Nationalism Politics and Diplomacy in International Sports

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Introduction

Nationalism and sports are intertwined in a way that both provide symbolic competition among different nations. National conflicts are mostly reflected in sports matches. Sometimes, sports are also used as a vibrant tool of diplomacy. However, contrary to the basic rules of games, which are carried out to please the participants, the involvement of political motives in sports is a matter of routine activity. The influence of political and nationalistic ideologies in sports has been present throughout the history of games. The same is happening in the current postmodern world. For example, the English newspaper The Guardian wrote about the Iceland football team's win at Euro 2016, which was the fantasy of an adventure that captured the nation and turned into a nationwide romance. This shows how sports have brought people from one country together and provided a platform for joy, love and pride. With this example of the football match, we have an idea of how the identities of nations form from individual, national, and global interactions. Events like the Olympics and World Cups provide a blunt picture of national races, characters, and strict competitions. The postmodern era of power has also influenced sports in various ways and changed the simple concept of games that was just to entertain and enjoy.

Description

Generating national ethos or pride from sports is a standard tool among the members of various nations. People in general also feel pride when their team wins over players from other countries. Waving the flag and listening to national anthems are essential activities in present-day sports. It is a critical tool in conveying an indirect message to the confronted nation. Using the actions of fans at ceremonies after the conclusion of the match, policymakers try to influence the people of other countries. The free version of sports activities has developed a sense of fear among political analysts that the ground for the match might become the stage of political debate (Bairner, 2001). Regardless of the bright dresses and displays of individuals at sports events with their background symbols, there is a close link between nationalism and sports. In the history of Ireland, Gaelic sports have significantly taken on an over-nationalistic tone. People are banned from sports activity if they are seen by the authorities as playing association football, rugby, cricket, or a game of British origin. Contrary to rugby and soccer, the fascist nationalists of the Italian state developed their own game

and named it Volata. The step was taken against the replacement of favorite games of British origin. The citizens of Italy linked their newly developed game with the historical perspective and games played before for cultural safety.

In Scotland, the derby fixture featuring Celtic has historically linked the game with the Catholic community, while Rangers has been linked with the Protestant population. Trends have also been seen along religious and political lines. The policy of the Spanish football team in the selection of Basque players was highly linked with Basque nationalism. Similarly, FC Barcelona is promoting its youth with a series of Catalan players such as Carlos and Xavi. The club is widely seen as the de facto representative of Catalonia. The same case happens in Canada, where old and successful players of the hockey team the Montreal Canadiens are always symbolized as francophone. During the period from 1975 to 1995, the political influence of games was enormous between the Nordiques and Quebec City. Different units and groups still influence the ideas of players playing for different teams. Political and religious thoughts are incorporated along with the enjoyment that the participants of any match have, providing ways to the strong relationship between nationalism and sports.

The concept of nationalism is commonly used to grasp the ideologies and collective experiences of the nation. The phenomenon of national identity also reflects the same idea, which is also propounded by various theorists. Categorization, where we provide details about different symbols assigned to them, is a requirement mostly associated with the concept of the ideology of nations. Sports-based national narratives are commonly produced through conversation, imposition and incentives of the precipitating mechanism. The general discourse on nationalism reveals how sports taking on ritual forms might influence national feelings and sentiments (Bairner, 2008). Games have now, in modern society, become a central symbol of nationalistic views and activate identity stories about members of the state. National pride coming from sports is one way to look at the outcomes of such processes. Being proud of the success of our athletes and being convinced that we are the best at football in an attractive way is a feeling associated with banal nationalism.

Those individuals with strong national sentiments are also proud of the success of their athletes. Sports nationalism might depend on the factor of affection for sports. Despite not showing a strong feeling for the nation, some people feel national pride in their players. Smith and Calhoun pointed out that nationalism is placed under the thick layers of culture, and within this relationship, religion and conscious national patriotism can be very close. Religion is closely connected with nationalistic ideas, as it is linked to ritual practices, places, and people, and it is associated with the flavor of the nation. Comparative research concluded that culture has a primary relationship with the cognition of an individual. The educated classes of society have a better understanding of otherness. They can quickly adjust to the cosmopolitan atmosphere with the image that they are part of a larger social group. People with higher education are less proud of their nationalistic sports than people who have less knowledge. Material resources also influence the ideology of nationalism because people with high finances feel more secure than those having minor investments. However, people with increased income should be less nationalistic than others who have low income. In the same way, gender also plays a significant role in the relationship between sports and political ideology.

The result of gender involvement in sports nationalism is that males are more prone to sports and playing, while females are less interested in games. Similarly, older or mature people are more nationalistic than the younger generation. Older people have experienced sports and other events like politics and wars, while the younger class has a public attitude due to interaction and education. However, direct participation in sports events and related physical activity might increase sports nationalism for people of every age. There are several national characteristics that overwhelm the concept of sports nationalism. Some of these characteristics have distinguished the national experience, which fosters nationalism. National prosperity, democratic values, and political and cultural phenomena are the structural factors leading to sports nationalism. The income of the individual, education, and cultural globalization of the country also feature nationalistic ideas (Wong, 2008). The meaning of cultural internationalisation includes the information available to people, expansion of views, and more cosmopolitan citizens with education.

Contexts like East and West also influence sports nationalism. The concept of geographical division is unnecessarily chanted by a few who try to change the thoughts of the majority of people. Differences in industrial, modern industrial, and specific sports traditions and various types of cultures also affect sports nationalism. Studies were conducted by asking multiple citizens how they feel about their team winning at the Olympics. The majority of the respondents frequently replied that, as they are proud of the achievements of their team, they will remain proud until the next match between players of their state and others. The countries of Western Europe have less sports nationalism than the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, as their level of nationalistic sports ideas is higher than that of other nations of the world. The states of Eastern Europe are above average in ideas of sports patriotism. For example, the Czech Republic has less sports nationalism than Poland, which has an increased number of patriotic nationalists living there. Developing states like the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, and South Africa are sports-nationalist countries (Nauright, 2004). Regarding the Asian states, Israel and Japan are below average, while South Korea remains a sports-nationalist country. Certain factors contributed to the sociology of sports.

Sociologists of sports understood the phenomenon of patriotism within case-oriented and historical contexts and failed to note individual characteristics. It also opens up the interplay between individual and collective factors. The importance of sports, along with other issues like political or nationalist issues, indicates common phenomena. Two questions from sports sociologists can shed light on the issue of why games are popular in some countries and not in other states. The answer to these questions is discussed above, along with the nature, type, culture, and collective approach of the respective countries. Patriotism consists of positive and negative characteristics.

There are specific pros and cons of nationalism, which influence people inside and outside any state. Diversity and separation in today’s culture are so intense that it is difficult to believe that we came from one point in time and place. Humans created their idea of the cultural divide, which is causing numerous issues around the world. Excessive pride in one country and its values has a very adverse effect on the people of another state. Nowadays, nationalism is gaining popularity, and the results are before us. Nationalism has created competition among different countries, which could lead to war. In

this nuclearized world, these ideas are not suitable, as a small mistake by one nation could result in the deaths of millions of people (Persson, 2014). We have experienced World War I, which was based on nationalistic ideas. European people had a lot of pride in the honesty they believed was not present elsewhere in the world. These thoughts convinced them that other nations might be plotting and threatening their region. A substantial number of people were affected by the war, along with those statements that enhanced nationalism in their countries. How can nationalistic power overwhelm people to such an extent that it kills eight million people along with causing around thirty-seven million casualties? Nazism was a movement consisting primarily of nationalistic ideas wherein Hitler's pride and love for Germany prompted people to move for the control of other nations. An educator, Carton Hayes, defines nationalism as the pure state of mind with the modern emotional fusion of the old phenomenon of patriotism.

The increased amount of nationalistic views may result in damage to the broader human community of this mortal world. Pride among the people of any state is essential, but excessive pride is poison for all. History reveals that division and confrontation happen all around when approaches like the immense pride of individual states reach their height. African American confrontation is widely discussed in the literature, and it shows how Africans have faced severe treatment, which is now stuck in their minds against the civilized Western states. In the same way, countries colonized by the British had profoundly negative feelings after they gained independence from Western rule (Billings, 2011). A more significant international role, cultural revival, national pride, personal and societal fulfilment, and political influence are the positives of nationalism. They also include economic prosperity over other weaker nations. A sense of a reliable and robust state also sustains the value and sovereignty of the country for those who possess the ideas of nationalism. Attention and importance in the world can also be maintained by nationalistic approaches, as the state of North Korea is doing with other countries, especially the United States. If we claim that English nationalism is positive, other states will ultimately react because their views of nationalism are also excellent. So again, a kind of confrontation will be created among nations.

Conclusion

To sum up the discussion, it is essential to understand the collaboration between sports and nationalism. To combine both is to create a political ideology. Games will not remain just enjoyable, entertaining, or beautiful events for people but will instead become a stage for the conversion of political and nationalistic ideologies. History up to the present time has revealed all the negatives about nationalism in the shape of wars, blood, and mass killing of human beings. In the positives of national pride, there is always the presence of negativity. The vibrant concept of equality for humans, regardless of their creed, race, and culture, must spread and gain value all across the world. The only option left for the postmodern nuclearized world is to save the diminishing human costs.

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