



**»It is evident that the journalist who suffers from chauvinism and nationalism is more dangerous because of his mobilizing power«
said Fékrou Kidané**

Until democracy rules in the developing countries, sports fans there will continue to know more about Manchester United than about their own people's merits

of European championships or the portrait of big stars.

Under these conditions, the question is very rarely asked about why so much space is given to European sport and so little to Africa, Asia or Central and South America. So why does the West, which monopolizes the information distribution system, not try to provide news on sport from developing countries.

That is why it is said that one-way information is an arbitrary trademark of an unequal communication system.

Seeking sensations

It is clear that the perception of information varies from country to country, depending on its political system.

However, I do not think that the situation will change as long as democracy, the right of expression in all its forms, have not been consolidated in the vast majority of developing countries, and that modern technology and the necessary means are not made available.

Sports fans in developing countries will therefore continue to be knowledgeable about European football, Manchester United, Ronaldo and will know less or nothing about the Olympic football champion, Cameroon's national team, or the new Asian football champion, Japan.

In any event, Olympism and sport development do not really interest many journalists, unless it is of a sensational nature. I still believe, anyhow, that journalists in developing countries should be concerned with overall social and cultural development, of which physical education and sport are an integral part.

In addition, I believe that we have to assume the responsibility of participating in the education of the masses. If violence around sport and racial discrimination has become a common practice today and if the message on fair play and tolerance is not clearly understood, this is partly due to the fact that we have failed to do our job well.

It is evident that the journalist who suffers from chauvinism and nationalism is more dangerous because of his mobilizing power.

Unfortunately, we live in a society which is more attracted by sensational news which helps newspapers make profit and good business. The good newspapers are still around regardless, even though you read more news about football than any other sport.

Criticism is good when it is constructive and not destructive. I believe that the sports press can play a significant role in the society by using sport as an instrument to promote peace, human rights, justice and democracy, the fight against racial discrimination, drug abuse and violence, the protection of the environment, eradication of poverty, and for sport for all. It is not sensational but it is worthwhile.

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Unequal communication

Fékrou Kidané, The Director of International Co-operation of IOC, proved in the 1980'ies that 80% of sports journalists from developing countries are football specialists and the remaining 20% covering other sports which are more popular than football in their respective countries. Once a journalist himself, Kidané stressed the importance of the media in development processes.

There are no well-established information and documentation centres on physical education and sport to consult, or enough libraries and bookstores from where to borrow and buy books.

This situation alone makes it difficult for journalists, technicians and researchers to improve their knowledge and follow the changes and innovation in world sport.

The history of sport of our countries and regions has yet to be written. The historical documents of our forefathers have disappeared or been misplaced. Those who have witnessed the history of sport of their countries and continent are taken away by age or other causes without having written their memoirs. We say in Africa that the death of an elderly person is like a library which burns.

(...) The media in most developing countries is state-owned, apart from a few exceptions.

Censorship is therefore the main weapon which controls the behaviour of the mass media.

Self-censoring has even become a qualification for journalists in developing countries.

Meanwhile, the government-controlled media, although heavily subsidized, owes more to the sports columns that provide sales, rather than politics.

Buy TV rights in spite of crisis

Sports broadcasts on radio and television are the most popular. In spite of economic crisis, the Ministries of Information do their utmost to obtain TV rights for major sports events, such as the Olympic Games and the football World Cup.

It is true though that even in the field of sports news, negative aspects are emphasized much more than positive aspects as far as developing countries are concerned in the Western media.

You will rarely find a reference to Asian or African sport in the so-called international press. It is only when athletes win gold medals at the Olympic Games, World Championships, or when teams perform well at the football World Cup, that you can read a short account on them.

On the other hand, the developing countries' press has unconsciously become a relay for the Western press by presenting, every day, the results

