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Hamburg, 16.09.2020
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Must the games go on? Natural and Cultural Preconditions for Sport and Tourism.

Presentation at the XVI. Internat. CESH-Congress, 2011, Oct., 14, in Estoril, Portugal

(The [web-links](#) refer to the addresses <[www.claustiedemann.de/](#)> <[www.sport-geschichte.de/](#)> and <[www.kulturwiss.info/](#)>; the documents to be found in the respective subdirectory <[.../tiedemann/documents/](#)>.)

Most participants of this International CESH-Conference on "Sport and Tourism" in Estoril (Portugal) in October 2011 are tourists - like me. The European Commission's *tourism definition* of 1998 seems to me - with one change - useful:

Tourism is the *field of activity* of "persons who travel to places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for vacation, business or other purposes".¹

So, at this conference, we are dealing with a topic whose *subject and object* we are ourselves in a person. Self-reference and subjectivity are inevitable with this topic. Having been an active sportsman at international level for a long time, I have been a sport tourist - like presumably also some of the colleagues present here. Therefore, I can contribute quite personal experience I've gained in this double role as an actor and as a scientist.

When in 1972 IOC-president Avery Brundage in the Munich olympic stadium after the deadly assassination on the Israeli team in the olympic village spoke the famous words "*the games must go on*", I happened to sit in the stadium not far away from him, and even then I felt not happy with this statement. At least for the survivors of the Israeli team and some others like Mark Spitz this was no good message; they departed.

The assessment of such events and situations remains always subjective. But we can exchange our reasons for our particular assessments. As sport historians we do this afterwards, *ex post*. As reflective people we do this also in advance, *ex ante*, for to be not unprepared if such possible events and situations should occur. I think that *we have to do both*. We are historians and at the same time living people, interested in shaping the future.

I would like to direct the focus upon the general requirements for sport and tourism, with which I make a distinction between natural and cultural preconditions.

Sport and tourism are cultural fields of activity which depend on socio-cultural circumstances free from danger or misfortune, which in turn require natural conditions that at least don't endanger our bodily safety

¹ <<http://www.michael-waibel.de/kus/wm2000/wm2000-def-eu-all.pdf>> (last access 05/02/2013), translated to English by me, C.T. The quoted definition of the European Commission does not read "field of activity" but merely "activity".

existentially.

Recently (2011,03,11) the events in and around Fukushima and their lasting effects have demonstrated again that only under certain conditions the activity fields sport and tourism are possible options for us.

The ray disaster of Fukushima represented *in particular* the natural side of the preconditions. Because of the danger of health damage, since the radioactive processes were and still are out of control, national and international sports events in Japan have been cancelled, for example, the World Figure Skating Championship (later it took place in Moscow).

These "natural" appearing processes are caused by people. Human beings, relying on the controllability of this technology, have invented and built procedures and facilities that have been repeatedly turned out not controllable.² *Up to now, we have been just lucky.*

Besides the accidents which have happened with the *so-called "peaceful"* use of nuclear energy, there is the option of the *warlike* application of atom bombs, whose disastrous effect mankind has experienced already twice in August 1945 (Hiroshima and Nagasaki).

On the one hand still many nuclear explosive devices exist, built specially for *military* use. And on the other hand, also in the *so-called peaceful* sector of the nuclear industry large amounts of radiating "waste" already have been produced and are produced continuously, the "disposal" of which is still completely unknown.

What have these events and facts to do with "sport and tourism"? They represent basic conditions on which sport and tourism are dependent. My general main thesis is:

Sport and tourism depend on socio-cultural circumstances free from danger or misfortune, which in turn require natural conditions that at least don't endanger our bodily safety existentially.

(Unfortunately) these "socio-cultural circumstances free from danger or misfortune" are not simply given; they always and everywhere *must be aimed* by us and "*be produced*" to approach them as near as possible. **I call the *longing and the striving* for such circumstances "peace".³ In this sense, **peace is a prerequisite for sport and tourism.****

After having already defined the concept „tourism“, I would also like to clarify briefly what I understand by "sport":

"Sport" is a cultural field of activity in which people voluntarily enter

² Windscale / Sellafield (1957), Three Mile Island / Harrisburg (1979), Chernobyl (1986), and Forsmark (2006) are only the most prominent out of many disasters before Fukushima (2011).

³ See Tiedemann, Claus (2011): „Frieden und Sport“. In: Giessmann, Hans J. & Rinke, Bernhard (eds.): Handbuch Frieden. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, pp. 564-573. <.../FriedensHandbuchSport.pdf> Now updated and extended in 2. edition: Giessmann, Hans J. & Rinke, Bernhard (eds.), assisted by Schädel, Andreas. Wiesbaden: Springer VS-Verlag 2019, pp. 685-695. <.../FriedensHandbuchSport_2.Auflage.pdf>

into a relationship with other people in order to compare their respective abilities and skills in the art of movement - according to self-imposed or adopted rules and on the basis of socially accepted ethical values.⁴

This narrow concept of sport grasps the activities at (organised, international) sports competitions. There is also a wide range of activities which do not fit in this sport concept, which, however, in colloquial language are referred to as "sports", such as vacation activities like skiing, golfing, riding a bike, hiking etc.

My efforts towards clear concepts are primarily not designed to change the *everyday* language; this would be illusory. But more clarity in the *scientific* language does matter to me. Here, I suggest the concept "*movement culture*" for the big rest marked also as sports in the everyday language.

"Movement culture" is a field of activity in which people deal with their nature and environment and consciously and intentionally develop, shape and present their in particular physical abilities and skills, in order to experience an individual or shared gain and enjoyment that is significant for them.⁵

For the purposes of my concepts, the congress' topic could therefore be specified in **"sport, movement culture, and tourism."**

I can only scarcely indicate the sport-historical dimension of this topic in the short time. Already with the antique games, participants and spectators were predominantly *tourists* - like the "friend of the gods" Ibykus in Schiller's ballad, who on his tour from Rhegium (Reggio di Calabria) to the Isthmian games was attacked and slain by robbers. To protect those sport-tourists during their outward journey and return - at least to and from the games in Olympia - the *so-called "Olympic peace"* - better: „*Olympic truce*" - was proclaimed, the "Ekecheiria". Already to the ancient Greeks apparently was clear:

Sport and tourism depend on socio-cultural circumstances free from danger or misfortune, which in turn require natural conditions that at least don't endanger our bodily safety existentially. But indeed, several violations of the Ekecheiria have happened.⁶

The *natural* prerequisites for sport, culture of human motion, and tourism are largely detracted from human influence. We don't bear any responsibility for the fact, *that*, e.g., earth-

⁴ Tiedemann, Claus: „Sport' - a suggested Definition" <.../sportdefinitionEnglish.html> resp. <.../DefinitionSportEnglish.pdf>

⁵ Tiedemann, Claus: „Bewegungskultur' - Vorschlag einer Definition." <.../bewegungskulturdefinition.html> resp. <.../DefinitionBewegungskultur.pdf>

⁶ Cf. Lämmer, Manfred (1982/83): Der sogenannte olympische Friede in der griechischen Antike. In: Stadion, VIII/IX, pp. 47-83, here: pp. 53-65.

quakes or storm floods happen. However, knowing about the *possibility* of such natural phenomena, we can carry *precautions* so that they harm us as little as possible. Therefore in Japan, after the Fukushima catastrophe, the games of the soccer leagues as well as the scheduled world championship in figure skating were cancelled.

For the results of our self-induced, culturally-related events we bear the *undivided responsibility*. At least since the report of the "Club of Rome" "Limits to Growth" (1972) this is common knowledge. However, in these questions moving the world there are very different interest-based positions.

I plead for to deepen the discussion about what we can and should do to make the natural and cultural prerequisites for sport, culture of human motion, and tourism as safe as possible.

This can succeed only worldwide in big questions on the side of *nature* (as for example global warming). So here in particular the international sports organisations are in the responsibility. And since they are built up in principle (!) democratically (for the IOC, this statement is, unfortunately, still not true), the *regional* sports organisations and, ultimately, of course, *we ourselves* jointly are responsible for what these organisations are working for and how successfully they operate.

The *purely cultural* prerequisites for sport, movement culture, and tourism are even more complicated and more complex than the *natural* ones. They include religious, political and other issues, that are partially highly controversial in our different social systems. Thus, e.g., girls and women in Islamic societies have very low chances to do any sport.

In the history of sport, e.g., problems arose on the basis of *political conflicts*. I'll cite only few examples from the history of the *olympic games*: Some were called off at the outset, because big wars were fought (in 1916, in 1940 and in 1944); after both wars the political conflicts showed some aftermath: in 1920, in 1924 and in 1948 the olympic games e.g. were celebrated without German participation. The workers' olympics in 1936 in Barcelona were broken off because Franco's troops invaded into the republican Spain. Some olympic games were boycotted by national teams for predominantly political reasons (in particular in 1956, in 1968, in 1980, and in 1984 - *in 1936, remarkably, not*).

Thus again, my thesis is confirmed: Sport and tourism are cultural fields of activity which depend on socio-cultural circumstances free from danger or misfortune, which in turn require natural conditions that at least don't endanger our bodily safety existentially.

When in 1979 the world championship in the 505 class dinghy was to be held in Durban / South Africa, my helmsman and I decided not to go there because we thought that the sport boycott, that even the IOC had imposed in 1964 on the racist regime of South Africa⁷, should not be foiled by us. That time, it didn't work - instead of us just other German 505-sailors toured to Durban. They put purely sporty interests over general ethical and sport-political considerations.



pict. 1: The author as crew at the 505 world championship 1982 near Cork (Ireland)

I am not suggesting to discontinue all activities in the fields of sport, movement culture, and tourism completely, as long as the striven aims are not realised. This would be counterproductive and just as bad as to act as if everything were okay. Rather, in my eyes it's necessary and responsible to name the recognised natural dangers and cultural defects clearly *and simultaneously* seek to form them to the better.

Furthermore, I take it for important that we don't justify the maxims of our acting exclusively from the activity fields sport and movement culture (and tourism), but - superior to that as well as basic for it - from the insight, that we are responsible not only for ourselves as social beings but also for our fellow people and the following generations.

*If these most important preconditions are not created soon, then all sporty and tourist activities are endangered, too.*⁸

The conclusions most important for me from this position are that I am first committed to peace as well as secondly to a responsible solution of the frequently ousted human-made problem: dealing with the huge quantities of radiant matter, which still threaten life on this planet for millennia.



Must the games go on? Here *my answer*:

Avery Brundage's dictum "the games must go on" is problematic for me because it is based on reasons committed *only* to sport. **The games *must not* go on, and certainly not at all at any cost.** In a situation like that arising in September 1972 in Munich, the perspective

⁷ Cf. Krumpholz, Andreas (1991): Apartheid und Sport. Rassentrennung und Rassendiskriminierung im südafrikanischen Sport sowie der Sportboykott Südafrikas. München: Verlag V. Florentz; cf. Schlosshan, Andrea (1992): Sport und Apartheid. Geschichte und Problematik der Rassendiskriminierung im Sport in der Republik Südafrika. Frankfurt a.M.: Domus Editoria Europaea (= Sportwissenschaftliche Studien; 4).

⁸ *Meanwhile* (2013.09.08), the IOC has chosen Tokyo as hosting city for the olympic summer games 2020, though the results of the Fukushima disaster still have not been overcome and will be threatening for decades. The cartoon was published two days before this decision in the German newspaper „taz“. - *Meanwhile* again, April 2020, the olympic summer games 2020 had to be postponed to 2021 because of another natural catastrophe, the covid-19-pandemia! **Quod erat demonstrandum!**

should have been extended by superior human aspects. Therefore, I would by no means have chosen the word "must", but as a signal of my grief maybe I would have declared: "***In spite of*** the tragedy that happened - *let us proceed* with the games ***and at the same time*** *let us take care* to prevent any return of such disaster."