

REVIEW ARTICLES

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Free time, tourism and recreation: some sociological reflections

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Abstract

Background and Aim. Reading the book by Wojciech J. Cynarski *Czas wolny, turystyka i rekreacja w perspektywie socjologicznej* (in English, *Free time, tourism and recreation from the perspective of sociology*) (2017) inspired us to analyse its content by referencing works published by adherents of a range of sociological subdisciplines, and other source materials.

Methods. The methodology of this article is based on a review of the subject literature and an analysis of texts available in the media discourse.

Results and Conclusion. Cynarski stresses the view that the universal needs of human nature include a rejection of authority and totalitarianism, and the unbridled desire to own and consume, which is a characteristic of capitalism. This forms part of the contemporary critical theory that expands upon the Frankfurt school of thought. Millions of people worldwide take part in sporting events, religious events and pilgrimages that are important for tourism, and all of which are neo-tribal in their nature. The book uses the term “touristification” in the context of sports fans. Cynarski considers sport events to be rituals and as para-religious phenomena. He also presents his concept of postmodern woman, and compares three standard approaches to corporeality. Cynarski describes the current predominant postmodern culture as a consumption culture, where the ascetic ethic of work is replaced with the hedonistic ethic of consumption and the use of goods and services is required to achieve fulfilment in life. The radical relativism of postmodernism puts it in opposition the religious interpretations of reality. Thus, Cynarski’s decision to compare the three conflicting standards is both understandable and interesting. The book criticises the liberal postmodern school of thought concerning the human body and physical culture. Cynarski also notes and provides examples of, the effect of popular ideologies on the theories that are currently dominant in the sociology of physical culture. We may observe that the standards of the postmodern and consumption culture are being enforced. Any attempts at influencing, enforcing or dominating in the fields of science or in any other sphere of human activity should be rejected, and a space for the free exchange of opinions should always exist.

Introduction

Reading the book by Wojciech J. Cynarski *Free time, tourism and recreation: sociological reflections* (2017) inspired us to analyse its content by referencing works published by the representatives of a range of sociological subdisciplines, and other source materials. In terms of the methodology, this article is based on a review of the subject literature and consists of an analysis of texts available in the media discourse.

Cynarski proposes that the ‘new general sociological theory’ is based on a social ethic that is understood as a continuation of *Frommism* or an implementation of the Catholic *personalism* [Cynarski 2017: 33]. In the context of Fromm’s ‘humanist social philosophy’ and his ‘project of a new humanity and society’, Cynarski underlines that

the universal needs of human nature (where satisfying those needs determines the health of the individual and the society alike) include a rejection of authority, totalitarianism, materialism and the unbridled desire to own and consume, which is a characteristic of capitalism [Cynarski 2017: 52-53]. This forms a part of contemporary critical theory that expands upon the Frankfurt school of thought. According to the main representative of contemporary critical theory, Jurgen Habermas, deadly rationalisation, capitalist commercialisation and the alluring consumption of Western societies and the modern world, as a whole lead, to social pathology [Elliott 2011: 194-214]. Alan Aldridge provided an excellent description of the concept of ‘immanent criticism’ (which originated from the Frankfurt school of thought) in capitalism, or the perception of the market ‘a realisation of

Renaissance rationalism' (translated from the Polish). The criticism is based on certain undesirable phenomena that occur in social life, such as atomisation, dehumanisation, exploitation, social control, pseudo-individualisation, commodity fetishism, diachronic standardisation and consumerism [Aldridge 2006: 103-106].

Contemporary neo-tribes

The book uses the term *neo-tribes*, which was coined by Michel Maffesoli [Cynarski 2017: 122; Maffesoli 1996]. Among the representatives of communities that are neo-tribal in character, Cynarski lists sports fans [Cynarski 2017: 62], who are also the consumers of sporting events [Lenartowicz 2011, 2012; Mehus 2005]. Sports fans constitute an extremely interesting social collective, and as such they could have been addressed to a somewhat greater extent in the book. For instance, sports fans are a part of the increasingly popular area of sociological research (as well as being included in studies in the fields of economics, political science and anthropology) that is dedicated to grand sporting events [Wloch 2016; Wloch 2017: 244]. For example, Martin Muller has proposed analysing mass sports events from the perspective of their attractiveness to visitors. Cynarski's book also mentions this subject [Cynarski 2017: 215-216]. Interestingly, the events that Muller lists (such as the summer Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, the UEFA European Championship and the Universiade) are, with the exception of Expo, sports-only events [Wloch 2017: 243-244; Muller 2015: 628-631]. Renata Wloch underlines the fact that a majority of the studies on tourism and the use of free time analyse the effect of mass sports events on the attractiveness of a particular destination from the perspective of tourism [Wloch 2017: 246; Hiller 1998; Preuss 2007].

It is worth adding that millions of people worldwide take part in many neo-tribal events that are religious in nature, including pilgrimages, which are significant to tourism. For instance, the most important events of this type include the World Youth Day organised by the Roman Catholic Church [Zwolinski 2003: 293-295] or the annual international gatherings of the Taizé Community. Events in Poland include the annual Lednica 2000 Youth Meeting, Przystanek Jezus (in English, the Jesus Station) and the "Jezus na Stadionie" (in English, Jesus on the Stadium) retreats, which have been organised since 2013 at the PGE Narodowy Stadium in Warsaw.

Cheering as a form of post-modern religion

What do sport and religion have in common? A character in the Czech film entitled *Up and Down* says, "There is no

God. That's why I'm a sports fan"¹. Furthermore, Tomasz Sahaj, referring to the well-known statement by Karl Marx, proposed that sport, more so than religion, is the contemporary 'opium of the people.' Some people begin their day by reading sports newspapers, check the match results regularly, anxiously watch the match broadcasts and plan their free time to include taking part in sports events. The most avid fans attend their favourite team's matches, regardless of the rank or location of the match [Sahaj 2012: 29].

Coming back to the subject of neo-tribes, contemporary tribalism [Maffesoli 1996] and the totemic character of fan relics (such as scarves) can be observed in the 'pilgrimages' that take place when fans follow their football teams. For instance, the Polish football clubs Legia Warszawa and Lech Poznan are regularly followed by thousands of faithful 'believers'. This is a unique type of sports tourism that can be referred to as a *sports pilgrimage* or a *sports pseudo-pilgrimage*. Sahaj predicts that there will be an expansive development of this branch of tourist traffic. The first sport and Olympic travel agencies have already emerged, which organise pilgrimages to destinations that, thanks to their wide scope for entertainment, offer fans the opportunity to participate in sports celebrations throughout the entire year. Thus, a modern 'post-tourist', a football consumer or a broadly-defined fan can, for instance, embark on a 'fan safari' to hunt for sports experiences [Sahaj 2009: 157-158].

According to Dominik Antonowicz and Lukasz Wrzesinski, a fandom belongs to the context of an 'invisible religion', which was introduced to the field of social sciences by Thomas Luckmann. An analysis of various fandoms leads to the conclusion that only the forms of religiosity change, whereas the religiosity itself does not. The divine is relocated outside of the traditional ecclesiastical structure, and the religion breaks the institutional boundaries [Antonowicz, Wrzesinski 2009: 115-149]. Sahaj admits that many social facts seem to corroborate the thesis proposed by Antonowicz and Wrzesinski. However, he provides a counter-argument, suggesting that the *flâneur* from Richard Giulianotti's categorisation of fans does not support this perspective. A religious character pertains to the fans of local clubs or national representations, who are also called supporters. For example, football fans, as supporters, identify with their local teams and combine the attributes of both tradition and modernity. The professionalisation and mediatization of sport [Rymarczyk 2011: 115] (the book also mentions 'the mediatization of tourism') [Cynarski 2017: 206] create post-fans. A post-modern form of fans are the *flâneur*, who, in their pursuit of cosmopolitan entertainment, value the results of sports matches and the accompanying emotions more than banners, and try to partake in the winning team's glory. They wear t-shirts displaying the names of the winners of the

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTaB5OHbwz8> [accessed on 19 April 2017].

UEFA Champions League, the FIFA World Cup or the UEFA Euro Cup. Here, the logos and names of clubs on clothes serve the same function as the logos of other global brands, such as Adidas, Nike, Puma or Reebok [Sahaj 2009: 157; Giulianotti 2008].

Different dimensions of touristification

The book expands upon the subject of cheering (currently popular in the sociology of sport) by addressing the social and cultural process of touristification, which is indirectly related to sports fans and leads to the establishment of tourist centres [Cynarski 2017: 63]. The global reach of this interesting process is related to both sport activities and religious worship [Cynarski 2017: 181; Przeclawski 2004: 9]. Cynarski considers sports events to be a particular ritual and para-religious phenomenon that fosters the fans' identification with a club and the building of a group identity. He provides examples that include American and Japanese baseball, and suggests that the ritual of a sports competition satisfies the need for *circenes* and, in a sense, the religious needs [Cynarski 2017: 142].

As far as economics is concerned, touristification may take a religious form. Some countries earn over 30% of their GDP from tourism, although a strong economic dependency on tourism is very dangerous for the country. Even a share of the GDP consisting of several percent makes tourism an important sector of the national economy. Countries with an income from incoming international tourist traffic that significantly affects their economic, social and political stability are referred to as *tourism monocultures*. These include: Macao, Maldives, Seychelles, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba and the British Virgin Islands. Data for 2006 collected by the World Travel and Tourism Council indicated that the share of tourism in the GDP exceeded 5% in as many as 54 countries worldwide. These included: Morocco (10.1%), Tunisia (9.2%), Croatia (9.2%), Egypt (7.9%), New Zealand (7.4%), Spain (6.9%), Portugal (6.4%), Switzerland (6.3%), Austria (6.2%) and Turkey (5.7%). In Poland, the share of the GDP amounted to 2% [Kurek 2007: 412-413].

Unfortunately, terrorist attacks are relatively frequent today. On 26 June 2015, in the Sousse resort in Tunisia, 39 persons died in a terrorist attack, most of whom were British tourists.² As a result of this attack, a state of emergency was introduced in Tunisia, and in a dramatic statement on television President Beji Kaid Essebsi declared that should another attack occur, 'the country [would] fall'³. This is an example of the threat

caused by a system of economic development that is focussed overly or solely on maximising the income from tourism, and which leads to countries becoming dependent on this sector of the economy [Jasinski 2006]. Cynarski's book mentions the aforementioned attack in Tunisia, which caused the number of Polish visitors to drop. Cynarski also mentions Turkey as another good example of a previously popular tourist destination that has been 'contaminated' by terrorism [Cynarski 2017: 130], and many more examples can be given, such as Egypt, France and Great Britain.

Feminism and sport

Cynarski is critical of ideological feminism, although he acknowledges the constructive role of the feminist sociocultural movement. He presents his concept of a postmodern woman as: a woman who is dynamic, active and creative [Cynarski 2017: 72-73]. According to Cynarski, the new cultural model of a dynamic woman should be included in research being undertaken in the areas of sociology and the pedagogics of physical culture, with a special emphasis on far-Eastern martial arts [Cynarski 2017: 85]. Zygmunt Bauman argued that any description of the postmodern world requires postmodern sociology, as postmodern changes cannot be analysed based on the old theories and definitions. Therefore, new theories and definitions should be developed [Bauman 2006, 2007]. The concept of the postmodern woman, as an attempt to reinterpret her new social role, is a part of this challenge. The characteristic features of the postmodern woman are 'an athletic figure, vigour and joy of living, openness to knowledge and to other people, respect for nature, an artistic attitude and a need for spiritual improvement' [Cynarski 2017: 85]. However, the postmodern society is very pluralistic and diverse [Giddens 2004: 95], and postmodernism destroys modernist hierarchies, undermines ideological certitudes and introduces an interpretative ambiguity and self-reflexive pluralism [Elliott 2011: 304].

Cynarski argues that even women who are not fond of fighting may, or should, practise a recreational sport or participate in the physical culture in general. However, due to biological considerations, they should not practise the typical strength-based sports. Furthermore, he states that women excel in those sports disciplines where the participants are judged based on aesthetics, precision, harmony and beauty [Cynarski 2017: 86]. The necessity for practising sport (whether competitively or recreationally) cannot be understated, regardless of gender. However, assumptions about the predispositions of men or women to a given sports discipline or type of physical activity should be made with care. Raewyn Connell warns that it is common to think about manhood, womanhood and the relationships between the genders

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33287978> [accessed on 20 April 2017].

³ <http://fakty.interia.pl/swiat/news-prezydent-ostrze-ga-po-zamachu-tunezja-upadnie,nId,1846855> [accessed on 20 April 2017].

only within the categories of one's own system of gender roles, which prevents one from noticing the richness of gender models in different cultures. Furthermore, most gender systems worldwide favour men and discriminate against women (Connell 2013, p. 9–10). The broadly-defined world of sport is no exception in this regard, and the masculinisation of sports organisations is a good example of this prejudice [Hall et al. 1989; Talbot 2002; Jakubowska 2014; Dziubinski, Organista 2013]. Well-established knowledge and a deep understanding of this issue are necessary in order for these systems to become fair, peaceful and ethical [Connell 2013: 11]. Cynarski's book is part of the discourse that may help in achieving this goal; for instance, he refers to the fictional protagonist of a series of video games, comic books and films, the British archaeologist Lara Croft (Tomb Raider), as the emanation of an ideal postmodern woman [Cynarski 2017: 160, 2001: 180-192].

It is worth mentioning that in Polish, the postmodern society is also called *postmodernistic* or *the postmodernism*. Thus, the term *postmodernity* is connected to the term *postmodernism*, which denotes a popular direction in postmodern thought and art [Rymarczyk 2011: 109-110]. Nonetheless, the definitions of the two terms vary, and the book should have explained the differences between them in greater detail. In short, postmodernity is a feature of postmodernism. But it is worth adding that authors such as Bauman have begun to avoid using *postmodernity*, which they think is an overly-unclear blanket term, in favour of the term *liquid modernity* that accentuates constant movement and uncertainty despite the many attempts at enforcing a modern order onto contemporary societies [Bauman 2006, 2007].

Three models of attitude towards corporeality

The author compares three standard approaches to corporeality. The first approach is consistent with the dominant ideology of a liberal and progressive postmodernity and with ideological feminism. It is also the one that is most popularised by the mass media. The second approach is religious (Christian), and appears less often in the media, except for the Internet. The third approach, self-realisation, is the rarest to appear in the media and is additionally warped by extreme commercialisation [Cynarski 2017: 165-166]. Indeed, the currently widespread postmodern culture is sometimes described as a consumption culture, in which the ascetic ethic of work has been replaced with the hedonistic ethic of consumption, where the use goods and services is required for achieving fulfilment in life. The radical relativism of postmodernism puts it in opposition to religious interpretations of reality [Rymarczyk 2011: 109-110]. Thus, Cynarski's decision to compare the three conflicting standards is both understandable and interesting. From

both normative and pedagogical viewpoints, the author postulates the promotion of a model that combines the second and third approaches [Cynarski 2017: 165-166].

As far as the media are concerned, an important theoretician of postmodernism, Jean Baudrillard, argues that electronic media have had a destructive effect on the relationship between humanity and its past, and are creating an empty, chaotic world. Symbols and images are what shape contemporary social life; thus, our points of reference are not real persons or places, but are images created by the media. Similarly, Baudrillard concludes that life has been absorbed by television [Giddens 2004: 95-96; Baudrillard 2005, 2006].

Criticism of postmodernism

The book is critical towards liberal postmodern – or rather, postmodernist – thought concerning the human body and physical culture, and shares the basic opinions of the aforementioned Jurgen Habermas, one of the most avid critics of postmodernist theory. Habermas is convinced that we should pursue modernity, which he considers as 'an unfinished project' [Habermas 1996]. Giddens adds the fairly critical view that postmodernists are in essence pessimists and defeatists, and suggests that contemporary postmodernist theories are seeming to lose their position in favour of the theory of globalisation, which is the most important theoretical framework for allowing us to understand the changes that are occurring in the 21st century [Giddens 2004: 97].

Cynarski notes and provides examples of the influence of popular ideologies on the dominant theories in such subdisciplines as the sociology of culture, the sociology of sport and the sociology of tourism. He argues that we are dealing with an enforcement of the models of postmodernist and the consumption culture, relativism and homosexuality, and that the left-wing liberal worldview is being identified with the scientific worldview. Consequently, we should support an open exchange of scientific viewpoints that would be free from political or ideological correctness [Cynarski 2017: 101]. Charles Wright Mills underlines the view that sociological studies cannot be limited to the objective of gaining knowledge. A sociologist must be able to set themselves free from their own direct limitations, and thereby see the subject they are researching in a broader context. Mills introduced the term *sociological imagination*, which describes a characteristic feature of sociological thinking [Mills 2007]. Assessing sociological theories is difficult, as a theoretical discourse is more abstract than an empirical one. However, does the lack of a single theoretical standpoint that is universal for the entirety of sociology constitute a drawback for the discipline? No, it does not. On the contrary, a clash between competing standpoints and theories is a sign of the liveliness

of sociological inquiries. In the fields of the humanities and social studies, a diversity of theoretical perspectives prevents dogmatism and stagnation. Furthermore, it is impossible for a single theory to encompass all of the complicated and multilateral aspects of human behaviour. A diversity of theoretical viewpoints stimulates creativity and imagination (which Mills finds to be extremely important) among the researchers that study social life [Giddens 2004: 9]. Bauman warns that the relationship between individual and collective freedom is dangerous to various forms of power or ‘social order’. Consequently, sociology is sometimes accused of ‘political disloyalty’. Indeed, any (liberal or conservative) attempts to influence, enforce or dominating other views in science or the other spheres of human activity should be rejected, and there should always exist a space for free exchanges of opinions, which could be metaphorically called: *the First Amendment to the Constitution of Science*.

Sources

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Czas wolny, turystyka i rekreacja: refleksje socjologiczne

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia, kultura fizyczna, postmodernizm, kibicowanie, nowoplemiona, turystyfikacja, feminizm

Abstrakt

Tło i cel. Lektura książki Wojciecha Cynarskiego *Czas wolny, turystyka i rekreacja w perspektywie socjologicznej* (2017) zainspirowała nas do podjęcia próby analizy jej treści, nawiązując do publikacji przedstawicieli różnych subdyscyplin socjologicznych, a także innych materiałów źródłowych.

Metody. Od strony metodologicznej artykuł opiera się o przegląd literatury przedmiotu i analizę tekstu w dyskursie medialnym.

Wyniki i wnioski. Wśród uniwersalnych potrzeb ludzkiej natury autor książki podkreśla odrzucenie autorytaryzmu, totalitaryzmu czy też właściwej kapitalizmowi niezaspokojonej chęci posiadania i konsumowania, co wpisuje się we współczesną teorię krytyczną, stanowiącą rozwinięcie idei członków szkoły frankfurckiej. Miliony osób na całym świecie uczestniczą w nacechowanych nowoplemiennością i znaczących turystycznie imprezach o charakterze nie tylko sportowym, ale także religijno-pielgrzymkowym. Związana z kibicami jest przywołana w książce turystyfikacja. Autor dostrzega w widowisku sportowym rytuał i zjawisko parareligijne. W książce przedstawiono autorską koncepcję ponowoczesnej kobiety. Autor zestawia ze sobą trzy wzory stosunku do cielesności. Rozpowszechniona współcześnie kultura ponowoczesna opisywana jest jako kultura konsumpcyjna. Ascetyczna etyka pracy zastępowana jest przez hedonistyczną etykę konsumpcji, a korzystanie z towarów i usług jest warunkiem życiowego spełnienia. Radykalny relatywizm postmodernizmu stawia go w opozycji do religijnych interpretacji rzeczywistości. Stąd uzasadnione i ciekawe jest zestawienie przez autora konkurencyjnych wzorów. Książka jest krytyczna wobec liberalnej myśli ponowoczesnej na temat ciała i kultury fizycznej. Autor dostrzega wpływ popularnych ideologii na teorie dominujące współcześnie w socjologii kultury fizycznej, co popiera przykładami. Mamy do czynienia z narzucaniem wzorów kultury postmodernistycznej i konsumpcyjnej. Wszelkie próby wpływania, narzucania bądź dominowania w nauce lub innych sferach ludzkiej aktywności należy odrzucić, przy czym zawsze powinna istnieć przestrzeń nieskrępowanej wymiany myśli.