SOCIOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT

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Summary

This chapter is devoted to two important scientific disciplines included in the structure of the science of sport: sociology of sport and philosophy of sport. The characteristics of their purpose, content and value of these scientific disciplines, their place in the system of sciences of sports and sociological disciplines, and also stages of their formation and development are presented.

1. Introduction

The main task of this chapter is brief characterization of two closely connected, but nevertheless relatively independent scientific disciplines of sport - *sociology and philosophy of sport.*

In view of the difficult and inconsistent character of development of sport, its inextricable link with all sides of social life (economics, politics, culture, etc.), intensive development of scientific researches in the area of sport and of the need for significant increase of their efficiency, researches play increasingly important role in the system of scientific disciplines, considering sport as a subject of their analysis.

2. Sociology of Sport

With reference to sociology of sport it is possible to distinguish its narrow (direct) and wide purpose of research. Directly it studies sport, and the wide area of its analysis is the whole complex of phenomena, connected to sport - physical training, physical recreation, the Olympic Movement, etc. This difference is well traced in different names of this scientific discipline and its branches. Along with the name "sociology of sport (sports sociology)" authors of publications also use other names: "physical training sociology", "sociology of physical exercises (motor activity)", "physical culture sociology", "sociology of body/corporal sociology", "sociology of the Olympic Movement", etc.

Specificity of the range of problems (basic directions, problems and tasks) of sociological research of sport is connected, first of all, with the fact, that it implies *sociological* research, in the course of which specialists use specific conceptual apparatus and methods of *sociology.* Therefore, to define the range of problems of sociological research of sport, it is necessary to specify those basic concepts (terms) of sociology, which determine specifically a sociological aspect of studying of any social phenomena, including sport.

2.1. Basic Sociological Concepts

The central concept of sociology playing an especially important role in the definition of a specific subject of its research is a "*social system*". Scientists understand a system as the entire complex of its interconnected elements, which are in functional relations and communicate with each other. One system can be an element of a system of higher order, and elements of any system, in their turn, act as systems of lower order. The basic elements of social system are people, their public relations, connections, interaction, and also social groups, social institutions. A social system is interesting to a sociologist-researcher, mainly, from the point of view of its influence on the behavior of a human being.

A social system includes in itself different forms and kinds of social *activity* of people, their social *communication* and *relations,* on the basis of which they successfully live together.

The analysis of human activity and its different forms - industrial, political, art, legal, medical, pedagogical, etc. - is one of the major tasks of sociology. The simplest element of any kind of social activity of people, their social relations and interactions is *social action*. The concept "social action" has been introduced for the first time into sociology and scientifically proved by Max Weber, who considered sociology as a science about social interaction (action of individuals, directed to each other). According to Weber, social action has at least two special features: first of all, it should be rational, realized, and, secondly, it should be surely oriented towards behavior of other people. Therefore, any social action should include: a character (an actor); demand in activization of behavior; the action purpose; the action method; the other character (other actor), on which this action is directed; a result of action. A human being is stimulated to social actions by certain needs, interests, motives, sets and other elements of motivation.

Social (public) *connections and relations* are very multiform. It is possible to distinguish, in particular, *impersonal* and *personal* social connections (relations). Impersonal social connections are relations, based on social division of labor, on the basis of which any society is divided into social strata, and also relations, based on national, racial, religious and other distinctions, which divide a society into national, racial, religious layers (groups). Personal social relations are caused by full or partial direct contacts of people in all spheres of life.

A process, in the course of which people act and react to actions of other people, is named in sociology *"social interaction"*. There are two levels of sociological analysis of social interaction - *microlevel* and *macrolevel*. At a microlevel sociology analyzes

social interaction of people (sometimes in groups, sometimes in pairs), i.e. *interpersonal interaction*, and at macrolevel - social interaction of large social structures, for example, social institutions.

One of the important elements of a social system is its *normative subsystem*. It includes *values*, *norms* and *sanctions*. Values characterize purposes of a social system. Norms specify preferable means of achievement of these purposes and regulate prospective standards of behavior. They establish behavior forms: a) expected from members of a social system (mandatory norms), b) forbidden for them, c) authorized, but not obligatory and d) preferential, but not obligatory. For provision of strict observance of norms and holding to established terms (values) special sanctions are introduced in social systems. Positive sanctions are those awards, which are received by individuals for their adherence to established aims of a certain system and for their achievement by right means, and negative sanctions are punishment, imposed on people for their departure from corresponding norms (established purposes) of a system or for usage of wrong means for achievement of these purposes.

A term "culture", used in sociology, characterizes a process and results of activity of a social subject (an individual, a social group or a society as a whole) on creation and preservation of those social phenomena, which are estimated by him/her as the most important and significant, i.e. those considered by him/her as values. Values act for people as social ideals, sense, symbols, norms, samples of behavior, etc., defining a character and orientation of different forms and areas of their activity, social relations. For characterization of a set of values of a separate individual or a social group, different from values, shared and supported by that wider social system, into which these individuals (social groups) are included, specialist use a term "subculture".

For sociological characterization of a personality and its place in social structure sociologists, first of all, use such concepts, as a *"social status"* and a *"social role"*.

Each person in a certain social system takes a certain place, a certain position, implying certain rights and duties. For example, he/she can be a musician or a worker, a father or a mother, etc. The concept *"social status"* characterizes a position, occupied by an individual in a society according to his/her age, gender, origin, profession, marital status and defining its rights, duties and privileges.

Under a *social role* sociologists understand relatively steady sample of behavior (including actions, thoughts, feelings), developed in a certain society for performance of certain social functions, for implementation of a certain social status, i.e. a set of actions of a person, having a certain status in a social system.

Within the framework of sociological analysis any person acts as "homo sociologicus", i.e., first of all, is considered as an individual, playing a certain set of social roles, following certain norms and instructions, samples of behavior, accepted in this social system.

In the analysis of any social system, attention of a sociologist is concentrated also on studying of social *communities*, *groups*, *layers* (*categories*), *organizations* and *institutions* connected with this system.

A social community is a real (instead of imaginary, conditional) association of people, participating in those or other social processes, engaged (directly or indirectly) in this or that joint activity and, therefore, somehow connected with each other. Social communities are extremely diverse. Sociologists distinguish demographic, ethnic, political, cultural, territorial and other social communities.

Communities of people with steady interactions, presence of mutual expectations, coordination of actions, cooperation and solidarity in the area of common aims and cultural samples are named *social groups*. Sociology studies different kinds of social groups. It pays a special attention to the study of the so-called "*small groups*", i.e. such groups, in which social relations are represented in the form of direct personal contacts. Therefore, a small group in sociology sometimes is named also a "*contact* group". Small groups differ from "*big* groups", i.e. social groups, including a great number of members and based on different types of relations, not implying obligatory personal contacts.

The subject of steadfast attention of sociologists is *group dynamics* - interaction of members of a social group among themselves. Examples of processes of group dynamics are: communications between members of a group, management and leadership, group pressure and other ways of regulation of behavior of members of a certain group.

There is another category, differing from the category of a social group. It represents a group of people, having a certain common feature or an attribute (for example, metalworkers, qualified workers, graduates of high schools, etc.), i.e. people, ranged on such parameters, as age, gender, a place of residence, etc. For their characterization sociologists use a concept "social stratum" or "social *category*".

Pitirim Sorokin, a famous American sociologist, has introduced into the scientific area a concept "*social stratification*". This concept characterizes arrangement of social strata, their stratification according to a certain criterion - wealth, power, prestige etc.

There are also such basic concepts of sociology, defining purposes, problems, basic directions and problems of sociological research, as "*social institution*" and "*social organization*".

The concept "*social institution*" is used for characterization of a system of roles, statuses and sanctions, prescribing to individuals certain rules of behavior that is created to fix types of social relations vital for a human society, to make them obligatory for members of a certain society or a certain social group. Hence, by the term "social institution" scientists mean a system of social relations, a mix of social roles, statuses, norms, by means of which standardized samples of behavior in group processes for implementation of significant social values are fixed (are kept in certain framework). For example, a social institution of a family includes: 1) a set of significant social values

(love, attitude to children, family life); 2) standardized samples of behavior (care of children, of their education, physical and intellectual development, family rules and obligations); 3) a system of roles and statuses (statuses and roles of a husband, a wife, a child, a teenager, a mother-in-law, brothers, etc.), used in family life. The other fundamental social institutions are the following: a state, science, mass media, education, upbringing etc.

The process of formation of a social institution is named a "*process of institutionalization*". It acts as a process of replacement of spontaneous, uncontrolled behavior of social groups by expected behavior, regulated by creation (according to norms and rules) of strict status-role structure, socially approved by majority of participants of this social process and providing satisfaction of certain social demands.

The sociological concept "*social organization*" has two meanings. In its *wider* meaning social organization is understood as any organization in a certain society, in its *narrow* meaning this is a social subsystem of an organization, i.e. a system of relations, uniting some set of individuals for achievement of a certain purpose. According to such narrow understanding of social organization its essential features are the following: existence of a certain purpose (purposes); a set of functional statements (statuses) and roles, distribution of these roles according to corresponding rules with orientation to a set goal; rules, regulating relations between roles; formalization of a considerable part of relations and aims, etc.

Under the influence of internal and external factors within the framework of a social system different *social processes* take place - consecutive change of states or movement of elements of a social system, its subsystems.

Social processes are extremely diverse. In sociological research of social processes it is important to distinguish: a) processes *of functioning* of a social system, providing reproduction of its qualitative condition, and processes of *development*, causing transition of a social system into a qualitatively new state; b) *functional* social processes, i.e. processes, providing implementation of main functions of a social object, and *dysfunctional* processes, preventing implementation of these functions.

In the study of a certain individual, sociology pays special attention to an analysis of the process of his/her *socialization*, i.e. familiarization of a person with social roles, functions, norms, cultural values, to formation of corresponding abilities, knowledge, skills, interests, demands, valuable orientations etc. - in other words, all those qualities, which are necessary for this person for his/her active participation in social life, for creative social activity in a certain society. The process of socialization takes place during the whole human life and is determined by pedagogical (i.e. conscious, purposeful) influence on a person in a system of education, upbringing and training, and also by spontaneous influence of a wide range of other factors of a social environment (profession, housing conditions, family and extra-family communication, etc.).

The range of problems of sociological research includes study of *social mobility*. Scientists distinguish two types of social mobility: horizontal and vertical. *Horizontal mobility* is a transition of an individual or a social object from one social position to

another, lying on the same level, i.e. when an individual does not change a social stratum, to which he/she belongs, or own social status (for example, transition of an individual from one family into another, from one religious group into another, and also place of residence change). *Vertical mobility* is connected with transition of an individual or a social object from one social stratum into another, with change of its social status. The examples of such transition are the following: step-up or rise in profession from lower to higher position (professional vertical mobility), substantial improvement of wealthiness (economic vertical mobility), or transition to the other level of power (political vertical mobility).

The special modification of social processes is represented by social movements - religious, youth, political, revolutionary, etc.

Not only a *society* in whole, but also its separate *elements* – a certain social process, a social institution, a social community, a social sphere of life, etc. (for example, job, education, cinema, family) can be a subject of sociological analysis. The main purpose of sociological research of each of these objects represents itself definition of its *place in a general "mechanism" of functioning and development of a social system.*

We introduced some general statements concerning conceptual apparatus, features, purposes and problems of any sociological research. They are basis for definition of a range of problems of sociological analysis of sport.

2.2. Subject of Sociology of Sport

In research of sport and all phenomena connected with it, sociology of sport chooses its special **object** (objective) of research. The *main cognitive purpose of sociological analysis of all phenomena from a sphere of sport is connected with definition of their places in a general "mechanism" of functioning and development of a social system, their social status and social functions, relations with other social phenomena.*

Usage of the above mentioned concepts allows us to concretize the given purpose of sociological research, to define problems connected with it, gives a possibility to distinguish specifically a "sociological" object of research at analysis of phenomena from a sports sphere. Sociological research of phenomena of a sphere of sport implies a series of main directions of their analysis.

A. *Definition and substantiation of social nature of phenomena of a sphere of sport.* A starting point of sociological analysis of these phenomena - substantiation of legitimacy of their treatment as components of the world *of social* phenomena. It is necessary to find out, what is the "nature" of the studied phenomenon: social, biological or socio-biological (biosocial). For the last variant the question about a ratio between social and biological components of this phenomenon surely appears.

The following complex of questions about a social character of corporality of a human being can serve as an illustration of those obstacles, which arise in the course of solution of this problem:

- About a ratio of social and biological in the course of physical and psychophysical development of a human being, and also about spontaneous and deliberate social influence on this development;
- About dependence of health of a person on biological and social factors;
- About social or biological nature of orientation of a person to rivalry, etc.

After a social character of the analyzed phenomenon of a sphere of sport is revealed, it is important to find out, *what it represents itself as a social phenomenon*. The solution of this problem implies usage of such sociological concepts, as "social system (subsystem)", "social structure", "social activity", "social action", "culture", "social institution", "social organization", "social relations", "social process", etc. The system of these concepts (terms) allows comprehensively, fully, and deeply to characterize the social nature of the studied phenomenon of a sphere of sport.

The wide range of different problems is connected with this particular problem of sociology of sport.

So, for example, in the analysis of different phenomena of a sphere of sport specialists discuss a question: is it right to attribute a status *of social activity* to them. This question is one of the main in sociological analysis of not only sport and going in for sport, but also of physical (somatic) culture, and of its separate elements, forms, versions, models – of sport of supreme achievements, "sport for all", physical recreation, etc. In sociological research of a sports sphere assessment of its different phenomena – "sport for all", the Olympic Games, etc. (as special forms and kinds *of social movement*), and also more precise definition of purposes and problems of this movement, its ideals and values is very important.

One more group of problems concerns legitimacy of inclusion of a corporality of a human being and his/her sports activity into a sphere of *culture*. For solution of these problems it is necessary to perform value analysis of a sphere of sport, to conduct a study of functioning and development of a system of values, connected to a human body, to going in for sport, to sports and the Olympic movements, to separate kinds of sport (for example, team sports), etc. Analysis of those values of a human body (or a set, a complex of these values), which serve as a reference point for a social subject (a person, a social group, a society as a whole), define his/her attitude to own body, his/her behavior and even a style (way) of life, allows to distinguish different historical and modern models of physical (somatic) culture. On the basis of studying of values, which different social groups relate to sports activity, different forms of sports culture - pragmatic, sports-humanistic, Olympic, etc. - can be distinguished.

In the specification of social nature of physical training, sport, sports organizations, sports shows (events), the Olympic Movement and other objects of a sphere of sport there is also a problem of their estimation and analysis as *social institutions and organizations*. Determination of *social relation*s *and processes*, connected with them, is also an important task. We mean, for example, mutual relations between sportspersons, a trainer and sportspersons, between sports teams, between sportspersons and non-sportspersons, between different sports organizations, etc. A special issue of the magazine of the International Committee of Sociology of Sport (Sport Organizations,

1994) is devoted to discussion of sociological problems of social organizations in sport. The other social objects of a sports sphere are also studied. So, for example, K. Heinemann and K. Horch in their article "Soziologie der Sportorganisation", this question is considered with reference to voluntary sports organizations of Germany. This publication also contains discussion of problems of a sports club as a social organization, sports show as a social institution, etc. Authors also attempt to analyze the Olympic Movement, national Olympic committees, etc. in the specified aspects.

Study of each object of a sphere of sport from the point of view of *social relations and interactions*, developed between people and organizations, is an important part of sociological analysis. In the study of social communities (for example, sports clubs) it is necessary to analyze social processes, following from interaction of different people, forces, uniting and splitting these communities, changes and transformations in these communities. The analysis of social groups in a sports sphere implies study of their "social configuration" - internal structure of a group, i.e. their hierarchical and functional position, emotional attitude of "actors" to each other and a type of co-operative or competitive samples of actions between them. In this connection there is a series of important questions, for example: 1) how structure, composition of a certain group, forms of communication of its members, degree of cooperation and solidarity, and also presence of conflicts influences achievements of this group and efficiency of team work, i.e. how all these factors influence success of this group in sport; 2) how sports achievements influence group structure, position and mutual relations of individuals in the group; 3) how structure of management and decision-making influences sports achievements and mutual relations in the group. Mutual relations between sportspersons, a trainer and sportspersons, between sports teams, between sportspersons and non-sportspersons, etc. are subjects of social analysis.

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Biographical Sketch

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