

Foreword

Integrating migrants through sport: untapped potential

Managing Europe's increasing cultural diversity – rooted in the history of our continent and now amplified by globalisation – has become a priority for Council of Europe member states. In the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, published in May 2008, these states emphatically argued that our common future depends on our ability to foster mutual understanding, while at the same time safeguarding and developing human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Sport is no different in this respect. Played and watched by people from a variety of social backgrounds, it has an educational and socialising effect that makes it an ideal vehicle for intercultural dialogue and social integration. Indeed, when we speak about "integration through sport", there is wide acknowledgement of the positive contribution sport makes to social integration, for ethnic minorities and immigrant communities in particular. This consensus has been highlighted by various opinion polls in Europe and by references in political and institutional discourse. Regular participation in sport is thought, for example, to help young people of immigrant origin to develop key skills and to integrate better into society.

It is important, however, not to take things at face value. Often the only visible evidence of sport's potential to promote integration is the presence of international stars in high-profile, top-level sport, which is not always a true reflection of the situation on the ground. Experience has shown that sport can equally be a setting for extreme nationalism, exclusion and discrimination. In the context of the Council of Europe Convention against Spectator Violence, it has been observed that, unfortunately, racism and intolerance are still rife.

Sport in itself does not necessarily foster tolerance. Nor is it necessarily a factor in social mixing and integration. Harnessing this political potential requires first and foremost real commitment on the part of the associations and institutions that administer and support sport.

It is important, therefore, to look beyond the conventional wisdom and rhetoric in order to understand how certain practices contribute to the integration of immigrant communities through sport. Any such assessment must not only look at the (political and cultural) context but also identify the target groups concerned.

As co-organiser of the European Encounters conference "Sport and Diversity" with the Agency for Education through Sport and the University of Strasbourg,

the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport sought to facilitate international discussion on these practices and policies by bringing together policy-makers, journalists, researchers and heads of associations. The experiences presented at these events and the debate that they generate provide valuable insights into the issue of integration through sport and may serve as a guide for future policy.

This activity is wholly in keeping with the remit of the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport, which is to foster the sharing of experience and develop standards that will help to unlock the potential of sport, not least as an instrument for promoting the Council of Europe's core values.

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General introduction

Intercultural dialogue or integration through sport? European models under scrutiny

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The European Commission's decision to declare 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue demonstrates that the question of integrating different cultures into European society is more immediate than ever. From the standpoint of the commission, the European Union's (EU) successive enlargements, the growth of migration movements, and interactions with the world at large through economic, cultural, academic and sport exchanges have accentuated the multicultural character of many countries. These features heighten the linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity present in most Council of Europe member countries – including France, which is characterised by its own kind of blending and diversity, an inseparable element of its identity according to the historian Fernand Braudel.¹

Sport, long accepted as an instrument of social integration, is now considered a means of furthering intercultural understanding in an ever more diversified Europe. Like food culture and pop music, sport can be said to possess a potential for interculturalism, because it has contributed, throughout history, to the blending of cultures.

Behind this assumption, however, a number of questions linger. Can sport really be a platform for stimulating dialogue between cultures? Are intercultural dialogue and integration the same kinds of phenomena? Intercultural dialogue presupposes the coexistence of different cultural communities, each of them homogeneous entities which do not naturally mix. Can this be validly argued for all European countries?

How can social cohesion be strengthened in the context of cultural diversity through sport? Sport has a reputation for drawing peoples together in the tradition of Coubertin, but is it inherently integrative, diversified and intercultural or must the political conditions be provided for it to become so?

In order to answer these questions, it seems appropriate to observe at the outset that the recent initiatives of European institutions illustrate the European preference for making cultures engage in dialogue, rather than be integrated in a single "melting pot" through a purposive integration policy at European level.

1. Braudel Fernand (1990), *L'identité de la France. Espace et Histoire*, Flammarion, Paris.

Next, let us consider the meaning of the concepts “intercultural dialogue” and “integration” in the realm of sport? They have multiple, even litigious, connotations, not only defining groups much discussed in the social sciences but also representing national categories that take on different meanings for different European countries. Contrary to the idea that these concepts are naturally transnational and European, their definition and usage are rather the upshot of symbolic battles fought in the European intellectual arena over the rightful European definition of a paradigm for integration through sport.

The third stage of the discussion will compare European patterns of integration through sport – a comparison that should not only provide a basis for building a typology, but also raise methodological and theoretical questions. Faced with these difficulties, how are we to organise European research into sport’s contribution to the integration of migrant populations and social and national cohesion?

As I see it, these initial thoughts should help open up avenues to develop a framework for a reflexive science of European “integration through sport” models.² They also try to get away from ritualistic extolling of sport and dutiful remarks about integration through sport.

1. Intercultural dialogue and integration through sport: a European concern

Sport has only recently become a real social and cultural concern for the EU. As from 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam (in Declaration 29, appended to the treaty)³ stresses the social importance of sport, particularly its uniting and identity-building role. Sport is also seen as an instrument of social inclusion. Since 2000, numerous projects and events for promoting intercultural dialogue through sport have been funded all over Europe. Examples of projects in the realm of sport range from setting up sports networks to drafting a sport charter for the furtherance of intercultural dialogue, together with “intercultural” street football tournaments, or special initiatives staged by sports clubs to welcome migrants or pursue exchanges with “foreign” clubs in an educational perspective.

2. See in this connection Bourdieu P., “Les conditions sociales de la circulation internationale des idées”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 145, December 2002, pp. 3-8, particularly his proposal to contribute to a “science of international cultural relations” on p. 3.

3. “The Conference emphasises the social significance of sport, in particular its role in forging identity and bringing people together. The Conference therefore calls on the bodies of the EU to listen to sports associations when important questions affecting sport are at issue. In this connection, special consideration should be given to the particular characteristics of amateur sport.” Declaration 29 on Sport, Appendix to the Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, *Official Journal No. C 340 of 10 November 1997*.

Sport, as a whole, is also perceived by the citizens of Europe as a possible avenue for furthering dialogue among the various cultures living side by side in Europe. According to several Eurobarometer surveys (at the behest of the European Commission), almost three Europeans out of four regard sport as a means of promoting integration, while 64% of European citizens think that sport would help combat discrimination. Finally, 81% regard sport as an opportunity for dialogue among the different cultures (Eurobarometer survey 2004).⁴ The EU has proposed recommendations and initiatives to that effect since 2007.

Two examples illustrate this accommodation of sport's intercultural and inclusive dimensions:

- the White Paper on Sport, drawn up in 2007 by the European Commission (after two years of work), suggests harnessing sport to social integration. The member countries are asked to focus on aiding access to sports participation for women from ethnic minorities.⁵ Accordingly, the mobilisation of the European programmes and funds is mentioned as a means of enhancing possibilities for social inclusion and integration through sport;⁶
- in 2008 the institutional initiatives and encounters were intensified through the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The European ministers responsible for sport adopted a joint declaration on Social Significance and Dialogue in Sport on 17 March 2008; in March 2008 the commission also published the final report on Unity in Diversity, "National approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe"; on 15 and 16 May 2008, an international round table on sport and intercultural dialogue was held in Ljubljana (Slovenia) by the Slovenian Sports Union called "Sport for all as the element of intercultural dialogue"; lastly in December 2008, recommendations on sport and intercultural dialogue were presented at the European Sport Forum in Biarritz.

In a parallel but longer-standing endeavour of its own, the Council of Europe has disseminated the idea of amateur sport as a factor in social integration and inclusion for migrants, since tolerance, dialogue between cultures and peoples, respect for national minorities and social cohesion are among its goals. As early as 1981, the European ministers responsible for sport therefore adopted a resolution on sport for migrants,⁷ convinced that it was

4. Special Eurobarometer 213 (2004), *The citizens of the European Union and Sport*, survey requested by Directorate General of Education and Culture and co-ordinated by Directorate General of Press and Communication, European Commission, November 2004.

5. Commission Staff Working Document, Action Plan "Pierre de Coubertin", accompanying documents to the White Paper on Sport, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 11 July 2007.

6. Progress, Education and Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action, Europe for Citizens, European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund or European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals.

7. Resolution on sport 81/4.

a significant means for “migrants” to participate more in the life of society in the host countries. In May 2003, the European Council recalled the social value of sport for young people, stressing its role in integration. According to the rapporteurs: “Sport is a human activity resting on fundamental social, educational and cultural values. It is a factor making for integration, involvement in social life, tolerance, acceptance of differences and playing by the rules.” The democratic management of Europe’s cultural diversity is also a political priority for the Council of Europe.⁸ The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue was consequently launched in May 2008 by the ministers of foreign affairs of the organisation’s 47 member states.⁹

As UEFA President Michel Platini recently told the Council of Europe (24 January 2008), sport in Europe has always been a catalyst for social and cultural integration. He considers that millions of children worldwide have become, and continue to become, Europeans by playing football on a muddy pitch, whether in town or country, before they even start school. Thus the sports movement regards amateur sport and especially football as naturally conducive to the blending of cultures and the integration of migrants.

2. European categories by social science standards

For sociologists, “intercultural dialogue” and “integration through sport” alike are categories of social and political debate requiring analysis before they are used in European surveys.

First they are not legal categories, so that “intercultural dialogue” as such does not constitute a specific legal category. Consequently, there is no international, European or national law regarding the matter. It is nevertheless accepted that a constructive dialogue can only exist in an environment ensuring equal opportunities, freedom of expression, security and dignity.

It then falls to the sociologist to investigate “integration through sport” and “intercultural dialogue through sport” as categories of analysis and thought. In the interpretative social sciences, many key words and phrases – “community”, “citizenship”, “diversity”, “integration”, “intercultural dialogue”, for example – are at once categories of social and political practice, and categories of social and political analysis. By “categories of practice”,

8. An Action Plan on Democratic Management of Europe’s Cultural Diversity was adopted in May 2005 in Warsaw by the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe.

9. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue seeks to provide a conceptual framework and a guide for policy-makers and practitioners. To co-ordinate the various activities conducted in this field, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, was appointed Council of Europe Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue at the end of 2005. On 7 May 2008, the Committee of Ministers adopted this white paper, the outcome of a process of consultations with the governments of the 47 member states, experts, international organisations, NGOs, representatives of ethnic and religious communities and the general public.

Brubaker (2001)¹⁰ means the categories of day-to-day social experience developed and deployed by the ordinary social agents who take a hand in sport as sports instructors, coaches, club managers, "outreach" youth counsellors, and sports players themselves.¹¹ These categories of practice are distinguished from the categories used by socio-analysts, who take a stance remote from sports experience; these include politicians, scientific experts, journalists and essayists. Being devised by experts, analytical categories are often taken up indiscriminately (that is, without regard to the national and intellectual context in which they were devised) and become categories of practice used in ordinary situations of sport and social training.

a. Interculturalism

Unlike "diversity", "interculturalism" is neither a concept nor a theory, but a practice and a problem field raising debate, which differs according to country.

For some societies, intercultural signifies "multicultural", construed as coexistence of different cultures in the one space. For others it has more of a sense of "cross-culturalism", or "interculturality" construed as a process of cultural interpenetration.

These two conceptions of interculturalism hark back to two models for the integration of individuals into a nation-state: multiculturalism in the first instance and, in the second, a melting pot and national integration.

Next a distinction should be drawn between "factual interculturalism" (existing de facto because each main wave of immigration has given Europe its quota of sports players – suffice it to observe the composition of the national teams), and "purposive interculturalism" presupposing political actuation of intercultural dynamics (through intercultural tournaments, intercultural sports education, or cultural mix in the clubs). Furthermore, interculturalism often becomes associated with terms that specify it in an educational sense: intercultural proficiencies, intercultural learning, intercultural teaching practice, intercultural dialogue.

The premise of intercultural dialogue is that, in the EU, multiple forms of dialogue are needed to bring out both respect for everyone's diversity and sharing of a minimum core of common values. Etymologically the word dialogue, *dia-logos*, means being penetrated by the word of whoever addresses one – so that in an exchange with a person belonging to another culture, part of oneself will vanish and another part will be transformed in the juxtaposition of cultures. That accounts for a dual identity in many children of immigrants (dual nationality and dual frame of reference for their personal and cultural

10. Brubaker R. 2001. Au-delà de l'"identité", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 139, No. 1, pp. 66-85.

11. See Gasparini W. (ed.), "L'intégration par le Sport?", *Sociétés Contemporaines* No. 69 (2008), Presses de Sciences Po.

identity), which may be felt either as an asset or a problem. Modern sport, born in Europe but at present a universal medium of expression, is capable of creating the conditions under which persons originating from different cultures or ethnic groups (whether intra- or extra-European) draw together, coexist, or even interpenetrate. In the context of competitive sport, discovery of another culture may occur, but the exchange may also turn into a “figurative battlefield” (Elias, 1986) where national stereotypes re-emerge. Do matches between two countries or communities then provide the best vector for intercultural dialogue? Examples of sport-based intercultural dialogue schemes in Norway also show that women from Muslim minorities are under-represented. This finding has prompted the Norwegian sports federations to devise specific projects in cities aimed at women of Muslim faith, more in keeping with their origins. The establishment of aerobics or swimming lessons for Muslim women only is an example. In some German schools, physical education teachers offer instruction suited to each pupil culture.

However, by concentrating too closely on the cultural backgrounds of sports players or physical education pupils in schools (given an intercultural educational method), there may well be a risk of creating mental categories and stereotypes by confining individuals to their own group of origin and their own distinctiveness. Current debate in France – concerning swimming pool time slots for women only, as well as in Europe generally concerning exemptions from swimming in physical education for religious reasons – is an example: should one allow co-education, gender equality and secularity to be impaired by accepting identity-linked demands under the cloak of “tolerance” and intercultural dialogue? Provisionally, for want of a common position, each country makes its own response according to its national legislation, cultural tradition and societal model.

b. Integration

The term “integration” applied to sport also invites questions, particularly when used as a political injunction. Its use in France is based on a concept traceable to Durkheim’s thought and to republican ideology, while “cohesion through sport” is the preferred usage in European bodies (Council of Europe and EU). It is also notable that integration is defined according to its national setting and sociological entrenchment, lending it a specific meaning (Schnapper, 2007). Integration is nonetheless a crucial, historic concept of sociology and has a fairly exact meaning: the process whereby an individual enters a human community as an integral part of it. This does not mean that their original identity is completely lost, but rather transformed by contact with the features and the values of the host community. Integration may at the same time signify both a “normative programme” and a “social process”:

- Imposed by the state, integration as a normative programme is the desired outcome of an official policy and becomes an injunction to adapt

to the host society. This is described as a “paradigm” of integration. In this perspective, several paradigms of integration can be discerned in Europe: republican, multiculturalist, discriminatory... but for some countries the absence of any model, pattern or paradigm is also observed (for example, Spain, Portugal, Italy) as up to the 1980s those were countries of emigration.

- Integration as a social process is an interaction between the migrant and the host society, between the “minority” and the “majority” and, like all processes, prone to differing progress according to fields, mismatches, discovery of new patterns, counter-trends, and developments which can be analysed by surveys.

Lastly, sociologists ascertain that the more a migrant belongs to the disadvantaged social classes, the more marked is the integration shortfall, linked with remoteness from the dominant culture. Still, school and associations have always been instruments of integration for children of migrants, and especially sport in a club context. The notion of integration does not actually correspond to any experience, but can guide sociological investigations, even if not directly operative in the research procedures. Thus integration cannot be studied as such, but its various dimensions at a given time can be analysed. As a practice productive of social bonds in the society of settlement, and as a universal form of expression, sport constitutes one of these dimensions.

Freedom with categories of thought such as integration and “intercultural dialogue” can ultimately only be achieved at the price of an effort to think these categories through and make them explicit. They are often taken up just as they are by the political office-bearers, managers and sports instructors without prior analysis. Breaking with these ready-made categories is all the more difficult in that it also requires detachment from the effects of the media, which tend either to maximise “multiculturalism of sport” in high-grade competition (French national football team – blacks/whites/second-generation North Africans), or to highlight “ethno-centricity of sport”.¹²

By analysing these two concepts, it is also apparent that reference to ethnic, religious or national peculiarities may become the easy justification for practices and policies which increase the confusion by using the ethnic bias of social relations more and more as a regulative mode. Tolerance towards “ethnic” clubs may well disperse and weaken the humanist rationale of sport; indeed sports ethics teaches that players must each leave their ethnic ties and peculiarities behind in the cloakroom to appear on the sports field, or in the gymnasium, as an impartial player. At the same time, however, cultural cross-fertilisation and blending can only occur if there are policies to

12. See in this connection Gasparini W., “Le sport, entre communauté et communautarisme”, journal *Diversité*, No. 150 (2007), pp. 77-83, Ville Ecole Intégration.

combat and prevent discrimination in access for all to recreational sport and to responsibilities in sports organisations.

3. Patterns of integration through sport, tested by comparison across Europe

Since the late 1980s, there has been a profusion of comparative studies produced by international agencies (OECD, UNESCO, WHO, EU/European Commission, Council of Europe, etc.). The more globalised societies become, the more they rely on comparative studies. Indeed, international comparison furthers a better understanding of the respective effects which the political context (national, but European too) and the cultures of social groups have on the social phenomenon examined (for instance, sociability in the context of sport, or straightforward sports participation). The comparative method is a way of finding singularity in the obvious through comparison with alien styles of thought and action, which are self-evident to others (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 4). Thus comparison involves rendering comparable certain “units” of analysis deeply embedded in distinctive national histories, categories and languages.

a. Sport and multiculturalism: a European comparative study

In 2003, the European Commission commissioned a comparative study in order to examine the contribution of sport as a means of non-formal education to multicultural dialogue among young people, as well as its role in integrating recent influxes of migrants. Published in 2004, the study on sport and multiculturalism provides insight into how sport was used to lower intercultural tensions in the then 25 member states.¹³

The study was based on the four models of nationality and citizenship that serve to illustrate all approaches employed in the EU: the republican French model, the ethno-nationalist German model, the pluralist British model and the emerging Polish post-communist model. Working with these four models, it identified four traditional political approaches to sports policy in respect of populations with different ethnic origins. Two of these emphasise or heighten cultural diversity and pluralism:

- *interculturalism*: promotion of intercultural exchanges by attaching the same importance to each culture (for example, funding cultural exchanges for sport purposes);
- *separate but equitable development of the ethnic groups* (directly funding associations of ethnic minorities).

13. See the contribution of Ian Henry in this book, p. 59.

Two concentrate on cohesion rather than on diversity, with “unitary” views of national culture:

- *inclusion policies* seeking to integrate groups into the existing national culture (using sport as a means of coping with problems of social exclusion or urban renewal);
- *non-intervention*: populations are deemed homogeneous and there is no need for financing (that is no need to act).

The study makes political recommendations on the greater use of sport to further intercultural dialogue and on issues relating to refugees, asylum seekers and spending of European structural funds. It holds up examples of good practice to the sports organisations serving different cultural communities.

This study shows that there is no single model of integration through sport in Europe. But it also reveals that the concepts employed, such as intercultural dialogue or interculturalism, have become second nature and self-evident whereas the concept of integration is not used. The various European countries’ patterns of integration through sport might nevertheless be considered convergent, owing to European harmonisation in particular. The divergences have gradually given way to convergences, with the historical paradigms exposed to political realism.

b. Convergences and divergences

There is indeed an observable tendency to standardise official mechanisms, stimulated by the sports and social policies of the EU and the Council of Europe. For example, in 2008 the Swiss Federal Council decided to strengthen the measures in aid of migrant integration. In one such measure, the Federal Office for Sport set up a skill centre, with the object of boosting the promotion of sport and physical activities among migrant populations. In Germany, “Integration through Sport” is a programme of the *Deutscher Sportbund* (DSB) aimed at developing sports participation in migrants’ clubs. The principle behind this stance is that a sports club has a special potential for integration in allowing social contacts among sports players and inducing persons of foreign origin to undergo intercultural learning (sport and culture related norms). Clubs also foster voluntary service, which makes for everyday political participation in the local networks. That is what qualifies them as schools of democracy. In Germany and the United Kingdom alike, the questioning of multiculturalism from 2000 onwards led to a more integrationist policy.

The analysis of European publications and assessments concerning integration through sport illustrates the variety of inclusion policies, as described above. It also shows diversity in the responses, as regards the way in which civil society (specifically, the sports and community movements) and state authorities use

sport to create social bonding, pacify difficult urban neighbourhoods and include migrants and their offspring in society.

Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom still have observable policies of community management governing, in particular, multicultural education and the endeavour to instil intercultural skills in sports teachers and instructors. Accordingly, for the German sports movement, sport facilitates dialogue between migrants and the population at large. On those terms, it supports the involvement of Turkish migrant associations in young people's education and the promotion of "intercultural" gatherings. For example, the project "*Strassenfussball für Toleranz*" ("street football for tolerance") fights exclusion of ethnic minorities in sport by proposing football tournaments between teams made up of culturally diverse boys and girls. These are programmes aimed at intercultural dialogue in a multicultural context. It is also notable that in some European countries community-based groupings are permitted, even encouraged, in the voluntary sector, particularly football clubs. According to this concept of integration with a multicultural bias, "ethnic" sports clubs can be seen as a step towards national integration, which would aid participation in the host country's democratic life.

France lacks these forms of official policies as such, but their machinery is subsumed by the generic term "urban policy" or "combating exclusion". These have the function not of practising positive discrimination but of remedying the effects of negative discrimination (social, gender, ethnic, disability-related...). In the case of sport, official schemes of sport-based promotion or integration are directed at town and country districts or populations facing social problems, not at constituted groups or at ethnic minorities. Thus, "ethnic" clubs, like the display of religious symbols on clothing when playing sport in public facilities, are not tolerated, because they uphold the community to the detriment of the individual. Unlike other European countries, France has also been a magnet of immigration since the 19th century.¹⁴ We have formed the principles of our democracy in a country where immigration was one of the social realities. "Modern" sport thus developed in France at the same time as a massive influx of migrants, the passage of the law on freedom of association, the separation of Church and state (1905) and the building of a secular republican state system. So, on the whole, despite instances of social discriminations in admission to sports clubs, migrants and children of migrants gradually blend into the "melting pot of French sport" (Noiriel, 1988). That is why the French national football team often serves as a barometer of the main immigration waves in France (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Armenian, African and North African).¹⁵

14. Not so, for example, in the case of Spain, Italy or the United Kingdom.

15. See in this connection an article by Beaud S., Noiriel G. (1990), "*L'immigration dans le football*", *XX^e siècle*, 26.

c. European comparison under challenge

Looking at the countries of Europe, comparing the populations concerned with “integration through sport” and urban policies is problematic. First, these policies have neither the same legal status, nor the same scientific definition, in the various countries of the EU (Arnaud, 2005): how can an outright comparison be made between the “ethnic minorities” in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, the *extracomunitari* in Italy, and the populations of migrant origin in France?

Next, the comparative studies often draw conclusions about the “best practices” registered in the different European countries. This English-language concept embraces the practices, experiences, or mechanisms of education through sport which have succeeded in one country and are suitable for transposition to other countries considered to be lower achievers. These “workable experiences”, from which inspiration may be taken in other contexts, are widely used in the United States. UNESCO and the European Commission have also been guided by them. For specialists in international comparison, however, transfer of experience is unsound. It is founded on the fallacy that models of education through sport exist which could be indiscriminately exported to other socio-political, economic and cultural settings. For instance, is any comparison possible as regards the impact of sport on dialogue between minorities in the countries of the former Yugoslavia¹⁶ and between young French people with a North African migrant background in France?

4. Conclusion

Studying the forms taken by sport in Europe affords an approach to the transformations which the frameworks of social behaviour undergo in a new context of derestricted social relationships and multiculturalism linked to globalisation. Recent initiatives by the European institutions to promote a type of sport conducive to social integration and intercultural dialogue show that sport has its rightful place in European construction. But the debates surrounding sport also draw the sociologist’s attention to the controversies and issues that go beyond the bounds of sport proper. Thus sport as a social phenomenon, according to Durkheim’s definition, accurately reflects the nature of the relations between ethnic minorities and the host society as a whole. These questions are not insignificant, for our sociological convictions partly guide action on sport. There is no doubt that conceiving a society in terms of individuals or community nurtures different and discordant political visions in the countries of Europe.

16. In the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, a special award was conferred on a Slovenian-based basketball league official. This prize rewarded the efforts of the league, which has succeeded in mustering different cultures through sport in the former Yugoslavia, insofar as it comprises several teams from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. When presenting the prize, Slovenian Minister for Sport Milan Zver said that sport could break down all stereotypes.

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