

Problems and challenges of modern sports

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Abstract:

The purpose of the research: Identify and analyze the main problems and contradictions of modern sports.

Material: In this study the research was conducted on different levels. Methods of empirical level: political situation, news of the anti-doping scandal and manifestation of sports problems in news publications were monitored; students of Plekhanov Russian University of Economics were interviewed; comparisons of different situations in sports were made and on their basis the main problems were identified.

Results: In the conditions of such geopolitical tension, economic instability and changing moral foundations sport acquires a different role. First of all, it is about the increasing role of sport, sports diplomacy in the process of establishing peace, mutual understanding, smoothing of international tension and establishing interstate contacts. In the practice of international sports and the Olympic movement there are many examples of how sports became an instrument for forming a positive image of the country in the international arena establishing relations between the conflicting states. Sports competitions are not able to solve all the world problems and cope with all the difficulties but the gradual overcoming of these problems is one of the main tasks.

Conclusions: Suggested solutions will not fundamentally help to fully escape such problems as racism or the impact of politics on different aspects of life but will help greatly to guide the sport in the direction of honest competitions.

Key words: modern sport, problems, politics, doping racism.

Introduction

Sport is an integral part of the social structure and is to some extent present in the life of every person. This is the reason for the importance of the development prospects of modern sports. Sport has great potential for impact on health and physical development, on the spiritual world and human culture, on moral principles and aesthetic tastes. However, practice has shown that these opportunities can be realized both through humanistic values and on an inhuman basis for mercenary or political purposes. So, it becomes necessary to answer questions about social conditions that facilitate or impede the realization of humanistic functions; trends of development of modern sports; the most important problems of the sports industry for society. All these and other questions require theoretical research and analysis. The topic is also politically relevant, since international sport has been and remains the arena for meeting of the political ambitions of states.

The purpose of the research: Identify and analyze the main problems and contradictions of modern sports. Consider the influence of external factors, such as globalization, geopolitical and economic situation, morality and compliance, on the modern sports industry from different perspectives.

Material and methods

In this study the research was conducted on different levels. Methods of empirical level: political situation, news of the anti-doping scandal and manifestation of sports problems in news publications were monitored; students of Plekhanov Russian University of Economics were interviewed; comparisons of different situations in sports were made and on their basis the main problems were identified. Methods of experimental-theoretical level: data analysis was carried out; such methods as historical and syntheses ones were used that allowed to collect the necessary data, identify and systematize problems in sports; the data connections were also determined by means of correlation analysis. Methods of theoretical level: study and generalization of facts and events was conducted; logical study of the facts gathered, which helped to identify the most important problems, was made; developed judgments and conclusions helped to find solutions to these problems.

Results

The most acute problems of modern sport were identified. These challenges were considered from different positions. After conducting the analysis of the identified problems conclusions were made and the most suitable solution was found. The concepts of “sport” and “sports competitions” originated in ancient times. With each era sport developed and diversified, new sports and legal settlements appeared in every country. At the same time with the development of sports new problems and challenges appeared. In the 21-st century in the era of globalization and political instability modern sport is experiencing new challenges.

In the conditions of such geopolitical tension, economic instability and changing moral foundations sport acquires a different role. First of all, it is about the increasing role of sport, sports diplomacy in the process of establishing peace, mutual understanding, smoothing of international tension and establishing interstate contacts. In the practice of international sports and the Olympic movement there are many examples of how sports became an instrument for forming a positive image of the country in the international arena establishing relations between the conflicting states. Sports competitions are not able to solve all the world problems and cope with all the difficulties but the gradual overcoming of these problems is one of the main tasks.

Challenges of modern sports also excite the student movement. To identify the direction of further research a survey among students of the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics was conducted. The sample size was 120 people. The results of the survey are shown in the diagram below (fig. 1).

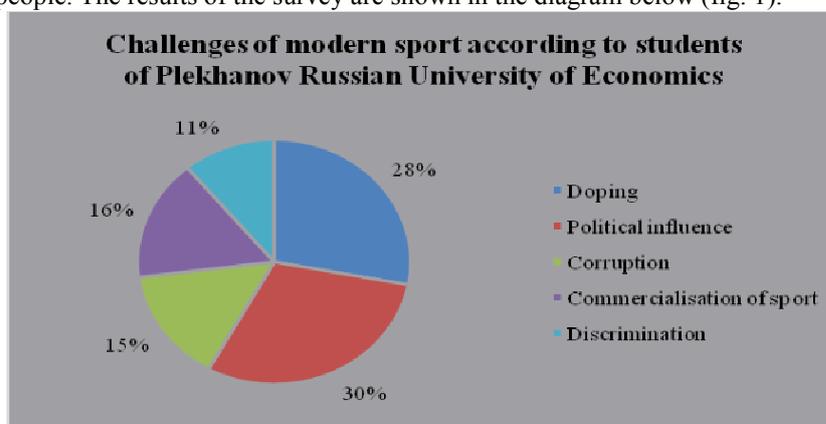


Figure 1. - challenges of modern sport according to students of Plekhanov Russian University of Economics

One of the problems of modern sports is the use of doping.

In professional sports doping refers to different medicines and medical manipulations that somehow expand the limits of the body’s capabilities and are applied precisely in order to improve the athletic performance. For example, they help build muscle mass, increase movement speed and endurance. Such drugs and methods are added to the stop list by the World Anti-Doping Agency (hereinafter WADA). It is important to understand that WADA list is not only about doping, but in general about prohibited substances. Therefore, there are also drugs and methods that cannot be considered doping. For example, those that help to hide the signs of doping, or simply substances that are unsafe for athletes during performances.¹

According to WADA report of 2017, in 65% of cases the use of doping was has caused the positive tests results among sportsmen. More detailed statistics are presented below (fig. 2).²

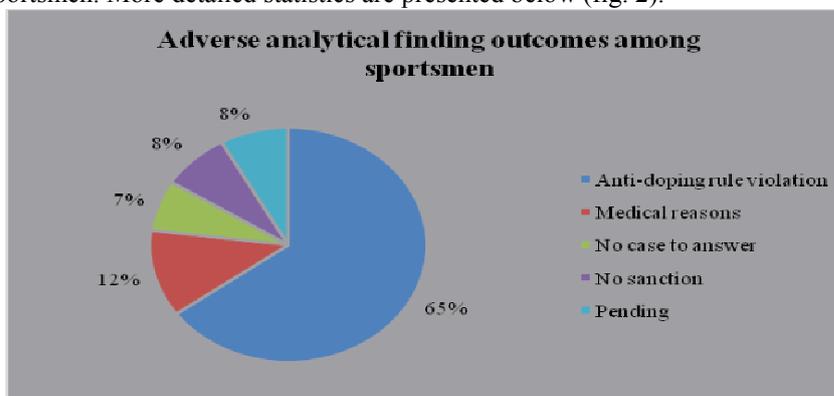


Figure 2. – adverse analytical finding outcomes among sportsmen

¹ What is doping and how does it work? [Electronic resource] // Meduza: online media, 2016. URL: <https://meduza.io/cards/chto-takoe-doping-i-kak-on-rabotaet> (reference date: 30.04.2018)

² Anti-doping rule violations report [Electronic resource] // World Anti-Doping Agency, 2015. – Electron., Data. – Access: <https://www.wada-ama.org/> (reference date: 11.05.2018)

This problem has existed in sport for a long time but only recently the whole world has begun to discuss doping as one of the main problems of modern sports.

As for different kinds of sport the highest indicator of positive cases of doping use belongs to one of the most popular areas of the Summer Olympic Games – athletics. In the graph (fig. 3) below there is data for the total number of doping cases in the most popular sports in the period 2000 – 2015.³

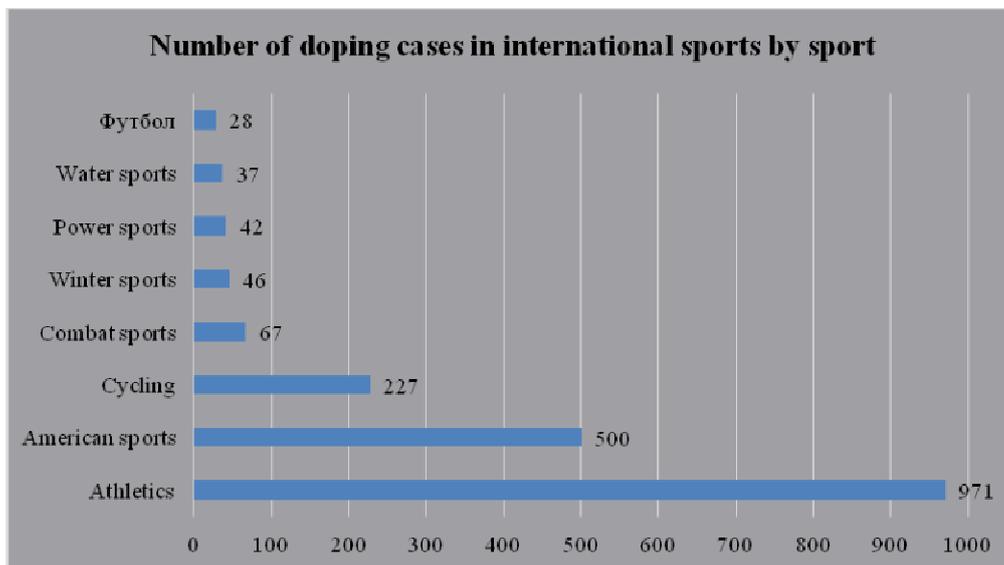


Figure 3. – number of doping cases in international sports by sport

Violations of the doping policy in sports in our opinion is the most severe case as it undermines the basis of sport – fair competition. The solution of this problem will be a more violent policy regarding offenses of the rules on doping. In particular, Russia now has juridical responsibility for the case of a positive doping test.

Another global problem is the impact of politics on sports. The influence of politics on modern sports has become another problem that the sports industry faced in the 21-st century. Sport is such a sphere in which each country tries to show its influence and sustainable development.

The impact of politics on sports can be both positive and negative. No wonder we all know the famous tagline “O sport, you are peace!” because competitions often mitigated the political situation, showing that cooperation can be beneficial. The original mission of sports is precisely aimed at uniting people. But everything has changed in our time. Globalization does not stand still, we are now integrated with other societies, we can easily find any information, follow everything online. Globalization has a positive and negative impact simultaneously. We become more educated and tolerant. But on the other hand, developed countries are trying to find a profit for themselves. The process of globalization is accompanied by an intensification of competition, both economic and political, which often turns into confrontation and international conflicts using both information and power methods of struggle. To some extent, sport has lost its educational character but it has acquired another one – modern sport has become an instrument of pressure.

The negative influence of politics on sport can be traced lately more clearly. Now this is not only a confrontation between international coalitions or political views, social institutions are increasingly being used. In sport IOC and WADA can be highlighted. So, in the activities of the IOC based on the Olympic Charter and the principles of peaceful coexistence it is possible to find out a number of areas related to “sports diplomacy”, the communication and integration role of sport.⁴

And if initially IOC mission was to eliminate instability in the world with the help of sport, overcome national strife, create equal conditions for the development of people despite their race or confession, work in social spheres, disarmament, solve environmental and demographic problems. Now the influence of the committee has acquired a more political nature aimed at acting in the interest of Western countries.⁵

International competitions have always become a platform where countries show not only their superiority expressed in the number of awards, medals and overall statistics of the team but also economic development, development of infrastructure and services in the country in which the competition is held.

In the conditions of world globalization, the initial world orientations of the competitions recede into the background while the interests of the developed countries come first. This is expressed as a fundamental

3 Number of doping cases in international sports by sport 2000 – 2015 yy. [Electronic resource] // Statista: research agency, 2010. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/214837/number-of-doping-cases-worldwide-by-sport/> (reference date: 11.05.2018)

4 Alekseev, S.V. International sports law: textbook / ed. P.V. Krashenninnikov. – M.: UNITY-DANA, 2012, P. 45

5 Stafeev, D.V. International sports movement in the context of global problems of mankind / D.V. Stafeev // Digest of Volgograd State University, 2015, № 1 (31), P. 92-97

inequality: the contradictions are growing both between countries and national sports organizations and the role of supranational organizations, including sports ones, institutions dictating the rules of the game is growing. It is also worth mentioning the anti-doping campaign carried out by Western countries against Russian athletes and the government as a whole. The removal of the athletes from participation in competitions, cancellation of international competitions on the territory of the Russian Federation, restriction of the symbolism in the Olympics is only a small part of the sanctions that have affected athletes. Such restrictive measures are not always supported by real facts. Sometimes the data is presented in a favorable for one of the parties' position which only strengthens the political confrontation.

Thus, according to WADA report on violations of the anti-doping rules for 2014 (table 1) the teams from Russia recorded the largest number of precedents and confirmed cases of doping. This fact was replicated by the media and is still widely discussed. However, if we compare relative indicators instead of absolute ones, namely the percentage of recorded cases of doping use to the total number of all tested athletes, the picture will change dramatically.

Table 1
Adverse analytical findings outcomes by country⁶

Country	Total samples	Adverse analytical finding	Adverse analytical finding, %
Russia	12556	114	0,908
France	7434	99	1,332
India	4340	99	2,281
Mexico	1947	67	3,441
Turkey	2392	65	2,717
Sweden	3395	55	1,62
South Africa	1854	55	2,967
South Korea	3071	52	1,693
USA	7167	51	0,712
China	13180	48	0,364

The solution to this problem is obvious to us: we must clearly distinguish between politics and sports. Athletes who have devoted their lives to this cause should not be influenced by others and should be given equal chances to participate in open and fair competitions. And international sports organizations should remember the main goals of sport as the phrase "Oh sport, are you peace?" now is perceived only in a question form.

No less urgent today is the manifestation of racism both in the arena of sports competitions and beyond. It is generally accepted that sport does not know the difference between race, gender or religion. Sports competitions have always been aimed not only at healthy competition between athletes but also at establishing more favorable relations between athletes from different countries at blurring borders and cultural diversity which allowed people, even viewers, to learn more about other countries. That is sports were not only competitive but also educational which often allowed to solve many political problems.

The problem of discrimination and racism may seem somewhat exaggerated. For example, sports teams of the United States and the European Union have a diverse composition and are represented by athletes with different skin colors, different religions and different political views.⁷

Sport, like any other area associated with social interaction, is not devoid of the human factor and therefore is subject to the same problems as other spheres. The world of sport is one of the brightest indicators of racism in Europe.

The graph of the so-called "racism index" (fig. 4) demonstrates how deep the negative perception of the negroid race has taken root in Europeans. The data of Project Implicit, which reveals the implicit attitude of people to various objects and phenomena during the period of 2002 – 2015, was used. The higher the absolute value of the index, the higher the level of xenophobia in the country.⁸

6 Anti-doping rule violations report [Electronic resource] // World Anti-Doping Agency, 2014. – Electron., Data. – Access: <https://www.wada-ama.org/> (reference date: 11.05.2018)

7 Kolobaev, D.V. Problems of modern sports / D.V. Kolobaev // M.: Observer, 2009, № 9

8 What white Europeans associate with race [Electronic resource] // The Conversation: analytical agency, 2017. URL: <http://theconversation.com/this-map-shows-what-white-europeans-associate-with-race-and-it-makes-for-uncomfortable-reading-76661> (reference date: 11.05.018)

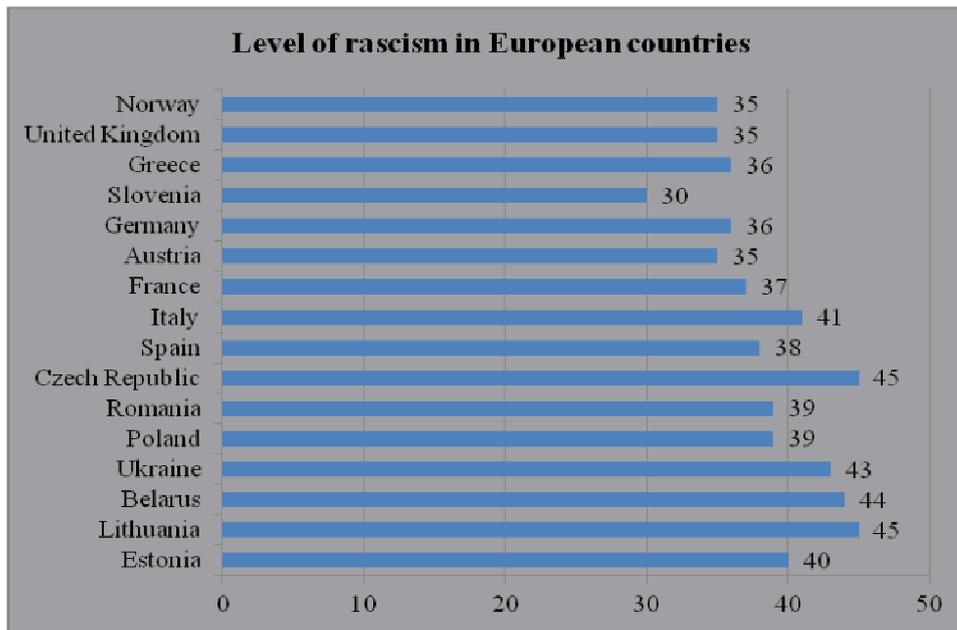


Figure 4. – level of racism in European countries

Analysis of the results of the study allows to conclude that there is such a phenomenon as unconscious racism. In each of the countries of Europe people with dark skin color are more often associated with such concepts as “bad” and “evil”, rather than “good” and “kind”. Also, we cannot skip the fact of positive correlation coefficient for Eastern Europe, which indicates a connection between the index value and the geographic location of the respondents. So, the countries of Eastern Europe received the highest scores of “bias” while the countries of Western and Northern Europe show a fairly high level of tolerance.

The last problem on the account, but not on the importance, – lack of the legislative and standardized base concerning some aspects in sports, especially in the sphere of transfer of athletes. In each of the modern sports there are domestic and international acts regulating the transfer process.

In addition to the lack of standardized practices in the field of athletes’ transfer, there is another no less important problem – increasing value of the transactions costs. Athletes became a source of money. Competitions have ceased to be of a competitive nature but rather have become like an auction: for which athlete are the teams willing to give away more money?

The chart (fig. 5) shows data on the most expensive transfer transactions of sportsmen. The most expensive transfer in history was the transfer of football player Neymar to the French football club. The amount of the transaction, namely 222 million euros, is comparable to the GDP of a small country.⁹

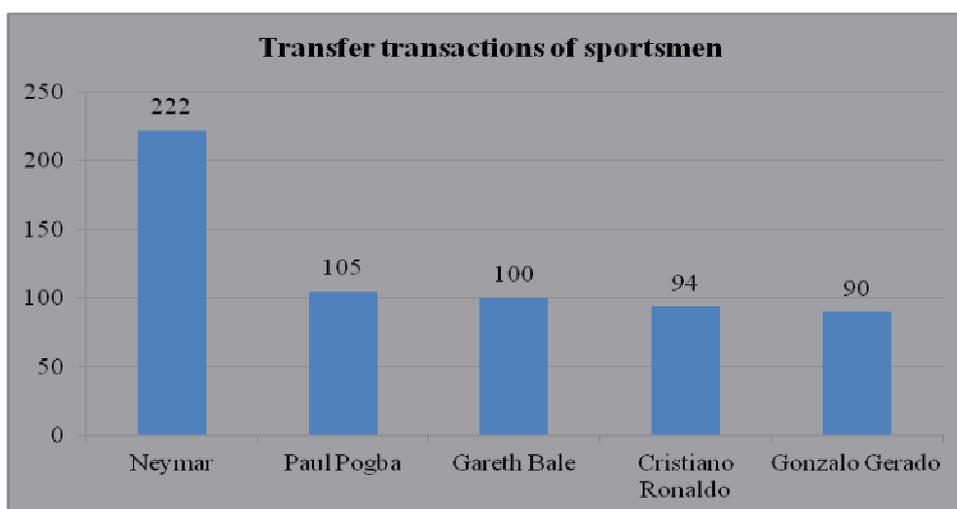


Figure 5. – transfer transactions of sportsmen in million euros

9 10 most expensive transfers in the history of football [Electronic resource] // Komsomolskaya Pravda: online media, 2017. URL: <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26713/3739163/> (reference date: 11.05.2018)

Conclusions

Based on the research the main problems and challenges of modern sport were identified. The existence of these problems shows the lack of legal and moral regulation in sports. Suggested solutions will not fundamentally help to fully escape such problems as racism or the impact of politics on different aspects of life but will help greatly to guide the sport in the direction of honest competitions. With the further development of society and technologies new challenges and problems will appear in sports however it will always be possible to find an appropriate solution for any problem.

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