

# The Degradation of Sport Value in Post Industrial Era

## A Philosophical Perspective

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### Abstract

*This paper critically reviews the philosophical concept of sport industry. The details of this review will be specified into axiological review as it is an easier tool to deliver the concept. In particular, this axiological review focuses on value system related to sport.*

*This paper has heavily been influenced by a masterpiece "Homo Ludens" by Johan Huizinga. Homo ludens concept has been believed as fundamental to institutionalized human playing contemporary known as sport. In Huzinga's perspective, the concept of ludens does not only represent playing activities pursuing merely pleasure but it also more than that. Ludens is a concept of activities which includes value and norm system. Furthermore, this paper will analyze the basic value of sport as it is conceptualized by Huizinga in comparison to the hypothesis that sport values have been declined in post industrial era.*

*The growth of modernism, marked by industrialization in all aspects of life, has included the change of ludic value. The problem is that weather the process of change is on the track of evolution or is throwing away to the distortion area. This is not a suspect or a prejudice. But awareness has to be maintained considering every movement of the civilization always brings series of ideological dialectics possibly replacing basic values of sports*

*Keywords: Homoludens, sport value, industrialism, distorsi.*

### Introduction

"Where do you learn about moral base? "From Sport", replied Albert Camus a man of letters from France, a nobel prizewinner - an automobile accident cut short of his life. During his childhood and teenage, he grew up in circumstances of poverty in Algeria and Camus fond to play soccer. He looked on the game and had been a kipper. He not only involved in the game under the gate but also lonely perceived and contemplated it (Gunawan Muhammad).

Sport in Malaysia is translated as "sukan" which has a broader meaning compared to

physical activity. Sport is not only processed a body but also an attitude. "He is a good sport", reputedly by an English man toward somebody who can accept lost with big heart and tend to be winner without stopping his opponent. For Camus, that is a good teaching. He learned his morality from sport and in the present time possibly people will jeer him. Nowadays sport experience ethics crisis. Aphrodisiac use, bribery, soothsayer influence and political infiltrate to contest arena. Money and strength (invisible or visible) exploited in, only for victory without ashamed (Gunawan Muhammad).

Is it true that happened nowadays? Anyway to date jargon "Keep the sportivity" still hummed in any athletic arena. Homo Ludens, a thesis which is stated by Johan Huizinga to give illustration of elementary human being characteristic decanted in play activity. It is believed that concept of "playing" in human being represent the basic fundamen especially from athletic activity, and also entity of human being characteristics in general. Through *homoludens*, Huzinga stated that lots of values from playing in human being which exceed biological dimension, logical, and esthetics. But this time, we should ask the values of its existence.

Gloomy facts happened in the world of sport and we can follow it from various non-stoped expand media. From case of referee maltreatment, supporter clash, coach expulsion because of drubbing, unfair process of athlete selection, come up with the high level conspiracy in the election of athletic organizational management. These recently happened where sport have entered a modern system. Generally stated – industrialization - when athletic is not a simple physical activity anymore. Further athletic become a new life dimension in civilization gap which load complex elements as in production unit.

It is true and cannot be obviated when sport have to contact with various element of social life and inhale it in rotation called industry. A question appeared, "whether sport have in such position, shall values loss its base?". It is realized, that every production machine in a subsystem industry, will produce goods in another side will produce a lot of waste and polutan. How about industrial athletic? Whether has more productive side or more reduction process of value and later only fermented become athletic polutan and waste? We should contemplate on it!!

### Characteristics and Important Meaning of *Ludens* in Sport

Playing for human being still represent something secret. Huizinga describes that symptom in comprehensive way and detail. No one able to contemplate its basic. It might not need although very challenging. We have to know the important thing that playing for human being related to the spontaneity, autensity, and self actualization to be human being as intact as possible. Therefore it is concerning world and climate of human being independence, maturation and invention of something that involved as real (Romo Mangun Wijaya). It is a fact that in game we deal with human being function, that cannot be fully defined, either biology, logic, and aesthetic. Specification of game definition remains to be quit from any form of mind and we can express the mental structure and social life.

First of all and particularly, all of game is free action. Game for comand is not a game. Because of its free character, game pass over natural process. It represent its addition and

cover up as decoration. Of course the word "freedom" here shall be meant in diffuse meaning which do not touch the problem of determinism (Huizinga, 1990: 10).

The second characteristic game is not life of "ordinary" or "truthfully". It represent something out from atmosphere of temporary activity which has its own purpose. Even children also know that he "only just make as if", even "he only just fad". Awareness of "only just game" is not really close the possibility that "only game" that can be conducted in serious way; even with self resignation turning into ecstasy which for the time being fully negate the qualification of "only". Every time each game can fully dominate the player (Huizinga, 1990: 12).

The next characteristics of game is closed and limited. It is "played" in certain place and time. It take place and has a meaning of itself. With its limitation from time facet, it is directly interconnected with other dissimilar quality. Game will immediately frozen as culture. Once it is played, it will be in our memory as a creation or spiritual resources, inherited, and anytime can be repeated. The absolute discipline in game going into effect so this characteristics which more positive than just a game; it creates the order and it is an order. It create - in the imperfect world and life confusion - a finite temporary perfection. The order in game is absolute (Huizinga, 1990: 13-14)

### **Play, Games, Sport, and Work**

"Where are you all day long?" Ask a mother to her child. "Playing football" a short reply from her child. Play or involve in a game is a way to mention for someone who doing athletic activity. Beside that the label of "game" generally going into effect given to most of all expanding sport branch. What is actually the meaning of word "playing" or "game" itself seldom to comprehend by people. Then how its relation to sport or work?

According to Ronald B Woods (2007: 5), "play", "Games", "Sport", and "work", can be explained in hierarchical order. He called it as Sport Pyramid. The concept of "Play" is on the base of pyramid. Further explanation, play is a free activity which contains exploration, self expression, dreaming, and pretending. Play has no firm rules and can take place anywhere. The outcome of play is unimportant other than giving pleasure.

It seems simple but not for Huizinga (1950), he stated that the basic concept of many trial towards human investigation and all of its civilization. According to Huzinga (1990:1) play is older than culture, because the definition of culture is not qualified enough it assume human society; and animal is not waiting human to teach them how to play. While in many archeological evidence, animal exist earlier than human. Then it can be concluded that play entity exist earlier than human itself.

Game is an aspect of play that have greater structure and competitive. Games have clear participation goals that are mental, physical, or a combination of both; are governed by informal or formal rules; involve competition; have outcomes determined by luck, strategy, skill, or a combination thereof; and result in prestige or status. Inactive games include board games like Monopoly, card games like hearts, and video games like play station. Active games include stickball, dodge ball, and street hockey.

Sport can be thought as specialized or higher order of play or as games with certain

special characteristic that set them apart. Various authors have defined sport over the years, and generally their ideas contain the following characteristic. The first and perhaps most critical is that sport must involve physical component. Unlike play or games, which may or not be physical, sport must involve physical movement and skill. Sport typically involves physical coordination, strength, speed, endurance and flexibility. The second common characteristic of sport is that it competitive, with outcomes that are important to those involved and often to others such as families, fans, sponsoring organization, and the media. Winning and losing are critical part of competition and powerfully motivate participants to train faithfully and compete using their best effort.

Then why "work" is in the top of Sport Pyramid and is a part of it? Recently in sport discourse we often hear the term "professional". In simple terminology it means someone who does activity because of wage or salary. In sport world an athlete who has reached "high performance" phase, he will not do sport as a hobby or against spare time anymore. Moreover his sport activity will be a work mechanism or as a profession that should reckoned by its result.

### Sport Industrialization: Still Ludens?

Play contain gladness, ease, enjoyment, intensive, free from constraint or sorrow, proceeding to the emancipatoris; and it will be reached in free atmosphere and nature. Unliberated man cannot play spontaneous, free, happy, and satisfy. Games have rule, because real independence only bloom in binding experienced voluntarily and sincerely for higher level value. Complicated, condition and strict rule in games is not a game anymore. Moreover for its which has dominated by extreme motive like business, political, arrogancy, prestige, merely look for win and others which spontaneously mentioned: not sportsmanship, unfair, etc (Romo Mangun, 1990: xxii)

According to Huizinga there is a wide and deep chasm between *homoludens* spontaneous game which expanding by natural instinct of our human being genuiness and in another side nowadays athletic "game" or professional games masterminded by political and business power. Now athletic events have far from *homo ludens* expression, closer to *homo economicus* object, and oftenly being *homo homini lupus*. Clearly stated that it command instrumental rasonality which do not see purpose and meaning anymore, only the way how to win, achievement, and also advantages.

The new emergence of something and come into contact with modern cultural product for some poeple is something captivating, interesting, and bewitching to be adopted. Awareness of reduction and exploitation usually come late. As in the term of "professional" in athletic discourse; many athletic coaches and builders give remarkable motivation to their athlete with any method to improve their performance for the shake of professional demand. After reaching professional level, unconsciously athlete will only become a worker or a model—marketing media for an industrial product. Excellent Ludens activity reduced in limited to *homo faber* or *homo economicus* - screw in an industrial subsystem. According to Coakley (1994: 305) in another case, professional athletic have become business expansion media without ethics. For example, when we see car race event unconsciously we only gaze

on walking billboard which offer products like alcohol and cigarette that in some countries actually banned to be presented on the television. However by manipulating athletic as media, producer can do infinite expansion.

### War Ideology behind Industrialization

In spanning history of world civilization, expressed that first time industrialization word used in English. We recognize it as " industrial revolution". This is used to give the picture towards English far reach progress with the invention of some modern appliance production after Enlightenment era in English. This period was used to sign a period where at that time empirical thought motorized by John Locke, David Hume etc has predominated opinion pattern. Thereby, from inferential existing history can be concluded that 'industrialization' have empirical pattern.

Presumably a matter cannot be avoided that every civilization emergence always bring new ideology. Possibly it will too difficult for us to identify concerning many ideology have developed until this time. Perhaps like others, everything emerge in two faces. Positive, interesting, and promising in one side but cruel and harm on the other side. Then how about industrialization track mostly in sport world? Apparently it needs more study and we should aware of it.

As drawn in Maslow's requirement pyramid or theory about human being requirement, fundamental requirement in that pyramid is food, gird, and house. In present sociological discussion, those requirements can be represented with one expression that is economic system. Because it related to the elementary requirement of human being, hence various relevant ideologies which related to economic system is more quickly to expand.

One of the oldest and strongest ideology that remain and dominate untill in this time is capitalism ideology. Etymologically the word capitalism come from the word capitol means ' capital'. Thereby this ideology is emphasizing at capital domination in particular economic system. All kinds of fee, appreciation or sharing holder will be reckoned according to capital which is figured in. There is no love compassion, barren, and reduce the human values, ( franz magnis )

It can not be avoided when capitalist ideology victory mastering more than three quarters of world take to clutch its power in global intervention space entitling industrialization, included in athletic world. Thereby it is not just joking when we show our suspicion toward the industrialization track in sport world. Considering that historically industrialization developed between a marriage of dry empiricism and capitalism then it will not confess sport supreme values which passing over material logic.

### Cheating and Fair Play in Sport

A common features that happened in childhood, especially in rural area where a lot of traditional game using physical activity still can be found – a child who like to play insincere tend to be avoided by his friends, even he is not enabled to follow in a game. *Persona Non Grata* - A social law which formed unintentionally. Through this media a child start to learn the meaning of honesty, obey the rules, and appreciate others. Generally people

mention it in sport discourse as Fair Play.

People know the word as if they understand when they hear the term "fair play" although it will be difficult for everyone when they should explain it. One popular word which has close relation with the definition of fair play is "justice". Through this concept it will be easier for us to understand what is meant by fair play.

In history of philosophy the dialogue concerning to the concept of "justice" has started since 400 BC; about 2400 years ago. Plato as a great and an influential philosopher along the history gave his explanation in detail about the concept of "justice" (*dikaion*) in lovely dialogue in his works *Republic*. Firstly, justice meant a loyalty toward law or in sport we mention it as rule of the game (Franz Magnis Suseno, 1997: 18). It is same as stated by Huizinga that play is an order. Seeing this fact recently we should feel apprehensive. Various sport events performed loaded with the cunning and trick tactics disobey the regulation to win. Referee who acts as a judge of justice often get misfortune and roughly treatment from athlete. It can be stated that the term of fair play in sport is only useless rumor.

The second definition of justice according to Plato is a harmony of parts in a whole (Eugene Freeman & David Appel, 2004: 168). Now sport has developed as a complex system. Many components are interrelated in chain. It will be wonderful if the conception of justice or fair play in term of harmony conducted in this way – where each element is going smoothly according to its function. But what is going on? As explained previously, in global industrialization space carrying capitalism, pressure of economic motive become overweening. The consequence is shifting function of harmony system which always appear. Sport shifted from its basic concept as a game becomes serious place for working to be done – it is common to be called professional. Economy sector takes this role dominantly so conjure up sport become a business place without ethic.

Then why cheating should appear in sport? Cheating in sport is the act through which the manifestly or latently agreed upon conditions for winning such a contest are changed in favor of one side. as a result, the principle of equality of chance beyond differences of skill and strategy is violated (Oliver Leaman in Ronald. B Woods, 1988: 277).

Victory is one word that can make everyone doing anything to realize it. Victory should not be the main purpose as stated by Huizinga in the concept of the play. It tends to desire satisfaction, happiness, and freedom. Recently it seems difficult for all athletes to release from the desire of victory. Even cheating impressing something not bad but represent part of strategy. As an example in football we often hear the term "diving"; that is a pretense behavior incurred by the wrong behavior or injured by opponent. Through this behavior expected a referee will give the advantage for him, just for example by giving penalization or yellow card for adversary. Of course this is a sadistic cheating. But practically it has become a equity and considered to be the part of tactics to win the contest. Even the title of 'expert' passed to athlete who do it in sophisticated way. Once more the term fairplay in sport questioned again.

## Conclusion

It is true that cannot be avoided when sport have to contact by various social elements expanding in this time. Trying to do the analysis toward athletic activity, presumably it is complicated to reflect its own reality (sport an sich). It is not excessive matter when sport have transformed become a separate cultural phenomenon. A concept should remain firmly its fundamental value as a certain characteristic after passing metamorfosis process.

The main idea of this article is trying to look into the progress reached by sport as a part of this present global industrial subsystem from another side. It needs an awareness and wary toward several new things which emerge under the cloak of " industrialization and modernity". The conflict of dialectics among ideology which appear in every civilization often difficult for us to put something in well-balanced position. New, forward, efficient, productive, etc always more foremost and tend to be believed without caring to another side which offering reduction, distortion, and exploitation.

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## Question:

1. In professional area will be degrade value of sport, on sport recreation, how your explanation about it?
2. What do you mean sport value?
3. What different sport value in pre and post industrial era?