

REVIEWS

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“Sport, social unity and conflict” Sociology of sport conference in Dublin

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Abstract

Aim. The aim of the material is to present a report and review from the EASS Conference: “*Sport, social unit and conflict*” – XII European Association for Sociology of Sport Conference held on 10-13th June 2015 in Dublin, Ireland.

Method. The methods used were participant observation and an analysis of the discourse. It is a type of case study of scientific events, of one of the periodically organized conferences in one of the international scientific societies.

Results. A programme of the event was presented and its content was reviewed, with evaluation of at the organisational and scientific level. The level was good.

Conclusions. Participants were of the opinion that the conference was a valuable form of well-understood scientific tourism. Decisions concerning the future activity of EASS were also made during the event.

Introduction

The aim of the material is to present a report and review from the EASS Conference: “*Sport, social unit and conflict*” – XII European Association for Sociology of Sport Conference held on 10-13th June 2015 in Dublin, Ireland.

The methods were the participant observation and an analysis of the discourse [Krippendorf 2004]. It is a type of case study of scientific events, which is of one of the periodically organized Conference in one of the international scientific societies. This can be seen from the perspective of the concept of scientific tourism [Cynarski, Duricek 2014].

The European Association for Sociology of Sport (EASS) was established in Vienna in 2001, created by people from Central Europe. In 2002, the first European Association for Sociology of Sport conference was held in Vienna. There were further conferences and congresses were organized and described by sport sociologists of [cf. Obodynski 2009; Cynarski, Raimondo 2010; Obodynski, Cynarski 2011; EASS 2015].

At present there is only one representative from Central and Eastern Europe, Prof. W. J. Cynarski from the University of Rzeszow (Poland), on the Board of the EASS But there will be new fresh elections next year, and

the 14th EASS Conference will take place in 2017, probably in Prague. The EASS members generally come from Europe, but this is not always the case.

Conference Programme

The XII EASS Conference entitled “*Sport, social unit and conflict*” took place in the Irish capital on 10-13th June 2015 in the Royal College of Surgeons, near the headquarters of Trinity College Dublin. An EASS Board Meeting was the first event, where the operation of the association was discussed.

The formal registration of participants in the large College Hall auditorium was followed by the Opening Ceremony. Prof. Jeroen Scheerder (Belgium), president of the EASS formally opened the conference. Participants gathered in the auditorium and the first speaker, Prof. Anthony King (University of Exeter, UK) presented an introductory keynote lecture: “Sport, war, sacrifice”. Certain conclusions intended by the author were controversial. He concluded that expressing political rivalries, sport has often been connected to war itself. Taking the correlation between sport and violence as a starting point, this lecture considered the changing relationship between

sport and war over the last one hundred years. It seems to be a simplification. A short discussion ensued. Researchers and representatives of sports sciences and humanities from many countries attended.

The second day began with a lecture of by Prof. Robert Sassatelli (University of Milan, Italy). It concerned therapeutic active leisure, sport for all, and the politics of fitness. We all agreed that exercise can be considered as a therapeutic factor, which also serves recreational activity and health.

Many interesting parallel sessions also took place during the event. Jan Haut, Ph.D. (Germany) led the session “Media I”. It included Nicolas Delorme (France) – the visibility of female athletes in at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games; B. Braumueller (Germany) – connections between social media and sporting activities, A. Tiessen-Raaphorst (The Netherlands) – media use and Dutch health behaviour; Peter Laszlo, Ph.D. (Romania) – (on) the issues and problems in soccer discourses; N. Patsantaras (Greece) – awakening sport memories for reconstructing Greekness.

After a coffee break there was a discussion in the session “Violence I” under the direction of N. Delorme (France). J. Swallow (UK) applied a feminist phenomenological framework to describe domestic violence surrounding sporting events. Two authors from the Netherlands presented the results of their research on the behaviour of football fans (S. Vertigans) and policies against violence (R. Pronk).

In the evening, the council of the Editorial Board of the EJSS – “European Journal for Sport and Society” had a formal meeting. The meeting was chaired by the chief editor, Prof. Ansgar Thiel (Germany). Decisions were taken concerning the further development of the journal.

After that, there was a small symposium on a European project about monitoring physical activity

among Europeans. The coordinators of the project were J. Sheerder (Leuven, Belgium) and Remco Hoekman (Utrecht, The Netherlands). The meeting of a group which concerned design of the MEASURE included: 1) discussion of the publication of current research; 2) discussion on the results as yet unposted from several countries; 3) arrangements for further action.

The third day started with a session under the direction of Prof. H. Jakubowska (Poland) titled “Media II”. Prof. I. Wawrzyczek (Poland) presented an interesting development on the coverage by the British press, of the Racist and neo-Nazi scare in Euro 2012. The racist behaviour was only reported in British newspapers, and practically not at all in Poland. Additionally, researchers from the USA: S. Dunne and J. Rightler discussed the issue of the image of black athletes in the media in the NBA and American football. Dr P. Tchir from the USA described the power of British football, and A. J. O’Dea (Ireland) compared British and Irish sporting literature. Dr Z. Mazur (Poland) discussed “The discourse of Polish-Irish cultural similarity in the Irish Press reporting of Euro 2012”, pointing to the friendly tone of coverage.

Particular attention should be paid to the session led by M. Waardenburg, with four papers: M. Pinheiro (Portugal) – parents’ influence on children’s sports participation; J. Hoyer-Kruse (Denmark) – exercise in natural settings; K. Alexandris (Greece) – healthy lifestyle and sport for all in Greece and N. Kuijsters (Ireland) – involvement in sport clubs in the Netherlands. There were two very interesting sessions after lunch: “Social Theory” and “Conflict II”. Renan Petersen-Wagner (UK) created a fashionable critical discourse between new and old traditions in relation to the perception of football by fans. The final Session took place with presentations by three researchers from Finland: Dr A. Nevala – the history of sports clubs; M. Simula and Prof. Hannu Itkonen



Photo 1. Participants at the “Lifestyle sports” session [courtesy of H. Ebishima].

– sport clubs in the local context. In this session, there were two further valuable papers: Paul Walsh (India) – rugby in Indian education, and G. Nujeidat (Israel) – sport track for social empowerment in divided societies.

On the fourth day the "Lifestyle sports" session Chaired by Prof. W. J. Cynarski (Rzeszow, Poland) started. Two valuable papers should be mentioned here: Prof. H. Ebishima (Japan) – "Pathway from bicycle commuter to serious cyclist: Bicycle commuters in Japan", and "Managing alternative sports. New organisational spaces for the diffusion of Italian parkour" by Prof. Davide Sterchele (UK) and his Italian co-authors. Ebishima presented the issue of "bicycle – sports regulation" in Tokyo the recreational and social groups, and competitive rivalry. Sterchele discussed the social dimension of groups practising parkour [photo 1].

After a coffee break the presentation to the winner of the EASS Young Researcher Award 2015 headed by Prof. Sterchele was held. The award was won by a Korean student M. Tak (University of Otago, New Zealand). He delivered his prize-winning paper: *The politics of countermeasures against match-fixing in sport: A political sociology approach to policy instruments*.

Professor R. Collins (University of Pennsylvania, USA) was the third keynote speaker at this conference. He presented his lecture entitled *Micro-sociology of sport – Interaction rituals of solidarity, emotional energy, and emotional domination*. While the sociology of sport is a theory on a meso scale [Krawczyk 1995], Collins included all the information with reference to the structures of a micro scale, entering at the same time into the area of social psychology. Concepts from the sociology of culture, from cultural anthropology and from psychology (violence, emotional energy) were used, but this multi-dimensional approach seems to be necessary.

The social activities programme included a selection: Option 1: Walking Tour, Dublin City Centre; Option 2: Hiking in Glendalough; Option 3: Mountain Biking. For first time visitors to Dublin the most interesting was option 1, visiting the city centre [cf. Joyce 1993]. The crowning achievement of the conference was a conference dinner in Smock Alley Theatre.

Conclusions

From the total number of 252 submitted abstracts, 130 presentations qualified. In summary, the conference was attended by 165 people from 28 countries. One can say that it was a success for both the organizers and participants. Participants were of the opinion that conference was a valuable form of well-understood scientific tourism [Cynarski, Duricek 2014], travel for cognitive and self-realization reasons.

The next conference will be held in Copenhagen in May 2016. It is entitled: "Sport in the City: Mobility,

Urbanity and Social Change". The election of members to new terms of office on the Board of the EASS will also take place at the same time.

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„Sport, społeczna zgoda i konflikt”. Socjologia sportu w Dublinie

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia, kultura sportowa, EASS, konferencja

Abstrakt

Problem i cel. Celem opracowania jest przedstawienia komunikatu i recenzji z Konferencji EASS: "Sport, social unit and conflict" - XII European Association for Sociology of Sport Conference odbytej w dniach 10-13 VI 2015 w Dublinie, Irlandia. Metoda. Zastosowano metody jakościowe: obserwacji uczestniczącej oraz analizy dyskursu. Jest to także swego rodzaju studium przypadku imprezy naukowej, jaką jest jedna z cyklicznie organizowanych konferencji jednego z międzynarodowych towarzystw naukowych.

Wyniki. Został przedstawiony program wskazanego wydarzenia i recenzja konferencyjnych treści, z oceną poziomu organizacyjnego i naukowego. Ten poziom był dobry.

Wnioski. W opinii uczestników konferencja była wartościową postacią dobrze rozumianej turystyki naukowej. Dokonano też ustaleń dotyczących dalszych działań EASS.