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**SPORT:  
COMMUNICATION IN SERVICE OF CULTURE?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The mass communication sport is benefiting from allows, through images, values, representations, to convey what we may call a culture. But which one ? Sport culture is a mass, political, social, economical, at the same time than a global phenomenon. Relations between sport and politics reveal a culture, maintained by the olympic phenomenon, which is universal, even dangerous, because influenced today by political entities.

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## Introduction

The definition of culture itself tends to show that there is not a single culture but as many as groups or societies. Culture is defined as the whole of social structures and artistical, religious, and intellectual expressions which define a group or a society compared with an other (Larousse, 1990). The pluralism of cultures ought to be a scheme of our universality, and culture is a way to differentiate the societies we live in.

Sport though is not included in the definition as art or religion ; shall that mean that we can not compare two different social groups by examining their approach of sport ? Shall now sport be included in the culture, at the same level than religion or intellectual elitism, that is sport should be an ingredient of culture ?

A phenomenon we have to take into account is the globalisation : the European Union is a harmonisation of many different societies, the same laws, the same income taxes, the same currency unit,...within a huge market of 355 million inhabitants on 3.3 million sq.km. The dream of our politicians, and ours since we voted in favour, is to tend to a normalisation.

The danger to lose the national identity by becoming culturally similar to our neighbours is therefore highly important, but it is a real statement ?

Sport becomes global, earthwide. Who is benefiting from this phenomenon ? Ignacio Ramonet, writer at the French newspaper *Le Monde*, implicates financial groups on the background of the sporting world : the sport events increase their interests. The television channels are not out of innocence as well ; thanks to their (financial) interests, the events are what they are today. And the culture communicated through television is becoming the one and only culture in the world nowadays. What do we have culturally in common with the antipodes ? Maradona maybe. The mediatisation of sport is favouring its political expansion.

Politics is also using the expansion of sport. What could be a better example than the huge political aura of the International Olympic Committee in the world, deciding at the same level than the United Nations whether a country should be banned from its association or not.

Sport, money, television and politics are therefore deeply implemented. There is not much to compare with the definition of culture ; we are far from artistical and religious values. Sport tends to a single culture whereas culture is based on the pluralism of societies.

The Olympic Games have always implemented politics. In the Ancient Greece, they were created to cease the fights between cities ; they were, already, a continuation of the war. After their re-instigation by Pierre de Coubertin in 1896, the idea of "Olympic Pact" has not always been respected : the Games were cancelled three times: in 1916, 1940 and 1944, because of war precisely.

Each athlete at the OG is exalted by representing its country, and he is the flag-holder of the national identity. Sport events are able to provoke great reaction of nationalism and chauvinism. Hitler, at the Berlin OG in 1936 did not hesitate to leave the stadium to avoid clapping the black athlete Jesse Owens.

After the war, the popularity of the OG and international sport events became so high that it created a sort of diplomacy through sport.

Political organisations were looking forward to benefit from the wide and global impact of these events to appeal on their cause : in 1968, two black American athletes, defending the ideas of the Black Panthers, struck the world by appearing on the podium a black-gloved fist stretched in the air on the national hymn of the USA. More tragical was the terrorist action in 1972 in Munich, where 17 Israelian were killed.

Sport has also enabled to make pressure on internationnally non-accepted policies ; South Africa, because of the apartheid, was banned from the Games since 1970. This reveales also the high political impact taken by the IOC throughout the years, being now almost quicker than the United Nations to take a decision against a country that will not suit to political integration. Sport enables then to awake political wars, but it also deals high sums by its mediatic power. Pierre de Coubertin had at his time already pretend : *"A germ of decadence slidded into antic sport, the same that, if we do not care, will destroy our first hopes: money"* (in *Le Monde diplomatique*, May 1990). Mercantilism and business are envading our stadiums.

In these conditions, Third World or developping countries are left aside and can not take part at the great sport life. The world stays under influences.

The great importance sport has taken in our societies is also due to the means it has to be widespread; sport is a mean in itself to communicate by gathering people from different cultures.

## **1. Sport, a means of communication**

### 1.1. Sport and press media

The aim of the journalist, the genius of the commentator, or the daily goal of the photographer is to reach a great number of people, awake its interest and create its emotions.

Historically, the development of modern sport in France is contemporary to the one from the press. At the beginning of the century, 80 newspapers in Paris and 260 in the countryside were to count, and the emergence of specialised press was parallel to the vote on the free creation of association (1901). There are economical and cultural reasons to this narrow evolution of the first mass medium.

#### 1.1.1. Industrial press

Coming from the industrial society, newspapers from "large information" try to win a large audience (the increasing middle class and the working aristocracy) by depoliticizing their content, increasing the news items, looking for the sensational, finding new entertaining subjects which will keep the readership in suspense, making it therefore a loyal supporter.

The colonial adventure and the sporting feats will constitute an important part, already since the end of the last century. The increase of the school attendance has opened the market of the news readers as well as the number of writers able to live from their production.

Before the creation of the specialised sport press, newspapers from large information will monopolize sport in its greatest, most popular and modern feats. The essential themes are constituted by car racing, aeroplane and cycling. P.Giffard, chief editor of *Le Petit Journal* in France creates in 1891 the Paris-Brest cycling race, and when he takes in the head of the first French sport newspaper, *Le Vélo*, the Paris-Rouen car race. Still in France, the newspaper *Le Matin* organizes in 1907 the first motorcar raid Paris-Peking to relate the event.

At the time of industrial engineering, new and curious machines appear, should they fly or drive. Aeroplaning and car racing are considered as prestigious activities and are therefore reserved to an upper

class of the society. More simple and accessible, cycles will shortly gain popularity ; it is a true product of the industrial era which releases the worker. Coming from the technical progress, the bicycle does not slave the worker to his machine, but makes his transportation easier, his living space wider, his endurance better. The bicycle is soon available to any kind of budget thanks to its mass production, and it has the advantage to have two images : transportation and ride, for utilitarian and leisure activities.

In 1903, Henri Desgranges creates the success of his newspaper, *L'Auto-Vélo*, ancestor of *L'Equipe*, with three weeks of the most sensational and exhausting cycle event, the "Tour de France". The success is not even only sportive, but by going into the smallest and furthest regions, it ensures the publicity of the bicycle of course, but more important, of the newspaper also.

### 1.1.2. A minor literary theme

We have to wait until the years 1920-1930 to assist to the emergence of a "sport literature" created by talented writers, and seen as an aristocratic reaction to the "industrial literature". The situation after the War extols new ways of living, simple and spontaneous, and celebrates athletical exploits of the Olympic Games, held in 1924 in Paris.

The literary heroes become less the Greek ephebe but more the German athlete, sporting and muscular. It is also noticeable in movies where the scene is more occupied by masculine profiles, more athletical, sporting and acrobatical, who become also popular.

Still French writers noticed already since 1920 that the sport literature will be a minor literary theme ; they state that France is the country where the divorce between sport and intellectuals is the most distinct. This statement will last until our days, because "though some exceptions, sport remains a minor literary theme" according to P.de Charreton in 1985. With the specialised sport press, cinema, radio and photography will represent the mediatico-poetical power.



### 1.1.3. The thrilling stories of the newspapers

Journalists of the daily news (gathered nowadays in the single *L'Equipe* in France) have been busy, the week before the event, to announce the game or the fight, so to characterize and dramatize it. The teams in competition are presented, and the line-ups highly calculated. Their stars will be interviewed on their extra-sporting life in their own environment, and familiarly, as simple people. Their physical standing and training level will then be estimated by the coaches. The opponent's prize list is recalled, so as to point out the difficulty of the task. At the approach of the "D" day, the readership is set into a thrilling mood, by describing the individual fights into the game which will oppose two strong personalities. Their tactics will be analyzed through superlatives, big headlines, in a warlike style. The editorial talent of the newspaper consists in raising passionate interest of the readership, organised in a progressive tenseness, violence and passion culminating during the game (or its account), then a decline of this state of excitement to come back to a reflexive and strategical calm, and a deep analysis the days following the event.

This high power of critics, associated to a great distribution of the newspaper, may be worrying for the athlete ; the newspaper treats and makes its reputation among the population. We understand why reading the newspaper is unavoidable among the competitors.

Nevertheless, newspapers do not spare managers, teachers, coaches, and ministerial technocrats, even ministries. *L'Equipe* , in France, becomes therefore the "official french sport newspaper".

## 1.2. Sport and television

Since the 1960s, the part of sport in television has increased in all industrialised countries, so that today, channels are fighting, on an economical point of view, to get the largest audience through sport events.

Sport represented also an argument to sell televisions during the olympic games. In France, the rate of equipment of TV-sets in houses was from 62% in 1968, year of the winter OG in Grenoble, to reach 87% in 1976, year of the Montreal OG, and finally 95% in 1992, for the OG in Barcelona.

It is undeniable that if we analyse the quality of the audience, the masculine beats the feminine ; except few exceptions, characterised by what specialists call a “going-out culture” (belonging to a highly graduated upper-class), refusing television and therefore sport.

In a German firm in 1994, there had to be negotiations between managers and employees, for these wanted a different nightwork-planning to be able to follow the football games of their countrymen at the World Cup. Meetings are interrupted at the House of Lords to follow, still “in meeting”, the games of the rugby 5 Nations tournament. Sports, especially those from opposition and in teams, are stimulating and reveal the masculine identity.

But inquiries state that since the mid-1980's, the sport audience has not increased, and, more worrying, the degree of satisfaction has decreased. It may partly be explained through the double acquisition of a TV-set (more than 25% of the french households own two sets), since the offer in sports transmissions is increasing, and the spreading demand (women, teen-agers, children) may find its interest in another TV-set or in a video-recorder. TV-sets suppliers were worried during the last football World Cup not to note any increase of the sells, which they were waiting for.

Indicators today state that sport shows offer exceed the demand, what explains the research in parasportive products or mixing sport with other cultural products.

### 1.2.1. Selecting a sport show

Television is able, through the fact of living a great international event, broadcasted live, concerning the national team, and seeing it beat the opponent in a valourous fight, to create biggest emotions. Let us do not forget the preparating work of the newspapers that we saw earlier, bringing the audience the days before the event in a thrilling mood.

The selecting criterias of the spectator for a sport show are then the style of sport (culturally most appreciated from the national spectators), the level of the competition (underlining the stakes, reserved to the elite), the participation of countrymen (stimulating the national pride of the spectators), the participation of well-known stars (process of identification to a hero) and the live broadcasting (allowing a momentaneous emotional tenseness). These sport events selected by TV channels, and which are stimulating chauvinism, national dignity and

masculine pride, find their best examples in the show of the direct and tough opposition of team sports. In France for example, people appreciate most football and rugby, in South America the "futebol", and in North America the american football and ice-hockey. These are sport shows where the fight is real because opponents are facing each other, go to the contact, and not unviolently, and these get most people together.

An extreme example to show the feeling of national dignity and pride is the case of Andres Escobar, Columbian football player, killed in Bogota after a fight "because he scored in his own goal" during the 1994 football World Cup, in the game that precisely was not to lose : against the United States.

The spectacle of collective sport, which has to be analyzed as deeply as a problematical problem for social sciences, has important cultural functions, and may be compared with the war. I. Ramonet, from *Le Monde* : "War ? Yes, war. Sure with other means, but war, fight, violence. And this since the beginnig, since Greeks created the Olympic Games with events based on military disciplines: running, high-jump, javelin-throw, etc. Is it a coincidence if the most emblematic event - the marathon - recalls the famous fight won by the athenian general Miltiade against the Persians in 490 b.C. ?". After the first episod of the Falklands War, which seemed to be in favour of the South-Americans, an argentinian newspaper had titled: "Argentina 1, England 0"...

Polls though show that men and women do not share the same views. The last football World Cup has shown that the ball could generate conjugal violence. In these extreme but revealing situations, the consulted psychologists had the impression that responsables "were truly transported out of their house and felt in a way on the ground, in the game, with the players" in an uncontroled male excitement. Two different cultural planetes, which could not communicate, were present at the domicile of the married couple. An "intrusion", considered as unacceptable, able to provoke violent masculine reactions, where the link to the social class and degree of alcoholical mood is not at all evident.

This sexual division of the sport tastes has economical consequences ; specialised agencies evaluate the "audience" of any sport event (with the purpose of establishing advertisement tariffs) and analyse the "structure of the audience" to know the people which they select spontaneously ("the target").

According to a survey done in France in 1990 by the *Mediamétrie* agency, men are in a large majority not interested in golf (71.5 %) and dancing (58.4 %), whereas women reject boxing (66.6 %), rugby (56.2 %) and mechanical sports, like motorcycle (50.6 %) and car races (50.1 %). Women then do not appreciate shows with sportive violence (boxing, rugby) and those where death can happen (car and motorcycle races). In opposition with what we could think, men are eager to follow an ice-skating (64.6 %) or a gymnastics (61.1 %) event. Cycling, which appears to be a quite “rural” sport through its adepts, is appreciated by men in their forties, with a basic instruction, living in small towns. On the contrary, tennis is appreciated by young men with a high instruction level and who are living in big cities. The audience of car races is essentially constituted by youngsters (15-24 years old) with a technical or trading graduation, that is middle instruction. The interest in car races regularly decreases with the age, and over-instructed people heavily turn them down (they are 54 %).

The survey underlines that “men are more satisfied by sport broadcasts than women”, that the audience “of less than 25 years old are the less satisfied”. In the year 1990, 46 % of the interviewed people were satisfied by sport programmes ; the determining element to follow a television program is the sport proposed. Ice-skating, skiing, football and tennis are able to attract any TV viewer.

These considerations on the structure of the audience of sport programmes determine the decision of the advertisers concerning their strategy : they know their target, and we understand why shaving products, car, all the products that refer to it, and do-it-yourself products advertisement are invading our screens as soon as a team sport is broadcasted.

### 1.2.2. The influence of television

Television, according to its interests, tries to “rule” sport : the tie-break was demanded by american televisions so that the games did not exceed the time planned for the broadcast. Finals at the Olympic Games may happen by a real hot temperature, only to allow strongest (with all the money the term includes) televisions to compensate the time difference with their countries. At a national level, the days of football games are planned according to television’s will. This influence changes the

conditions, if not the rules, of the game. The medium influences the pictures as well, to make them more attractive for a large audience.

By exploiting big international sport events, televisions are benefiting from a basis of male audience, helped throughout the year by football games. In France, the rugby "5 Nations" tournament in winter, the tennis "Roland-Garros" Open in spring, the cycling race "Tour de France" in summer, and the Formula One races in autumn gives the rythm of a sportive year. In a same way, TV channels in the USA give the rythm of american football, base-ball and basket-ball games. This rythm help the channels not to bore and lose their audience.

Though the audience is decreasing as we saw earlier, women have since a long time given up, and the demand is overwhelmed. Television is therefore turning to "parasportive" products ; new broadcasts appear, discovery of landscapes with a sportive means, combining sport adventures with professional culture of the sea, the mountains, the poles,...animals and ethnography. Televisions furthermore are now interested in "extreme" sports ; sport which brings the athlete in a position where he has to overtake his fear. The tendency is not to show sport at its basic level, but to include sport in cultural broadcasts. The state today is to create the sensational, and television is favouring this phenomenon ; a definition of sport according to a media will otherwise be dependent of culture.

### 1.3. Sociological values in sport

The importance of some sport shows do not find its explanation only in the research of myths, representations or images they may refer to, but also in the increasing state of excitement of a popular public, gathered in mass.

#### 1.3.1. Cultural behaviour

Through the increasing success of football games (which started in France in the mid-1975's), and the second view on the sport show thanks to the television, the status of young fans in stadiums will change. They become, in a way, the show within the spectacle ; they can demonstrate their feelings, create great collective figures to be noticed,

and even fight with other groups to feel they exist. The phenomenon is even bigger since it affects big cities suffering from economical crisis (Liverpool, Manchester, Napoli, Marseille...), and that skinhead groups are exploiting it, causing violence against their enemies (or the security staff), calling for, and hoping in a way, repressive actions.

But let us do not forget that spectators' violence is not a recent phenomenon : football's history has seen many incidents (in Glasgow already since 1909 for example), coming after a refereeing mistake or the aggression of a player. There is here a contamination process, which allows spectators, in an exciting state, to fall into collective violence.

The hooliganism (appeared in Great-Britain in the mid-1960's) though does not find its starting point on the playground, and is not linked with the game itself. The reasons and significations have to be found in external, social, political causes. Hooliganism may be considered as an answer to the increase of individualism, the weakness of social integration. It represents, for excluded people, a means to change the social inequality into a difference. It may also be seen as the double effect of the economical crisis (social difficulties linked with unemployment in some towns of England) and the crisis of male identity, choosing to stand on a global and media sport which represents this identity. Football, thanks to its globalisation, mediatization, strength of the identifications, and regularity of the games, offers the best field to whom wants to show himself and wants to turn a role of spectator into a role of actor.

Though, history and culture of different countries may considerably change these phenomenons. The same mass spectacle, football, creates in this way a totally different phenomenon in Denmark. An original form of supporting, qualified by Danes of "Roligan" ("peaceful"), which appeared in the years 1983-85 on the football fields. It gathers women, in a significant number (15%), and men of any age, in a family and festive atmosphere. Despite the drinking and nationalist excitement abuses it causes, football does not inspire nor creates here violence. It is more a support to a laughing culture and creates jolly or grotesque expressions, characterised by "the sense of derision" (Eichberg, 1992). By adopting communicative folk gestures, "roligans" invite supporters of the opposing team to join this "carnival", pacifying the relations in the extreme tension of the game.

Thus the same sport may arouse here and there different expression and organisation of the supporting forms. C.Bromberger had noticed the

same signs of mockery and derision (masquerades, miniature coffins, or announcement of bereavement sent to the opposing town) in the Italian football. H. Eichberg underlines the structural ambiguity of football, for it engenders two different ways of supporting forms : the violent hooliganism in Great-Britain, Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands, and on the other end, the mocking hooliganism in Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, as well as in the Netherlands. The divergence seems to lie partly in the cultural opposition between highly industrialised countries organised in social classes and countries where social organisations have less hierarchy and more community. The firsts give to violence a political status, from class struggle, whereas the seconds, more rural and egalitarian, have logically given to challenges between equals their original festive sense. This Danish culture assimilates football to former Scandinavian games, which were still living in the 20th century. Because Danish culture was less exposed to a sort of industrial capitalism, and therefore to a productivity culture, the Scandinavian roots have rebelled against a sportive worship of athletical performance and record to favour collective opposition, which remains culturally more entertaining and significant.

### 1.3.2. Communication through the sport event

Feats, sport, adventure... Our society stages a new generation of heroes. Magnified by media, in particular by the most powerful, television, these spectacular moments fascinate millions of readers and viewers. What we recently called factual communication (the first French professional review, *L'Événementiel*, was created in 1990, and it takes up the position of an information vehicle of this new sector) takes an important place in our cultural landscape. Its instigators consider factual communication as a great means of communication. It is indeed able to be different in the saturated world of advertisement, by creating a real emotional shock among the concerned persons : spectators, organizers, sponsors, athletes...

The term "event" takes an always more important place in the press files ; it is used to characterize a local competition as well as a worldwide organisation like the Olympic Games. The term has been generalized to be now woolly. An inquiry conducted in 1989 by the French review *Stratégies* reveals the divergences of some professionals about their own

representation of an event. Frédéric Bedin, from the agency *Délires*, considers that “a true event creator is a guy like Thierry Sabine who one day, waking up, invents the Paris-Dakar rally, and then is looking for finances, and not a communication agency whose method is to act for a client and answers to a brief. Bruno Trouble, from *Creative Business Evenement*, presents the factual as a “modern version of public relations as far as traditional public relations - invitation to a cocktail at 6.00 pm in Paris - do not attract anyone anymore. They had then to become factual.” Françoise Laurent, working at the *Extérieur Nuit* agency, considers that “a real event has to be followed by the media. If it concerns the three hundred best salesmen of a company, as original as it may be, it is their own business. It is an event for the company, but not in itself.”

We better use the definition of Sylvère Piquet, which includes the relationship factor in this new form of social experience. In her way, an event is a place where “men and women gather in a sort of collective celebration, to assist to a sports or cultural spectacle. This one is subjectively seen as the possibility of realizing a feat” (Piquet, 1985). An event is a highly media social fact, whose impact among the different spectators is linked to the uncertainty of the result of the action whose actors are in a situation of competition, performance, and feat. The peak of the factual is therefore occupied by the trio Olympic Games, Football World Cup, and Formula One World Championship.

### 1.3.3. Factual communication

Factual communication, initially reserved to businesses, has extended to a great number of organisations, so that today everyone is using this form of communication : companies, local communities, sport organisations... These structures seem to be unified by the collective celebration, but do their respective aims converge on a single point ?

The aims of the company are to increase its fame, to develop its image or one of its product, while taking care of the intern. Companies have been the first ones to be engaged in this form of communication. They were requested, in particular by organizers of car races, to demonstrate the performance of their product (car or tyres manufacturers). They have progressively diversified their aims, as well as their means of acting. Oil manufacturers like Elf have entered the field of sailing, by communicating on the theme of environment, and tobacco industrials the



field of adventure. They wish now to win on the celebrity point of view, to build themselves an image, and as far as creating a sales network, like Peugeot which markets its 205 model with a special Roland-Garros trademark during the time of the tennis Open tournament.

The aims of the local communities are the image and fame as factors of economical development. A law published in 1982 in France has transferred the scopes of the state on the regions, departments, and towns, creating therefore a situation of competition. Most important ones have then established a communication department, with a manager coming often from the private sector. Some of these local communities have chosen sport factuality as the essential vehicle of their image, looking for giving shape to their dynamism. They became partners of great events such as the Tour de France cycling race or the 24 heures du Mans car race, events which give them international repercussions.

The aims of the sport movement and of the professionals of the event are the fame, image and proof of efficiency. Responsibilities coming from the organisation and the marketing of sport event are now going to specialised societies. The French Tennis Association is in charge of the organisation of both Roland-Garros and Bercy competitions; the French Basket-Ball Association has entrusted the management of its marketing to ISL. Professionals of the communication sometimes compete with the sports professional, but the success in the organisation of a sport event will bring everyone celebrity, image and credibility.

The aims of the media are to rally, attract and keep the reader to gain market shares. When in 1903 the newspaper *L'Auto* organised the first edition of the Tour de France, it was to build up a sport event to increase the sales in a slack period. Its success encouraged other newspapers to organise cycling races, media however are more in the situation of partners of the organizers, covering the event. Whatever position media can take, it is their involvement which determines the impact of the event, ensuring or not a sufficient audience. Though the great affinity media have with all what is factual, let us do not forget that each event has its specific position corresponding to a target of readers or viewers who have to be satisfied. There is then an economical logic in the broadcast of the information. The French sport programm illustrates this strategy : the first channel has slipped sport from prime time to the end of the evening.

By examining the aims of communication of the different structures involved in the factual, we note that the couple celebrity-image is unavoidable. This one resists to the division between commercial and

non-commercial structures. The aims brought out by the commercial communication with those concerning the corporate communication (Brochand and Lendrevie, 1989) may be distinguished. The first ones are looking for improving the image of a brand or a product, whereas the second ones are bringing out the personality of a company or a structure.

The targeting of an action constitutes an essential step in the elaboration of a communication strategy. Factual decision-makers are not yet used to this approach ; they try to touch as many targets as possible, being therefore unprecise. Socio-demographical characteristics are mainly utilised to define these targets : since 1970 in France, searchers (Bernard Cathelat, Mike Burke and Claude Matricon) have been developing a method of socio-styles and have therefore created the Centre de Communication Avancée (CCA) in 1971, an advanced communication center, which allows to take personality criterias and sociocultural values into account. The “socio-style-system” gives the possibility to factual communication strategy decision-makers to precisely identify their targets and to conceive strategies from the “socio-bank” datas. This socio-bank describes the social, economical and cultural profile of the wished targets. Methodology though has to be stronger to reach the marketing target, for this is consituted by the population whom the company have the aim to sell its product. This strategy will be based on a commercial communication.

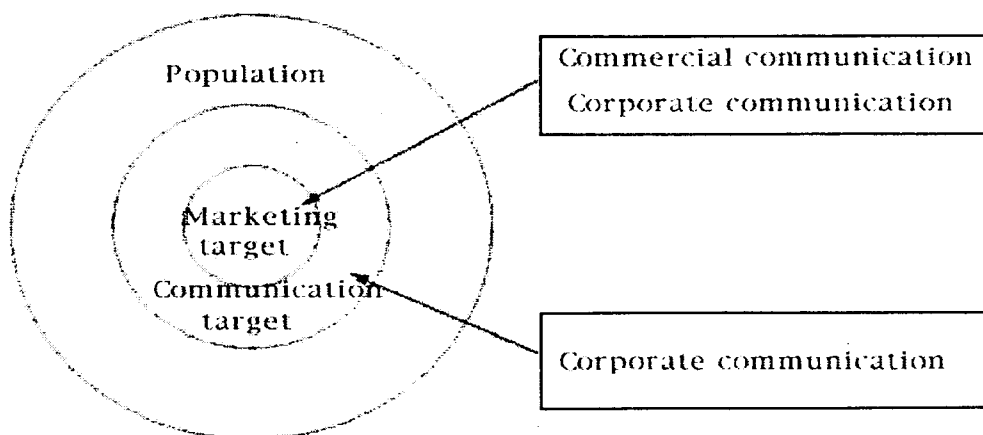


Figure 1 : Types of targets and communication strategies

#### 1.3.4. Evaluation of the results

The reluctance in evaluating the results seems to be among the characteristics of the French advertising sector. According to the IREP (French Advertising Research and Study Institute), advertisers have spent in 1989 only 0.08 % of their turnover on advertising studies (except in the media). This tendency may explain the low rate of expenses concerning the evaluation of results of the factual events. Evaluating the results are though difficult, for we have to isolate the impact of an event, and decision-makers are reluctant in evaluating an action which they often did because of emotional reasons. There is an interaction of methodological difficulties and emotional drift.

##### 1.3.4.1. Evaluation of the impact on the media level

This approach consists in a simple statement : to communicate, the public has to note and assimilate the event. Two essential media are implicated in factual communication, as we saw earlier : television and press.

Television is surely the most powerful media ; it reaches a great number of viewers, generally captive because of their passivity in front of the screen. In the case of sponsoring, the organisation have to be such as the viewer does not escape from the advertising device. Formula One cars race between giant advertising billboards, boxers fight on the sponsor's logo. To appreciate more the quantitative impact of the brand on the viewer, appearing times and quality of the appearing on the screen have to be related to the audience of the broadcast.

Its geographical selectivity (regional press) or the precise targeting of the specialised press taken into account, press media is essential as far as factual event is concerned. All professional organisations constitute a press-book of the event, taking therefore care of the medium. The most common evaluation consists in calculating the editing space on the advertising space, but this method does not take the qualitative aspect of the article into account. Another phenomenon is that reporters avoid to refer to any sponsor (except ones from the economical press), underlining therefore the importance on the impact of editing photos. This impact is though insufficient, justifying the rule of "1 + 1" (Ferrand, 1995), one currency unit for the event and one currency unit for the

communication campaign to improve the partner's image. The strategy of the French Lancôme company more than twenty years ago was to target its advertising space, so that newspapers today totally assimilate the golf tournament it organises.

#### 1.3.4.2. Evaluation of the impact on the public

The evaluation of the impact on the public level takes one of the main aspects of an event, namely its social character ; the statement lies in the appreciation of the changement in the behaviour of the public targeted by the act of communication. Leaders of the organisation and of the factual marketing such as IMG MacCormack and ISL Marketing reserve this type of study for most important events : OG, Football World Cup... These methods have been elaborated in the sector of advertisement and need a heavy protocol.

The impact studies are based on inquiries looking for reconstitute the memory of the event. They have two parts : fame and memorisation. The fame of an event may be analyzed by three usual levels (Ferrand, 1995) :

- the spontaneous fame, corresponding to the percentage of persons able to mention spontaneously the brand or event of the considered product ;
- the top of mind, that is the first brand or the first event mentioned ;
- the assisted fame, which takes the percentage of persons who mention the brand associated to the event in a list in which it figures.

The main image measurement systems use a technique emerging from the semantic differential developed by Osgood (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, 1957) and his colleagues. This technique allows to specify the value from two antagonist qualifications : young/old, modern/classic, for example. It is then necessary to realize a qualitative overview among the regular spectators to establish the components of the image. The step is then to measure the weight of each item to build the profile of the image.

#### 1.3.4.3. Measure of the image

Though a still discussed comprehension and a too large extension of the term, the concept of image is widely used in the marketing and communication sectors. The IREP defines it as "the whole

representations, both emotional and rational, associated by an individual to a brand, a product, a company, or an idea" (Lendrevie, Lindon and Laufer, 1989). In this way, the definition of the image of a brand, a company, a sport or an event wavers as well between emotion and rationality. Representation is a construction of what is given from the outside. What is constructed, the image, is interdependent from the values, rules, concepts which characterize an individual or a group.

Image may be analyzed from 4 statements (Lendrevie, Lindon and Laufer, 1989) :

- its proximity expresses the fact that it comes more or less rapidly to the mind of the asked person ; it is measured by its fame ;
- its clearness indicates its precision degree ;
- its content is structured by the whole of picture strokes given by questioned persons ;
- its value is the result of the strength of all these strokes.

Alain Ferrand gives a certain number of actions, allowing to conceive and conduct a factual communication. In this way, the optimisation of the commitment of a structure in a sport event needs :

- to establish the accountancy between image of the event and image of the product or the company ;
- to name the event ;
- to have a harsh management of the advertising places allowing an access to partners in proportion with the amount of their involvement ;
- a budget allowing to guarantee a minimal impact by buying advertising places in the priority mediums.

A real event has to have a high capacity to attract public, by the uncertainty of the result, and media, by the emotion it creates. It is elsewhere the medium of a strategy which will bring the sufficient rationality to be efficient. A strategy "allows, from an initial decision, to consider a certain number of scripts for the action, scripts which may be modified according to arriving information and according to incidents which may occur and disturb the action" (Morin, 1990). Defining precisely the aims and targets of communication from an initial diagnosis and making use of the appropriate means of evaluation allows to manage the uncertainty by ensuring necessary regulations. An event though is isolated, all components have then to be taken into account as soon as the decision of origin is made.

## **2. An application : the image of Central Finland through a sport event**

### 2.1. Presentation of the study

#### 2.1.1. Reason of the study

The starting point of this thesis was a football game. A Finnish team, Mypa, facing the great Dutch PSV Eindhoven in the European Cup 1995-1996. The enthusiasm of the Finnish commentators was so high that any viewer non able to understand a word of finnish woulf have thought that Mypa was in the lead throughout the game. The final score ? 7-1. In favour of the PSV. And also two still enthusiastic commentators. Their reason was not the famous Finnish vodka, but the fact that a Finnish team playing against a great european opponent was considered as an exportation of the Finnish football, and, to extend, as an exportation of the Finnish culture. The game was not at all important ; the only fact that someone somewhere else than in Finland was watching Finns playing with a ball was enough to satisfy these two commentators.

Surely, the expectations of Finns in comparison with great football nations, such as Germany, England, Italy, France are not the same : Finns are in a state, especially talking about football, where they try to make themselves noticed. What's better than a prestigious opponent to underline the nation's identity ? "Today, Finnish winners raise Finland into the awareness of Finns" (*in Stronger through Physical Activity and Sport*, 1993), but Finnish winners raise also Finland into the awareness of foreigners. Not only Jari Litmanen alone represents Finnish football anymore. Winning though increases the recognition of others. Do you English, German, French think that if one of your team is losing 7-1, you will analyze it as an exportation of your football or your culture ?

There is a difference not only in the level of the team between Finland and other countries, but also in the way to analyze a sport event. In a general sense, sociological and cultural aspects are taken into account to establish an analyze. Finland's way to comment a sport event seems though to be unique ; how would other countries comment if they were facing Finland ? What would be their remarks ? How would they see Finland ? Which image do they have of Finland ? This last question is the purpose of the study, but not entirely, as I will concentrate the work on

the region of Central Finland only, to rejoin a wish from the region's tourist office.

### 2.1.2. Procedure of the study

The study has to establish an image of the region Central Finland, through the analyze of a sport event, which after some research had to be the 1000 Lakes Rally, as it is the most important international event in the region. The medium of the research of an image would be newspapers. As we saw earlier, this media is less powerful than television, but in terms of image, it may be a greater medium, as french television allowed in 1994 three minutes and thirty seconds broadcasting time in the weekly sport programme (from France 2 television channel) on the 1000 Lakes Rally in 1994. Newspapers are also an easier medium to work on as the study concerns not only French but also German and English newspapers, and they are easier to concentrate on a single place for they are more available than all recordings from those countries on the Rally. Newspaper present also a greater interest in the way that they treat the information regardless of the nationalities ; especially in the specialised press, here car racing magazines, articles treat the technical part, the drivers' or the cars' characteristics, the driving feats without underlining any cultural aspect. Television on the other hand has to meet a demand : excepts maybe driving feats, people are interested in what narrows them to their culture, a chance to win of a countrymen for example. As seen above, if the thrill of people are not enhanced by newspapers the days before the event, if spectators have no interest in the event, neither will have television. Broadcasting time is also a disadvantage on this field ; television broadcast the essential : results, feats. Time on television is expensive, see advertisement prices. Newspapers on the contrary , thanks to their different specialisation, may approach the event with different aspects; in newspapers, there is a direct place for culture and intellectual improvement. Always talking about analyzing a sport event of course.

The following newspapers were used to establish the study :

German newspapers :

General newspapers	Ostthüringer Zeitung	Frankfurter Allgemeine
Sport newspapers	Motorsport Life	Sportinformation Dienst

French newspapers :

General newspapers	Le Point	L'Express	Agence-France- Presse
Sport newspapers	Agence-France- Presse	L'Equipe	Compte-Tours

English newspapers :

General newspapers	Newsweek	The Guardian
Sport newspapers	Autosport Magazine	Motoring News

### 2.1.3. The conception of image

The problematic of the study came right at the beginning, pointed out by Timo Ranta and Jan-Ake Törnroos from the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration : *“The first problem that an image researcher usually encounters is the fact that the concept has been used very loosely in past research, and it has been confused with various other concepts such as identity and stereotypes ”*(in Foundation of image research, 1993).

The word image comes from the latin “representation” and is defined as follow : according to the Larousse dictionary, image is a “symbol or material representation of an invisible or abstract reality ”, whereas the Flammarion dictionary simply resumes it to a “spiritual representation of something or someone”. Newspapers are then a suitable medium, for they give, through their articles, a material representation of an event, real, which they narrate and is therefore invisible for the reader. To fully



understand the concept, what about Kenneth Boulding's first approach : image is a "loose structure, something like a molecule"...

T.Ranta and J.-A. Törnroos have a more precise idea, for they state that "images are created by people in order to form distinct images of themselves in relation to other people and groups of people (...). Image is by definition somebody's mental picture of the characteristics of an object (person, product, environment)". There may be then as many images as someones.

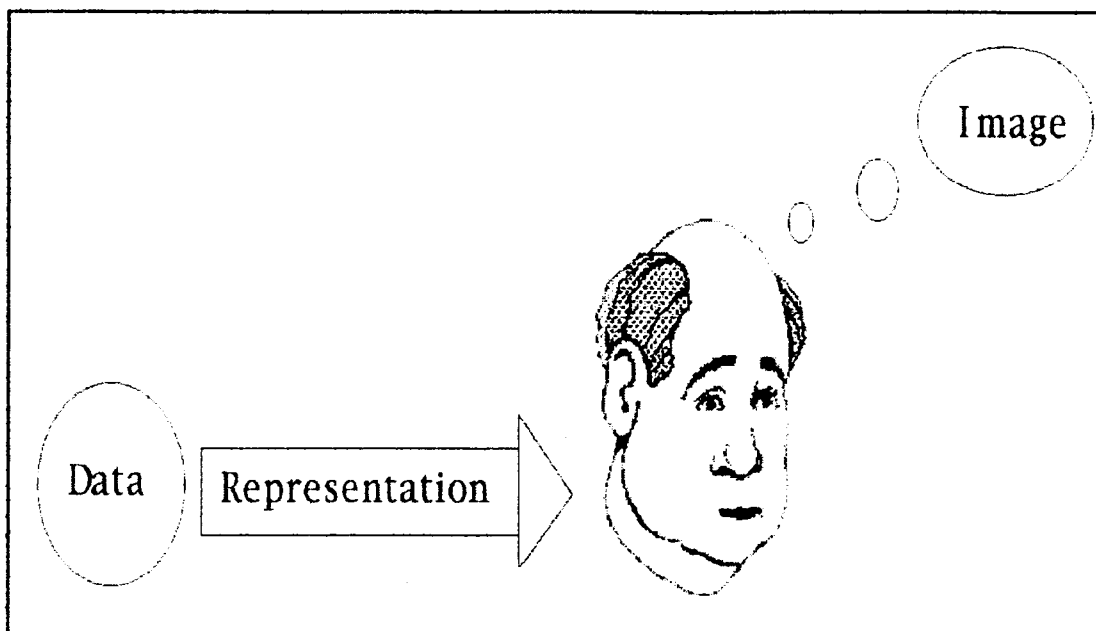


Figure 2 : Representation as a link between a data and an image

Newspapers are an intermediary between the event and the image readers create ; in this case they are a representation. Image here may therefore not be analyzed, unless questioning all readers. This rejoins the analyze of Lendrevie, Lindon and Laufer seen above. They give an analyze to measure image from people's mind or directly from the event. Ferrand as well has an approach of image where marketing and business are closer than emotion and rationality.

Newspaper though have already an image from the event, they give an image of the event ; they no longer are a representation, they are a source of images. The aim of this study is precisely to establish the image newspaper gives to its readers.

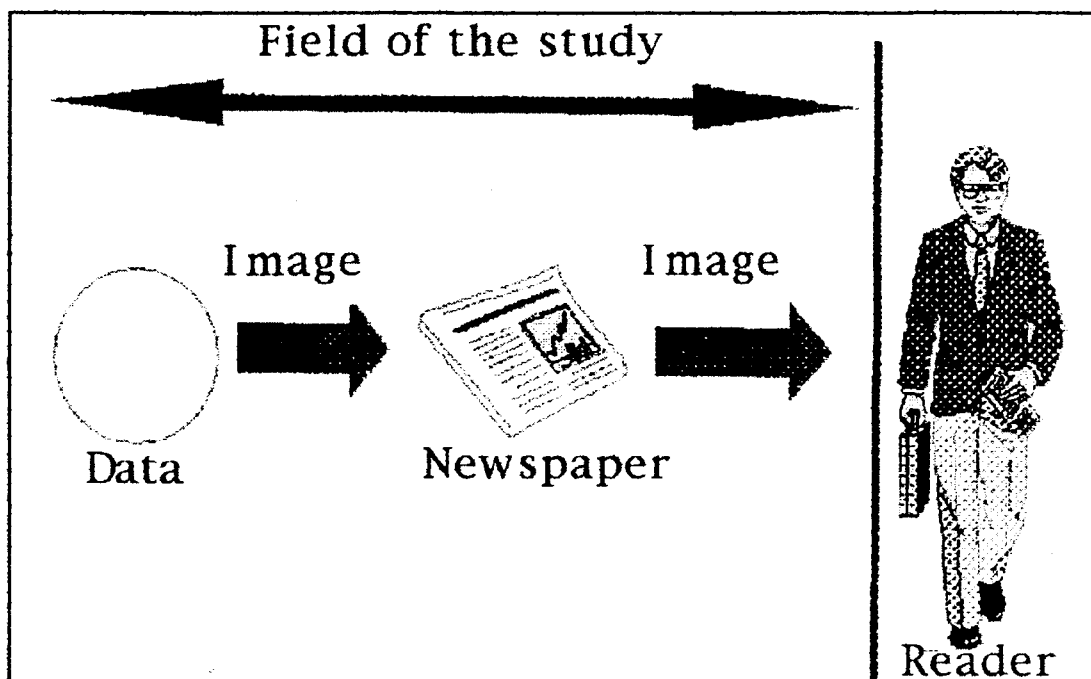


Figure 3 : The field of the study

A newspaper is an intermediary between the data, an event, and a receiver, the reader. The flow from the newspaper to the reader may then be studied for there is no mental treatment. The region Central Finland's image given by German, English and French newspaper may then be established.

## 2.2. Presentation of the background

### 2.2.1. The landscape

Finland is a modern, democratic country in Scandinavia with a high standard of living and a private ownership, free enterprise market economy. In terms of area, it is the fifth largest country in Europe, with

338,000 sq.km. It is also the northernmost country after Iceland. Finland is bounded by the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland. The neighbouring countries are Sweden, Norway and Russia. Estonia may also be added, though the natural border is the Northern Sea, but it is worth to mention on a economical level.

Finland has a population of five million inhabitants and it is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Europe. Vast forests cover most of the land and there are about 188,000 lakes over 500 sq.m. Southern and central Finland is covered with snow for an average of five months. The mean temperature in the warmest summer may exceed +18°C and in winter the temperature may fall to -30°C.

Finland features advanced educational and security systems. It has gained international reputation in architecture and industry, especially in the forest and electronic industries, and the Finnish telecommunication company Nokia has grown into a world leader in this field.

Finland is a bilingual country with the two official languages : Finnish and Swedish. Most Finns are able to communicate in English. Swedish is the mother tongue of some 6% of the population, most of whom are living on the western coast. Over 2,000 people speak Lappish as their native tongue.

The Jyväskylä Region, in Central Finland, formed by the four municipalities of the City of Jyväskylä (72,000 inhabitants), the Rural municipality of Jyväskylä, Laukaa and Muurame, comprising a total of 125,000 inhabitants, forms a significant center in Middle Finland, offering a variety of characteristics. This cradle of Finnish-language culture has developed into a modern and dynamic center of education for the thousands of people enrolled in its numerous secondary and tertiary level institutions. The University of Jyväskylä, the most popular university among Finnish applicants, has alone 10,000 students. The Jyväskylä Region is also well known for its internationally-acknowledged wood, paper and metal industries.

### 2.2.2. Presentation of the 1000 Lakes Rally

The 1000 Lakes Rally, since 1994 called the Neste 1000 Lakes Rally, is one of the nine qualifying rounds in the Rally World Championships. 1994 has seen the 44th running of Finland's premier motorsport event.

At the time of its birth in 1951, the 1000 Lakes Rally looked like a male automobile driving event. It was inspired by the Monte Carlo Rally and was considered as a training place for many Finns who wanted to participate to the Monegasque event. The Rally became an European Championship round in 1959 ; the World title was then not yet awarded. The rally started to be popular in the 1960's, thanks to the European title which interested more and more racing stables. The reputation of the rally increased therefore more and more, as the consciousness of a thousands lakes, and tracks where the cars flew. This reputation and the one of the "Flying Finns" were also settled thanks to the famous foreign drivers.

In 1973, the 1000 Lakes Rally formed one of the 13 events for the award of the Brand World Champion title. In 1979 the event was taking part in the accreditation of the drivers' world championship title. To compare with other races, the 1000 Lakes Rally was not a long-distance event, but very intensive, and thus were time gaps minimal. The myth that it was impossible to beat a "Flying Finn" lived until the 1980's and Carlos Sainz who broke the Norther success.

The 1000 Lakes Rally is nowadays one of the best-known event. Every year in august, more than 6,000 people are involved in its organisation. In 1994, 15 countries took part at the race, 42% of the drivers were foreigners, and 20 car brands were represented. Still in 1994, the battle was followed by 300,000 spectators on the tracks, three million on the national television. The ISC (International Sportsworld Communication) published a figure of 192 million people throughout the world following the 1000 Lakes Rally in 1993.

### 2.3. Central Finland's image by newspapers

As I read through the newspapers, I found out that it is difficult to dissociate sport and general press. We might think, or we might have the image that general newspapers will communicate more aside articles than the proper sport result. In fact though, I found more information in the specialised press, even if worked with the same number of sport than general newspapers.

A second treatment is that I did not find any proper difference on the content of the image in the three different countries : England, Germany and France. I could not then make a differentiation by countries either.

The evaluation of the image of a region hosting a sport event is difficult to establish ; Ferrand has a quantitative method of evaluation, taking billboards and advertising space into account, which is here not useful while studying the image given by newspapers. Lindon, Lendrevie and Laufer give a qualitative evaluation, but this concerns questioned persons, that is the image received. The study concentrate on a qualitative aspect of the image given by foreign newspapers and do therefore not rejoin Lindon, Lendrevie and Laufer's interpretation.

The dissociation we may establish will concern the language, the weather, the Rally, the landscape, the people.

-The language :

The image of the Finnish language, as seen in a french newspaper, is that it is a language full of "A" and "K", this maybe as an excuse for the French to justify their difficulty to pronounce any foreign name, especially Finnish ones. The English newspapers avoid the difficulty by writing the name of the stages in Finnish, letting the readers the care to read these terms properly.

-The weather :

Finland has the image of being rainy and cold at the time of the Rally and it is pointed out in the newspapers from each country. They use also the adjective "exceptional" when it comes to describe a sunny weather.

-The 1000 Lakes Rally :

This Rally seems to have a proper and unique image while reading the newspapers.

There was no doubt that journalists found this rally "exceptional" and have passionate terms to qualify the Rally.

"(...) a typical Finnish stage : very fast, with speed limits close to 200 km/h. A sequence of jumps, long straight roads. The cars will here take off to land 30 or 40 meters ahead (...)"

"(...) 1000 lakes, 1000 jumps, 1000 reasons to make a mistake (...)"

The summary of this part goes to the English Motoring News : the 1000 Lakes Rally is "Finland's unique combination of smooth surfaces and huge jumps (...)"

The myth that it is difficult to beat a Finnish driver is still present nowadays, this rally is the "monopoly of Nordics, especially Finns until 1990". Surely, Finns have the advantage to be "in their forests".

-The landscape :

With no surprise, lakes and forests are the two co-leaders while talking about the image of the region Central Finland. "In the middle of the forest" takes place the rally with the name of 1000 lakes, giving the image of the landscape only by its name.

-People :

People represent the greatest source of images, should they be rally drivers, "the Flying Finns", or spectators.

The "Flying Finns" have also the ability to be "good losers", and they have a great sense of solidarity : "one of the Finnish drivers ahead of him helped him to get a two-minute gap at the end of the second leg" when he was in trouble. This idea of solidarity is also described in another newspaper : "Even if they do not have alot in common, Finnish people have a great sense of solidarity".

Tommi Mäkinen, winner of the Rally in 1994, represents alos a means to tell about the image of people in Finland. "He knows hardly a few word of English but tries in a cheerful way to establish contacts".

The difficult contact appears also when it comes to talk with spectators : "Difficult contact. He speaks only Finnish". But he "looks jovial".

Finnish people are known to be "sportsmen", "strapping" but "potbellied" as well. Discipline is a qualification that should belong to the image of the inhabitants ; the proof is that "police cars intervene only on highways".

The summary of the image on the region, more precisely on Finland, given by a French newspapers is : "Forests, lakes, sportsmen, in short this is Finland".

#### 2.4. Central Finland's image by journalists

We have established that newspapers give an image to their readers. The link then between the newspaper and the reader is the image, but there is another flow of image : what image do journalists have through the event ? Do journalists get the same image than the one they publish ? Do they give an analogical image in their articles as the one they have themselves ?

It is then necessary to find out the journalists' opinion to establish their own image of Central Finland. Establishing a questionnaire is a way to

determine the image journalists get, and compare it with the image they give to their readers.

Two aims come to justify a questionnaire : the first one is to approach closer the image of the region Central Finland, and the second one is to find a relation between the image of the journalists and the image that stands in their articles, that is the image everyday people may get.

The questionnaire is established as following :

- Name of your newspaper ;
- Country ;
- Number of publication ;
- Number of sold newspapers per day/week/month ;
  
- What kind of image do you have about Finland ?
- What kind of image do you have about Central Finland ?
- What kind of image do you have about the 1000 Lakes Rally ?
- Do you have an explanation to this image, and if so, which one ?
  
- Do you express your feelings in your articles ?
- Is the image you get from an event important to develop in an article ?
- Do you communicate in you articles the image you get of
  - the event ;
  - the region ;
  - the country ;
  - the people ;
  - others ?
  
- What is the first picture you have in your mind when someone says "Finland" ?

The method concerning the questionnaire is that I did not want to have any quantitative questions, except the ones on the publication, for they would not be of any help, as seen above. Image is here a very qualitative conception and it would not fit with any quantitative problems.

The aim of the questionnaire is to point out more sociological or cultural aspects, and it has therefore to be taken on the communication's viewpoint.

The questionnaire was sent to four journalists from each country ; it gives a sample which represents a mean of 1/8 of this population. At the 1000 Lakes Rally in 1994, 26 nationalities were to count among the

media representatives, whose total number reached 660. Among this figure, 37 came from Germany, 22 from France, and 39 from Great-Britain.

For the questionnaire was sent to daily, weekly but also monthly newspapers, it was difficult to evaluate the number of people concerned by an image of Finland, and susceptible to read about Central Finland and thus have an image of the region. Another point of valuating this figure is that among the asked population were press agencies, more precisely the French Agence-France-Presse and the German Sportinformation Dienst. The activity of these agencies is to write articles that will be bought by the highest number of newspapers, these belonging for the majority to the general press. Because these agencies involve a great number of newspapers, they involve then a great number of readers.

#### 2.4.1. Image of Central Finland

According to journalists, Central Finland seems to represent the country, this maybe because it is all they know about Finland.

On the economical viewpoint, Finland is seen as a “very advanced country”, “wealthy”, “civilized”, “sophisticated”, “modern” for “taxi-drivers accept credit cards as a mean of payment”, and...“living from the agriculture”.

Surely, its climate is “not so warm”, but its landscape, formed with “lakes and trees” recalls “some part of Northern Ireland”. In one word, it looks “everywhere the same”.

Finnish people are “very calm”, even “cold”. But they are a “very welcoming” population. Anyway, “they do not have any similarity with the population from the Latin countries”. That is maybe why they are “disciplined”. They have no choice, their country is “heavily policed”. But it does not avoid the fact that “the youth is drinking every week-end”. Maybe to forget that their “language is difficult”. Finally, the first picture that comes up to the majority of the journalists’ minds is the word “green”. Finland is green.

As an analyze to these results, journalists have approximately the same opinion when it comes to describe Finland. the only big difference stands in the economical image of the country, where the agriculture appeared in the middle of qualifires which do not deal that much with agriculture. As



an information, Finland's economical structure is 60% services, 30% industry, and the 10% remaining agriculture.

Journalists have also this view of youth drinking on the streets, one had a perfect image of "a twelve-year old girl as drunk as a lord laying on the pavement". They do not have any explanation to this phenomenon though.

Especially among English journalists, some do not have a precise image but on the 1000 Lakes Rally.

#### 2.4.2. Image of the 1000 Lakes Rally

Journalists bear in mind that they are in Finland because of their job, because of the 1000 Lakes Rally. The first picture English journalists for example get of Finland is the Rally.

This Rally is described as "the best", all the credits going to its "extremely good organization". To win the 1000 Lakes Rally, "you have to participate at least three times, whereas other rallies request two appearances". It is the "most specialised one" and "driving standards are very high". High are also the cars, for they "take off majestically".

One journalist, combining the job of photographer, has though a negative critic to address to the 1000 Lakes Rally : "I tried desperately to take a picture from a flying car with a lake in the background... impossible". The Rally does not offer the possibility to take a picture from a car with one of its 1000 lakes...

The analyze of the questionnaire is unanimous : the rally seems to be exceptional according to the journalists, which stand already in their articles.

### 2.5. Similarity between image given and image received

#### 2.5.1. The place of image

What kind of disposition do journalists have to communicate the image they have on Finland ?

The results are very disparate. Some journalists stand to the result, others have to talk about a-side stories, and the last ones include image naturally in their articles. "The result is important", "I do not have any

other choice than to write the strict minimum”, “I wish I could”, or “Why not ?”, “When the result is told, I can”, “I have to write my impressions as well”, and “Yes, sure”, “It is always interesting”, all these sentences represent the range of the answers to the question if the image is important to develop in an article.

The reasons for this diversity of answers may be explained in many ways. First, the press agencies which were asked deal with many newspapers. Most of the articles they write do not content more than the core information ; more words means more expensive and the best way not to say more is to tell the result only.

Some newspapers then have a proper policy, which stands whether to the result, or on the other extreme, contains any kind of information which have nothing to do with the result. Most of the journalists though are willing to tell about the image they have about Finland, almost all wish they could express their feelings in their articles more that they currently do.

### 2.5.2. Central Finland's image

The image of the region Central Finland in the newspapers appears through different points. The first and undeniable one is the landscape, seen simply with lakes and forests. It is a country where the temperatures are cold, where the weather is changing.

The first impression going to the people is that they are cold. Similarly, establishing a communication with them is hard because they do not know much English. It is even harder as their language is so difficult. They have a big sense of solidarity and discipline ; they look like sportsmen, though some have their sport in the belly.

The image of the region Central Finland in the questionnaire goes more to a broad view of Finland.

Finland has the image of being a wealthy and modern country. On a climate viewpoint, it is a rainy and cold country. Too cold, therefore have the youth to drink and even get drunk. Cold are their inhabitants as well, though they are very friendly. They are calm, disciplined.

They live in a country where it looks everywhere the same, drawn with forests and lakes. It has not a unique landscape, because it recalls landscapes from Northern Ireland and Sweden.

Both images look the same, stating that journalists give a real picture to their readers, in the way that they give the image they have on their own.

Since the 1000 Lakes Rally is now called the Neste 1000 Lakes Rally, named so after the name of the main sponsor, an oil company, this company had wanted to associate itself with an event which, at the same time of being a car race, took place in a region which had a "green" image. This phenomenon appears more and more, where a company sponsors an event to get an image totally opposed to what it first suggests. The care for the event is that to follow that it does not harm the image of the event itself. This may happen if the company has a greater image as the event : the event loses then completely its own identity to be something organised by the company in terms of image..

The image of a region of an event is then harder to establish as the image of the event itself ; establishing the image of an event can approach quantitative and qualitative aspects, as described by Ferrand or Lindon, Lendrevie and Laufer, but a region, since it is not implicated in the event on an advertising point of view, will have more difficulty to establish a strategy which may be evaluated.

### **3. The sports world under influence**

#### 3.1. Sport and politics

##### 3.1.1. On a national level

Although the importance of sport has varied over time, the growth of nationalism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries revived the idea of using sport and games for promoting fitness and national integration. Ostensibly, a main reason for reviving the Olympic Games in 1896 was to stimulate improved physical fitness among children. The OG and other international sport events soon became mechanisms for propaganda and vicarious war ; today, sport and politics are inextricably intertwined and often work to demonstrate social, economic, or political supremacy over another nation.

McPherson, Curtis and Loy established themes to compare sport and politics tend to focus on the

- increasing nationalism in sport ;
- use of propaganda ;
- use of sport to encourage national integration or unity ;
- use of sport to foster or sustain existing social conflicts ;
- increasing politicization of the decision-making process in sport at all levels.

On an international level,

- political ideologies compete on the societal level and in the sport environment ;
- there is public policy involvement by national governments in the organization and control of sport ;
- the state uses athletes to symbolically represent national strength or character ;
- sport is thought to be a visible medium for communicating national policies and ideological beliefs to the public, both at home and abroad ;
- sport is a visible and effective way to express opposition to the political, economic, or social policies of other national governments (*in* The social significance of sport).

On a local level, sport is a good way to evaluate the health of a town : political action in sport acts deep in the totality of social classes. Town managers in charge of sport have great responsibility ; youth are involved

in sport events, these are therefore a place of communication which companies and advertisers are eager to conquest, but they should not be left alone in this market.

Municipalities are investing more and more in sport organisations, sport clubs ; they felt that sport is an important vector of communication, and who says communication say campaign.

Sport appeals on the imaginary ; its influence offers the illusion of an egalitarian society, where everyone seems to have access on the top of the scene and where merit and unremitting work are rewarded. This utopia has probably to be left aside today.

### 3.1.2. Sport is a vector of communicating power

Athletes represent their nation more than ever : national hymns, flags, national suits, delegations with the colours of the country. A winner today would shock if he did not made his honour lap wrapped up in his national flag. This phenomenon is also a means of propaganda, the flag having a great symbolic signification. Sport victories are more and more converted in political victories, and sometimes even in political revenges like the rugby match Argentina - Great-Britain after the Falkland War. Already in 1956 at the Melbourne OG, the water-polo final opposing USSR and Hungary had to be stopped so much the game was violent. Victories but also defeats may have a political signification : at the Berlin OG in 1936, Jesse Owens, winning four gold medals, did not avoid to show it to the most emblematic spectator, Hitler.

The presence of a country in competitions constitutes a good means to show its strength or influence. The results of the events is significant on a symbolical level ; even recently, in the East-West confrontations, Americans were required to win, as representative of the free world, on pain of worrying their Allies. Volley-ball finals of the Montreal and Seoul OG opposed Soviets against Americans ; many observers described the victory of Westerners as the one of liberty against alienation.

In some cases, sport is not a way to promote a socio-political system, but only to appear on the international scene. Participating in worldwide competitions, and parallelly being recognized by international sport authorities, allows to recent independent countries to assert their existence. Sport results are then not the only criteria, the sending of a simple delegation is enough, for example Zaïre in Montreal, Centrafica in

Seoul. Though, good results reinforce the feeling of belonging to a strong national collectivity and back up the notion of national unity. Sport remains thus a powerful instrument to obtain a diplomatic recognition, even one of the foreign affair diplomatic weapon of the most efficient.

In 1980, the diplomatic counsellor of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the French president, gave him the following reason for refusing to show solidarity to the boycott of the Moscow OG decided by the American president, Jimmy Carter : *“For in France, not only athletes would have been unhappy not to participate at the Olympic Games, but also all of those who had been waiting, during holidays, the happiness of watching athletes on television”* (in *Le Monde diplomatique*, 1996). The decision of J.Carter was entirely political, so was France's to go to Moscow, finding at a low cost a way to show independence towards Washington. Though, the same OG reflected the incoherence of the French policy, for finally, the French fencing federation did participate whereas the French horseback-riding federation followed the boycott of Western countries.

### 3.2. The unequal distribution of sports in the world

#### 3.2.1. A geographical share

The sport movement has though limits to its desire of global expansion. J.Praicheux highlighted the geographical unevenness in its ability to penetrate the continents ; should it be in the intensity of the practice, in the production of performances, or in the distribution of the organizing places of international events. The sport success world map, objective thanks to a “performance index” (number of olympic finalists related to the number of inscribed athletes), underlines the great unequalites between industrialised countries in the North and Third World countries in the South (Pociello, 1995). A statistical analysis of participation and success showed that already at the 1952 Helsinki OG a very high correlation between the economic conditions of a country and its sport achievement (Jokl, 1956). A more national index was set by Paavo Seppänen, in the way that he takes the population of the country into account. He gave a value of 3 points for each gold medal, 2 points for each silver medal, and 1 point for each bronze medal of the summer and winter Olympic Games from 1896 until 1972. After having added up these points for each country, he divided the proportion of total points for

a country by the proportion of the population of this same country in the world population (*in Olympic success: a Cross-National perspective*). The result of this sport success ratio is to level the countries, and is also favouring industrialised countries with little population, such as Switzerland and Scandinavian countries.

Western Europe and North America monopolize, since many years, head offices of great international organizations and big sport events, like the Olympic Games and World Championships. This may be explained by the correlations between the intensity of practices, the spectacular impacts of these events, and their effects' institutional control. The biggest explanation though stands in the unequal ability of investment in entertaining spectacles, that is in less fundamental and expensive activities, as the organisation of a sport movement, the management of the impact, and the facilities. In those conditions, the organisation of great competitions do not suit to underdevelopment. The economical power increase of South-East Asian countries allowed the attribution of the 1988 Olympic Games to South Korea. But the attraction of a sports model is such that less privileged countries are constituting themselves in "geocultural" areas to organise "regional Games", like the African, Panamerican, or Mediterranean Games. Anyway, as Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, summarizes, the Third World "*cannot organize the Olympic Games, simply because it cannot organize anything*" (*in Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1996). Maybe not at the prices of the IOC.

Except football, which with almost 180 national associations is the only "global" sport, other sports are unequally spread out, according to their nature or the conditions they request for an intensive practice. Some exceptions though appear in the southern sport world, which coincides more or less with the "poverty" part of the world (illiteracy and low Gross National Product) : Australia, with a high standard of living and an Anglo-Saxon culture ; Cuba, a poor country with a communist regime, which gives great importance to international sport success ; and regions where cultural, geographical, and climate conditions are gathered to allow performances which do not necessitate important logistics, like Eastern Africa.

The organisation in 1996 of the Olympic Games in Atlanta, headquarters of the Coca-Cola company, illustrate the importance attached by the olympic authorities to their sponsors and to the most powerful television channels. The new markets granted to multinational companies

through the great source of consumers are highly attractive. China and Asian countries will probably be privileged in the future, ensuring the reinforcement of mediatic coverage and connections on this new area. With the increase of performance levels of developing countries, great sport events seem to follow the wealth and economic growth.

### 3.2.2. A normalisation through economical fights

Sport goods manufacturers may influence on the decision of choosing the candidate for the organization of an international event. According to the rumour, "Nagoya, candidate at the Olympic Games would have been eliminated because such a place would have favoured Japanese manufacturers, competitors of the Adidas company" (J.-F. Bourg, 1988). In this field as in others, competition between great multinational companies sometimes favours a developing country.

Northern companies settle factories in the third world to produce sport goods ; underdevelopment does though not offer large markets. The motivation lies in the fact that the workforce costs are low, with equal or higher dexterity and rapidity. This phenomenon concerns today almost all sport manufacturers : Adidas settled in Tunisia, after Taiwan and Korea ; Snauwaert transfers its manufacture in Portugal ; Taiwan welcomes Dunlop-Slazenger, Wilson, Rossignol, Yamaha ; South-Korea produces Nike and Reebok shoes. The concerned countries are new industrialised countries and the subcontracting like in Korea or Taiwan may be the basis of a local and national production. Thus emerge "new sport countries" (V. Andreff). They are able to attract world spectacles to Seoul or Mexico, sport goods factories to Pusan or Taipei, but they are also able to develop sport practices and facilities.

## 3.3. Power and stakes of the multinational olympism

### 3.3.1. A powerful giant

In a century, relations between states and world sport authorities often stand to the legitimate acknowledgement, in particular after the decolonization. States asked for recognition, and sport authorities dispensed this



acknowledgement. Sport authorities benefit a great power from this ability to dispense legitimacy, and they care about their image of independence and political neutrality, underlined by their swiss headquarters. Olympic authorities have said to be "above blocks", thanks to the worldwide consensus surrounding its events.

Olympic Games are the most important and imposing regular and international event. They are the characteristics of a powerful international sport system, with huge political and cultural importance and economical weight. Through the "Olympic Charter", their authorities controlling this institution pretend to ensure the leadership of the world sport, to supervise most of the events, and have the ambition to define and preserve its philosophy.

Though an international (and Swiss) legal status uncertain and weak, these authorities are so powerful that they can treat from equal to equal with governments from big countries. Limits are sometimes overtaken, for international federations intervene even in the politics of national governments : Pelé, sports minister in Brazil was faced to a threat of a ban of the national team at the 1998 Football World Cup by Joao Havelange, president of the international football federation (FIFA), if he maintained his project of changing the Brazilian clubs' status into private businesses.

Although being faced to the uncertainty of difficult geopolitical circumstances (wars and diplomatical crisis, opposition of blocks and international terrorism), although facing an ideological and organised resistance, and a strong opposition during the Games (boycotts), although finally facing the great economical and technological changes of this century (growth, change of the mass communication means, pressure of financial powers), the olympic system has survived to all these difficulties, showing a great capacity of integration, and has even strengthen. The term "olympic movement" is based on this ability to adapt, term which the organisation appropriate for oneself, to the detriment of critics.

J.-L. Chappelet gives in his book all indications and historical references to be convinced of the influence of the olympic dynamic on the sports world : the increase of the number of disciplines registered on the official programme of the Games, the requests of international federations which do not figure in it, the increasing number of participating athletes and nations demonstrate the gigantic aspect of the Games, the progressive complexity of their organization, and the

increasing weight of their financing. This proves also the extraordinary attract of the Olympic Games on the sports world and its managers. The international recognition ensured to the organizing town and country, the battle to gain the privilege to organize the event, seen as a recognition, ensuring advertisement, promotion and worldwide prestige, all consecrate the political weight of the International Olympic Committee. The United Nations' Organisation itself integrate this world sport organisation in some of its resolutions. To communicate officially the suspension of the economical embargo towards the Serbian Republic, the UN announced in september 1994 that it allows Belgrad to "*start again cultural and sports exchanges* " with the rest of the world.

The condemnation of the South-African apartheid was inaugurated in a strong sports boycott. P.Irlinger showed that the pressure of this international boycott has weighted particularly on rugby. While South-African professional sportsmen, in golf or car racing, or specialists in some individual sports, in tennis or track & fields, benefited from visas to participate at the international competitions, rugby benefited from a discriminatory treatment by groups of pressure or political powers. Olympic Games prefer to highlight individual sports, seen as less patriotic. Games which pretend to contribute to peace and universal understanding do not forget that situations of international crisis may lead to boycott risks, which damage their events.

### 3.3.2. Olympic abuse

As J.-L.Chappelet underlines, "*the IOC became a multinational company of the show business* ". The increasing economical impact, which, thanks to broadcasting rights, allows great financial resources to the IOC. First global mediatic business, Olympic Games are exclusively owned by the IOC, an association with no lucrative aim, founded by Pierre de Coubertin, and headed in Lausanne. The Committee negotiate and collect rights for broadcasting and use of the olympic image : a gold mine of approximately 1 billion dollars which allows, among others, to treat sumptuously the ninety-one members of this select club. In fact, all are chosen according to subtle criterias of an advanced age, a good fortune, if possible notable, more important than the sport skills. "*A mafia of marquis, counts, multimillionaires and Whites* " according to Fidel Castro's hardly exaggerated description.

Competitions are theoretically open to every country, but the gigantic and increasing number of athletes exclude the organization of Summer Games by small countries. As J.-C.Killy, co-organiser of the 1992 Winter Games and member of the IOC, admits : "*The organization of the Games are reserved to a club of wealthy countries*".

Facing these restrictions, the rise of politics and the economical accumulation, speeches on the disinterestment of volunteers and the amateurism of athletes, moralizing speeches on doping affairs, the defense of the coubertinian ethic and the celebration of humanism... have less credibility. These speeches are though still supporting the great institution.

## Conclusion : the need for new ethics ?

*“The secret of my longevity ? Sport. Never sport. ”* joked Winston Churchill, died at an age of more than ninety years old. Do the perennality of our societies implicate the end of sport competition build up in shows, corrupted by money, perverted by doping, with violence on and outside the sport fields ?

Born in the western societies at the end of the last century, at the same time than the increase of productivism and industrial capitalism, characterised by social struggles, the rise of nationalisms, modern sport took rapidly the place of former games and entertainments. Since the origine, it was used as a means of propaganda of ideologies, and so it stayed. From the training for military conflicts to the preparation of athletes for economical wars ; from the apology of national values at the time of Pierre de Coubertin to the spectacular triumph of the trading competitions imposed by sport business multinationals.

Competitive sport today is the main vector of the speech on globalisation. Universalism of the sports high mass always renewed, Olympic games, Formula One world championships, football World Cups, tennis tournaments, cycling races, are the only events followed by tens, hundreds million, indeed even billions of people on the five continents. Crowds conditioned by the competition spirit, the worship of performance, convinced of the legitimacy of the fight, of the winner's domination, of the submission of the weak towards the strong, of the individual feat and success ; crowds giving such basis to indentity. *“If I would not have done it, I would still be fighting against myself ”* said later Tommie Smith, reminding his black gloved fist on the podium of the 200 meters race at the 1968 Mexico OG, without feeling regret of a broken career.

Culture today is what brings us closer to our national identity. Sport is a mass phenomenon, a political phenomenon, a social phenomenon, an economical phenomenon, and a global phenomenon. Universalism is a characteristic of sport, which therefore, may not be included in the culture. Global media coverage, global economical interests, global political fights, all have settled sport above a national phenomenon.

Though, sport and culture coexist ; the extraordinary richness and complexity of sport find its equality in the culture : know-how, images, representations, techniques, values, norms, believes...all these building the sport culture.

Admiring the Greek society, Pierre de Coubertin had wanted, by proposing the renovation of the Olympic Games, to integrate sport in a global, educational, and humanistic perspective. Sport was according to him a means to train the citizen.

Sport, today, became a fact of civilization. It may no longer be seen as a simple entertainment reserved to well-off social groups, having time for unuseful activities. Part of the cultural inheritance of the humanity, sport is not limited to the only European practices. The phenomenon of colonization by powerful countries has allowed to widespread the Anglo-Saxon sports. It was the result of a volunty to re-create a society reproducing the social, economical and cultural organisations, like in the bourgeois Europe, without taking customs and characteristics of local societies into account. Thus were local sports naturally integrated in the counscious of people brought back to simple folk customs.

Roger Bambuck, former French minister of sports, states that if sport should train the citizen, three theories have to be set up :

-A theory of the subject ; this consists in highlighting the fact that sport has to contribute to a bodily, a mental and an intellectual development : sport contributes thus to reinforce the identity and the personnality of individuals.

-A theory of education ; sport has to integrate a vast educational draft. the main characteristic of the performance is that it is ephemeral ; the more we ask for performances, the more we have to think on the after. Sport has to favour a personal life's plan.

-A theory of the social link ; this theory will take into account the fact that any development of the person will take sense if everyone is conscious of the different links, should they be political, cultural, or social, which unites him to the community.

Sport is education, but it is educational only in the way that it trains reponsible citizens, that is free men, capable of changing their destiny. The etymology of the word champion is "the one who leads to represent others". This quality has not the aim of giving him a mythical value as it is the case in our societies, excluding him by a difference, but on the contrary he has to be integrated to be recognized as one of us. If we admit that the champion is only representing us, we have also to admit

that the depreciation and degradation linked to sport reflect the depreciation and degradation of our societies.

The first congress on olympism took place in 1897 in France, chaired by Pierre de Coubertin. At this occasion, he declared : *“If I come back in a hundred years, I might destroy what I have built ”* (in L’Equipe, 1997). If only...

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