

Thoughts about the Theoretical Approach of Recreation, Sport and Tourism

Ferenc Győri

University of Szeged, Hungary

Correspondence: F. Győri, University of Szeged, “Gyula Juhász” Faculty of Education, Institute of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Szeged Hungary. E-mail: gyori@jgypk.szte.hu

Abstract

Despite the fact that recreational activities – like many other activities evolving in parallel with the social development of humans – are as old as mankind, recreation, as a topic for academic interpretation and research was justified only at a relatively late date in the history of sciences. Recreation, according to recent terminology used by researchers is the culture of how humans spend their free time; it relates to active recreation, the creation of well-being, the restoration of people’s abilities to work, as well as the preservation and improvement of their good health. My study is aimed at elaborating on and rethinking the relationship between recreation, sport and tourism by the help of a desk research. As a result of the investigation it can be state that recreation needs to be considered a complex phenomenon which is based on a variety of elements taken from various symbolical domains. At the same time it is also evident that recreational activities cannot be simplistically identified by using parameters of one or another symbolical domain. What needs to be considered instead is the complex recreational experience as well as the person, fully engaged in and enjoying the recreational activity in question. Recreation sport and tourism all have a lot of common attributes, moreover, the same activity occasionally might belong to all three entities. They also have a lot to share concerning their origin; they all might be described as cultural phenomena, and, at the same time, they also play a prominent role in economy.

Keywords: *leisure, cultural phenomena, sport, recreation, tourism*

1. Introduction

Recreation, as a topic for academic interpretation and research, was justified only relatively late in the history of sciences in Hungary, although, the term itself, meaning 'rest, holiday making, school break or admiration of something', was used as early as the beginning of the 20th century (Bánhidi, 2012). Initially the term was interpreted within the specific symbolic domains and systems of paradigms of related disciplines including the sociology of leisure and the geography of tourism. The situation is similar in sport science, because sport research was for long exclusively done on the periphery of one or another discipline. The true significance and the justification of sport as an independent area of academic investigations was only recognized by Hungarian researchers at the very beginning of the 21st century (Bognár, 2009). Tourism research, which is based on geographical investigations is thought to have been in a more favourable position, since the precise boundaries of research were identified by geographers as early as the dawn of the 20th century. Since then tourism research has been considered as a branch of social-, and economic geography. The importance of tourism, the growth in the volume of tourism research became only evident at the end of the 20th century with the emergence of mass tourism (Aubert, 2002) (Table 1).

Table 1: Recreation, sport and tourism as an independent topic for academic research in Hungary.

Phenomena	First turnout	First meaning	Independent academic topic	Name of the discipline
Recreation	Beginning of the 20th century	Rest, holiday making, school break, admiration	Beginning of the 21th century	Recreology
Sport	First third of the 19th century	Entertaining pastime	Beginning of the 21th century	Sport Science
Tourism	First third of the 19th century	Hiking, trip, excursions	End of the 20th century	Tourismology

The process, by which research in recreation (recreology, leisure sciences), sport sciences and tourism (tourismology) have become independent areas of study, was the result of a normal development, caused by the acceleration of the differentiation of sciences in the modern era. These areas today are defined as multidisciplinary sciences, that synthesize and integrate both natural and social sciences. The research topics within these scientific areas are clearly describable, and their complex and complicated systems of relations cannot be monopolized by other disciplines. Since multidisciplinary sciences build on the elements of several other symbolic domains, their terminology comprises specific terms, which are used either within their own specific area, or, are taken over from other, related disciplines. At the same time it is also important to see that the attempts to legitimize the new disciplines have always been characterized by heated debates and biased or unanswered questions, including 'What belongs where?' 'Where are the research boundaries?' 'How to call this area precisely?' Even today these and similar polemical exchanges make our new sciences vulnerable.

The main reason behind this uncertainty is that recreation, sport and tourism have a lot of common attributes. They are similar consi-

dering their aims, task systems and research tools, what is more, there are more similarities than differences between them (Figure 1). This is especially true when considering those areas which are related to one another and can be found on the boundaries of the new sciences. Examples include sport tourism, sport recreation and recreational tourism.



Figure 1. Some common keywords in interpretation of recreation, sport and tourism

Recreation, sport and tourism can be described as cultural phenomena, and, in addition, it is their common feature, too, that they all include voluntarily performed activities, deriving from people's somatic and psychological needs with the aim of renewing and restoring their own physical and intellectual energies and which are typically done in people's free time and which contribute to the development of human personality. Leisure behaviour in all the three cases is closely linked with joy of life experiences, offered by sport, recreation and tourism as well. Sports, recreation and tou-

rism belong to those social activities, which are closely interrelated with natural and social environment, in brief with geographical surroundings in general (Györi, 2014). It is also important to note that all these three areas – through related industrial and service activities – play a significant role in economic growth by providing new jobs, additional income and a growing consumer market. This is one of the reasons why in common thinking these three areas usually stand together and, even specialist literature refers to them as one single sub-discipline (Mitchell and Smith, 1985).

The aim of our theoretical work is to model the relationship between recreation, sport and tourism, to identify their joint areas and to tailor them to formal theories. I also aim to clear up misunderstandings and to contradict some false ideas, which have become stereotypes and which still occur in specialist literature.

Our initial hypothesis is that recreation, sport and tourism need to be interpreted as entities in their own right and, despite their similarities, they do not represent a hierarchical system; they are in a coordinate relationship instead. Their precisely describable sets are shaped by joint (!) aims, tools and methods (Figure 2).

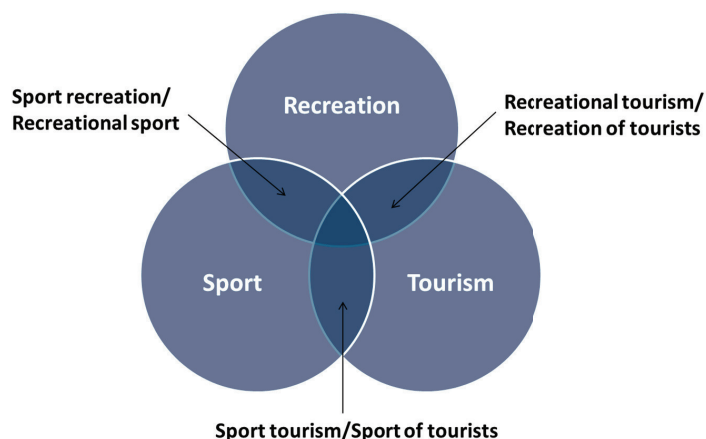


Figure 2: Relationship between sport, recreation and tourism

2. Basic categories

By now the consensus-based definitions of recreation, sport and tourism have become well known both in the specialist literature.

Recreation, according to recent terminology used by researchers is the culture of how humans spend their free time; it relates to active recreation, the creation of well-being, the restoration of people's abilities to work, as well as the preservation and improvement of their good state of health. Recreation comprises forms of positive behaviour aimed at satisfying individual and social interests which are entwined with the creation of people's good somatic, psychological and social well-being (Pigram, 1983; Cushman and Laidler 1990; Szabó, 2002; Kovács, 2002; Bánhidi, 2012). This elaborate definition underlines the fact that recreation goes back to people's natural needs, relates to free time, is culture-oriented; in addition, it brings joy and satisfaction to them and, as a consequence, people's physical, psychological and intellectual performance improves. In Gáldi's opinion (2011) recreation has got three streams: outdoor, health care, search experience. Sometimes recreational activities do not have an organizational framework at all, happen with the members of the family, friends or individually (Kiss, 2009).

Sport, by the definition of the European Sport Charter (1997) 'is types of physical activities, which casually, or, in an organized form, serve the development of people's physical and mental abilities and skills, with the aim of establishing social relationships or achieving certain results at different levels in competitions.' Sport presupposes adequate psychomotor abilities, it is based on regulated, purposeful competition or struggle and, to be engaged in it it is absolutely necessary to be determined, to take risks, to be good or playful. It is also interesting to note that the word 'sport' was brought from England to Hungary by Count István Széchenyi and at that time it used to mean an 'entertaining pastime(!)' (Takács, 2009).

Tourism means the free movement of people (excluding travel between work and home), as well as the services related to needs

deriving from the above. Free time activities, when pursued away from home are voluntarily chosen with the aim of doing something different and enjoy it. Several tourist motivations, models and styles are known (Kollarik, 1991; Fejős, 1998). Tourism has a considerable socio-cultural impact, which is manifested in increased social and regional mobility, as well as in the appreciation of local and national assets.

3. Sport recreation or recreational sport?

The joint areas between recreation and sport are the most critical and the most debated of all borderline areas and they might be in the background of most uncertainties. The first and most obvious problem one encounters is how to call those activities which carry the attributes of both areas, of sport and recreation as well. Is it sport recreation or, alternatively, recreational sport?

Early sport literature prefers the term *sport recreation* and uses it as a synonym for leisure sports (Blagajac, 1979; Kozmanovics, 1989; Dobozy and Jakabházy, 1992; Szabó, 2002), emphasizing the community nature and the joyfulness of sport as well as its favourable physiological effects. Kovács (2002, p. 50) calls those systematic exercises, which are performed with the aim of improving or restoring people's performance, state of health and abilities to work sport recreation, although, he adds that the term *recreational sport* is also possible in this case. In his opinion this latter term is capable of expressing the idea that sport is a tool to achieve an aim.

It is common to try to clarify the difference between sport and recreation. These attempts seems to lead to quite a subjective and unproductive argumentation ('Sport is a partially ordered set of recreation?'). It is rejected the use of the term of sport recreation, and classified sport activities performed with the aim of recreation as part of recreation in motion, a larger set of activities. In this opinion it is the voluntarily performed free time activities that belong to this category.

The use of the term 'recreation in motion' might seem reasonable when discussing physical activities of recreational nature, but it does not mean that no term exists to denote the joint area between recreation and sport, which is sport done in people's 'free time for the enjoyment or of it'. Since, in our opinion sport and recreation represent two *separate entities*, actually there are two terms and both of them are proper.

One of these two terms is the phrase 'recreational sport', suggested by Kovács (2002), and used quite frequently by international researchers. This term is unambiguous because it clearly suggests the *recreational motivation* of people to do sports. Consequently, recreational sport is a kind of sport, that requires physical and mental efforts; it can either focus on achievements, or it can be of competitive nature. Its main aim is to bring joy and achieve the state of well-being. In this sense there is no sharp boundary between recreational sport, hobby sport and amateur competitive sports. First class sport can be distinguished by its professionalism meaning, that its aims do not include recreation or the preservation of health. The recreational aspect of sport play a very important role from the economical point of view (Table 2).

Table 2: Types of sport from economical point of view (Dénes and Misovicz, 1994)

Type of sport	Trading function	Income for the sportsman/woman	Main target
Professional	Event as a show	Determining	Promotion
Recreational competitive	Sport facilities and equipments	Negligible	Promotion and leisure
Recreational social	Sport facilities and equipments	Nothing	Leisure and health

In the light of the above it is to be noted that when interpreting the relationship between recreation and sport in our opinion it is a serious methodological mistake to interpret their relationship in a

linear way meaning, that the differences between recreational sport and first class sport are determined only by physical parameters (e.g. frequency and intensity of training, or pulse rate). These indicators are suitable to evaluate only one cross section of sport, i.e. its impact on people's physiology and health, but in this case the recreational impact of sport remains undetected. The most essential feature of the recreational function of sport is the achievement of the formerly mentioned good psychological condition, as well as fitness, good physical, emotional and mental health. This condition can only be partially described by the number of weekly training sessions or the frequency of heartbeat. The major category to describe the above qualities is called 'flow', meaning the total immersion in sport (Jackson and Csíkszentmihályi, 2001; Kovács, 2002).

The 'flow' can be experienced by all those people who would want to have something positive in exchange for their efforts whatever the background – motivation -of those are. The adaptational process, which is induced by the training programs – even if their aim is recreational – creates increasingly favourable psychophysical conditions for the individual to achieve increasingly better results. Sport becomes a true experience only under physical strain. At the given training level different types of training programs – including competitions - are needed. A significant momentum of recreational sport is that each individual is capable of finding those challenges which suit them the best; thus, sport may become an autotelic experience.

According to Balogh and Domokos (2013) the presence of 'flow' is not only in traditional leisure or recreational sports but in elite sports too. For instance the results of the examination of 'flow' within two very different sports, Hip-Hop Dance and Handball, showed it clearly. There isn't any significantly different the level of 'flow'. Summary, both of physical movement can improve positive emotions. Furthermore, people in different cultures consider different values and traditions important and follow them even in sports (Balogh, 2012). It occurs sometimes that in one country there is a sport which has an intense impact on the economy and

attracts millions of competitors (e.g. baseball in the USA) while in an other country the same sport has other aims and operates on a much smaller scale.

The point in recreational sport is that the reward is the sports activity itself; with other words the motivation is in the activity itself. Sportspersons are not only consumers, but they are also the creators of joyful experiences (Jackson and Csíkszentmihályi, 2001, p. 160). The desire to improve health or to lose weight may serve as external motivations, and they might make people do exercises. But, if the sport activity or, the work completed, do not make people happy, the recreational character of the given sport activity is questionable. Those people, who do sports because they are depressed, desperate or bitter, sooner or later will give it up. This is why well-trained sports and recreational experts are needed who are able to develop optimal and personalized training plans and training programs for the individuals. It is important to evolve the pleasure of doing physical activities, the habits of doing recreational sport in particular at young ages (Ardelean, 2013).

In relation to recreational sports another favourable psychological impact needs to be emphasized: it improves creative thinking. Gondola and Tuckman (1985) experienced the improvement of flexibility and originality as a result of running training programs, while other researchers described growth in fluency and flexibility (Steinberg et al., 1997). According to the most recent investigations those people, who devote more time to recreational sport score outstandingly high in the elaboration sections of creativity tests (Cavallera and Boari, 2011).

Compared with other physical activities it is sport that has the most beneficial impact on the state of health. In studies, carried out by involving secondary school learners it was found that extracurricular sport activity, including regular competitions and training programs, done with growing intensity, was the most beneficial to battle obesity and overweight (Drake et al., 2013). The combination of various recreational activities increases people's efficiency, while endurance sports, including swimming, running, cycling have a positive impact on the state of cardiovascular organs.

Ballgames and fighting sports have a beneficial impact on bone health (Carmont, 2012).

The list of benefits related to recreational sports could be continued but now it is needed to return to the problems of the usage of the term 'sport recreation'. Considering the logic of the term a recreational activity can be called sport recreation, if the main motivation is sport. But very soon it becomes clear that with this definition we are back to square one. The only difference we can detect is that with this definition only sport symbols have been abandoned, and recreational symbols have been adopted. The players, the activities, the tools and the methods are the same, and the only difference is that these factors are now examined from a different point of view. Although, there is one notable difference, namely, that in addition to active sportspeople, now the passive participants of sporting events (onlookers, supporters) are also included in the conceptual sphere of sport recreation. Some investigators state that spectators' and supporters' strongest motivation are the good spirit and positive feeling of the sport event (Gaálné et al., 2012).

4. Sport tourism or the sport of tourists?

The category of sport tourism and free time activities, including travel, is very broad. Sport tourism activities can vary from the discovery of attractive nature spots to visiting events organized in man-made environments. Activities may also range from the passive watching of sporting events to active participation in them. Sport and tourism are interrelated and this feature is caused by temporal and spatial changes in the social behavior of human societies. This process is closely related to the quality of life, the state of health and the social, intellectual and emotional background of individuals, who make up societies.

It has been proven by several empirical investigations that, due to people's growing leisure time consciousness, as well as owing to the changes in their leisure time activities, the idea of 'doing sports every time and everywhere' was gaining significance increasing the number of those who do sport. This is how sport tourism, a new

and growing economic branch with enormous business potentials and an enormous consumer market has been established (Turco et al., 2002; Hsu, 2013). Sport tourism is a new trend in spending free time, a significant indicator of modern lifestyle, and, at the same time, an important factor in global development (Giddens, 2001); in addition, sport tourism has an enormous growth potential in it. Sport tourism stakeholders have got a responsibility to ensure that all persons have equitable opportunities to experience sport tourism services, that such services are morally and ethically delivered, and that sport tourism assets are of appropriate sustainability standards (Turco, 2012, p. 55)

Various sporting events, as well as the many opportunities to do sports attract thousands and tens of thousands of tourists to certain areas or geographical regions, and these visits launch and sustain the development of sport and tourism industry. Not accidentally sport tourism is considered one of the most promising branches of 21st century economy and it is a significant component of regional and local development, which can contribute to the production of local and national income, the creation of new jobs, tax revenue increase, and the development of other economic activities and branches. The share of sport tourism from global tourism industry is more than 10%, meaning, that sport economics and tourism economics are closely interrelated. Consequently, academics all over the world follow with marked attention the development of the relationship between sport and tourism. It can be attested by the fact that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the WTO 2000 have regularly been organizing joint conferences on this topic (Hsu, 2013, p. 475).

Gammon and Robinson (1997) have stated that sport tourism includes all those trips and activities which

a) are related to active participation in a given competitive sporting event either as a competitor (an organizer), or as a spectator (supporter) (hard Sport Tourism);

b) are primarily aimed at actively participating in a recreational sporting event (soft Sport Tourism);

c) although, are not primarily aimed at doing sports, but as complementary activities, make use of the available sport tourism possibilities (hard Tourism Sports);

d) minor form of sport or leisure: visitors participation is purely incidental (soft Tourism Sports)

If the purpose of a trip is to actively participate in a sporting event, competition, or training camp, it is called hard sport tourism. If the purpose of a trip is to go to an event as a spectator or supporter, it is called soft sport tourism. (a-b). Whereas, the sport of tourists serves the needs of tourists who travel for purposes other than sport (c-d).

On the demand side of sport tourism there are the active sportspeople, sport managers, coaches, supporters, spectators, and those, who only occasionally do some sport activity. On the supply side of sport tourism there are the active sportspeople (e.g. elements of the show, competitors), active participants (e.g. managers, promoters), travel agents, producers, distributors, lenders of sporting goods and representatives of the businesses on the periphery of sport tourism, including hoteliers, caterers. Infrastructure, including sport facilities, transport and information agencies, as well as various other social and natural resources also play a significant role in sport tourism (Turco et. al., 2002).

5. Recreational tourism or the recreation of tourists?

In recreational specialist literature it is a common mistake to interpret as recreation each phenomenon (e.g. tourism) that manifests one or another kind of recreational function. When doing so it means the lack of proper perspective, since recreation and tourism represent two symbolic systems belonging to two separate entities, which may have common components, but which do not function in a hierarchical order.

At the same time it is evident, that recreation is one of the main aims in tourism. Due to increasing social welfare, longer paid holidays, the development of productive forces and transport as well as the increased purchasing power of people, tourism has become a mass phenomenon (Kollarik, 1991). The driving forces of recreational tourism are active recreation, the creation of well-being,

happiness and joy, the restoration of people's abilities to work, the preservation and improvement of their health. Many activities might fit this description from visiting faraway places and health resorts to seaside vacations and participation in cultural programs and different types of entertainment. Consequently, it can be stated that there is an intensive border area with wellness tourism and health tourism.

Recreational tourism is considered active tourism if the trip is aimed at actively participating in a recreational activity; it can be considered passive if the trip is aimed at visiting a recreational event (e.g. a theatre night). The recreation of tourists means the recreational activities – given by the natural or social environment – of those tourists who travel for purposes other than recreation (e.g. hotel services).

6. Conclusions

Our paper is aimed at elaborating on and rethinking the relationship between recreation, sport and tourism. Sport is a physical activity which casually, or, in an organised form, serves the development of people's physical and mental abilities and skills. Tourism means the free movement of people (excluding travel between work and home) as well as the services related to the needs deriving from the above. When well-defined, recreation demonstrates the fact that a recreational activity responsible for the physical, intellectual, and emotional regeneration of people, needs to be interpreted as an entity in its own right. In addition, recreation needs to be considered a complex phenomenon which is based on a variety of elements taken from various symbolical domains. At the same time it is also evident that recreational activities cannot be simplistically identified by using parameters of one or another symbolical domain. What needs to be considered instead is the complex recreational experience as well as the person, fully engaged in and enjoying the recreational activity in question. Recreation, sport and tourism have a lot of common attributes, moreover, the same activity occasionally might belong to all three entities. These three

disciplines also have a lot to share concerning their origin; they all might be described as cultural phenomena, and, at the same time, they also play a prominent role in economy.

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