a variety of disintegration than ever before. One way of counteracting this trend is reinforcement of the associative elements in international sport, not only in internal terms of "fairness" but particularly in external terms of common good interests. This latter idea inspired the Committee of Sport and Mass Media (ICSSPE) to initiate a pilot study on those



elements in international sport which are perceived as conducive to *international understanding* as the official common interest and aim of international sport. It is striking that the elaboration of such a key concept of the legitimacy of international sport has been ignored by international sport authorities.

At the request and under the supervision of the Committee, the author conducted this pilot study with top athletes with "most experience in international sport" from Finland, Hungary, BDR and France as the target group (n = 270). Due to the tiny resources available the data were collected by mail (the full report: Heinilä, 1986).

The key concepts of the official legitimacy of international sport, *understanding* and *friendship*, are closely related to each other: the former

**Figure 19. Factors and conditions in sport related to international understanding**

	ASSOCIATIVE	CONFLICTUAL
EXTERNAL TO SPORT SYSTEM	SUPERORDINATE GOALS CULTURAL EXCHANGE	ETHNOCENTRISM NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST COMMERCIALISM PREJUDICIAL INTERFERENCE
INTERNAL TO SPORT SYSTEM	EXCHANGE PROGRAMS IN SPORT ATHLETICS' INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING CONCEPTION OF RIVALS AS PARTNERS PROHIBITION OF DOPING HERO-WORSHIP VICTORY CEREMONIES WITH NATIONAL SYMBOLS	INEQUALITIES OF NATIONAL SPORT SYSTEMS CONCEPTION OF RIVALS AS ADVERSARIES INDIFFERENCE TO RULES AND FAIR PLAY SERIOUSNESS OF CONTEST
	CONDUCTIVE TO INT. UNDERSTANDING	OPPOSITE TO INT. UNDERSTANDING

with the cognitive and the latter with the affective connotations. Both are reflections of the human mind making evaluations and interpretations of a diversity of incidents in the social context of sport. But those concepts remain too abstract and aloof from the realm of sport unless operationalized. The pilot study aimed at operationalizing the term *international understanding* in exploring those specific conditions and contexts in sport which are perceived by athletes themselves as conducive or as opposite to international understanding. This is the only way to get operative facts instead of beliefs on those conditions in sport conducive to international understanding; if we lack such facts, we can in sport only pay lip-service to it as has been done until today.

The dialectical concept of sport with associative and conflictual elements turned out to be fruitful as a frame of reference of the study. It was assumed that all factors and conditions are prone to be perceived by athletes as *associative* if they are reckoned to be in accordance with the common good interests of all parties involved but as *conflictual* if in contradiction with the common good and for instance for the advantage of just a few parties but not all. The findings of the study, condensed in figure 19, were by and large consistent with the main proposition.

Contrary to expectations, two items namely "extraordinary hero-worship of winners" and "victory ceremonies with national anthems and flags" were perceived by the majority of athletes as conducive to international understanding, instead of opposing in being an exclusive interest of a few but not of all. After all and as a second thought, those items of rewarding have a priori been highly recognized as vital incentives commonly shared by all participating athletes! Interpreted in this way, they are rather consistent with the main proposition of the study (Heinilä, 1986, 85-87).

Due to the explorative approach, the results of this pilot study are only tentative but the project proved that it is possible to specify in this way major conditions and social contexts which in international sport are conducive to the promotion of international understanding. Since the athletes have the key role in sport, their conceptions of the repercussions of sport on international understanding are also of great importance. Furthermore, since the most significant contribution of sport to the implementation of international understanding takes place or not in the minds of people participating in sport as spectators all over

the world, also their conceptions of sport with reference to international understanding are important to know, as well as also the conceptions of sport journalists, since they in turn have access to the minds of public at large. In probing the impact of the actual Olympic Games on the minds of people of the host country, the large-scale survey conducted in Norway in connection with the Winter Games in Lillehammer was in this respect a unique and most welcome pilot study. For those who take it for granted that the Olympic Games promote nothing else but international understanding, the outcomes of the survey are most startling: more than international goodwill, the Games promoted ethnocentrism, chauvinism and superiority feelings over foreigners amongst the Norwegian people (Kolstad et al, 1995). It is highly likely that the overall superiority of the athletes of the small host country contributed significantly to those in- and out-group attitudes of people, posing the awkward question about the amount of success: is modesty in success of the host countries more favourable for promoting international understanding than excessive superiority?

Taking into consideration the great significance of sport in international relationship, the author considers that his plea to the high authorities of international sport is still well grounded:

*The promotion of international goodwill and understanding is the main legitimacy of international sport. But sport does not generate that goodwill and mutual understanding automatically through some self-regulating mechanism and under all circumstances. Though deficient in many respects, the exploration strongly suggests that this capacity of sport depends upon many intrinsic and extrinsic conditions. It is also evident that the recent trend in international sport shown in certain changes, transformations and new interventions in those conditions, tends to jeopardize the capacity of sport for the international common good and make it more vulnerable to selfish exploitation and conflictual propensities. For the specification of those factors and conditions in the internal and external systems of international sport, which are conducive to international goodwill and badwill in a more reliable and accurate way than was here possible, more research is badly needed with proper design and properly commissioned. As stated in the Olympic Charter the promotion of international friendship, understanding and goodwill are*

*fundamental aims of Olympic movement. Is it not the primary interest of the IOC to initiate, sponsor and commission such an extensive international research project? (Heinilä, 1986, 92).*

Today, in 1997, it is clear that the primary interest of the IOC is something else. High authorities of international sport seem to believe that the great popularity of international sport is the sufficient guarantee for its legitimacy. This is hardly so, because the popularity in terms of massification of sports events also means heightened vulnerability to dubious exploitations and disorder.

Under these circumstances there is the dilemma of legitimacy, which could only be solved by strengthening the associative elements of international sport, such as

- 1) *commitment to "fairness" as imperative to all parties involved in sport, and*
- 2) *commitment to the common good interests of international understanding and respect of universal human rights of all parties involved.*

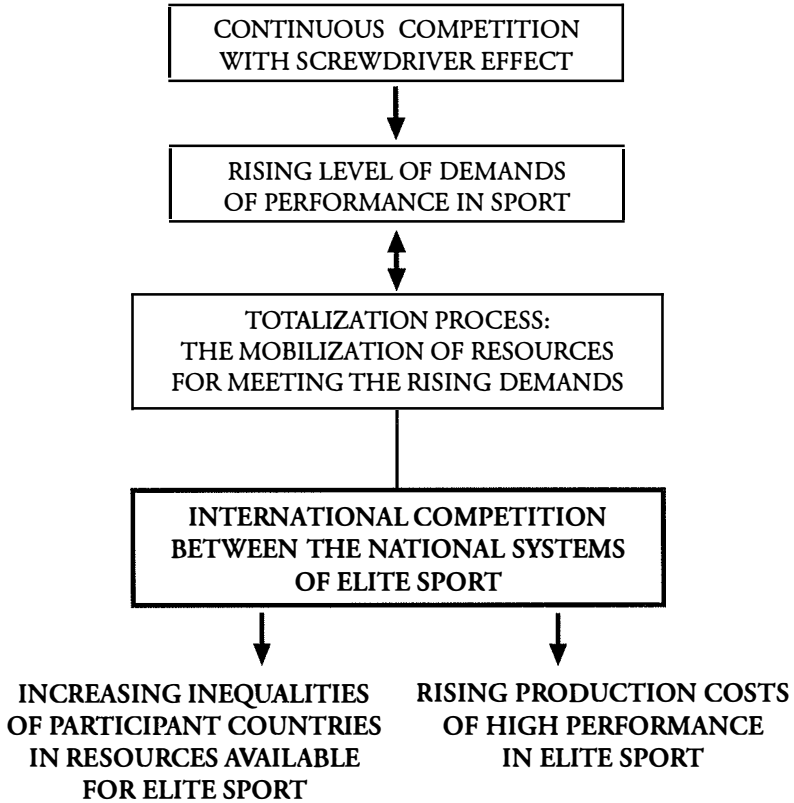
## **2. Dilemmas of validity**

International sport is supposed to also have some sporting meaningfulness for its steady continuance. Sport used to possess that meaning in the fair test of athletic superiority. But the past development in international sport has problematized that conception of sport as seen once again here. When the complex system of international sport is reduced to the most essential factors the outlook might look like figure 20, page 151.

The ultimate dilemma of international sport is that continuous competition does not know any ceiling limits in its ongoing pursuits for victory, well manifested by the Olympic motto of *citius, altius, fortius*. The late vice-president of the IOC Willi Daume perceived that and considered it "as a most dangerous dictum" which, if treated with absolute validity would have inhuman consequences (quoted by Lenk, 1979, 143).

Apart from any inhuman consequences – well evident e.g. in child sport, in medical abuses etc – of the ever upgrading level of demands,

*Figure 20. The core dynamics of international sport*



the totalization process is also going on in the "arms race" of sport and transforming international sport into a competition between the national systems. This totalization process poses the most important question about the very purpose of international sport.

In totalizing the competition of international sport, the outcomes of contest test more and more the total effectiveness of the national systems of elite sport in producing the high performance necessary for success but based on their great inequalities in terms of the quantity and quality of resources available for elite sport. Due to this great inequality of participant countries in totalizing international sport a contest which apparently seems to happen between equal partners, in fact, takes place

between David and Goliath but, contrary to the biblical contest, Goliath in sport is mostly superior to David today.

William Jones, the late Secretary General of The International Basketball Federation praised sport in the UNESCO-Congress in Helsinki in 1959 for an equal treatment of small and big countries:

*"A small country has an even chance when competing against large countries. It is true that in the larger countries there are greater numbers from which competitors may be chosen, but when the competition is on, it is one against one, or five against five, or eleven against eleven. In any given event on the athletic field,...a small country has an even chance to win. The might of numbers does not count any more"* (Jones, 1960, 160).

His argumentation was not fully convincing at that time and is far from tenable today due to the totalization process.

The equality of contestants is the vital principle of fair play in sport and the crucial criterion of the validity of a contest as a just test of athletic superiority. From this point of view the great inequality of national systems in their pursuit to produce high achievement distorts that principle and invalidates the very purpose of international sport transforming it into a contest between elephants and mice. But it is not only the dilemma of the proper purpose of international sport but also the moral issue of *justice* that is at stake in the recent development of international sport (Földesi & Földesi, 1984).

Along the totalization process of international sport not only the moral problem of justice vs. injustice but also the problem of the justification of participation in international sport by dominating Goliaths over Davids get accentuated at least in minor countries. Is there any point to make increasing investments for the participation in international sport with the fast diminishing chance of any success? In this situation the very issue of fairness and justice in international sport can turn – if and when fully recognized – into the issue of the legitimacy from the point of view of minor countries!

Due the totalization process of international sport, the production costs of high performance have been multiplied and with the continuance of the rising level of demands they tend to be increasing constantly – the

prize of the Olympic medal is already invaluable and not only in the sense that nobody has made any estimation about the total costs of success in international sport but also in absolute value. The national systems promoting elite sport are, because of the rising level of demands, forced to make use of all relevant production forces and a variety of resources in generating and maintaining high competitiveness of elite sport. All this means increasing amounts of costs in terms of money, energy, expertise, and lost investments such as failures, injuries, drop-outs, etc.

On the other hand, because of the commercialization and professionalization of sport the role of money in the market of sport has become significant also as a way of buying success from the market of *migrant* athletes. This new role of money in international sport, also favours the big countries with large market of professional sports, wealthy sport clubs and big money available. Due to these inequalities in the flow of big money between the countries all international sport is under reorganization: the centre with its large markets will be distinct from the periphery which is composed of small countries with a flow of small money.

In the small countries with limited resources available, this pressure of the increasing costs of elite sport has become a most stressful issue in sport organizations. There is a common cry for more resources for elite sport *if we want to have any success in international sport*. In fact, there is more and more money available but the costs seem to accelerate even faster and the sports federations of small countries will sooner or later face the critical question: is the pursuit for a great success any more in any meaningful relation to the heightening costs of the success? At the same time the other critical issue tends to become significant: what is the sustainable long term development of elite sport with the rising level of demands?

Thus also the increasing costs of elite sport and the new role of money in commercialized sport accentuate the basic questions about the meaningfulness of international sport at least from the point of view of minor countries.

### 3. Dilemmas of control

#### 3.1. Increasing misconducts

Misconducts are well known throughout human history; they are known also throughout the short history of modern sport. "*Opportunity makes the thief*" has its relevance also in sport. Yet there is increasing evidence that elite sport today has become more vulnerable to misconducts than before, accentuating the problems of control. Apart from intentional manslaughter, murder and robbery, all other malpractices are known in sport today: there are mutilations, maltreatments, sexual misconducts and other forms of physical violence, racism, vandalism, hooliganism, illegal business, briberies, tax- frauds, drug abuses, fixed matches, dubious medical manipulations, fraudulent equipment, etc. Sport is the reflection of society of which it is a part, in its virtues as well as in its vices. Is this a sufficient excuse in sport?

The relationship between society at large and any of its sub-systems cannot be so deterministic that the sub-systems do not have any degrees of freedom for their own choice. Sport used to represent "the better world" with its humanistic ideals and educational pursuits well manifested also in elite sport. Due to the deidealization and commercialization process, sport as the sub-system has assimilated more with the society at large and in this way become more imprinted by the society in its virtues and vices. Concomitantly with the recent transformation, elite sport in general has some propensities which make it more vulnerable to wrongdoings than before; there is even the shocking option that elite sport in the future can outdo the society in wrongdoings. At least the following propensities are conducive to the increasing foulplay in the elite sport of today.

**High publicity.** The wide publicity and visibility of sports events today attract some dissident groups of people to exploit that publicity for the demonstration of their causes, protests or social deprivations.

**Deidealization of sport.** Unharnessed from any sacred mission and secularized into profane mass entertainment and pursuits for victory as *he only thing which count*, sport is also more receptive for foulplaying.

**Massification of sport.** The increasing *lonely crowd* of spectators represents increasing potentiality of undue interference with sport, ethnocentric confrontations and time-off rioting of massified people.



**High pressure for victory.** Hightening investments in pursuit of victory of all parties involved – athletes, sport organizations, society at large etc. – enhance the pressure for success as a due compensation for investments and is conducive to the displacement of fair play as the prime code of conduct with the code of *at all cost* or – *right or wrong for my country* (cf. Földesi & Földesi, 1984). Without success all investments and efforts have been wasted.

**Flow of big money.** The flow of money in elite sport has multiplied due to the commercialization and professionalization of sport. Due to the increasing production costs of high performance, the role of money is most significant in today's sport. As an incentive and remuneration it is also of great importance. The big money involved tends to expose all human affairs - including sport - to dispute and malpractice. Hence even the IOC has seen it necessary to establish in 1982 *the Court of Arbitration* of its own (Mbaye, 1985, 5-13).

All those changes listed above have both separately and in concert made today's elite sport more liable to a variety of malpractice and at the same time accentuated the problems of control.

### 3.2. Vulnerability to cheating

Out of the great variety of misconducts, *cheating* is the most alarming and most extensive dilemma for the control in international sport, and as such worth some elaboration here. The term cheating covers all the illegal or unsportsmanlike manipulation of sport equipment and outfits but also the artificial manipulation of athletes' capacity of performance. Cheating stands as a sort of *capital crime* in sport since it distorts the very meaning of sport as a fair test of athletic superiority, and the athletes who do not observe the rules are condemned by Warren P. Fraleigh as "the greatest failures" in sport (Fraleigh, 1984, 72).

Due to tight standardization and effective control, even the attempts of cheating by means of illegal manipulation of equipment and outfits have remained only occasional in sport. There are some sports like Nordic and Alpine winter sports, in which to a certain extent, the manipulation of equipment and outfits is officially permitted with the consequence that occasionally the outcomes of the contest are attributed

more to better equipment than to better athletic capacity. Here we are not concerned with cheating but, rather, with matters of choice or with a business secret! Distinct from sport proper in which the performance capacity of athletes – let alone the share of chance – is the primary determinant of the outcome of the contest those sports permitting some degrees of freedom of choice of equipment and in its manipulations are called *equipment sports*.

*It is strange that e.g. the equipment of Nordic ski sports have not been standardized further, let us say with regard to waxing. In 1958 I posed this question in discussion with the sceptical Russian colleague visiting the University of Helsinki as follows: If a human being is able to invent the Sputnik (launched in 1957) it is a rather simple task to construct the mechanic instrument which at the starting site spreads the same wax on the skis of all participants!*

But the abuse of drugs and other illegal medical manipulation of the performance capacity of athletes has contaminated elite sport so extensively today that the very legitimacy of international sport has become jeopardized. However, as a matter of *cheating* the abuse of drugs and medical manipulations are carefully hidden as business secrets (and even under the safeguard of the Security Police as happened in the GDR/DDR). For this reason, there are no reliable statistics available - and never will be - on the extensiveness of all medical abuses in sport. According to some expert estimation, a great number of Olympic medallists have used these dubious means for enhancing their performance capacity particularly in training. It is evident from the criminological studies that only a minority of cases is detected and some fraction is convicted, which, if also true in sport, indicates according to Gunther Luschen that doping is far more widespread than becomes known through official detection or individual disclosures (Luschen, 1984, 56). In the notorious Pan-American Games in Caracas in 1983, 19 athletes were disqualified because of abuse of drugs and 11 more avoided the doping test (Luschen, 1993, 95). Also, a great amount of confiscated illegal drugs in many countries and their continuous supply in the market serves as evidence for the alarming extensiveness of cheating in sport.

Obviously doping has been known for a long time in the history of

sport, but it remained sporadic until the 1960s when anabolic steroids and so called *blood doping* – blood transfusions conducted by physicians (*sic!*) for increasing the athletes' oxygen intake capacity – emerged more widely into the hidden market of elite sport and the conspicuous effects of anabolic steroids became visible not only in the statistics of records but also in the newlook of athletes! The new type of superman created by medical know-how instead of training know-how entered the venues of international sport and eventually the obsolete conception of *a sound mind in a sound body* was superseded by – something else! Since then the use of doping, the assortment of drugs and also the methods for camouflaging this kind of foulplay have greatly advanced and are already so sophisticated that the agents of doping control have great difficulties in discriminating pure athletes from contaminated hustlers. Consequently there exists a new type of "arms race" in elite sport between cheating with medical abuse and the lie-detection of control. Incidentally, at least the control measures often seem to lag behind the progress of cheating. If this circumstance becomes the rule, the prospects of elite sport are at least obscured. The eternal confrontation of life: *virtues against vices, villains against heroes*, is displayed also in today's international sport. Already many hustlers and villains are glorified as *heroes* in international sport. Is it a symptom of an eventually lost battle against cheating in sport? As such it is not any anomaly in the history of international sport but actually in nice conformity with many former lost battles for proper sport!

As a form of illegal and hidden business, medical abuses in sport are most difficult issues to explore. The majority of the research done in medical sciences has focused on the effects of drugs and medical manipulation on the performance capacity of athletes, whereas there is a most significant gap of reliable information on the conditions and contexts which make elite sport prone to cheating. The medical-physiological knowledge on the effects of doping are of minor importance in any preventive policy, yet e.g. the Medical Commission of the IOC is mainly composed of members with a medical science background.

In order to delineate those social contexts conducive to cheating in sport, Gunther Luschen has done some pioneering exploration and stimulated with his ideas also the framing of the following tentative attempt to cover those conditions in elite sport that are particularly prone to cheating (Luschen, 1976, 67-77).

**Uncertainty of success.** It is well known that magic is used in the hope for some favourable outcomes in primitive societies, as the anthropologist B. Malinowski has shown but also in most advanced societies and in the most advanced sports (Sage, 1981, 155-158). The uncertainty of the outcomes also makes a few athletes, anxious to win,

*Figure 21. Cheating-prone conditions in elite sport*

Social condition	Pro cheating	Con cheating
Uncertainty of success	High expectation but low trust in success	Low expectation
Stakes involved	High stakes involved	Low stakes involved
Social pressure for success	High pressure	Low pressure
Remuneration of success	High remuneration	Low remuneration
Control measures	Deficient control and low sanctions	Tight control and severe sanctions
Perception on moral standards	Perceived as low	Perceived as high

prone to the pursuit of a victory literally by all means. Due to the high qualification of participants, the outcome of a contest in international sport is often most unpredictable, which makes them also more vulnerable to foulplaying. In general, a high uncertainty of a success associated with the strong desire to succeed, makes any contest more prone to misconduct than under other circumstances (Luschen, op.cit. 70).

In elite sport with the rising level of demands, champions today are sooner than in the past doomed to be losers and ex-heroes, at least because of the inevitable effects of aging. It is also well known that withdrawal from sport and from the spotlights is for many champions a most traumatic process; hence some athletes try to stay in the spotlight for as long as possible – and even by means of cheating. Evidently the number of aging athletes disqualified by doping tests tends to be conspicuously high. Cheating for them may be the only way left to win and to remain in the spotlight; on the other hand, they have nothing left to lose since their fame as ex-heroes is canonized on the golden pages of sport history.

**Big stakes involved.** Success in elite sport does not demand heightened investments only from the athletes and sports organizations, but also from society at large. With increasing investments, also the expectations for great success tend to be enhanced because only such a success with accompanied "fame and fortune" can compensate properly for those investments. Some balance between inputs and outputs, between costs and benefits is necessary in elite sport for the continuance of business. Tamasa & Tamasne Földesi underline also the causal relationship between the increasing stakes involved and the unfair behavior (Földesi, 1984).

Certainly sport has its intrinsic attraction to athletes, but in professional elite sport the intrinsic values of sport are not sufficient to compensate for the rising "costs" of a sport career. Athletes totally devoted to their sport careers and in pursuit of the top and the great success also seek a balance between their investments and returns. However, only a few of them ever reach the very top and can afford great surplus returns in their choice of career. The sport career comes, thus, close to gambling with high stakes involved and a high uncertainty of returns making it for some athletes a gambling-like business, vulnerable to cheating.

**Social pressure.** Due to the increasing demands of performance and the totalization process as a response, elite sport is transformed from "the one man show" into a joint venture with a number of parties involved – coaches, physicians, sport leaders, sponsors, mass media, fans, scientists, universities, public authorities, etc. This means that the society at large, with a high number of stake holders is involved with the athletes' pursuit of success. And only the success of athletes pays back for the stakes (Messing, 1991, 36-39). The stakes involved are often high and for instance the occupational and social status of coaches, managers and physicians involved in the business is often bound to the success of athletes/teams. It is particularly the flow of money from business into elite sport, as the most important asset for covering the rising costs of production, that depends on the success of the athletes: only great achievements in international sport generate for sport and athletes their market value, and attract promoters, business and public authorities to make investments in sport.

So many parties with such great stakes involved in elite sport generate a high pressure on achievement and success. Under such

pressure the *Lombardian* code of conduct – ”the only things that matters is a victory” – easily takes prevalence over fair play and *laissez faire* as the mode of leadership is considered proper as far as doping is concerned - right or wrong, my country. This is evident also in the obvious reluctance of sports authorities themselves in the execution of strict control measures against doping. It is plausible that social pressure for success in international sport used to be exceptionally high in countries with a totalitarian regime; hence sports authorities in those countries seemed to be not only most anxious for success in international sport but at the same time most prone to even systematic foulplaying in their pursuits. Success in international sport can represent both for athletes and for leaders, coaches, and physicians, etc. a key to a high social status and a high standard of living.

The social pressure for success is also exceptionally high in countries with glorious achievements and traditions in international sport. The Nordic countries Sweden, Norway and Finland belong in this category and, due to their past as *superpowers* in international sport, people at large in those countries still yearn for great achievements, ignoring the fact that chances for that have been drastically shrinking due to the totalization process. While the Nordic countries share the problem of increasing discrepancy between the rising demands and the shrinking chances for success, they all also share the problem of doping as an illegal solution to this discrepancy. *Not only the athletes but all of us who demand great success are guilty*, wrote one ordinary man in the reader’s column when some athlete failed in the doping test.

**Remuneration of success.** The extraordinary hero-worship is the most conspicuous cult profoundly peculiar to any popular culture with its superstars, fan clubs, halls of fame, hero stories, statues and the number of rites of honors and celebrations. Daily sports columns of newspapers, let alone the sport journals, reflect well that overwhelming hero-worship in sport.

*The Olympic Champions in Finland are as a rule paid tribute separately by a number of institutions: the President of Republic, the Government, the Municipality, the NOC, Sport Federation, regional and local sport organizations, The Society of Sport Journalists and finally the employer if it is any other than sport. Passing all these ceremonies of tribute*

*requires from the athletes extra time and effort in order to recover and get back to the top - if ever again !*

*The hearsay about the high rewards of Finnish athletes has even been printed at length in the most authoritative document such as the Final Report of the President's Commission of the U.S.*

*An American Champion marathon runner said, when asked what he would have received if he had been a Russian gold medalist, "Well, I would rather have been a Finn...Had I been a Finn, my town would have built me a house. Peugeot would have given me a free car, all this tax free, and I could have done endorsements. Every time I would have gotten 2 000 US dollars for cutting a ribbon. I could have demanded 2 000 US dollars for every mile I set foot on the track for the rest of the summer and probably all the rest of the next year, and all that money being ignored by the government; plus as I went along trying for the next Olympics I would have had the subsidy that I mentioned. (Also) if I were a businessmen I would have had all sorts of capital flowing in there from people who would give me fairly substantial loans to start several business". (The President's Commission, 1977, 85)*

No doubt, the Olympic Champions are honored as national heroes in Finland but hardly in quite such an excessive way as the high Commission suggests!

In commercialised sport, great success is not only a matter of public celebration and hero-worship but it also provides athletes more tangible rewards and fringe benefits; in the most popular sports, a great success can bring the athletes quite a fortune. Superstars today are not only public celebrities, they are often also wealthy people. Any great success in sport is also like a convertible currency which is easy to capitalize afterwards in the form of pecuniary profits with business partners. The *Cinderella* fairy tale comes true in modern elite sport. No wonder there are athletes who are willing to take the ultimate risk in striving for such great success.

The nature of the *zero-sum game* is accentuated in today's international sport: all partners have great stakes involved but only a few get returns for their stakes. With the increasing returns of fame and fortune, but the shrinking chance for a real success, international sport is perceived by a number of athletes as a game of gambling, and as such becomes more vulnerable to cheating. Luschen states bluntly: the rewards

that are at stake in a contest will determine the amount of the severity of cheating (Luschen, 1976, 70). Evidently many athletes have taken that risk and have achieved through foulplaying the fame and fortune; many athletes have also failed in their gambling and have *lost their face* if nothing else.

**Deficiencies of control.** As regards the ultimate risks in sport, they certainly cover the abuse of drugs and the medical manipulation of the athletes' capacity of performance: there is a risk of health and a risk of cheating involved. Athletes all over the world are so well informed about the prohibition of doping and other medical malpractise that the choice of such dubious means is mostly a matter of calculated risk-taking or a matter of moral weakness. The main excuse, which has occasionally occurred, has concerned athletes who by mistake have used some medicine for their illness and that has contained prohibited pharmaceuticals. With reference to the medicinal use Luschen points out that the "medicalization" of society with the widespread use of pharmaceuticals and the medical treatment of injuries might have tacitly some legitimizing effect also on the use of drugs in sport (Luschen, 1993, 93).

Under these circumstances, the execution of law and order in elite sport today depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of the control of sport authorities. In the pilot study on the fair play conceptions of junior football players the author concluded similarly:

*"the regulation and the maintenance of the integration depend in the public-oriented football more, and perhaps in a decisive way, upon the extrinsic control and sufficiency of the sanctions than upon self-regulation by the internalized common norms and shared notions about fair conduct in the game" (Heinilä, 1984, 48).*

The trend in elite sport is well in accordance with the conclusion above. Since fair play as the code of conduct has largely lost its normative power, the law and order in sport are based mostly on the effectiveness of external control. Consequently, the number of umpires and referees is increasing, their competence is improving through professionalization, sanctions for the rules are reinforced, and in the execution of control also electronic devices are extensively in use.



Extensive medical cheating has necessitated the establishment of the world-wide control system with multinational contracts, obligatory tests and sophisticated laboratories for detecting hustlers and gamblers amongst athletes. This unique network of lie-detection is far from any perfection and will be so, but it has certainly had most significant preventive effects on the extension of doping.

Obviously the effectiveness of the antidoping control in international sport depends on the strict neutrality and independence of control measures. There are doubts that occasionally sport authorities have interfered with control, for instance, by applying too permissive criterion for testing.

Sport authorities are well aware of the fact that detection of too many hustlers and gamblers inevitably jeopardizes the public credibility of international sport and the Olympic Games in particular. Also, the national sport federations and NOCs seem to have an ambivalent stand against doping control; the tight control is conceived to be in awkward disaccordance with the vested interest of the success sought by many significant parties involved in elite sport. Hence, as to doping, sport leaders *are unwilling to see anything, to hear anything and to speak anything*. As Karl-Heinrich Bette and Uwe Schimank recently explained about the reluctance of sport federations in antidoping affairs: there exists an organizational disjunction between talk and action and the cross-pressure between the public image and doping as "useful misuse" for success (Bette & Schimank, 1996, 357-382).

*This ambivalence was well manifested e.g. in the circular letter sent by the Olympic Committee to all athletes as candidates of the Finnish Olympic team informing athletes of the safety marginals in doping necessary to take into account due to doping control. Yet the accident happened and Martti Vainio who had already earlier in the spring 1982 given the positive test was qualified into the Olympic team finishing second in the final of 10 000 meter but later disqualified due to failing in the doping test.*

The very existence of this global network of anti-doping control is an alarming signal of the serious dilemma of control in international sport today: the hidden flow of dubious pills are pouring into the

market of sport and down to the metabolism of athletes. Pills are easy to swallow by athletes but their correct tracing by control agents is the most complicated and expensive process.

**Perception on moral standard.** The validity of contest as a fair test of athletic superiority presupposes that all participants pursue victory on equal terms. The terms of equality do not only concern the rules and venues but also the code of conduct in contests. If for instance one partner chooses to play tough and aggressively, the opponent is prone to counteract on equal terms; if one chooses to play foul, it instigates also the opponent to play foul. Thus even with reference to foulplaying and the abuse of drugs in the long run a contest tends to take place on equal terms or in a way that no partner has any particular advantage over other partners in their manner of conduct. Melvin Tumin has presented this proposition in general terms as follows:

*"In any social group, the moral behavior of the group as an average will tend to sink to that of the least moral participant, and the least moral participant will in that sense control the group unless he is otherwise retrained and/or expelled....Bad money may not always drive out good money, though it almost always does. But "bad" conduct surely drives out "good" conduct with predictable vigor and speed" (Tumin, 1964, 127).*

In elite sport "bad" conduct often means some advantage over other rivals and if the referees fail to maintain the proper code of conduct, "bad" conduct easily spreads and becomes prevailing in contest. If one partner pursues victory "at all cost", others tend to level off the situation similarly "by all means" or by even more ruthless manner. Since bad conduct tends to drive out good conduct in sport the pressure on umpires and referees for the maintenance of proper conduct often becomes very strong particularly in contests with high stakes involved. Umpires in professional football may need the escort of police forces from the stadium.

Obviously the thesis on the power of "bad" over "good" conduct has relevance also in doping as "bad" conduct. Common awareness of the extent of the doping problem sells that "bad" conduct in the market of international sport in the sense of levelling off any advantage of "bad

guys” gained by doping. Cheating generates more cheating. But not only does the factual abuse of drugs have a snowball effect in the marketing malpractice in sport. Also the spurious perceptions, which David Krech and Richard S. Crutchfield have called *pluralistic ignorance*, can have the same effect: if some athletes believe that other rivals make use of doping, though hardly anybody does, this spurious conception may instigate abstinent athletes also to resort to doping.

*David Krech and Richard S. Crutchfield have defined the term of pluralistic ignorance in a poetic manner: "no one believes, but everyone believes that everyone else believes" (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948, 389).*

A proper competition is supposed to test the athletic superiority of participants and not the superiority of some pharmaceuticals or medical manipulation in producing high performance in sport. Any doped athlete distorts the very sporting idea of a contest. Sport is constituted by rules; thus without compliance to rules there is no proper sport; hence any medical abuse is a capital crime against sport. There exists the notorious vicious circle in the international sport of today: the more there are hustlers gambling for a victory, the more the distorted reality offers ostensible justifications for doping. The very idea of a contest is pursuit of victory but when a number of hustlers are engaged in international sport, then what holds true is *"nice guys finish last"*. What a prospect of the international sport!

*The discussion about the athletes' factual or spurious perception on cheating in sport comes close to the game-theoretical approach to doping conceived as the athletes' dilemma of rational decision making for maximizing their profits in different competitive situation (Breivik, 1992, 235-256).*

#### **4. Dubious exploitation of sport.**

The metaphor of the *iceberg* illustrates well the system of international sport: only a small fraction of it is visible and the major bulk is invisible and even intentionally hidden as a business secret or as illegal malpractice. In

quantitative and visible terms, elite sport today has the most magnificent outlook with huge stadiums, thousands of participants, spectacular performances, festive ceremonies and immense popularity as mass entertainment. In invisible terms, however, elite sport today is gradually transformed toward a *secret society* with business secrets, camouflaged malignant exploitations and carefully hidden medical abuses.

Considering the alarming extent of cheating, it is of great importance to explore those conditions and elements which make international sport so vulnerable to a diversity of malpractice today. It is plausible that particular conditions described in figure 21 get more explanatory power in cheating or in fair play when two or more pros and cons respectively occur together. Due to those conditions, elite sport seems to adopt characteristics of gambling. Most athletes totally devoted to their sport careers dream of a great victory as a jackpot, but only a few out of the tens of thousands can ever enjoy any great victory. For the majority, the only chance for the jackpot left is foul play with medical abuses and wide malpractice of doping, giving athletes some factual or ostensible justification for the malpractice of their own. When and if elite sport is perceived as gambling proper, risk-taking in the form of cheating becomes an inherent part of elite sport.

The above exploration of those particular conditions and elements which make international sport today increasingly vulnerable to cheating is, however, tentative, and at best can only offer some frame of reference for further studies. Yet it is evident that the medical conception of doping and the medical approach to the problem resolution is far too narrow and insufficient. Doping affects performances and its tracing from the body is a medical problem, but doping as cheating, is first of all, a sociological, behavioral, ethical and juridical problem.

## **5. Dilemmas of a sport career**

From the athlete's point of view, elite sport at the international level is transformed into an occupation proper: on the one hand, it is the central preoccupation and supposed to provide athletes also their livelihood, and on the other hand it sets occupational expectations and obligations. In conventional occupations, as well as in elite sport, the very essence is goal-directed *working*, which in conventional occupations usually

means working with some material or services but in elite sport with the capacity of one's body in pursuit of high performance. But there are also most significant differences between conventional occupations and elite sport. The career span in elite sport is much shorter, usually beginning at the age of 15-20 but ending already at the age of 30-35. Furthermore, in sport the span of high performance and staying at the top is as a rule significantly shorter than in other occupations. However, career patterns differ profoundly in different sports and for instance in swimming, womens' gymnastics and figure skating the occupational career can start already in teenage but might be finished at the age of 20-25.

Some special training is usually necessary for entry into any occupation. Due to the rising level of demands of performance in elite sport, this occupational training tends to be prolonged, intensified and started earlier. In some sports, systematic training towards the maximal capacity of occupational performance might start already at the early years of childhood, and not always by free will of the children themselves but perhaps mostly at the wish of their parents. Anyhow, the whole issue of children's sport is accentuated today. While sport experts are mainly concerned with the pros and cons of early systematic training and specialization from the point of view of optimal career development in sport, the experts in education and developmental psychology are seriously concerned about the impacts of such *effect training* on the optimal development of the personality of children. Evidently the most embarrassing problem of the *exploitation of childhood* for a sport career is actualized in international sport today, well visible for instance in so called women's gymnastics with 15-17 years old acrobats manifesting muscular habitus of adults and expressive appearance of the lost childhood and the lost *flow*-experiences of play. This impression has similarities with impressions in the developing countries, which make use of child labor e.g. in textile industry: similar acrobatic skills and similar serious-looking faces with full concentration can be found in both instances.

*Here we are with the great visible progress of international sport: the vital issue of children's human rights is accentuated and children need special protection against their exploitation for elite sport. It is significant that the governmental organizations have been more concerned about this issue than the sport organizations themselves!*

There are human problems involved not only at the beginning but also at the end of the sport career. Jeffrey O. Segrave asserts that sport, like all cultural hero-systems, offers only a limited sense of the world, a world of ethical clarity and functional simplicity and as such is conducive to personal regression. Segrave let the French tennis champion Yannick Noach describe vividly the concomitant problems ahead:

*"It's a totally unreal world we live in..I'm thirty years old, and when I quit I will have to make my first real decisions as a man. Up until now, everything in my life has been taken care of for me. In one way it's nice to be thirty and still be a kid. In another way, it's scary"* (Segrave, 1993, 190-193).

Most problems of retirement are conducive to the professionalization of sport. Total devotion to the sport career often means that athletes do not take properly into consideration what happens when their career as an athlete is over and half of the life is still ahead. Only a few most successful athletes in most popular sports can make such a fortune in sport that they are doing well as ex-athletes without a new occupational start. Negligences in proper education and occupational training are often not realized until athletes face the necessity of the end of their career in sport. Sport authorities have been primarily concerned only with the promotion of the athlete's career in sport and their total devotion to pursuit of a high performance but have often ignored their long term responsibility for the well-being of athletes in general and particularly when athletes face the problems of readjustment in life at retirement. Franz Lotz underlines this responsibility as follows:

*"The athlete should not be regarded as a mere factor in the sum total of successes achieved by the associations, or as a performance-producer who is of interest only as long as he produces the expected performance and as long as the capital invested in his training and performance-building produces the expected interest. This contempt of the sportsman as a person is most conspicuous in professional sport. Man is here turned into a merchandise. He has a certain, higher or lower, market value, which determines the price of his sale or purchase. If he suffers an injury or falls ill, he disappears from the stock exchange"* (Lotz, 1971, 251).

Eric F. Broom recommends such a comprehensive assistance program for athletes which concerns 1) all talented athletes, 2) covers the total duration of their sport career, 3) integrates their sport career with education and working career, and 4) helps retiring athletes to refocus their lives (Broom, 1986. 215). At least in some countries, some positive actions have been taken for the extension of the responsibility of sport authorities, but mostly their target group is composed of the most successful athletes while the problem is accentuated amongst the great number of athletes who have been totally devoted to their pursuits in sport but never managed to get to the top or any proper compensation for their investments in sport!

At retirement the problem of *status crystallization* gets accentuated. By the term *status crystallization* Gerhard E. Lensky refers to the consistency of key social statuses such as occupation, education and economy that individuals have in their social context: in a *high crystallization*, all statuses are well in consistency with each other, while in a *low crystallization*, they are not in consistency and as such instigate people's strive for a more balanced state (Lensky, 1956). Gunther Luschen has probed some correlates of the status crystallization with sport participation but not with the adjustment of life at retirement (Luschen, 1984, 283-294). It can be assumed that a number of athletes do not realize, until close to their retirement, their state of low status crystallization. As an athlete, they are used to having a high social status but at retirement many of them might face the descending status of a common man. With reference to the status crystallization, the *status passage* of athletes to retirement can be a critical point and might presuppose some readjustments in their search for better status crystallization and a new identity in the new social situation. If this status passage to the retirement is not properly carried out, the ex-athlete might remain for the rest of his life as an athlete with the fake identity of a great champion, reliving in imagination his/her glorious past as a champion. Thus he/she is not able to live for today and for tomorrow like others, but only in the past (Heinilä, 1981, 152).

*According to Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, a status passage in general may entail movement into a different part of a social structure or a loss or gain of privilege, influence, or power, and a changed identity and sense of self, as well as changed behavior (Glaser & Strauss, 1971, 6).*

Obviously these problems of readjustment are accentuated amongst athletes who have a low status crystallization at retirement and have neglected their educational and occupational security for the sake of their sport career. This comes close to Jay J. Coakley's argumentation based on the critical overview of previous studies: if there are any serious adjustment problems they are likely to concern athletes who have been indifferent of other interests of life and totally devoted to their sport career (Coakley, 1983, 8-9). It is plausible that with the increasing demands of performance these problems at retirement tend to be accentuated and call for further attention and elaborations (Rosenberg, 1984, 245-258).

Due to the high demands of sport and the necessity of a total devotion to the sport career, athletes are forced to restrain from the normal life and submit all other interests to the central interest of sport. This is proved by athletes who commonly see that they have made "sacrifices" in most other spheres of life – e.g. in education, occupational career, leisure, family life, personal freedom, etc. for the benefit of sport (Heinilä & Vuolle, 1970, 17-22, Vuolle, 1977, 115-120).

The free choice of athletes is often tightly controlled by the System and they are sold and bought (e.g. Weiss, 1990, 49, Beamish & Borowy, 1987, 26). These kinds of *status constraints* on athletes might be conducive to the early withdrawal of number of athletes who are not able to find adequate solutions to those cross-pressures and/or too demanding expectations and anomalies of life as athletes. With the rising demands, these anomalies and status constraints tend to become accentuated, and if not solved properly, early drop-out is likely to increase (Heinilä, 1981, 156). If and when these "sacrifices" for the sport career become extensive enough, sport is prone to become *the zero-sum game of life*: what athletes might win in sport, they lose in life. If it happens, "the games people play have become more important than the people themselves" as Terry Orlick sums up the resentments of those athletes, such as Barbara Lamblin, ex-champion in swimming (Orlick, 1978, 113-118):

*"why I ever wanted to win in the first place  
if the costs are so high  
a loss of identity, a loss of self, a loss of soul  
a sacrifice to the god gold, gold gold and more gold .."*



Sport as an occupational career differs from conventional occupations also in reference to the risks involved. Sport as an occupation is highly competitive in the sense that only achievement of success in contest justifies the very occupational choice of sport. This inevitably means that there are high occupational risks involved: because there can only be a few winners there are a great number of failures, at least as far as success in big international sport is concerned.

Sport as an occupational career implies not only the extraordinary risk of failing but also the extraordinary risk of health. W. Hollmann, the former President of FIMS (International Federation of Sport Medicine) writes bluntly:

*"Medicine has more and more become the "repair-shop" of high performance sports. The former ethical pretention that sports should further man's health was then close to turning into its opposite in high-performance sports" (Hollmann, 1986, 4).*

Due to the high demands and high stakes involved, the health risk of athletes in the very contest is obviously increasing. For the same reason, also training is carried out often by maximal efforts without any due rest and recovery from the exhaustive drills resulting in increasing probability of injuries, accidents, stress or other health problems, let alone the great health risks caused by the extensive abuse of drugs.

Taking into account all the hazards, uncertainties and risks involved, it is appropriate to claim that sport is *a risk occupation*. This dilemma is eventually recognized also by athletes themselves who in many countries have established their labor unions for looking after their common professional interests and for increasing the attraction of sport as an occupational career. Though there are many mutual common interests in sport between the sport federations / sport clubs and athletes, there exists, however, also some distinctive interests between them as the employers vs. employees. As in the labor market in general, also the unions of athletes bargain with their respective federations for the contracts in sport specifying the obligations and rights of both parties. Athletes as the prime actors in sport and their unions have the vested interest undoubtedly also in the increasing flow of money from business into the market of sport and in their due share. In professional sport with its rising demands and

total commitments it is a matter of course that efforts in general and high achievements of athletes in particular are paid in cash. In setting the high demands for the performance of athletes, the responsibility of sport federations as employers for the overall welfare of athletes is accentuated

All occupational peculiarities, hazards and abuses involved in the recruitment of talented youth to sport careers tends to become more problematic than before. Because of the great hazards and the shrinking chance of ever getting to the top, the blunt persuasion of youth to adopt sport careers is ethically open to blame. It is plausible, that for the same reason, many youngsters who are well talented for sport are inclined to give in their choice the priority to school and the conventional occupational career and indulge in sport only for fun, fitness and the companionship if at all.

Thus it is likely that athletes pursuing careers in sport will in the future mostly be recruited from those minority groups in society who are constrained from common educational-occupational careers by some social deprivation, lack of opportunities or some other handicap etc. Anyhow, sport offers a channel for the social mobility to a number of youth anxious to get on in life and, no doubt, there is a great deal of attraction in sport with its superstars, hero-worship, celebrations and publicity. There is already evidence that athletes representing ethnic minorities are often overrepresented in the national teams e.g. in the Olympic Games (see Nixon II, 1984, 160-164). As Harry Edwards points out, athletic proficiency has an extremely high value in the Afro-American subculture because, with a sport career, the Afro-Americans can surmount many of the obstacles confronting them in other avenues of social and economic mobility (Edwards, 1973, 188).

All in all, it is highly possible that sport, as a risky occupation, has its strongest attraction to communities with the scarce supply of occupational opportunities and to people with some social deprivation and constraints in the conventional choice of occupational careers. In any case, sport has offered opportunities for the social mobility of many people who otherwise would have remained invisible as common men and fostered the hope for a better life in a better world amongst their compatriots.

It is perhaps also symptomatic for this biased recruitment to sport careers that so few of the off-springs of sport leaders are engaged in sport

as a career. Sport leaders who proclaim the glory of sport and persuade youth to take up sport careers seem to have failed with their own youth. Recently in his anniversary interview the President of The EAA expressed his delight that none of his four sons were bound for a sport career (Helsingin Sanomat 24.3.1996).

There are many dilemmas attached to the recent development of international sport, as can be gauged from the above. But dilemmas and constraints are also essential for development. Thus all spheres of social life are forever the scenes of new sources of opposition, new challenges to the existing order, new contradictions, and the need for new resolutions, just like Jay Coakley has underlined (Coakley, 1988, 106). But how those dilemmas are encountered has significant repercussions on the future of international sport. In any case, a proper approach to the problems related to elite sport presupposes a valid conception of the dynamics of international sport as a complex action system.

The history of international sport tells mainly about the heroic contests for a victory and the glorious achievements of athletes. But there is another history of international sport: the history of failures of the IOC and other international sport authorities to preserve sport as sport proper and to safeguard it from foreign exploitation. Linked mainly to the powerful market forces, "*the lords of the rings*" of the IOC have been incapable of solving those dilemmas in the past. Hopefully they have learnt from the past failures and recognize the current serious dilemmas of international sport, mostly deriving from the ever-rising demands of the international sport accompanied by the on-going "arms-race", the totalization process and the increasing costs.

## **POWERFUL MARKET FORCES**

Nevertheless, in quantitative terms, the history of international sport has been a very successful story. International sport has managed to conquer the whole world: all countries are involved in the network of international sport and all people of the *Tellus* are captivated by the great events of international sport as spectators. In the most advanced countries the key social institutions are also involved in the promotion of elite sport. Due to this success story of international sport, the monolithic conception of

sport has imprinted the physical culture everywhere and cemented the hegemony of sport. Peter Donnelly states that such a *sport monoculture* absorbs the most governmental and corporate resources, attracts the most media coverage and therefore also the most sponsorship but rejects or marginalizes those people less talented for the excellence in sport (Donnelly, 1996, 36). Thus this hegemony in turn can act as a serious barrier for the development of pluralistic physical culture meant to serve the welfare of all people and not only the few most talented, but this is another story, altogether.

Notwithstanding number of dilemmas contaminating international sport today, there are most powerful forces contributing to its continuance in any way. It is of great significance to notice that those forces are originally external to the system of sport proper, although for the time being they have adhered to the system of sport so intimately that they have become an integral part of it. It is also significant that these "forces" have adhered to the system of sport in a certain sequence and often as a response to certain functional dilemmas, mostly generated by the screwdriver effect of continuous competition and its ever increasing demands of performance. Thus, from the nuclear system of sport, composed of athletes as participants and the management as organizers and referees, international sport as a complex system has been extended to consist of a number of external partners with their most significant contributions to the very continuance of the system such as *spectators, mass media, public authorities, sport sciences, business at large* and also *law enforcement agents*.

The most powerful forces are involved and feed the very continuance of international sport today. It is worth noticing that the high authorities of the European Union have in their agenda the proposal for the uninhibited telecast of the most popular events of international sport on the grounds of free flow of information (*sic!*) as a basic human right. People should be given what they want, but from the point of view of spectators, it is not the free flow of *information* but rather the flow of *sentiments* and feelings that is concerned here.

The partners and forces involved prove that the society is totally interwoven with the pursuits of sport. In the figure above this totalization also includes the new partnership with the law enforcement agents of a society. Due to recent developments, the law enforcements agents have

been extensively involved in international sport: in antidoping, court suits, contractual disputes, bankruptcies of sport clubs, maintenance of order by police forces etc. Since elite sport in general tends to become more vulnerable to a variety of abuses and disorders, it is highly probable that the partnership with the *law enforcement agents* of a society will be of even greater importance in the near future. Sport will employ not only athletes, coaches, managers and sport scientists but also increasingly lawyers, solicitors, bodyguards and policemen! This is called progress?

### **Elite sport and mass society**

Elite sport is well in accordance with the modern concept of mass society. As a pursuit of victory, its basic semantic code is understood easily by all, and as a manifestation of superiority, highly valued and dreamed about in the modern achievement-oriented societies it has great attraction to people at large. What can be an outwardly more simple human presentation than, for instance, running, but what an attraction it holds as a contest for superiority or for championship! Despite the ostensible paradox, elite sport has become the most popular mass culture of the modern mass society.

As a distinction from other mass culture, sport is consumed by all social strata of a society, by the power elite as well as by the rank and file of common people. Everywhere the political elite is willing and even anxious to share the *nationalized* victories of athletes and to manifest in their election campaigns their own superiority as politicians with close companionship with the superstars of sport.

It is plausible that there are some deeper reasons for the extraordinary interest of the political elite in elite sport common everywhere. The political elite is supposed to have primary concerns over common peace and order in society. In the most advanced countries, common welfare also facilitates peace and order in society. But also some superordinate interests inciting large strata of people might contribute to the cohesiveness of a society. Such powerful appeal is attached to elite sport, which can be used – intentionally or unintentionally – as a political instrument of the social control in society. Paavo Seppänen argues that the internal integration of a society, rather than international solidarity, might be the main function of elite sport (Seppänen, 1984, 62).

It has also been suggested that in the mass society sport and religion have a great deal in common and that sport seems to have religious or quasi-religious significance for many people, at least in the sense that people worship other human beings, their achievements and the groups to which they belong (Elias & Dunning, 1986, 205, Dunning, 1986, 43, Sage, 1981, 147-159, Schiffer, 1972, 387-388). It has also been argued that sport is like "an opiate" or tranquilizer which can distract the underprivileged and keep the common man from confronting his/her grievances and social deprivation (Hoch, 1972). Even the Russian scholar V.I. Stolarov admits this plausibility, though in cautious terms:

*"In some cases, sport is exploited as a means of fooling the masses, distracting them from relevant everyday socio-political problems, manipulating the social outlook, and as a pretext for international conflicts and violence" (Stolarov, 1984, 37).*

These kinds of intentional or unintentional political functions of elite sport as an agent of social control are feasible but need to be proved by research proper. It is interesting to notice that the proposition on elite sport as an important political instrument for the social control of people corresponds well with the *orwellian* vision of a totalitarian mass society. For the mass of people spectator sport is like any other mass product of the entertainment industry creating a kind of *a virtual reality* for the vicarious fulfilment of their dreams and aspirations. It is plausible to imagine that the expanding virtual realities of mass entertainment have their contributions to the maintenance of proper order in a mass society. In any case, at least in elite sport, the political elite and the common man have found some vital common interests.

## **MAINSTREAM THINKING IN ELITE SPORT**

There is only one reasonable conclusion left in this exploration of the centennial development of international sport: there is surprisingly little reliable information available for any valid conceptualization of such a complex social system as international sport, and many scientific studies are badly needed for the understanding of these processes transforming

elite sport in current society. But there are some peculiar constraints to overcome first.

There is hardly any other major field in society endowed by so many make-believe experts who, as trustees in national sport federations up to the IOC, also have the authority over matters of elite and international sport. What is common for them all is the shared commitment to the pursuit of victory as an ultimate value of sport and as a justification for the ever-increasing efforts and costs of totalized sport. With regard to this belief system, there is a high consensus and low degree of freedom for any dissident thinking or critical evaluation. Has any trustee in any international sport federation or in the IOC during the centennial history of international sport challenged or problematized that basic greed of international sport and looked at it as the prime reason for the "arms-race" and totalization of sport with enhancing costs? Hardly anybody.

This high consensus is not only due to the genuine common belief in the ultimate value of excellence in sport shared by the most powerful forces and institutions of society, but also due to the intentional actions to safeguard this monolithic conception of sport. The very mission of the Olympic Academy with its annual sessions and its recent extensions with National Olympic Academies is meant to disseminate that greed particularly for the next generation of leaders. As to the pressures for conformity and consensus, the authoritarian structure of the IOC resembles more *a secret society* with its sacred rituals and oppressive flow of information. James A.R. Nafziger foresaw, however, in 1971 some symptoms for liberation:

*"The continuing practice of the Olympic organization to keep its deliberations secret and unpublished, except in summary form, serves to protect the freedom of discretion in decision-making. However, the trend in recent years seems to have been away from discretionary administration by a narrowly representative "clique" of gentlemen toward a rule-oriented administration by a more widely representative IOC" (Nafziger, J.A.R. 1971, 190).*

Coincidentally, the President of Finland U.K. Kekkonen also in 1971 paid pointed attention to the outmoded authoritarian structure of the IOC in his inaugural speech for the new faculty building of sport sciences of the University of Jyväskylä:

*"The IOC is a sovereign, totally independent body in no subordinate relationship or organizational connection with any political or athletic organization. There are now 126 member countries of the IOC, but only the representatives of the "chosen" 59 countries have the right to vote. The 67-country majority has membership rights but no power of decision. Even a decision-making member country may not elect its representative to the IOC. That is done by the IOC itself, that is, by the club of the elect. The sport organizations of the country in question have no voice or say in the choice. A very important premise for election to IOC membership is known and has often been stated: as the IOC general does not pay the travel expenses of its members and as the meetings are held in different parts of the world, the member must be sufficiently wealthy to be able to fulfil his duties as an IOC member. The IOC has absolute power of decision in the organization of the Olympic Games, approval of participants (e.g. the rules of amateurism), etc. The IOC is sovereign within the range of authority it has taken unto itself, not subject to any control whatsoever. Its decisions are final, no appeal lies against them to any instance. I know many members of this authoritative, exclusive order of chivalry. They are highly respected people. But there cannot be in a democratic society wielders of power who have not received their authority from those over whom they exercise power or from community organs. IOC members represent themselves only, they are elected for life. It is not reproof but fact to say that because of this long-term exercise of power without outside control the IOC members have become estranged from the reality of sport, they have become ensnared in their own rules and rituals. Democracy, democratic responsibility and control, public enlightenment have no place in their work".*

*President U.K. Kekkonen, The State of Sport. Oct.30, 1971*

President U.K. Kekkonen is far from a nobody even when sport is concerned: in his youth he was the Finnish champion in high jump, in 1930s he was many years a President of the Track and Field Federation and in this capacity also a member of NOC etc.

This critical evaluation of the closed system of the IOC still has a great deal of validity today, despite democratization measures implemented recently. On the other hand, taking into consideration the global coverage of the Olympic movement democratization should

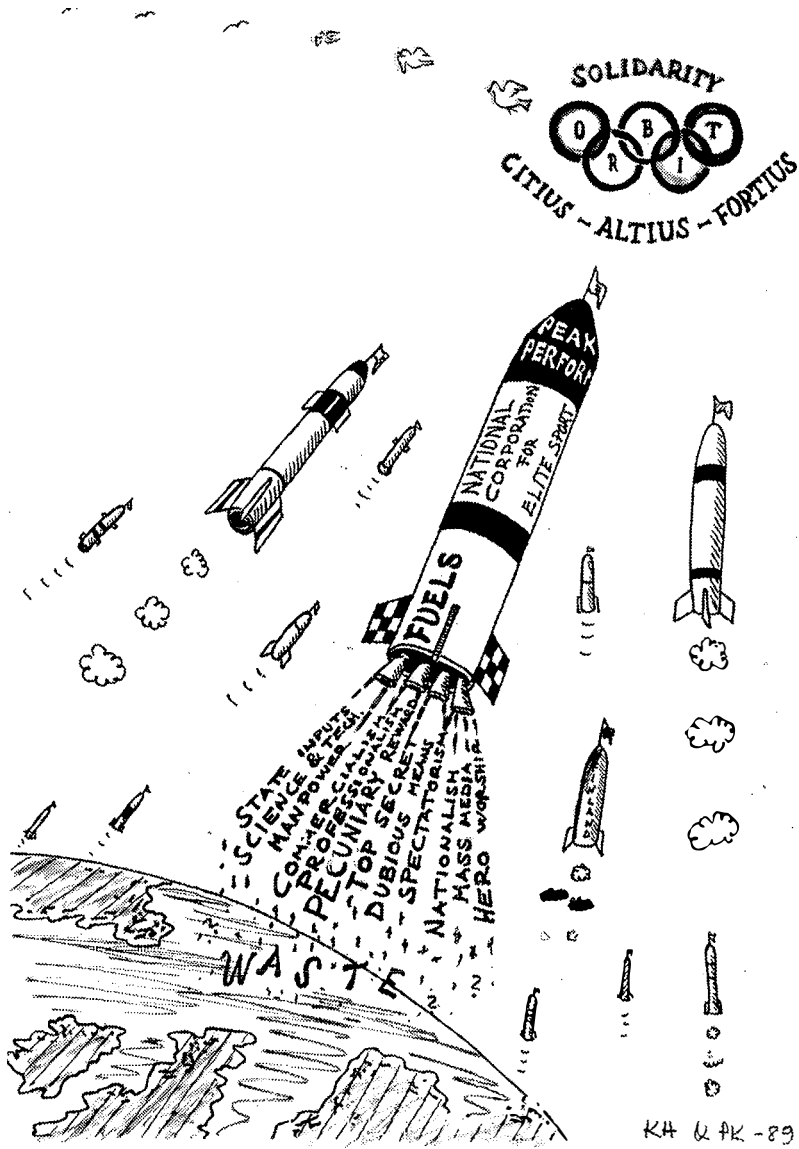


be implemented deliberately and gradually without the excess of *bureaucratization*, which easily – as concomitant to any democratization – nullifies its very purpose to articulate a variety of viewpoints, exchange of ideas and improved control of members.

As far as national sport federations are concerned, the high consensus in beliefs and values of sport is an imperative to be safeguarded by all means and this might hold some truth also with regard to international federations and the IOC. Science is supposed to be free from any value commitment, but it is hardly so in sport. In their desire for status, recognition and entry into the rarefied environment of elite sport, sport scientists easily lose their critical stand toward the phenomena of elite sport (Sage 1990, 112-113). Elite sport has such great appeal to sport scientists - and not only to sport physicians - that a majority of them seem to share that monolithic conception of sport and want to make their atomistic scientific contributions to the arms-race of elite sport and towards maximizing human efforts in *citius - altius - fortius* as the ultimate criteria for progress, often without the slightest conception of, or frame of reference to, the totality of sport as continuous competition with increasing costs, waste and unsolved dilemmas. This *scientific engineering* approach was clearly accentuated for instance in the first Olympic Congress organized by the IOC in 1989 in Colorado Springs where the author as the only sociologist – invited by mistake? – made the dissident contribution on the dilemmas of international sport but without any reactions nor any disputes (see figure 22). As far as international sport is concerned there is a great need for sociocultural studies (Segrave & Chu, 1996, 4-5).

The profound hegemony of elite sport, buttressed by the most powerful centennial institution of the Olympic Games, tends to make sport more like a religion with dogmas and creeds, rites and processions, saints and martyrs, and the divine truths of "*the Lords of the Rings*". Anno Domini 1997.

Figure 22. International sport today



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