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SPORT AS A MEETING FIELD OF SOCIO-POLITICAL DEMANDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

СПОРТ ЯК ПОЛЕ РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ЗАПИТІВ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ СПІЛЬНОТИ

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Abstract. *The importance of sport and sports entities as active factors of the international agenda formation is proven in this article. The arguments for replacing the classic actors of the world arena with non-standard units, such as individual athletes and sports teams and organizations are given in this context. While emphasizing the fact that they are becoming mouthpieces and lobbyists for specific demands of society more and more often, the analysis of such a phenomenon of politicization and socialization of actors as well as the actors' tools in such activities as symbols, narratives and physical space is carried out as well.*

The main research topics of most scholars who focus on the mentioned relationship between politics and sports are nationalism, propaganda, the struggle of ideologies and power through the prism of politics in sport whereas this article also highlights the use of sport as a tool of communication and local identity strengthening. Some of the analyzed sources concern the fixation of events and personalities (Guillem Balague, Dave Zirin, Franklin Foer), while others tackle with philosophical and anthropological issues (Zygmunt Bauman, Erin Tarver, Christopher Gaffney), thanks to which a sufficient level of this phenomena is supplied (especially these are American and British researchers) as well as the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the choice of methodology and areas of analysis is outspoken. The aim of the article is not only to study the sources that shed the light on this issue, but also to give the international (Olympic Games, Mohammed Ali, Marcus Rashford, etc.) and Ukrainian examples (FC «Karpaty») from history and the present.

The importance of analyzing fans' narratives (banners, songs, perception of themselves and others, etc.) and symbolic objects of the urban landscape (stadiums and sports infrastructure in general) is emphasized in order to understand the trends in society that fans and objects represent.

Key words: *structuralism, identity, localization, geodeterminism, sports diplomacy*

Анотація. Обґрунтовується значення спорту та спортивних суб'єктів як активних факторів формування порядку денного міжнародних відносин. У такому контексті наводяться аргументи заміщення класичних акторів світової арени більш нестандартними одиницями, як-от окремі атлети та спортивні команди й організації. Підкреслюючи той факт, що вони все частіше стають рупорами та лобістами конкретних запитів соціуму, наводиться аналіз такого феномену політизації й соціалізації акторів, а також зазначаються інструменти суб'єтів у такій діяльності, як-от символи, нарративи та фізичний простір.

Зважаючи на те, що основними темами досліджень більшості науковців, які фокусуються на співвідношенні політики та спорту, є націоналізм, пропаганда, боротьба ідеологій і міці через призму політики в спорті, в статті виокремлюється ще й така тема як використання спорту як засобу комунікації й формування локальної ідентичності. Частина проаналізованих джерел стосувалася фіксації подій і персоналій (Гільєм Балаге, Дейв Зірін, Франклін Фоер), коли інша – філософсько-антропологічних засад (Зигмунт Бауман, Ерін Гарвер, Кристофер Гаффні), які дозволяють стверджувати про достатній рівень розкриття проблематики іноземними дослідниками (в основному американськими та британськими), а також про необхідність мультидисциплінарного підходу до вибору методології й сфер аналізу. Метою ж статті є не лише вивчення джерел зазначеної тематики, але й наведення міжнародних (Олімпійські ігри, Мохаммед Алі, Маркус Решфорд і т.ін.) та українських прикладів (ФК «Карпати») із історії та сьогодення.

Підкреслюється важливість аналізу нарративів уболівальників (банери, пісні, бачення себе та інших, тощо) і символічних об'єктів міського ландшафту (стадіони та спортивна інфраструктура загалом) для розуміння тенденцій, що виявляються властивими всьому соціуму, що вболівальники та об'єкти представляють.

Ключові слова: структуралізм, ідентичність, локалізація, геодетермінізм, спортивна дипломатія.

Introduction. In 2005, boxer Mohammed Ali received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian award – thanks to his long struggle for the rights of the black population, against involvement in the Vietnam War and against the prejudices towards Islam. In 2007, Ivorian footballer Didier Drogba became the UN Goodwill Ambassador and received the Beyond Sport Humanitarian Award for his role in slowing down the civil war in his native Côte d'Ivoire. In 2020, Megan Rapinoe, American football player, was named one of the most significant figures of the year according to TIME: «Rapinoe's influence extends far beyond the playing field. In our age when athletes are still required to remain primarily athletes, she is not silent, advocating for LGBT+ rights and actively advocating a feminist stance». These and hundreds of other examples provide researchers with a basis for a reasoned discussion on professional sport's ability to multiply the points of its entry into the socio-political sphere. Whether it is another aggravation of the Ukrainian-Russian relations due to the picture of the Ukrainian full map on the yellow and blue kit of the national football team or corruption scandals during the organization of top events by international sports unions (such as the 2022 FIFA World Cup).

The purpose of research. The key aim of this article is to give arguments for the widening of the actors' field in the international relations, where athletes, teams and sport discourse in general are gaining more and more impact on the political and social agenda. That's why the authors strive to emphasize the role of sport not only as the tool of the soft power, but as the factor of salvation or exacerbation of social and political issues.

Scientific methods applied . While conducting this research the authors used the interdisciplinary approach due to the novelty of such an issue as sport diplomacy and athletes'

impact on social and political agenda of their states and the world in general. That's why the materials of foreign sociologists, sports journalists, athletes' memoir, anthropologists and others were studied thoroughly. The most prominent ideas were found in works of the Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, who gives his explanation for the current world situation, where states can't be taken as powerful actors of the international relations anymore. He also sees other magnets for the socialization and politicization of inhabitants such as neo-tribes at work, group of interests and other factors of localization. Erin Tarver, the American philosopher of sport, helps to understand the mechanisms of sport fandom formation as well as its impact on the patriotic identity crystallization. The thoughts of Ralph Wilcox, the American researcher, are also useful in seeing sports infrastructure's influence on cities and local areas especially, their economics and development in general.

Results. Thanks to the conducted research it has been confirmed that athletes now use sports to change the world, as they get the Peace Prize instead of the Match Player Award and recognition for their impact on the local community instead of new cup titles. Moreover, individual players and teams become the physical embodiment of the values and character of the whole society they represent, thus giving it a strong identification which is based on their initiatives and activities outside of sport. That is why it is important for scientists, firstly, continue to analyze cases when athletes have become both a mouthpiece and a lever of influence on the socio-political agenda domestically and internationally as well as to build the theoretical foundations for such a system. And secondly, to recognize the multidimensionality of such a sphere as sport that brings it into the field of international relations and provides with the functions of socialization and politicization.

The phenomenon of sport going beyond its borders shows, on the one hand, the consolidation of new actors in the field of international relations, on the other, the fragmentation and equalization of these actors. It seems that the individual level of the subjects of international relations is becoming stronger, because in modern times, when the institution of the state is less important for carrying out the international relations some even non-political personalities are able to hold digital tools and methods of soft power and have a real impact on the domestic and foreign policies of entire countries. Zygmunt Baumann calls this process «a reorientation to the realm of individual politics of life»: «An open and increasingly defenseless nation-state is constantly losing power, evaporating into the global space, and subsidizing its political acumen and skill to individual men and women» [Bauman, 2013: 42]. At least this is manifested in the ability of individuals to pay attention to the problem before forcing its solution. Moreover, in this process, they are also able to unite quantitatively significant masses of people around themselves. Therefore, in such processes, the group level of interaction in international relations requires special attention, because aimed movements, activist groups and other socio-political associations have a real impact not only on the leaders of their own countries, but also on the global level of nations [Gebhard, 2017: 2]. In such a situation of national and state institutions' blurring there is a need to replace the former elements. Obviously, sport is not the only magnet here, but its importance for gathering around itself both social movements and for providing a platform for the effective struggle of worldviews can not be underestimated. In other words, athletes, teams and their public activities can easily help shape the identity of the population, consolidate the values of entire nations, persuade influential people to make concrete decisions and simply simplify the lives of the population by upholding their rights. Similar phenomena could be seen, for example, during the active phase of Europe's industrialization, when participation in or support for local football clubs contributed not only to the socialization of the urban population but also to self-awareness as a national entity with – the club became the material embodiment of «us» and «ours» and of these things that «we» are ready to defend in opposition to «them». This effect is especially evident with cheering for national teams in international competitions, because when nations are still in the process of formation, football can really become an amplifier of identity [Brand & Niemann, 2014: 46]. The personal observations of Joao Nuno Coelho, a Portuguese sociologist, give the basis for the sport fandom of such a kind: «I would never have sung or known our national anthem if it wasn't for football» [Brown, 1998: 158].

Researchers attribute this to the fact that positive identification, aimed at specific athletes and teams, works with the imagination of people who associate themselves and their stories with them – as if they were heroes, fictional characters of epic narratives. In turn, this tells more about the society itself thanks to demonstrating what character traits they consider acceptable and with which they want to associate themselves in the eyes of others [Tarver, 2017: 157]. The words of sports psychologist Liliana Grabin about her compatriots, world-famous footballers Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, best illustrate the mentioned phenomena: «When you say 'I'm Argentinian', you actually hear 'Maradona' and now 'Messi.' This is Argentina. Football gives an understanding of self-sufficiency that allows us to feel firmly on the ground» [Balague, 2019: 232].

The following are two levels the analysis of which will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the aforementioned process of sport going beyond its original boundaries of influence:

- level of symbols and narratives – visual, verbal and other intangible links serve as tools in building the way of sport spreading beyond its borders. For example, Joseph Bradley, a British researcher on the interaction of sociology, politics and sports, emphasizes the importance of analyzing the songs and chants of sports fans as they are part of their communication as well as of set of identities and characteristics of society [Brown, 1998: 203]. Indeed, thanks to a careful study of the mood of the stands and fan groups the prevailing trends and opinions of society can be understood – for example, the city of Liverpool and its eponymous football club. The population of this British city, as in most port areas, has been perceiving itself as different (call them by «Scousers»), separated from everybody else, which in turn does not lead to outright separatist ideas, but clearly draws boundaries with the rest of their own countries. «We are not England, we are Scouseland», says the banner of the club's oldest grandstand. At the same time, here is another example of the individual influence in this context of symbols and narratives that emphasizes the Scousers' thought about their own exclusivity. «Having being faced with the critical choice I had to pick only one team – either to stop playing for ‚Liverpool‘ or for the England national team. I decided to neglect the national team. I was born at ‚Anfield‘, and I'm going to die here» [Gerrard, 2015: 265], says the Liverpool native, former club captain and legend Steven Gerrard. Continuing such precedents let's mention the Catalan football coach Josep Pep Guardiola who not only openly expressed his support for the expansion of Catalonia's independence during the leading FC «Barcelona», but also continued to symbolically express his views outside Spain as well. Thus, Guardiola publicly wore a yellow ribbon at the matches of his new British club, expressing the support of political prisoners-fighters, his compatriots, for Catalan independence.

- physical space – the ability of sports infrastructure to carry out broader functions for urban space and its population. For example, continuing the already mentioned case with FC «Barcelona» it should be noted that its stadium «Camp Nou» has become a physical and social space of resistance in the middle of the 20th century and almost the only place where Catalans could speak their language fluently and show dissatisfaction with politics of Madrid [Foer, 2010: 195]. The stadium as a symbolic and physical magnet is of paramount importance to fans as it defines the surrounding area and communicates its presence about the history, significance, strength and ideological affiliations of the rest of the population [Gaffney, 2008: 25]. That is why FC «Barcelona» which has been the embodiment of Catalonia's struggle for independence from Spain for decades or a weapon of a country without its own statehood is impossible without its material representation in the form of a stadium [Foer, 2010: 195]. Next the ability of sports areas to promote socialization and regeneration of the environment will be mentioned. With this in mind the European Union built part of its regional policy in the 90s of the 20th century allocating millions of euros for the construction of sports infrastructure in economically weak peripheries. That is why a number of projects (from centers for international competitions to local swimming facilities and cycle tracks) which restrained labor emigration and investment decline were included in the European regional development programme on a par with other fields of economy aimed at strengthening the regions [Matthews & Henry, 2014: 228].

It turns out that sport does leave its mark on the physical structure of the city and on civic consciousness – cultural, political and economic attitudes, collective values and identities, relations between people and space [Wilcox, 2012: 1]. That is why a brief historical analysis to provide specific examples that confirm the above mentioned opinion about the broad functions of the sports sphere and its actors will be given further. The influence of sport on the formation and consolidation of political and national consciousness, which has access not only to the national but also to the international level, can be seen in the following phenomena:

1) FC «Karpaty» has been representing the city of Lviv for decades. «Karpaty» in Soviet times were known for their ethno-national localism, which was manifested not only in the origin of the players of that time – almost all of them were from Lviv or the surrounding area – but also in the political position, which was then «typical» attitude of Western Ukraine to the USSR [Foer, 2010: 150]. A former player and captain of the team in the 60s and 70s of the 20th century Ihor Kulchytsky recalls: «At that time, ‚Karpaty‘ were probably the only team where almost everyone spoke Ukrainian» [Lyaska, 2020: 17]. «When Karpaty won the USSR Cup (a sensational victory for a team from the lower league in 1969), the stands in Moscow sang ‚Cheremshina‘, because people perceived the club as something native, as part of the Ukrainian», – a fan Yuri Gerun quotes his grandfather [Lyaska, 2020: 74]. You can still hear football songs based on «Lenta za lentoyu» (song of Ukrainian rebels), national salutes and slogans as well as the use of the Ukrainian symbols which are associated with national movements of the Ukrainians (for example, red-black flags, portraits of Stepan Bandera, etc.). One of the fans, Rostislav Shiyko, emphasizes: «Fans are not only interested in football and support their team, but also have a clear ideology. The fan has always positioned himself as a patriot» [Lyaska, 2020: 73]. Respondent Oleh Soldatenko, one of the organizational leaders of «Karpaty» fan sector, sees the basis for such behavior in the freedom provided by the feeling of belonging to the team. Back in the 1990s, it was at the stadium that they could loudly declare Ukraine's independence and call for the freedom of its people without foreign invasions. Moreover, after analyzing the photo archives of the club, the authors of this study were able to find evidence of clear socio-political views of «Karpaty» fans. In recent years, banners have appeared in the stands in Lviv with support / protests on current events in Ukraine such as «Freedom to Pavlyuchenkos» (protests in 2012-2013 on the unfounded accusation of Pavlyuchenkos in the murder of a Kyiv judge), commemoration victims of the Holodomor, the position of condemnation of the activities of the political party «Party of Regions», including banners against politician Dmytro Tabachnyk, commemoration of the anniversary of Taras Shevchenko, etc.

2) Mohammed Ali is one of the most famous and influential persons in the history of boxing. By combining his success in sports, oratory skills and ability to influence on the situation with the rights of America's black people, Ali not only became the archetype of the passionate rebel of the 1960s [Zirin, 2008: 238], but also walked along with the political and social leaders such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The athlete described his own situation as follows: «Where would I be if I didn't make the crowd pay attention? I would be a miserable black man in my hometown, washing the windows and knowing ‚my place‘» [Zirin, 2008: 135]. Numerous public speeches in support of the basic rights and freedoms of his population, participation in political demonstrations, educational lectures at universities and constant pressure on politicians – this is why Ali has become a critical symbol of the transformation of the policy of «black power». «He refused to be afraid, thus giving courage to those like us», – says his black compatriot [Zirin, 2008: 135]. At the same time, it is worth mentioning the boxer's outspoken statements against the foreign policy of the United States and its allies as Ali opposed the American war in Vietnam, questioned the recruitment process of American soldiers and became a symbol of anti-colonial movements at the time with supporting the African culture and visiting the continent's countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Egypt [16]. The modern case of Colin Kaepernick, an American athlete who gained international influence through his open stance against the US government, should be mentioned here as well. Presidential candidate at the time Donald Trump described this American football player as one who should be expelled from the stadium and fired in general as since September 2016 Kaepernick

had begun kneeling during the playing of the national anthem at the start of the match. With such a gesture he demonstrated own views on the situation in the American state: «I will not show respect for the symbols of a country that oppresses blacks and people with different skin colours. It's more than football for me». Following this gesture of Martin Luther King, which became widespread in the 1960s, more and more athletes were kneeling down in disapproval of police harassment against black people. This wave of peaceful protests gained even more strength with the death of George Floyd in May 2020, which led not only to mass riots around the world, but also to the renewal of the Black Lives Matter campaign, which was followed by professional sportsmen and women outside the United States – footballers, baseball and basketball players still continue to directly express their views which undoubtedly relate to the political sphere.

3) Another prominent person worth mentioning in this context is Marcus Rashford, the English footballer, who became best known to the general public at the start of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. It was then that millions of poor people in Britain had problems with food supplies, especially schoolchildren from the most needy families who would lose their main source of food due to school shutdown. By drawing attention to this issue through his own social media, Marcus Rashford was able to help ensure that 21 million meals were delivered to hungry children and families in Britain. Moreover, Rashford was able to influence a change in the government's policy when it did not plan to continue providing food during the holidays. That's why the banners with the 'football' score of victories and defeats started to appear: «Rashford 2 – Boris [Johnson] 0». Now the footballer is dealing with the problem of reading and kids' access to books as well with the issue of racial injustice. His influence is highlighted by such awards as the BBC Athlete of the Year, Man of the Year by several British and international unions and the Order of the British Empire.

4) «Old Firm» is a classic football derby confrontation in Glasgow. This phenomena is considered one of the oldest in the world, originating in the late 19th century in Scotland, when the division of Irish and Scots took a new turn – Republican Catholics and Protestant Loyalists founded their football clubs. The confrontation between FC «Celtic» and FC «Rangers» has been considered bigger than football issue ever since as even wearing the club's symbols demonstrates a person's religious and political views. There were more than 400 matches between the two teams during the whole period and the former Scottish police chief, Les Gray, described the atmosphere in 2011 as follows: «What happens on the pitch is reproduced throughout Scotland, on the streets, in pubs, in homes. When you go home, you can hear the police and ambulances sirens everywhere. It's like a war zone. Anyone who goes out to the streets after this derby risks their life». The case of the hooligan group «Bridgeton Billy Boys» is significant in this context too – having being the largest and strongest gang in Britain they supported FC «Rangers». In the 1920s and 1930s, they were not only involved in football events, but also took requests from the British Conservative Party as for destabilizing their left-wing rallies as well as controlled significant cash flows throughout the whole region. Here is an excerpt from their song which is still inextricably linked with the «Rangers» and symbolizes the division of Glasgow:

«Hello, hello

We are the Billy Boys

Hello, hello

You'll know us by our noise

We're up to our knees in Fenian blood

Surrender or you'll die

The Brighton Derby Boys»

The line «We're up to our knees in Fenian blood» mentions the members of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, who fought for the liberation of Ireland from British rule and quite clearly demonstrates their perception of 'another'. Some experts see such a split between the two groups in Glasgow as a struggle for power in a city where identification takes place at the level of

approving one group and totally rejecting the other. In other words, this view defines the phenomenon of «Old Firm» in and out of the stadium and gives it the form of tribalism.

5) The Olympic Games that may be seen as an apolitical international platform but with the political views and social demands being openly demonstrated at the same time. The impact of the Olympiad on general culture, urban development and sports ethics in general is difficult to overestimate – from the invention of calendar by the ancient Greeks to the world art (drawings on vases and utensils, statues glorifying winners, understanding and depiction of human body) [Baker, 1988: 23]. With a massive audience and attention from the world decision-makers countries-participants and individual athletes have used the Games as an opportunity to express their views for centuries, e.g. numerous boycotts of Socialist and Western bloc countries during the Cold War or Egypt's and its allies' withdrawal of competition due to the West's position in the Suez Crisis. Now let's turn to the following trends that most often emerge during the Olympics in the field of socio-political activities:

- some of the symbolic protests of individual teams and athletes on political issues:
 - 1908, London – the Russian Empire insisted on refusing to display the Finnish flag while the British Empire did the same towards the Irish one. Two positions could be explained by the internal conflicts with these peoples who did not recognize the power of empires;
 - 1948, London – World War II losers, Germany and Japan, didn't even receive invitations to the Games. The same was done with the losers-states after the First World War;
 - 1956, Melbourne – The Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland withdraw from the competition to demonstrate their disapproval of the Soviet invasion to Hungary;
 - 2018, Pyeongchang – athletes from South and North Korea paced together at the opening ceremony of the Winter Games. The symbolic gesture appeared as the result of a new round of relations, complemented by the «Olympic diplomacy» from the Korean and the American politicians as they met several times during the Games and tried to take steps to improve relations between Seoul and Pyongyang;
 - 2021, Tokyo – pressure being made by the Belarusian government on their own athletes during the Games (for example, the removal of Timanovskaya from participation right in the middle of the games and her persecution due to criticism of the Belarusian committee);
 - 2022, Beijing – Japan didn't not send its athletes to the competition because the host country systematically violated human rights and had other conflicts with Tokyo. The United States, Britain, Canada and Australia have not delegated their officials because of the same problems on human rights in China;
- some of the symbolic gestures of individual teams and athletes on social issues:
 - 1968, Mexico City – the American athletes saluted with one of the gestures of «black power» on the winners' podium in support of the rights and freedoms of the black population of their country [18];
 - 2016, Rio de Janeiro – the first appearance of the refugee team at the Olympics. Ten athletes from Syria, Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan gathered to emphasize the migration crisis that was actively sweeping Europe at the time;
 - 2021, Tokyo – mass protests of the Japanese citizens against the Summer Games in their capital. 43% of the population called for the abolition of the Olympics in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, accusing their government of carelessness and weak position in overcoming the virus within the country [11];
 - 2021, Tokyo – footballers and players of the national teams of New Zealand, Great Britain, Sweden, the United States and other countries kneeled down before the start of matches in protest against racism (a gesture that gained its spread again after the killings of black people by the police officers in America);

Conclusions. Thus, it should be concluded that at the current stage of international relations development, when the role of non-political actors and social movements is only growing on the world stage, sports actors receive not only the tools of politicization and socialization, but also leave their mark in the urban landscape and in the construction of symbols and narratives of the whole population – sports fandom, symbols of football clubs, chants and other verbal and visual objects contribute to the identity's building as well as the feeling of local patriotism. With such functions sport also becomes a mean for political and social requests giving more space for sport diplomacy at the same time – sport events, athletes, teams and sport infrastructure are easily used to foster relations between nations and to change the general agenda.

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