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Sport catalogue of the Others. : 'the Otherness' as a perspective in social sport studies

Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica 16/4, 15-30

2015

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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Sport catalogue of the Others. 'The Otherness' as a perspective in social sport studies

The paper introduces the xenology as a useful perspective in the sport studies. It focuses on 'the Other' category as the key idea of sociology. At the same time, 'the Otherness' remains a constant feature of sport. In effect, 'the Other' analysis becomes a socio-psychological background of sport analysis. The text considers five elements of the xenological 'Other's' characteristic in sport terms. Those are the Strangeness, the Meeting, the Sign of the 'Otherness' limits, the Experience and the Feeling of fear and desire. That approach explains many important sport aspects: aggression, fans' behavior, rivalry and co-operation, group-thinking syndrome. The xenology gives a new perspective in the sport studies and it provides some new research ideas.

Key words: xenology, sport studies, sport sociology, otherness

1. Preface. The Otherness

S. de Beauvoir claims: 'Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself' (de Beauvoir 1971: 44). The Otherness concept creates the sense of belonging, identity and social status. It describes basic social categories in terms of the binary oppositions. Then J. Grad believes that the Otherness is the effect of the assimilation/differentiation role of culture. People can recognize members of 'theirs' and 'others' societies during the specific cultural activities (e.g. sport). The existence of the Others provides the feeling of community and the sense of group-identity (Grad 1993). In that case, Z. Bauman argues: 'In dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of social order the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. The second member is but the other of the first, the opposite (degraded, suppressed,

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exiled) side of the first and its creation' (Bauman 1991: 78). Thus, the oppositions constitute the fundamental elements of social order. This thesis points out that the 'Otherness' is a basic sociological category.

This paper introduces the Otherness as a key concept in the social sport studies. The text consists of two parts (not to mention the preface and the conclusion). In the first part, I explore what kind of the Otherness exists in sport. I analyse various contexts of the Otherness at the sport arenas. Most of them have socio-psychological background.

In the second part, I consider the xenology as a useful idea in the social science of sport. I present the link between its key concepts and sport studies. In effect, the chapter is composed of five basic xenological features located in the sport terms. Altogether, the essay is the suggestion for using Otherness and xenology perspective in the explanation of the sport phenomena.

2. What kind of Otherness exists in sport²?

E. Dunning claims: 'The bonds which humans form involve both direct interdependence with concrete persons such as parents, children and friends, and indirect interdependence within collectivities such as cities, classes, markets, ethnic groups and nations. Whether direct or indirect, such bonds tend to be simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. That is, the membership of any 'we-group' tends to imply generally positive feelings towards other members of the group and pre-fixed attitudes of hostility and competitiveness towards the members of one or more 'they-groups'. Although such a pattern can be modified – for example through education – it is easy to observe how frequently the very constitution of 'we-groups' and their continuation over time seem to depend on the regular expression of hostility towards and even actual combat with the members of 'they-groups'. That is, specific patterns of conflict appear to arise regularly in conjunction with this basic form of human bonding and simultaneously to form a focus for the reinforcement of 'we-group' bonds (Dunning 2001: 4–5). The author emphasizes that sport offers easy distinctions – 'we' and 'they'. This is quite an unusual offer in the times of fluent postmodernism (Bauman 1996: 63). Sport **divides the social world into the domains of 'Ourness' and 'Otherness'**. Being a member of a particular sport team means that at the same time you are also a rival of other team; supporting one group is tantamount to wishing failure to the other one. Besides, sport gives a number of **labels to make the process of distinguishing easier** – names, nicks, legends, shirts, scarfs, sport fields, drawn field lines, opposite goals, etc. All of them are supposed to accentuate the distinc-

² To present my statements more clearly in this paper I would like to do a limitation in sport definition. I analyze here only the most popular team sports with more or less organized groups of supporters. The perception of the otherness in the individual sports could be a little bit different, so I focus on team sports.

tion – the differences amongst groups. They are essential to decode a sport performance – to recognize partners and rivals, my team and opposite team. In effect, the Otherness is considered a crucial category in sport studies.

M. Radkowska-Walkowicz claims that ‘the Other is outside from our arrangement. (...) It blurs our peace, because it slips out of our cognitive structures. It is not the friend, neither the enemy. It remains ‘undecided existence’, which is does not affected by such a categories as ‘or/or’ or ‘neither/nor’. (...) **The Other undermines our order and introduces us the world that we do not want to know.** It brings a chaos and makes people restless. So, the Other is a danger” (Radkowska-Walkowicz 2009: 308). According to that, A. Ben-Portar claims that the concept of the Other is a kind of *bridge between the text* (‘the constructed significance’) **and the context** (‘the imported position’) (Ben-Portar 2008: 5). It means that the Other is ‘located’ amongst the reality we already know (the experience – we can see or touch him/her) and the background we do not know (the imponderables, the knowledge, the habits).

In contrast, G. Simmel describes Other as a ‘person who comes today and stays tomorrow’ (Simmel 1950: 402). The meeting situation is an important feature of the Otherness experience. Without this kind of personal contact the Other remains only a label which is used to describe the social world. The knowledge about him/her is not embodied. But the fact of the meeting with the Other becomes the point of our self-identification. We experience the difference of the Other, so we can also learn the meaning of Ourness. This is an apt metaphor for the sport situation.

The sport’s Other is a **combination of farness and nearness**. The Others come to us from the distance – from the other continent, other country or other city. They represent different lifestyles, values, views or support different teams. But at the same time, they are not the ‘alien’. The media inform us about them (TV, Internet), we meet during the travels, we read about them, etc. The globalized world gives us a feeling of closeness, in spite of the physical or geographical boundaries. Thus, the key ideas describing sport otherness are ‘meeting’ and ‘awareness’. They both give a sport ‘double-nearness’ status – being far and very close at the same time.

The first ‘nearness’ is related to the **knowledge about each other**. In the world of information the Others are not the unfamiliar strangers. All the sport teams and their fans are well-known. Players’ performances are globally broadcast. Sportsmen appear on the television or internet. They become media stars and remain widely recognizable. Newspapers write about their private lives. Fans travel with their teams all around the world. Moreover, even the groups of supporters have their own songs, scarfs and shirts. They are labelled as ‘friendly’, ‘aggressive’ or ‘loud’. In effect, host citizens have some information about how fans tend to behave. So, the meeting with those ‘sport Others’ is rarely the meeting with complete strangers. The knowledge about them (sportsmen or fans) gives us a kind of E. Goffman’s **initial interpretation frame**. This knowledge enables people to predict how the Other acts and lets them prepare themselves to react (Goffman 1986).

The second 'nearness' is about the **moment of gathering**. It appears exactly during sport events. Two groups meet at the sport pitch (sportsmen) or at the stadium (fans). They share the same space and act under the same rules. It facilitates the contact between them. The opposite groups can struggle or celebrate together. This closeness creates specific relation: separateness and being together, hostility and coexistence at the same time. G. Le Bon rites: 'Under certain given circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics. The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organised crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd. It forms a single being, and is subjected to the law of the mental unity of crowds' (Le Bon 2001: 13).

Therefore, the Other in sport is ambivalent. On the one hand, it comes from the 'outside' and represents the 'cultural difference'. But on the other hand, it is well-known and spends its time so close to us, that we can even touch it. This is the paradox of the 'Other' figure.

3. Xenology in sport studies. The possibilities and applications

The xenology is a very useful concept to understand the social context of the Otherness. It means anthropological studies about 'alien' cultures, species or biology. This approach is founded on three main activities focused on the Other: the Cognition, the Comprehension, and the Experience (see Waldenfels 2002: 101–102). M. Brzozowska-Brywczyńska claims that 'xenology is about treating the Otherness as the specific Experience and the other persons' Categorization Process' (see Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2007). Besides, D. Brin calls the xenology 'The Science of Asking Who's Out There' (Brin 1983). The basic questions of xenology concern the 'undiscovered' beings and their cultures. Xenology is a fascination with something unknown but very near. The objects of such reflections are different but still quite familiar.

Summing up, J.J. Cohen introduces the main assumptions of xenology and characteristics of the Otherness. They cover the most important research ideas about the Other figure. Firstly, the Otherness is **the Strangeness**. Secondly, the Otherness is **the Meeting**. Thirdly, the Otherness is **the Sign of the 'Ourness' limits**. Fourthly, the Otherness is **the Experience**. Finally, the Otherness is **the Feeling of the fear and desire** (Cohen 1996: 4–20).

As I mentioned before, the perception of the Otherness is a constant feature of sport. Therefore, these xenological conclusions may be used as a useful tool in the

social sport studies research. Thus, in the following chapters I analyse all the five xenological basic assumptions in terms of sport.

3.1. The Sport – the Otherness – the Strangeness

Sport simplifies a fan's **feeling of identity**. The situation of a sport rivalry is clear. There are 'Ours' and 'Others' – there is no place for any deliberations. V. Theodoropoulou points at an interesting phenomenon of an anti-fan. The author asserts that an inherent element of a fan identity is being at the same time an anti-fan of the object which can endanger the object of the fan's positive affection. The author writes: 'Antifans are people with clear dislikes. They are people who, for a variety of reasons, hate or intensely dislike and have strong negative view of feeling about a certain text, genre or personality. (...) Fandom is the precondition of antifandom. (...) These are cases where two fan object are clear-cut or traditional rivals, thus inviting fan to become anti-fans of the "rival" object or admiration. It suggest that under such circumstances, the fan becomes an antifan of the object that "threatens" him/her own, and of the object's fan. Thus, when A and B are the opposing fandom objects, fans of A are antifans of B and of B's fans, and vice versa' (Theodoropoulou 2007: 316).

This situation is visible especially at the football level. The fans of FC Barcelona hate Real Madrid, or Lech Poznan's supporters cannot stand Legia Warsaw. During rivalry, fans identify themselves with the sportsmen (team) in the opposition to the others. They do not change the subject of their support. Most of the research shows that 'the fan identity' is a part of the human identity which is modified very rarely (see Kowalski 2002).

These divisions are strengthened by the other distinctions. Sport teams are often treated as representatives of particular groups. Some of them are related to social groups – workers, aristocracy, migrants or intelligentsia. Other fans are divided by the political (right wing or left wing) or religious views (e.g. in Glasgow Catholics and Protestants have their own clubs).

Finally, for many fans the historical roots of the team are essential (some clubs were established by politicians, industry center's chairmen, army and the police headquarters or universities). Each team attracts different fans. Even when current clubs have nothing to do with their historical background (there are no native players or there is no relation to any political or religious view any more), they are still perceived as the vehicles of past ideas.

A sport team is a representation of social identity. Rivalry sharpens distinctive aspects of social groups and represents them in a spectacular way. The diversity of teams is simply a reflection of social diversity.

Sport representations give different individuals a common identity – team fans' identity. But at the same time they also create the anti-identity – the identity constructed on the opposition to the Others' identity.

3.2. The Sport – the Otherness – the Meeting

The Otherness affects both the sportsmen and fans. The former meet the Others on a football pitch or in a basketball court; the latter – at the stadium's tribunes. Because of many factors which I have mentioned before, the Otherness and the Meeting are the basis of the sport system. When we consider these categories more strictly, it appears that there are different types of Meeting with the Other in sport. Now I would like to explore the major categories.

3.2.1. The meeting with the Guests – The Others from the other country/city

Concerning **countries**, M. Billig claims that sport is a major tool of banal nationalism – 'the everyday practices, which state uses to remind citizens that they act in a specific national context' (Billig 2008: 135). In this view, national sport teams are 'impressive agents of the homeland'. A sportsman is dressed in a suit with national symbols, national anthems and streaming country flags accompany the medal decorations – T. Edensor claims that these kinds of events are the most convincing examples of national spirit (Edensor 2004: 106). Sport remains the universal area which people have in common, but the diversity of sport teams shows how different people are. This situation makes sport an important component of B. Anderson's theory of the nation. The author considers it as an 'imagined community'. It means that members of this community do not even know each other but they share the belief that they have many things in common. Each of these communities needs a range of common ideas and representations – language, historical awareness, symbols, government, education, currency, etc. (Anderson 1991: 46). These elements give them a dense of distinction. A national sport team is one of them.

Quite similar situation appears in the case of **cities**. At the level lower than national, sportsmen represent a city (or a region). In the mass perception they embody all the features of typical citizens of a given city – people from the capital are conceited; mountaineers are tough; villagers are poor, etc. There are obvious stereotypes and bias but sport very often sustains them. T. Schirato writes that 'sport has been both instrumental and fundamental with regard to this process at numerous times and places: we can think of Celtic and Rangers vis-à-vis religious and ethnic identity; Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao regarding ethnicity- as-nationalism; Boca Juniors and River Plate at the level of class; and Flamengo and Fluminense in terms of race' (Schirato 2007: 88).

So, the Others in this perspective are the other nation/city representatives – sportsmen or their supporters, who represent different spatial contexts.

3.2.2. The Meeting with the Neighbors – the Others from the neighborhood/the same city

Sport's Others very often come from the **neighborhood**. This kind of competition is usually called a 'derby' and has a long tradition (see Beattie 2008). Two teams compete for the domination in the neighborhood. Usually, they have a different social background, historical roots or ideology. Frequently, one club has been founded as an act of resistance to the other one.

FC Barcelona was established in 1899. It was thought as a sport association which supports the idea of an independent Catalonia. As a reaction, royalists from Barcelona, who profess one Spanish country under the authority of the king, set up their own club – Espanyol Barcelona. The matches between them were a clash of two different **ideologies**.

Another ideological background appears in the case of the two Milan's clubs – AC Milan and Inter. The former forbid the immigrants' employment at the beginning the 20th century. The latter allowed to employ them (full name of the club is 'Internazionale').

In the other derbies the **social heritage** is crucial. In London, the great matches were played by Chelsea (club of aristocracy) against Arsenal (club of workers). The same situation occurred in Liverpool (dockers from FC Liverpool and middle-class from Everton) or Berlin (Hertha and the labor's Union).

Likewise, being governed by particular **public agenda** is at the core of the sense of Otherness. This kind of relationship occurs in Moscow (CSKA belongs to the army, Dinamo to police, Torpedo to industry, and Lokomotiv to railway department) or Cracow (Wisla was founded by the communist police, as opposed to the rather anti-communist Cracovia).

In Glasgow demarcation line is the **religion** (Catholics support the Celtic and Protestants the Rangers) and in Rome – political views (right wing Lazio and left wing AS Rome). R. Holt points out that 'the conflict between Celtic and Rangers was no ordinary club rivalry; nor was it confined to Glasgow. Celtic and Rangers drew support from a wide area of central and southern Scotland. Rangers supporters, bolstered by Orange immigration from Ulster around the turn of the century, saw themselves as bastions of true Scottishness in contrast to the Catholic Irish immigrants, whose numbers were undermining the native Protestant traditions of Scotland and who even wore the colours of a separate national movement' (Holt 1989: 257–258).

Examples mentioned above show that even within the same city there are a number of fans who treat their neighbors as the Others.

3.2.3. The Meeting with the Scapegoats – the permanent Others

Apart from the temporary Others (introduced in 3.2.1. and 3.2.2.) there is a group of figures which are **permanently treated as the Others**. Their Otherness is not

linked with any spatial/local context. Mainly, they act in the sport world as individuals from the outside, not strictly involved in the game. Besides, their appearance mostly evokes negative emotions.

This syndrome of permanent exclusion is an effect of the 'scapegoats mechanism'. R. Girard describes it: 'when social groups feel stressed, unstable or threatened, they tend to build up nervous energy. Escalating tension increases the energy, making society a nervous pressure-cooker. To address these social tensions, an 'outlet' is needed. Humans, as we have seen, are highly capable of fighting back against adversity. But it is difficult to "fight" the forces that cause famine, drought, disease and change. Unable to either fight or flee, human beings need a place to direct their reaction. People long to address the impulse to do something in the face of such frustrating social tension. With remarkable consistency across time and cultures, human communities have found release in directing pent up energies and frustrations at a scapegoat' (from: Severson 2009).

In the contemporary sport we can mention a number of excluded 'permanent Others'. Below, I distinguish three major groups of 'sport scapegoats'.

The first group of 'spacegoats' is based on **ethnic/racial prejudices**. K. Hylton claims that sport is a place of racial 'assumptions that have endured are those that argue humans could be divided into a few biologically and phenotypically detached 'races'; the similarities within these groups could be reduced to ability, behavior and morality; these differences would be naturally passed from one generation to the next; and racial hierarchies exist with white people at the top and darker 'races' at the opposite end' (Hylton 2008: 2). In effect, the names of some ethnic groups serve fans as the 'generalized Other' names. Calling someone a 'Jew', 'Black', or 'Gypsy' is regarded as offensive. Offensive, but not in racial terms. The real ethnic roots of the team mostly remain unimportant. The local context either. It is understood as a pure ('empty') invective³. For many sport fans the names of those ethnic/racial groups are the synonyms of otherness and strangeness.

There are many examples which show that 'Jew' is very often treated just as an insult – without racial meaning. The label of 'Jewish' club sticks to many European clubs, in spite they are not 'Jewish' in any terms. For instance, Dutch Ajax Amsterdam, English Tottenham London, Austrian Austria Vienna or... German Bayern Munich (see Foer 2006: 87–96). There are even situations where two groups of fans call each other 'Jews', when none of them has any Jewish heritage. 'Jewity' acts here as an empty figure, a synonym for the Otherness.

The same situation concerns the Roma population. Blaming is related with stereotypical features of this groups. They are often perceived as the emanation of the fraud and dishonesty (see Back, Crabbe, Solomos 1999: 435). Offending by using 'Gypsy' name at the stadium is also more a provocation than an ethnic attack. Roma are treated as an indefinite enemy, someone who can threaten the sense of Ourness. The example here could be fan songs of two clubs from Belgrad – Crve-

³ See J. Simons, 2013, *'Yid' chants are not racist. But the 'Jew goal' is*, The Telegraph.

na Zvezda (Red Star) and Partizan. One group sings to the other: 'We slaughter and stab / anyone who is not with us / So be careful Gypsies / Great battle is close'. The seconds respond: 'Only real Serbs support Partizan / We are proud of our Great Serbia / No Dirties amongst us' (see Colovic 2001: 26–3267).

The abovementioned way of thinking is an effect of the pre-Second World War period, where Jews and Roma people did not have their own state (Roma population still does not have it). In effect, they were regarded as outcasts and 'weight the contempt for all the Otherness in society' (Foer 2006: 94).

The dark-skinned players are also frequently introduced as the real Other. The booming and zooming accompany the African sportsmen during their performances. In London fans used to sing: 'There ain't no black in Union Jack, send the bastards back!'⁴. In April 2014 a Spanish fan threw a banana to the Brazilian dark-skinned player Dani Alves⁵. These are only a few examples of racial and xenophobic fans' behavior.

This state of mind could be an effect of the postcolonial discourse where the Negroes were perceived as inferior to white people (see Gilroy 2002). Nowadays, it is vital in Holland, Spain, Germany, Italy or England. Fans' racist movement is the reaction to intensive postcolonial migrations. But this phenomenon is also noticeable in countries without the colonial heritage – Russia, Ukraine, Serbia or Poland. One of the most popular banners at the Moscow's stadium is 'White Pride – White Honour – White Team'⁶. Serbian Borac Cacak fans put on white hoods and pretend to be the Ku-Klux-Klan members⁷. In Kielce some Korona fans made a protest against the transfer of a dark-skinned Brazilian to their club. 'We do not need the Others. I do not believe that in Poland – a 40-million country – there are no any white football players. If it is true, we have to look for him in Russia or at the Balkan' – they claimed⁸. Those are just a few examples.

The described kind of Otherness combines racism and xenophobia. The skin color remains the sign of the Otherness, and consequently, it leads to fear and aggressive reactions.

The **referee** has a great influence on the sport competition. If functions on the meta-level: remains the guard of the rules, disciplines the players, co-ordinates the game. Every referee's decision is 'for' ones and 'against' the others. So, the arbiter's mistake is perceived by fans of the disadvantaged team as an intentional fraud (or the effect of bribery). His wrong decision can squander the hard work of the whole team. In these terms, the referee exposes himself to the danger of the fans' anger.

⁴ See <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/nov/26/patriot-games-battle-for-flag-of-st-george-english-identity> (access: 15.07.2015).

⁵ See <http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/27183851> (access: 15.07.2015).

⁶ See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-3050208/Spartak-Moscow-fined-2-500-fans-banned-two-away-games-losing-appeal-against-racist-banner-sanctions.html> (access: 15.07.2015).

⁷ See <http://www.faren.net/news/racist-incident-at-borac-cacak-in-serbia/> (access: 15.07.2015).

⁸ See <http://www.sport.pl/sport/1,65025,2789856.html> (access: 15.07.2015).

Besides, there are numerous psychological mechanisms which deepen the Otherness of a referee. Firstly, there is usually only one main referee. It is much easier to concentrate the (negative) feelings on just one person than on a team or a crowd. It is also much easier to blame one person for an unsuccessful competition than to accuse a group of people of the failure. Secondly, the official seems to be an easy target because he acts outside of the real game. He has an important impact on the contest, but does not take part in it. A referee remains 'close' and 'unfamiliar' at the same time. In effect, he exists as a solitary individual on the borders of the game. Thirdly, he is also the Other in visual terms. A referee is dressed in a different way than the sportsmen. He usually wears black (or bright) clothes and has a whistle in his mouth.

Noteworthy interpretation of a referee's role was given by S. Colwell. The author claims that the increasing coverage of football by radio, television and the printed media, has fed the notion that refereeing is an issue. At the root here is the need of pundits – reporters, former players, managers, you name it – to respond to incidents and to entertain the public. And the way the cookie crumbles is like this: incidents are often the result of a referee's decisions. In addition, all the pundits have their own ideas about how football should be played, so it is not unlikely for those ideas to clash with the way in which referees exercise their authority (Colwell 2004).

As J. Dudała's research shows, the hatred towards the **police** is the constant elements of many fans' identity. Fans, asked about what they understand as a 'real fan', responded: 'someone who attends the stadium and fights with police', 'well-skilled in beating police guy', 'fan who is not afraid of other fans and police' (Dudała 2004: 190–191). G. Armstrong finds that the police is one of the 'significant Others' who are necessary to build the hooligan identity – 'the creation of hooligan, with all the cultural values and rituals, codes of honor and shame, opposition to significant others, e.g. the police, other teams' supporters, the footballing authorities, and non-football fans, and communal patterns of behavior and consumption' (Armstrong 1998).

These statements show that the police is treated as an adversary, exactly like the other team's fans. The difference is that teams and their supporters are shifting according to a competition, whereas the hatred towards the police is constant. The confrontation between fans and the police became the predominant form of the spectator violence (Dunning 1994: 136).

Policemen are perceived as an external force which disturbs a sport event. Their Otherness is the otherness of the administrator – they do not take part in the event, but try to discipline the people who do. 'Guys just want to have fun (...) police focuses only on disturbing them' – claims M. King and M. Knight (King & Knight 1999: 135–136). The police is an obstacle in this 'fun having'. So, the police remains an important surrounding of contemporary sport, but at the same time it has a great influence on the sport's key actors.

3.3. The Sport – the Otherness – the Sign of the ‘Ourness’ limits

H. Eichberg writes: ‘In modern sport and body culture, one meets at least three different patterns of how to relate one’s own exercising body to the other. Competitive sport streamlines the body and teaches one to keep the rules of competition. It homogenizes and normalizes the human being by adapting the individual to the body technique of winning and producing results. In the hierarchical order of competitive sport, the place for otherness is ‘down there’, where the declassified losers are huddled together in their misery. All are united in striving for achievement and excellence, but some are better, and some are worse’ (Eichberg 2011: 11). The opposition remains the fundamental element of sport. So, the Otherness is necessary for a real sport challenge. The Other is a partner (rival) in the sport interaction.

The sport’s **Otherness underlines the limits of Ourness**. The meeting with the Other on a sport pitch is the test of our skills, possibilities and chances. So, the Other is the pre-condition of the contest – it is an indispensable feature of the basic sport tenet. Otherwise, physical activity becomes merely a recreation or an amusement (see Znaniecki 1974). An attempt to defeat the contestant (or to perform better than he or she does) is the basic attribute of the professional sport. In the real gameplay there should be ‘me’ and ‘someone’, the Other, whose skills I would like to compare with my own skills. The Other’s performance is the mirror of my possibilities. We can recognise the limits of our body when we juxtapose it with another body. The inseparable element of the rivalry is the comparison between the two and the evaluation of performances. In effect, sport leads to the binary oppositions: better and worse, winners and losers, hosts and guests, we and they.

This situation pushes sportsmen to the **transgression**. The key idea of sport is ‘fastest, highest, strongest’. Every player wants to break the record or beat the rival. The comparison with the Others highlights the weaknesses and blind spots. So, the rivalry is a challenge to perform better. It leads to more intensive trainings, upgrading the possibilities of a body and (mostly) getting better results. A sportsman’s skills improve and his or her performance becomes more effective. Consequently, the Other propels the basic transgression related to the nature of sport.

3.4. The Sport – the Otherness – the Experience

During sport events fans are tormented with intense emotions – euphoria, fury, aggression, happiness, sadness, etc. (see Dunning 1996). The sport’s ‘emotions usually encompass three types of response: physiological such as increased respiration and heart rates; cognitive such as the changes in attention, perception and information processing priorities; and behavioural such as aggression towards an opponent or displaying disgust at an official’s decision’ (Lane et al. 2011: 14–15). It means that a sport experience has a psychological background – the mechanism of preparing the body and the mind for a meeting with the Other.

The emotions are an output of the sport pitch situations. Fans simply react to them. Supporters of opposite teams react inversely – the happiness of ones means the fury of the others. It leads to the phenomenon which C. Matusiewicz calls a '**consolidation effect**' (Matusiewicz 1990: 34–35). In the situation of a collective affection people tend to generalize their emotions. They perceive the group as a union of similar feelings. It conduces to a situation in which every individual who feels differently than the group is treated as an opponent. This kind of a group-thinking syndrome leads to the war scheme – 'who is not with us, is against us'. M Kosewski asserts that the aversion to the Others is related with domination: 'aggression and violence create the basis of social hierarchy' (Kosewski 1977: 225). The easiest way of marking out our domination is to diminish the position of the Others. So, the rivals must be beaten, otherwise the Ourness will be endangered.

At the same time, we can notice that all of those stadium **emotions become regulated** by norms and laws. C. Brick describes the transformation of a match-day experience: 'The 1990s have witnessed a pronounced effort on the part of the police, the football authorities, and the clubs themselves to discipline, regulate and criminalize particular expressions of the match-day carnivalesque. This has taken the form of the imposition of increasingly moralistic codes of conduct and etiquette' (Brick 2001: 16). So, even the emotional aspect of a sport experience is going to be controlled.

Sport puts people in the situation where an opposite perception of a game is crucial. This context supports the creation of the Others. The sport's Others are merely the people who manifest different emotions than the opposite group does.

3.5. Sport – the Otherness – the Feeling of Fear and Desire

The competition with the Other evokes mixed feelings. Most of the sport contests' focus is on the striving for beating the rival and/or remaining unbeaten. E. Browne claims that the sense of rivalry is an attack on the space of the Other. She finds the roots of these rules in the **biological instincts**: 'there is a kind of inner human mechanism, that he/she defends the territory where he/she acts and tries to widen it' (from: Matusiewicz 1990: 28–34). According to this statement, the author asserts that the goal of all beings is to maintain their possession and try to conquer new areas. If we transposed this way of thinking onto the sport level, it would appear that a sport competition is a clear reflection of the biological rivalry. The aim of many popular sports is the conquest of the rival's space. The area of competition is clearly demarcated. There are lines, zones or tracks which label territories as 'Ours' and 'Others'. The main goal of contestants is to break these delimitations – place the ball in the rival's goal (in football, hockey, handball), put it to its basket (basketball) or hit it to their ground (volleyball, tennis), etc. Successful attack is rewarded by scoring a point. But at the same time, you should protect your territory from the Other.

R. Giulianotti and G. Armstrong claim: ‘The history of football is the story of rivalry and opposition. Indeed, the binary nature of football, involving rival teams and opposing identities, precedes the modern game of “association football” (or “soccer”) and its codification in 1865. During the Middle Ages, the various European forms of “football” were often violent affairs involving rival social groups. Often, these games would be part of a folk carnival and so would dramatize opposing social identities, such as those between married and single men, masters versus apprentices, students against other youths, village against village, or young women against older women. (...) With the establishment of football’s modern rules, the game had a more rationalized, universalist framework. Accordingly, the game provided a ready background for the expression of deeper social and cultural antagonisms that were existent anywhere on earth. In Britain, rivalries between the old aristocratic football teams were quickly displaced by those between clubs formed in the new industrial conurbations. Typically, the strongest club rivalries grew up between neighbouring localities, due to larger crowds of opposing, working-class, male fans’ (Giulianotti, Armstrong 2001: 1). Thus, football as an example of sport discipline remain the great illustration of the **fear and desire model**. The layers attack each other’s positions (on the pitch, in the social life), but at the same time they have to defend their own fields (sport and social).

The spatial aspect of fear and desire is also discernible in the fans’ context. A. Bairner and P. Schirlow write about the Northern Ireland football: ‘First, in many respects, the north of Ireland is little different from other places in terms of feelings of communal attachment. Thus, people love those places and objects, football clubs included, with which they are most familiar. Their fears and loathing are reserved for the unfamiliar, the other. Second, the less than universal characteristics of Northern Ireland are by no means confined to a single straightforward ethnosectarian conflict. On many occasions, the collective other does consist of members of the opposing tradition. But intra-community rivalry which is also closely bound up with the history of the troubles should not be ignored. While sectarian division is a major factor in the relationship between certain fan groups, intra-community rivalry, for example, goes some considerable way towards explaining the hatred felt towards Linfield by fans of clubs such as Glentoran, Portadown and Glenavon. Even those relationships, therefore, can be linked to local themes as well as to the more universal reasons for football antipathy’ (Bairner, Schirlow 2001: 45). It shows that the combination of hostility and nearness leads to the xenological fear and desire effect.

4. Conclusion

The aforementioned E. Dunning writes that the question about sport ‘is a question of forming a socially appropriate “we–I balance” in which a person comes to be considered by others as neither too self-absorbed nor too dependent on the

groups to which he/she belongs' (Dunning 2001: 4). At the end of this sentence I could add one more phrase: 'and eager to meet the others from other groups'.

In this paper I have tried to examine the case of Otherness in sport. At the beginning I have introduced the specific character of the Other in sport. The basis of sport is opposition. The competition requires opponents – the sportsmen who compete for a victory. In that part I focused on various aspects of the Otherness. Afterwards, I introduced the main thesis of the xenology. There are five elements of Otherness' characteristic in xenological terms: the Strangeness, the Meeting, the Sign of the 'Ourness' limits, the Experience and the Feeling of fear and desire.

It is worth mentioning that xenological perspective does not explain all the processes in the contemporary sport, but does offer the explanations of some of them – rivalry, cooperation, group forming, aggression, protection (of goal/ball), etc. In the aftermath, it could give useful tools in empirical research.

The figure of the Other is crucial for the contemporary sport. J. McKay, M. Messner and D. Sabo assert that sport should even guard the Otherness – save a 'nonviolent relationship to the Other and to **otherness** more generally, that assumes responsibility to **guard** the Other, against the appropriation that would deny her difference and singularity' (McKay, Messner, Sabo 2000: 230). The more general question is: could sport exist without the Others?

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