

## INTEGRATION INTO SOCIAL GROUP AS DIMENSION OF SOCIALIZATION

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**ABSTRACT.** The dimension of socialization consists in learning the group rules, in integration and membership in that group. European research underlines that ethnical minorities are less integrated comparing with the majority, both in the labour market or education. Sport has a great impact in the socialization process. According to some authors, the issue of developing a moral judgement using sport has been already raised, since the sport has a different influence upon the individuals and their groups. We should not forget that sometimes sport generates a mass behaviour. When irrational manifestation replaces reasoning, it can lead to violence.

**Key words:** *Sport, socialization, groups, behaviour*

**REZUMAT.** *Integrarea în grupul social ca dimensiune a socializării.* Dimensiunea socializării este de învățare a regulilor grupului, de integrare și dobândire a apartenenței la acel grup. Cercetarea europeană subliniază faptul că minoritățile etnice nu prea sunt integrate, față de cei majoritari, pe piața muncii sau în educație. Sportul are un foarte mare impact în procesul de socializare. Potrivit unor autori se ridică problema dezvoltării unei judecăți morale cu ajutorul sportului, acesta influențând diferit indivizii și grupurile acestora. Nu poate fi neglijat faptul că sportul uneori dă naștere la situații de masă, când rațiunea este schimbată cu manifestări iraționale, ducând la acte de violență.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Sport, socializare, grupuri, comportament.*

### Introduction

One dimension of socialization, either socialization on younger age or secondary socialization or even considering the process organization dimension is to learn the group rules and to integrate and acquire the sense of belonging to

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the group. The year of 2004 was the “European Year of Education through Sport”, and one of its main objective was to promote multicultural understanding and integration through sport. A report presented by Amara et al (2004) shows that 20 countries of the European Union are involved in this type of projects.

On European level, the research revealed that ethnical minorities are less integrated in social life domains as the labour market and educational system, than the majority of population (Gowricharn, 2002). One representative example is Norway, which at an unemployment rate of 1,8 % has at the same time a four times bigger unemployment rate in ethnic minorities (Walseth, 2006). According to the same author, the immigrant’s level of education is less than the majority of population, although significant differences between the first generation of immigrants and their descendants are observed. These are the signs of a failed socialization, an inability to adapt to the values, standards and life style of the social group.

In order to study the level of integration into the majority group, Walseth (2006) based its assumptions on macro social indicators, on stories of a subjective experiences narrated by the target group studied. This type of approach can be applied in this research, based on the attempt to understand the subjective feeling of what integration means by recording personal experiences and the meanings attached to these experiences.

Bernard Enjolras, another author concerned with this field of study, portrayed two different bases related to group affiliation: normative behaviour and expressivity.

Normative behaviour as principle of group affiliation supposes a relationship between the individual and community which arises from the desire to be part of a set of practices, norms and values as defined by collective. In Bernard Enjolras’s opinion, expressivity refers to the relationship between an individual and community created as a result of a sense of identity confirmation given by the involvement in the group’s activities.

The relationship between sport and society was long debated. There are two extreme points of view:

The idealistic point of view, which considers sport as a free activity, voluntarily made, separated from the society

The mechanistic, Marxist point of view, which sustains the sport should be an ideological mirror of the prevailing interests in the current society.

As a social phenomenon, sport should always be understood and explained taking into consideration the historical, political, economic, social and cultural context. Sport ideologies, norms and values always represent to a certain extent the expression of work division, knowledge and power within society. However, the

ideas and norms should be refined and modelled in different social environment – such as family, work team, sport team. Within this process, they acquire certain independence, an inner particular dynamics.

Within each social field, at some point there are some critical moments, conflicts and battles for ideas and governing social practices, between individuals and interest groups. It is often obvious that some people defend the existing order against critics and innovative people. Thus, the prevailing culture in sport is the result of the battle between different social groups. (Culeva, Pătru, 2000).

Sport holds a great potential for socialization process. Sport is associated with certain values, such as tenacity, perseverance and reasoning, implied by the attendance to systematic trainings for long periods of time in order to achieve a pre-established goal. Furthermore, sport means the acceptance of competition as a fundamental value for the social group, adhering to the rules and self-discipline. Culeva et al (2000) consider that „theoretically, sport is an ideal activity for encouraging social behavior”.

Some authors raise the issue of developing the moral judgment by means of sport, but they underline that nevertheless the results are contradictory in what concerns this aspect. We noticed the fact that the sport environment exerts in different ways the moral issues, depending on the individuals and their affiliation groups. Although in relation to sport we have already launched this idea of personal development in advantageous ways, including the decrease of delinquency in young athletes, we cannot disregard the fact that the sport phenomenon give raise to group situations, such as “the club culture”, when reasoning is replaced by an irrational mass comportment, which often leads to violence.

Florica Popa brought under discussion the less pleasant part of the sport phenomenon: „Often, the sport organizations face several negative aspects which cast a shadow over the high performance sport, athletes and the countries they represent, and which is even worse these negative aspects overshadow the noble principles of Olympism. Unfortunately, unsocial influences such as discrimination, xenophobia or toxic influences as drugs and doping, violence and lately the ever-growing terrorism occur not only in everyday life but in high performance sport” (Popa, 2005).

Consequently, sometimes sport can lead to deviant behaviors, avoidance of rules for gain, actions which are then transferred to everyday life. Doping has negative impact both on health and fair-play. Use of narcotics and doping substances threaten youths’ health, making young people less prone to socialization, and the presence of verbal and physical violence inside or outside the sport environment harms competition, athletes, trainers, sport leaders and fans. In the experts’ opinion, one possibility to diminish these effects is an intense and constant campaign for promoting moral values of the sport and Olympic principles, addressed to young people, principles that should be applied by all sport enthusiasts.

## Conclusions

As a result, sport environment exerts a different influence upon the moral issues, depending on individuals and their affiliation groups. These influences can be both positive and negative. People who perform well in sport teams, seem to perform well in the society, as well.

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