



Wanderley Marchi Júnior

Towards an analysis of contemporary sport: the proposition of a model¹

Abstract

This essay is grounded in conceptual reflections on sport developed within the scientific field—particularly in the sociology of sport—as well as in the enduring notions of sport constructed in society. Based on this, the essay aims to present a proposal for understanding sport through an analytical model that enables to interpret its characteristics in the contemporary context. This model is composed of five dimensions: emotion, esthetics, ethics, entertainment, and education. The analytical model we propose serves as a tool that may contribute to the analysis of sport in contemporary times, avoiding a restricted understanding centered on biological and health-related aspects, as is often observed in physical education programs. In this way, the model broadens the interpretative horizon of sport, offering theoretical foundations for contemporary socio-cultural analyses.

Keywords: Analysis model; Sociology of sport; Contemporaneity; Sports.

Para uma análise do esporte contemporâneo: a proposição de um modelo

Resumo

Este ensaio fundamenta-se em reflexões conceituais construídas sobre o esporte no campo científico, especialmente na sociologia do esporte, e nas noções perpetuadas sobre o esporte na sociedade. Considerando isso, temos como objetivo principal apresentar uma proposta de compreender o esporte a partir de um modelo de análise que permita interpretar suas características no contexto contemporâneo. Este modelo é composto por cinco dimensões: emoção, estética, ética, espetacularização e educação. O modelo analítico que propomos é uma ferramenta que pode contribuir para a análise do esporte na contemporaneidade, não restringindo a sua compreensão à aspectos biológicos e de saúde como se observa, de forma recorrente, em cursos de formação de Educação Física. Assim sendo, o modelo amplia o horizonte interpretativo sobre o esporte, oferecendo subsídios teóricos para análises sócio-culturais contemporâneas.

Palavras-chave: Modelo de análise; Sociologia do esporte; Contemporaneidade; Esporte.

Introduction

Sport may be challenging for those who are dedicated to studying it. Given its polysemy, sport takes on different meanings considering its diverse historical, political, social, cultural, and

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economic contexts. The fluidity and alternations of understandings about sport can mean a clash between social reproduction and social transformation: while there are old attributions of sport, there is also a movement of formulating new questions about this constantly changing social phenomenon (Marchi Jr. et al., 2019).

In light of contemporary sport, there is the impression of imprecision over its understanding both in society and in science. Thus, we ask: what is sport and how do we understand it in contemporary times? This question, which guides and encourages this work, may present several answers and discussions — which we do not intend to stop, but rather approach in favor of a theoretical deepening. What we will address in this work is not an imposition of a sport theory or a closed and exclusive concept, as there is a long history of tension around the perspectives favoring and against the construction of definitions (McBride, 1975; Kleinman, 1968).

In the following, we will present some concepts of sport formulated throughout history. Then we can better understand what sport is and be able to grasp the central aspects that each author considered when formulating their definition (Kleinman, 1968). Subsequently, we will present the proposal of an analytical model that aims to pedagogically assist in the reading and reflection about sports in contemporary times, based on theoretical readings and considering the practical factor evidenced in today's society. The model will be explained thoroughly in the section entitled "Towards an Analytical Model of Sport in Contemporary Times".

We will expose an analytical model previously presented in the studies of Fermino et al. (2018), Varotti (2020), Nunes et al. (2021), Ferreira (2021), Boschilia and Marchi Júnior (2021) and Souza, Amstel and Marchi Júnior (2023) in the area of Physical Education, and Américo et al. (2019) in the area of Communication; it was published in the book "Introduction to the Sociology of Sport" by Marchi Jr., Almeida, and Souza (2024)², besides having been originally presented in Marchi Jr. (2015). We believe that it is of utmost importance to disseminate and discuss this model beyond the borders of South America, as it was structured and tested in its place of creation. The aim of this essay is to present a proposal for a model of analysis that allows us to interpret and understand sport in the context of contemporary times.

Below, we will present some conceptual perspectives on sport in order to briefly explore the topic. It's important to note that there are countless authors who have contributed to the discussion of the sporting phenomenon, and our goal is not to overlook or diminish any particular study. Rather, this is simply a means of summarizing some common conceptions of sport.

² A book review can be found in Moraes and Gomes (2020).

What is sport? That is a question with many answers

In the linguistic field, according to Melo (2010), from the 15th to the 20th century, the British used the word "sport" and made conceptual changes to it, while the French adopted the same spelling from the 19th to the 20th century, as did the Portuguese during the 19th century. However, according to the author, in the 20th century the Portuguese started using the term "desporto", which has existed since the 18th century, meaning fun and recreation.

When we think of sports in modernity, we find that it is traced back to aristocratic practices in public schools in England during the 19th century (Bourdieu, 1983; 1990). Whether in the tradition of fox hunting, rowing competitions, or soccer, the English brought to the world new elements within cultural perspectives and social distinctions that can be disseminated and become available for behavioral appropriation.

Sport, in a process of expansion and internationalization, started to be resignified and acquired new interpretations according to the context in which it would spread. Its modalities multiplied and unfolded into original practices little by little, which attracted practitioners and created a demarcation between amateurs and professionals. From this scenario, national and international competitions were created, surrounded by training methodologies that intensify the experience of the sporting spectacle experienced by more and more sports fans and, in turn, also surrounded by the political, cultural, and economic elements that constitute it.

Perhaps this understanding of the sporting phenomenon arising from modernity is the most accepted and universalized (Struna, 2000). However, there are other processes of apprehension of what sport is as a result of the "sports talk" by Umberto Eco (1984). In this process, the understanding of sport is not given by practice, but by the discourse promoted by the sports press. Individuals adhere to media discourses and tangle practice and what is presented to them — which confuses the idea of practicing sport with that of talking about sport. Likewise, this understanding leads to the incorporation of "truths" about sports that are disseminated by social agents with assumed authority on the subject. That, sometimes, fosters analyses that are poorly grounded.

In contrast, the academic environment has always contributed significantly to the search for an understanding and definition of sport (Klein, 2017). This search for a concept is surrounded by barriers, given the difficulty in rigorously defining sport or differentiating it from other physical activities. Below are some examples of incursions into this object.

Georges Magnane (1964) understands sport as a leisure activity, whose predominance is physical effort practiced competitively, and that includes specific regulations and institutions,

besides being susceptible to professional transformations. Here, we note the attention paid by Magnane and other sport sociologists to the professionalization perspective and the respective unfoldings of this process, which was already glimpsed in the 1960s by sport scholars (Loy, 1968).

Jean-Marie Brohm (1976) points out that the term sport is polysemic as it relates to different and complex social realities. However, the author analyzes sport as a physical activity of an industrial society founded by the scientific organization of work and the pragmatic belief in endless human progress. In Brohm's reading, we highlight the notion of polysemy — a concept that will be central to the model of analysis and reading of sport. However, it should also be noted that sports rationale is based on the idea that modern sport is accompanied by, and often even submissive to, the relations and conjunctures of capitalist society. Malcolm (2012) adds that Brohm places sport as a nationalism legitimizer that depoliticizes the masses by diverting its attention away from economic exploitation.

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1983; 1990) defines sport as a structural space of specific social practices, called a field, constituted of its own struggles, where the social agent's positions are established based on competition, on the dispute for objects, and on their elements of distinction. In this field, commodification interferes with the definition of the capitals assigned to certain practices. This is how the relations between the supply and demand of sports are defined.

Thus, Bourdieu states that the sports field is shaped by the interconnections between the agents and the social structures that make it up. Based on this analysis of modern sport, the habitus and capitals are determined and decisive for understanding the social dynamics circumscribed in diversified sociocultural contexts in contemporaneity.

Norbert Elias (1992), in turn, starts from the assumption that societies reveal compensatory means to attenuate tensions that arise from the process of emotional self-control, and sport is one of these means. Cathartically and controlled, sport would attend to the mimetic emotions of relationships, risks, and tensions present in everyday life. For the author, modern sport is the civilizing impulse in the process of the sportification of hobbies.

The figurative reading of sport is also contemplated in a work by Elias and Dunning (1992, p. 232) in which they highlight it as an organized group activity and a confrontation between at least two parties. The authors also point out the use of physical effort in a context buoyed by known rules and, in each meeting, a specific (flexible) pattern of group dynamics occurs, but that is not necessarily predictable in "its course and its outcomes" (Elias and Dunning 1992, p. 232).

Other authors could be presented in terms of interpretative contribution and definition of sport, however, considering that in most examples the concept is given with a focus on the context

of modernity, we briefly highlight the relevance of some authors, or even supposed "schools", that have dedicated themselves to the reading and historical and theoretical dimensioning of sport in this context. These are the works of J. Loy (1968), G. S. Kenyon and J. Loy (1969), A. Ingham and J. Loy (1973), H. Edwards (1973), Günter Lüschen and Kurt Weis (1976), Allen Guttmann (1978), G. Sage (1980), Klaus V. Meier (1981), Pierre Parlebas (1987), B. D. McPherson; J. E. Curtis and J. Loy (1989), Jorge Bento and Antonio Marques (1989), Manuel Garcia Ferrando (1990), Manoel J. G. Tubino (2001), among others.

Without disregarding these contributions, but aiming to move in the direction of analysis complementarity, more recent readings and projections with contextual links to contemporaneity will be presented. Mauro Betti presents an interesting re-reading of sport, considering "the classical definition of sport in sociology" as a dimension. For this author, sport is:

[...] an institutionalized, conventionally regulated action, which develops on a ludic basis in the form of competition between two or more opposing parties or against nature, whose objective is to designate the winner or log the record through a performance comparison (Betti, 2002, p. 29).

Through Betti's reading, we notice conceptual advances and additions that allow us to open different fronts for the dimensional analysis of sport. The issue of sport institutionalization leads us to note that sport — the social phenomenon of greatest growth and investment in the 21st century — is undergoing a process of administrative organization that, in certain instances, implies the bureaucratization and strategic action of its institutions. This dimension is confirmed by the notion of universalized, defined, and legislated rules by sports structures endowed with the powers to do so.

The identification of the ludic basis in the form of competition between opponents or against nature leads us to theoretical insights that affected the dimension of sport. The process of sportivization of hobbies or body practices up to the current perspectives, such as situations in which the environment becomes a scenario for commercialized and spectacularized practices, can even lead to the creation of new modalities.

Still considering this definition, we highlight the perspectives of performance, of comparing results, and of the record. These aspects are closely related to social structuring elements of what we call contemporaneity. Many times, regardless of the burden in question, there is a frantic search for the best result, for superior performance, for excellence, for the benefits, etc. These elements, for Bourdieu (1996), are essential to provide a sense of practice — both in life as a society and in sport.

And here is in order a further reflection on the record and how this fact is associated with life in society. Nothing is more representative of the way society operates today than the obsessive search for "breaking" records in the most varied fields of activity. Thus, the record is understood as the track of something not yet accomplished by man, that is, an achievement materialized in an institutionalized capital that gives its bearer, in a given historical time, the constitution of a symbolic capital that is distinctive in society. A mechanism of meritocratic recognition and distinction — in sport — is often questioned and refuted in the critical analysis of social stratification and reproduction.

In the continuous search for new definitions and interpretations, we found significant contributions in the work of North-American sociologist Jay Coakley that could subsidize the understanding of sport. For the author, the concept must be interpreted plurally and questioned in its traditional way of understanding. Namely, sports "are institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards" (Coakley, 2007, p. 6).

From this critical reading and interpretation, we can strengthen and add elements to the present discussion. The reinforcement is noted in the perspectives of (social) competitiveness in sport, its characteristic of institutionalization, the sense of physical activity/skill, and its plurality of meanings. The innovation lies in the motivational aspects that derive from what the author identifies as "internal and external rewards". The "rewarding" sense is closely related to the professionalization process and takes into account intrinsic and extrinsic aspects and values attributed to sport.

Despite the relevance of this concept, the author warns that in many cases this specific definition is used for practical reasons, while at other times or for other reasons, more flexible approaches are needed to consider customs, traditions, and particularities of certain societies in certain historical times. Thus, the physical culture perspective becomes more acceptable when faced with the issues and characterizations presented for sport in cultural diversity, even meeting the dimensions of an analysis of "organized sports". These meet the definition widely used in the United States and in Europe in which "sports are physical activities that involve challenges or competitive contests" (Coakley, 2015, p. 7).

Although past research in the sociology of sport has focused mainly on what we would describe as "organized sports," current research often focuses on physical culture, which includes all forms of movement and physical activities that people in particular social worlds create, sustain, and regularly include in their collective lives (Coakley 2015, p. 7).

For Coakley, sport is treated as a social construction and incorporates parts of a social world in which people interact while respecting certain social, political, and economic conditions, which were created by themselves. Still in this process of understanding sport, the author (Coakley 2015, p. 11) presents us peculiarly and critically with what he calls the "great sports myth." In this concept, sport is generally conceived as essentially pure and good, and all its inherent characteristics are transferred to all those who practice, consume, or sponsor it. Therefore, there would be no need to study sport, as it already is what it should be. From this point on, the author builds his arguments in order to deny this view and point out the agents and social structures that benefit from this kind of interpretation.

Approaching the thought of Coakley, Jim Parry seeks to present a concept of sport from what he calls the "six logically necessary conditions for the use of the word 'sport'"³ (2018, p. 7). These criteria have the primary purpose of defining what is and what is not sport:

1. Human: sport is essentially practiced by human beings and aims at their development;
2. Physical: sport is any activity that demands physical effort, regardless of intensity;
3. Skill: given the characteristics and potentials of the human being, all his abilities must be stimulated and developed in sport, involving practical and educational processes;
4. Contests: sports have the presence of their competitive aspects in an established "contract" that is known by the parties involved in the practice and that seek excellence in performance and results;
5. Rules: as mentioned in the previous item, the (universally) established rules that determine participation in these practices are known and existent: these rules are about fair play, equality, and justice;
6. Institutionalized: there is a whole structural and organizational apparatus in sports that controls rules and participation by constituted and recognized authorities with full powers to exercise their function.

Parry's contribution betters the demarcatory perspective of the concept of sport; however, it seems somewhat deterministic to us. In contrast to Parry's reading, we find in Torrealba (2009) an expanded perspective that is based on and is an interpretive reference of Platonov's understanding (2004). For him, the term sport can be considered in broad or narrow senses, that is, as a "multifunctional social phenomenon" or a strictly competitive physical activity.

Torrealba (2009) understands sport as an educational, playful, and competitive activity that requires the maximum development of physical, technical-tactical, and psychological possibilities in specific events. The Latin American author adds: the main and unique characteristics of sport are

³ It is important to note that Parry (2018) stresses, in addressing these six conditions, that he is referring to Olympic sport.

the presence and the specificity of preparation for competitive activity. Torrealba (2009) understands that the main objectives of sport are the achievement of the best results, as well as the health and physical improvement, companionship, solidarity among people, ideological, intellectual, moral, and ethical education.

When we deal with the polysemy of sport, we invariably seek the possibility of interpreting the multiple meanings, forms, and functions that the sporting phenomenon allows and prescribes. In this sense, Torrealba's (2009) approach is in line with our considerations, especially when he highlights identifying aspects of sport such as education, playfulness, and competitiveness developed in specific contexts of physical practice and culminating in the observance of other factors and social goals to be achieved.

Put differently, this gathering of definitions and understandings about sport led us to Roland Renson's work, having the full understanding that the work is not done after analyzing these authors or lines of thought and that they stimulate and encourage us to search for new readings and references. Renson argues that the concept of sport is a product of the West, a cultural product of modernity recently imported and exported globally. He also reinforces that sport has diachronic, ethnocentric, and cross-cultural meaning (Renson, 2014).

In the face of postmodernist discussions, Renson stands for the concept of "movement culture," a perspective that encompasses four spheres of activities that are "universal, historical and cultural, elements shared by all groups of individuals over time" (Renson 2014, p. 139). The spheres are defined as such:

Physical exercises are part of the sphere of "instrumental" physical culture of homo exercens. Physical competitions are part of the "competitive" sphere of homo agonizens. Games and play that involve movement belong to the "ludic" sphere of homo ludens. Acrobatics and dancing are part of the "expressive" performance sphere of homo exhibens. All four of these spheres are interconnected, and "sport" manifestations are the central point of intersection between them. (Renson 2014, p. 139).

Renson's contribution is extremely timely for our purposes as this schematic and interpretive structure proposed by the author comes very close to, and fundamentally organizes the concept of polysemy in sport.

In light of this theoretical review on the concept of sport, and bearing in mind that our objective is to add knowledge to the study and not to deconstruct what has been built in view of its historical and cultural specificities, we understand that sport is complex, broad, and subject to several perspectives of analysis. This way, we contemplate the possibility of understanding sport in

the contemporary world as a polysemic, institutionalized, regulated, and competitive physical activity: a historical phenomenon of mankind, built and determined from diversified sociocultural contexts, which is in constant development and in a frank process of professionalization, commercialization, and spectacularization⁴.

However, even with the respective conceptualization, a greater contextualization of sport with society and its generational dispositions is still missing. Our intention in studying the conceptual possibilities of sport refers us to the possible social interconnections that it determines while also being determined by. It is with correlational analyzes that we seek interpretations able to observe and consider the polysemic, contextual, and dimensional features of sport.

Thus, for example, we try not to dwell on the limitations, manichaeism, or reductionism that hasty interpretations can often lead us to. It is about avoiding the induced adoption of "theoretical defense" positions from voices, critical, or adherence discourses. These are positions invariably defined by situational interests and structurally located in the social fabric. Therefore, a more expanded reading is required regarding the social contextualization of sports in contemporary times. It is from this logic that we enter the perspective of building an analytical model.

Toward an analytical model of sport in contemporary society

Prior to engaging with the analytical model, it's important to note that it should be subject to testing in empirical studies. The purpose of this essay is to present the model in broad strokes, with the understanding that it may also be refined and improved through practical application.

An important reference to start our proposal would be understanding and adopting the sociological category of mimicry⁵. The term "mimetic" refers to events that elicit emotions similar to those experienced in everyday life. These events can evoke a range of emotions, such as fear, laughter, distress, love, empathy, pleasure, friendship, and hate. According to Elias (1978, p. 155), behaviors and experiences in a mimetic context deviate from typical experiences and behaviors in what we consider real life. This concept allows us to explore dimensions such as emotion, esthetics, ethics, entertainment, and education, which are present not only in society but also in sports, whether mimetic or not. By problematizing this phenomenon often considered trivial, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances that underlie it.

⁴ However, this is not our "final version" for understanding sport, if that is possible. We have been careful to continuously search for authors and studies that deal with this theme and add more views and perspectives to the understanding of this object of study.

⁵ For a better understanding of social mimicry and sport, see Marchi Jr. and Gebara (2020).

In it we find the establishment of the dialogue between macro and micro-social structures, that is, it is possible from social mimicry to understand the relations of interdependence that are established between agents and the social structures that establish certain configurations or social locus of action. Thus, this theoretical perspective offers an option to view the communication established between sport and society, especially regarding collective social representations. Examples of this reading can be found in the transfer of values and behaviors from capitalist and/or neoliberal society to the manifestations of sports.

For example, many times students in the formal education system, specifically in physical education classes, regardless of their age, show interest in certain sporting practices based on their idols or high performance standouts. How many times on weekends, in social-sports clubs, do their members not organize specific sports tournaments, judging — through an "official" regulation, and its set of rules and procedures — the best team or "athlete" with their respective awards? How many times have we witnessed or heard speeches from professional athletes declaring their effort, commitment, dedication, and resilience to reach certain results and achievements from a "virtuous view" — almost a novelistic plot — indispensable to achieve these victories? And these are just a few possible examples.

But what are we talking about? It is precisely about the transfers arising from social mimicry. By presenting these examples, we want to make explicit that behind a supposedly naive interest of a student, an associate, or a professional athlete, is the manifestation (often perverse, in the sense of the hidden domination proclaimed in Pierre Bourdieu's studies) of a set of references and values that will unconsciously determine a way of thinking, acting, and seeing the social world in the course of time. It is, for example, the capitalist world's work relations and the market players that end up defining how people should act when facing a competitive process, who are the examples to be followed, and what are the best decisions and values to take on a certain situation, whether at school, at a club, or professionally. In this sense, the answers to the questions raised above become evident and fundamentally coherent with the established relational set.

However, this process is not unison, that is, it is not a one-way relational perspective. We are invariably tempted to believe that there is only a transfer of values and behaviors from the macro to the microsocial, when in fact there is also a value movement from the micro to the macrosocial — essentially when successful situations are established in this area. An example of this happens when certain sports, including their main structuring agents, are taken as reference for the development of large corporations or for the training of their executives.

The established mimetic between society and sport ends up reinforcing our argument about the dimensions attributed in the context of contemporaneity and making our readings and analyses essentially discuss the interconnections between contexts, dimensions, and polysemy. Ultimately, this logic of reasoning leads us to review the unfolding of constitutional sport manifestations and the composition of new sport scenarios.

New scenarios are constituted, or even "new sports," from derivations of those already traditionally established or even "invented" from new possibilities, market "demands," or in the name of a "new lifestyle." Their audience and spaces take on another meaning, they are now multi-use "arenas" provided for a consumer spectator of the various forms of sport existing in a formatting and expanding market. Athletes are like products to be marketed, and they are treated and paid as such: in accordance with their potential return. And from this perspective, every marketing action, be it by emotional impact or a sense of belonging, is present in order to achieve its objectives and goals.

With this observation or all of them, we do not want to insert ourselves in the "revolutionary" context that in many cases — in many discourses — is assumed consciously or naively. We just want to present and understand these situations by proposing a possible model of analysis that can help us in this task. However, before that, we have to present what this set of reflections and definitions leads us to understand about sport. Sport is understood as a physical, social, economic, and cultural phenomenon, dynamically and historically built, present in most intercontinental peoples and cultures, regardless of nationality, language, color, creed, social position, gender, or age; and that in the contemporary world has been globally popularized and its meaning resized by the contextual logic of the processes of commercialization, professionalization, and spectacularization. Based on this, we highlight our main interpretative and analytical references of sport for the composition of a model, namely, a dimensional polysemy, that is, the reading of sport from an expanded perspective with multiple meanings, contexts, and dimensions.

Thus, we present our proposal for a model of analysis of sport in contemporaneity called "Sport Analytical Model". As previously articulated and defined, the model seeks to build a reference for the analysis of sport based on five dimensions located in the macrosocial context that allows us to better situate, understand, and discuss the sporting phenomenon in its complex relationships. The image below represents the analytical model visually, where the sport, located in the center, is intersected by all dimensions and vice versa. It is still fundamental to note that all dimensions are also interconnected, and it is of utmost importance to understand that the analysis of sport requires considering each one of them.

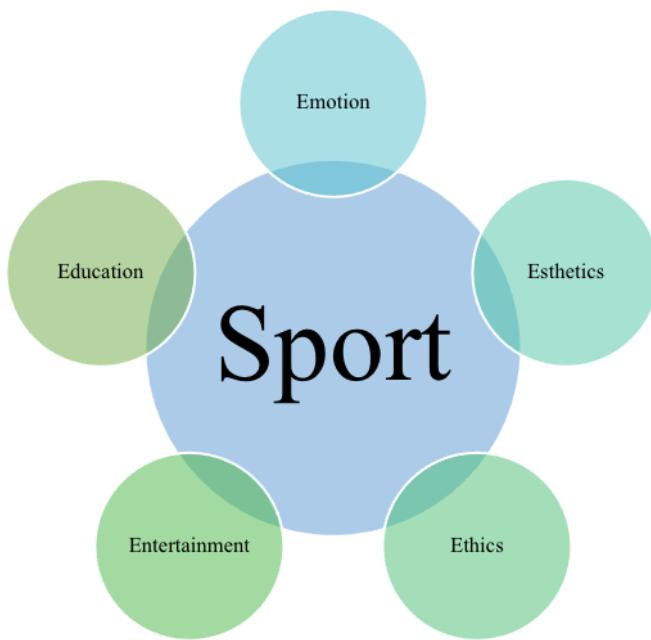


Figure 1 - The Analytical Model of Sport.

Source: The author (2025).

The first dimension is about *Emotion*. It is associated with the possibilities of reflection to which the sport can refer its practitioner, such as situations of controlled challenges and risks, whether they are technologically constructed or primarily presented in nature. Invariably, these practices take the human being to an intense level of excitement that, ultimately, has a counterpoint to the routine of everyday life.

The impression here is that the greater the risk or the level of difficulty, the greater the practitioner's level of satisfaction and fulfillment. It is worth mentioning examples, such as television programs that identify these practices in their so-called "extreme" levels or even the circuits, now international, of long-distance street courses, namely marathon and ultra-marathon circuits.

It is important to emphasize in this dimension that all this preparation for the risks, the challenges, and the excitability manifests the composition of a regulated loss of emotional control, as Elias and Dunning (1992) alerted us. The excitement, the challenges, and the risks — at their highest exposure rates — give the practitioner a sense of loss of control in the action, a fact that actually doesn't occur, since the exposure to risk, for example, is regulated by technological apparatuses or by those who have a monopoly on emotional control.

In this last case, it is worth pointing out that the forms of violence present in society also reinforce this level of excitability and, when they exceed the limits of social constructs and rules, the action of governmental apparatuses comes into play to exercise this control. A good example of this argument can be seen in the more intense participation of fans in soccer stadiums and in the deliberate action of the police in maintaining social order.

The second dimension is about *Esthetics*. In this dimension, the main discourse, or the main idea, is directed to the recurring association of sport with the concept of health. This association, indistinctly, comes conditioned from an interpretative substantialism in which every form of sport practice, exposure, or manifestation is aimed at, or determines, a state of well-being or development of desirable bio-physiological aspects in its practitioner (Tainio 2018). Nothing is more mistaken than this dangerous determinist association, especially if we take into account the various expressions of sport in the face of its polysemic understanding. An example of this would be to think if sport effectively, in its professional perspective, meets the prerogatives of an activity that constitutes healthy and lasting aspects for the person who practices it.

Parallel to this association, in the Esthetics dimension, we can add the presence of stereotypes, or rather, of body standards of beauty imposed by society and pursued, in a large number, in a pathological way. This obsession, or even compulsion, for the perfect body has led men and women to processes of bigorexia or anorexia. The fact is that specialized gyms and their personal trainers have sought to meet this social demand of contemporary corporeality through a diversity of methods and activities. Technologies, nutritional supplements, training methodologies, new environments, and motivating activities, often alternative ones, have been developed with this perspective. In addition, fads are often ephemeral and seasonal in the context of these practices.

It is important to note in this dimension the formative aspect of a lifestyle, or even a social habitus, in the broad sense of its definition, in which dispositions that generate behavior manifest themselves in the reinforcement of individualism. In the Eliasian (Elias, 1992) sense, it is also possible to point to the role of primary anthropomorphic egocentrism present in the context of human relationships.

Besides these thinking methods that allow us an interdisciplinary look, Esthetics also allows us to think about sports based on philosophical precepts. Elcombe (2012), Edgar (2013), and Mumford (2012; 2018) are examples of researchers who have reflected on the potential of sport as an aesthetic element — be it from an understanding of sport as an aesthetic experience of "aesthetic pleasure" (Edgar, 2013, p. 81), or from visualizing the distinctive aesthetic aspects of sporting practices, as Mumford (2018) and Gumbrecht (2007) noted.

The third dimension highlights *Ethics*. If we look for definitions of ethics, we will not deviate from the idea of criteria, values, principles, and social constructs that lead us to certain behavioral patterns and rules. In the intended treatment for this model of sports analysis, we can discuss Ethics, or at least its assumptions, as a set of rules, values, and conducts.

As far as conduct is concerned, there is a recurring discourse in sports related to fair play. It is interesting to note that this perspective is not limited to professional sport; on the contrary, it permeates and echoes in its various manifestations and dimensions. *A priori*, this "fair play" of aristocratic origin holds the participants to an unconditional respect for the rules of the game and, fundamentally, to a code of honor established among all different levels of participants.

The protocols of international and national competitions — and even school or recreational level competitions or participations — follow, basically, the same script in which there are patriotic and institutional greetings, cordiality among the participants, and, fundamentally, agreement (manifested at the moment of "oaths") and respect for the rules and social conducts minimally required for the course of the activities within what is prescribed by ethical behavior.

However, from the moment that the performances, the results, and the effects resulting from this set are actually put to the test, all these "ethics," ultimately, remain in a situation of rhetoric or oblivion. There are athletes who try to cheat the rules; frequent cases of doping; prejudiced and violent fan manifestations (physically and symbolically); referees who, in certain situations, give in to corruptors in a historically established system — as in cases of match-fixing — or even children and adults who often "change" their behavior when facing a sport practice.

Therefore, when talking about or analyzing sport from an ethical point of view, we have to take into account the relationships and paradigms that constitute sport in the context of contemporary society. It sounds hypocritical to talk about respecting social rules when these rules are not constructed, accepted, or practiced by a large part of society in the most diverse situations of our daily lives.

As a fourth dimension we have the *Entertainment*. From this perspective, we must take into account some inaccuracies that occur in the misinterpretation or misunderstanding that spectator sport is synonymous with performance sport. In theory, performance sports can be seen as any activity that requires practitioners to go beyond their initial stage. In other words, there are several levels of performance that range from sport beginner to professional athlete, or even the elderly in their physical activity programs. And, unconditionally, these manifestations do not necessarily assume the perspective of spectacle.

In the Entertainment, some variables must be observed as structural determinants of its process. For example, the capacity to move the economic and marketing context; the generation and constitution of offers and demands; the motivational and emotional appeal; media plasticity and viability (taking into account the performative aspects of sports and the "aestheticization of movement"); the communication capacity and global interference; mass mobilization; among others.

In this sense, we see that in contemporary times, sport has almost irreversibly assumed the prospect of constituting a globalized and commodified product in its most diverse possibilities of manifestation and commercial appeal. Show-time, allied to business, has conditioned and limited the understanding of sport to this dimension, that is, the Entertainment. And this perspective has defined what we call a social habitus of consumption.

In the logic of analyzing this dimension, we come across stages that end up defining the trajectory of a sport in the process of spectacularization. It should be noted that these stages do not necessarily occur sequentially, which is not to say that they do not all occur. We defend the idea that each and every sport modality under analysis in a given historical and social context will inevitably manifest the characteristics of a conditioning process of amateurism, institutionalization, professionalization, and commercialization stages. This would be our "thesis of the stages" in the process of spectacularization of sports.

Parallel to this dimension, we observed the possibility, or rather, the strength of the presence and manifestation of another dimension, the Economic one. However, our theoretical line of analysis presupposes overcoming the economicistic readings that are given to sport, or society, in general. We consider the economic aspect not in a deterministic way, but as one of the main intervening variables in the process of constitution of the spectacle. In other words, and supported by Pierre Bourdieu's correlational analytical line, we understand the economic component as fundamental in a process of structural analysis of society and sport. We do not determine sport as exclusive in the process, we go beyond this: it is about observing the economic factor as one of the possible enhancing and structuring elements of social relations and interdependencies.

Finally, we have the *Education* dimension. We defend the idea that the dimension of education must be what interconnects all the others, that is, it dialogues with Emotion, Esthetics, Ethics, and Entertainment always in a formative intentionality. We understand that this process, whether institutional or informal, subsidizes the formation of the much desired and rhetorically defended reflexivity and criticality of the human being in contemporary society.

However, for the educational process through sport to be efficient, it needs to have rigor and, fundamentally, density. In order to work educational aspects in a correlational manner between the dimensions of sport, we have to know them in their essence and context. That is, it is necessary to understand, for example, the reasons for the development of physical activities and risky sports in a spectacularized society where aesthetic and resilience values impose themselves in a logic that often disregards other pre-established values in human relations.

Thus, it is feasible to talk about Education, understanding, and associating the various social dimensions of sport in a formative and correlational perspective. Thinking about educational aspects in isolation would inevitably lead us to a one-dimensional or restricted reading of reality.

Conclusions

To conclude, we would like to point out again that the purpose of our theoretical exercise was to seek elements, authors, and proposals that would help us to better understand sport in contemporary times, something that has currently stood out as a notorious object of study in the field of human and social sciences. Therefore, we revisited some authors who were engaged in these debates, which enabled a re-reading of the concept and, ultimately, the presentation of a proposal that explains what we believe to be coherent and compatible for analyses of the structural and dimensional elements of sport.

Effectively, with the systematization of the analytical model of sport in contemporary times, we propose another stage for the reading, analysis, interpretation, and correlations of sport. We cannot limit our scope to reductionist determinisms that would invariably lead us, or may still lead us, to distortions or mistaken incorporations of the potentialities of this social phenomenon of sport.

Ultimately, we treat sport, or intend to treat it, by what we call the Dialectic of Social Consumption Sport, that is, sport consumes society as well as society consumes sport. There is no unilateral direction in this relationship as many sport "intellectuals" try to defend. On the contrary, this relationship is built on collaborative communication, and if there is any distortion or possible (unseen) symbolic domination in this relationship, it stems from the absence or limited use of the educational dimension in understanding the other dimensions mentioned above.

In Bourdieu's view, we are talking about the "Sense of Practice." And to understand this sense of practice in sports, it becomes imperative and conditional to study it considering the correlational analysis of the proposed model. To understand the relationships established in

contemporary sport, we cannot fail to consider, relate, and analyze the five dimensions presented in this study.

With the proper appropriation of this "Meaning of Sports Practice", we will be able to contextualize and correlate values, manifestations, and dimensions, which indirectly ends up qualifying our readings and interpretations, and this, obviously, is a huge challenge in the context of the analytical and theoretical education about sports and society. To do this, we inevitably need to draw on multicultural theories and interdisciplinarity.

Much of what we proposed to build and present in this article to the scientific community of sport, and why not say to the very agents involved with the practice of sport at its various levels, goes through the context of reflexivity. And because of that, there is no intention here, under any circumstances, to exhaust this discussion; on the contrary, our intention is to foster the debate and qualify the analysis of sports in contemporary times.

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