

For an outset of the field of Sports Sociology: scenarios and perspectives

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ABSTRACT: The present article aims at presenting and structuring a brief historical-sociological panorama about the constitution of the sports sociology field in the international scene, making afterwards some inferences and transpositions to think about the Brazilian and, maybe, Latin-American, scenario. This undertaking starts from a bibliographic exploratory approach, so as to restore some historical elements of the development of sports sociology and, moreover, to write a general panorama which may contemplate some of the main theoretical frameworks and the respective authors who followed closely the study of the social phenomenon called modern sports and, consequently, contributed for the institutionalization of this space for academic discussion.

Key-words: Sociology. Sports. Pierre Bourdieu.

1 INTRODUCTION

The look at the process of historical establishment of sports sociology through Pierre Bourdieu's "sociological lenses" enables a much further look than simply marking the space that this discipline has been reaching in the academic scope. More specifically, Bourdieu's perspective for the analysis of scientific fields (BOURDIEU, 2002; BOURDIEU, 2003; BOURDIEU, 2004), enhances the noticing of struggles between researchers and scientific institutions inside this

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configured micro-cosmos, whether through the definition of legitimate objects to be studied, or due to the academic legitimacy of methods and theories which support the respective productions made possible inside the referred space.

Those apparently internal struggles are due to scientific hierarchy principles and, in a certain way, reflect the autonomy that the field enjoys regarding the macro-cosmos. It is logical that sociology and the sports field also suffer external influences, mainly, from political dimensions. However, the tensions demanded in this universe seem closer to *pure* competition, i.e., to that competition which usually opposes empirics to theorists, researchers with objectivist direction to researchers with subjectivist direction, among countless other polarizations.

It is important to remember that those tensions fostered in the scientific field of sports sociology also seem to reflect, in their due proportions, the typical confrontation between disciplines which are part of the so called nucleus of Social Sciences and, in the specific case of the sociological field, the struggles between contemporary *versus* classical sociology, among the areas of sociological expertise and, mainly, among the most distinct paradigms and theories which epistemologically constitute the referred social *locus* of production and circulation of scientific assets.

Another relevant aspect for the treatment of bibliographic productions restricted to the field of sports sociology consists on not appreciating them through the pessimist point of view that results from the slavery of an evaluation of, misguided and many times partisan values, but, rather, as academic insertions which contribute for the development of sociological science, as the production of knowledge potentially advances by confronting concepts, methods or even through the conciliation of paradigms and theoretical positions seen as irreconcilable.

As a guiding and directing assumption for the present article, it is supported that the field of sports sociology, in its

most different stages of development, seems to have absorbed some tensions demanded in the field of Social Sciences, as the researchers when keeping the fidelity to a determined approach and/ or methodology, are likely to be in a position of mistrust to those theoretic-methodological perspectives which oppose their own, contributing for the structuring of a space of forces according to the logics of social reproduction of scientific *habitus*¹.

Hence, the following lines will try to present and structure a brief historical-sociological panorama about the constitution of the field of sports sociology in the international scenario, and, right after, doing some inferences and transpositions to think the Brazilian scenario and, maybe, the Latin-American one. This undertaking starts from a bibliographic exploratory approach, so as to restore some historical elements of the development of sports sociology and, moreover, to write a general panorama which can contemplate some of the main theoretical frameworks and respective authors who dedicated to the study of the social phenomenon called modern sports and, consequently, contributed for the institutionalization of this space of academic discussion.

2 SCENARIOS AND PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIELD OF SPORTS SOCIOLOGY

In the transition from the 18th to the 19th century, some pioneer studies were published contemplating the development of sports practices in Great-Britain. Those studies, in turn, were not conducted by academic institutions, which, however,

¹ Habitus is an old scholastic notion which was recovered by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu with the aim of founding his theory of practice, in which the author, briefly speaking, tries to shun a philosophy of the subject without, however, sacrificing the agent and a philosophy of the structure without denying that it has impact on and through the agent. Thus, habitus, in a condition of structured structure willing to work as a structuring structure, complements the movement of interiorizing the exterior and exteriorizing the interior, in a dynamic which tries to overcome the false dichotomy of reproduction versus transformation.

did not prevent them from becoming important sources of research for 20th century sports scholars. (DUNNING, 2004).

Among those early studies, the ones that stand out are from Peter Beckford about the fox hunt, in 1796, the one by Pierce Egan about boxing, in 1812, and, approximately 70 years later, the studies by Montagu Shearman about the history and development of football, rugby and athletics, published in 1887 and 1889. (DUNNING, 2004).

Notwithstanding, such panorama starts to become a little more suggestive in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, when some classical Social Sciences authors started reserving a more specific space to discuss the sports phenomenon in their works. Thorstein Veblen in *The theory of the leisure class* from 1899, for example, mentions sports as one of the activities suitable for distinguishing a financially advantaged class, which did not have the need to spend time with stressful work activities. (VEBLEN, 1965).

In 1902, Marcel Mauss recovers the notion of corporal techniques to refer to the ways through which men, from society to society, know how to use their bodies. Among the techniques listed by Mauss, those called movement activities are found, i.e., running, swimming, climbing, jumping, movements of force, dancing (MAUSS, 2003). Whereas Max Weber, in *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, from 1904, questions the opposition of English Puritanism regarding the sports-recreational activities present in that society. (WEBER, 2004).

It is worth noticing that the initiatives of those mentioned authors are not structurally representative yet to characterize the formation of an institutionalized field of sports sociology – also because, at that time, Sociology itself was in an incipient process of institutionalization as an academic discipline. What, however, can be admitted is that the referred contributions may have conformed and defined the pre-historical stage of a field which would start being more systematically structured from the 1960s.

Continuing the construction of this scenario, are highlighted, in 1921, the writings by Heinz Hisse, who developed, under the supervision of Alfred Weber, the first broader sociological study about the thematic of sports. (DUNNING, 2004; PILZ, 1999). In this work, Hisse sought under any circumstances to analyze competitive sports through the view of criticism to a current model of industrial society. (MARCHI JÚNIOR; CAVICHIOLLI, 2008).

Another author who built a theoretic framework which enables the thinking of sports in a more general way is Johan Huizinga. In his classic *Homo ludens*, from 1938, Huizinga approaches the game as an inseparable component of culture which should be, successively, noticed in a perspective of interaction between entertainment and seriousness (HUIZINGA, 1995). Concerning the sporting issues themselves, Huizinga states that the balance between pleasure and seriousness was strongly shaken in the dynamics of modern sports organization.¹

In the 1940s, in turn, the contributions from the so called first generation of the Frankfurt School gain visibility, especially from the angle reported in the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer. In the 1947 text, called *Dialectic of enlightenment: philosophical fragments*, those authors tried to discuss leisure activities and, in a way, sports under the critical view of what would be called by them “cultural industry”. (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985).

However, after the study by Hisse, in 1921, the preliminary incursions by Huizinga and the first generation of the Frankfurt School in the next decades, only in 1955 would sports be again treated in a more significant way. It is the work of Gregory P. Stone who, besides addressing the manifestation of the game in its sports form, advances towards the preliminary definition of sports-show and questions the implications it has on the sports character of the game, in the

¹ For a critical approach to work by Huizinga developed about the relationship game, sports and culture see: DUNNING, p. 299-325, 1992.

sense of making it more predictable and, successively, less spontaneous. (DUNNING, 1992).

Years later, in 1961, two very suggestive works are presented, and with apparently opposite effects, for the modest field of sports sociology which was about to be structured. Anthony Giddens defended his Masters dissertation at the *London School of Economics*, approaching the topics connected to sports in contemporary English society (GIDDENS, 1961). Eric Dunning, under the supervision of the until then unknown German sociologist called Norbert Elias, defended, at Leicester University, his Masters dissertation about the development of football, having as reference for analysis the civilization process theory and the configuration approach formulated by his advisor (DUNNING, 1961).

It is interesting to notice that after his Masters dissertation, Giddens never returned anymore to the study of sports, preferring, otherwise, to continue his academic background in more conventional subjects and that, possibly, brought him the prestige he has today in the field of Sociology. Whereas Dunning has a history of almost 50 years serving the field of sports sociology and, maybe, because he chose an object considered as *lower stratum* is that he enjoys a lower academic recognition when compared to sociologists who preferred to treat subjects seen, at least in the scope of Sociology, as more relevant.

Besides those mentioned contributions, and still in the course of the 1960s, the foundation of the International Committee of Sports Sociology (ICSS and present ISSA after 1998) in 1965, in the city of Warsaw, in Poland, is seen as an important milestone. The foundation of this entity was, mainly, due to the efforts of scholars both from the area of Physical Education and from Sociology (DUNNING, 2008). Among the accomplishments of this institution, more notoriously, stand out the publishing of the *International Review for Sports Sociology* (IRSS) which started being periodically published since 1965, as well as the organization

of international symposiums, and the first of them was conducted in 1966, in the city of Cologne, in Germany. (DUNNING, 2004).

In that period of transition to the beginning of the 1970s, some of the first texts with a more didactic-pedagogical character in sports sociology are also published, in which the authors try to provide a more general and systematic view of the development of the area so far. According to Dunning, clear examples of this initiative may be contemplated in the work *Sport, culture and society*, from John W. Loy and Gerard S. Kenyon, in 1969, in the United States, closely followed by his book *The sociology of sport: a selection of readings*, published in England, in 1971. (DUNNING, 2004).

To those projects should be added the work with Marxist ideology by Bero Rigauer *Sport und arbeit*, from 1969, the study by Harry Edwards *The sociology of sport*, from 1973, and, more notoriously, the book *Sport in society: issues and controversies*, published by Jay Coakley in, 1978,² and which, according to Dunning, is still till today, with good reason, a *best-seller* in the area (DUNNING, 2004).

Still in 1978, there was the production of some texts where the authors had the purpose of systematizing a model of sociological analysis of sports. It is the case of the book by Allen Guttmann (1978) called *From ritual to record: the nature of modern sports*, in which the author, following the Weberian framework of ideal types, tries to improve an analytical scheme able to differentiate modern sports from old sports practices; from the article *Sport and social class*, by Pierre Bourdieu (1978), who, with this text, inaugurates and extends the assumptions of his theory of the fields to substantiate the analysis of consumption and sports practices; and from the book with a Marxist angle *Sport: a prison of measured time* published in England by Jean-Marie Brohm

² For a deeper foundation, see: COAKLEY, 2009.

(1978) as a result of research and the articles that this author had already been developing at moments previous to his work.

Such initial panorama covered in a somewhat rushed way seems, however, very reasonable to raise some comments about the field of sports sociology which, between the 1960s and 1980s, if the limited line of thought is correct, was institutionalized with the highest criteria as a legitimate place for academic-scientific investment.

One of the first aspects to be remembered, in this sense, is the character of development of the field in more regional terms and meeting, mainly, the demands of English language. According to Dunning, the field of sports sociology experienced a considerable growth from the 1960s, mainly in the United States, in Canada and in England itself, where this area was already a little more privileged. However, West Germany and France were also decisive in this process, and the role of scholars in those countries for the potential emerging from the mentioned field should be considered (DUNNING, 1992; DUNNING, 1999).

Another point refers to the plurality of theoretic-methodological approaches that are possible to be identified in the period from 1960 to 1980 in the field of sports sociology. Just to have a more accurate idea of this diversity, it is enough to have a look at the countless fronts of appreciation which come from functionalism, Marxism, structuralism, interactionism, ethno-methodology, feminist theories, figuration approach etc. (DUNNING, 2004).

In turn, such paradigms, when they are internalized by the agents in the form of scientific *habitus* and externalized in the field as more or less consecrated scientific practices, which helped to define some of the polarizations/tensions which are currently more often visualized in this space and, in a broader way, in the scope of Human and Social Sciences: materialism *versus* idealism, agent *versus* structure, synthesis *versus* analysis, objectivism *versus* subjectivism, social statics *versus*

social dynamics, synchronic studies *versus* diachronic studies, historical-comparative approaches *versus* statistic approaches.

This last dichotomy might be illustrated, for example, in the confront between, on one side, Loy and Kenyon supporting the statistical analyses from the North-American empirics school and, on the other, Elias and Dunning (Pierre Bourdieu and Peter McIntosh offer similar possibilities) defending interpretations which give more importance to historical constraints and that, therefore, enable approaching the relationship between sports and society in a comparative way and as parts of the same process. The middle ground between those two strands, to make it clear, would be Stone's interactionist-symbolic perspective (DUNNING, 2004).

Along the 1980s and 1990s, sports sociology starts to develop in a deeper way being even inserted in new contexts of the global scene. What is, however, noticed in this process is that researchers, much more than proposing other analytical models to study sports, sought to continue the theoretical legacy which guided the field of Social Sciences in terms of production of knowledge during the 19th and 20th centuries.

An evaluative parameter of those possible insertions of sports sociology, as well as of the character of the theoretical reproduction in the field established by sports sociology itself, may be developed as an undertaking similar to that of Dunning in the article *Sociology of Sport in the balance*, a possibility of comparison between the *Handbook of social science of Sport*, published by Günther Lüschen and George H. Sage, in 1981,³ and the *Handbook of Sport and society*, published by the sociologists Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning, in 2000.

According to Dunning (2004), the first collection compiled contributions of a relatively small number of countries – 06, only – whereas his collection and Coakley's increased this number to 13 countries. In the first collection, 24 articles were published, and 16 of those were from North-

³ For more detail in: LÜSCHEN; SAGE, 1981.

American authors. In Coakley and Dunning's collection, the amount of published articles increased to 49, and 14 were contributions from North-American authors and 15 from researchers from United Kingdom.

Hence, the *Handbook of social science of sport*, from 1981, is characterized as a work predominantly composed by works from researchers from the United States and the articles published reflect the structural-functionalist paradigm which guided the field of North-American Sociology in that context. Whereas the *Handbook of sport and society* organized in the year 2000, although it counts on 29 publications divided between United States and United Kingdom, already points to an increased eclecticism in terms of countries represented in the composition of texts of the collection. Moreover, the texts from the *Handbook of Sport and Society* contemplate several paradigms of Social Sciences and do not, regularly, present empirical descriptions which lack theoretical reflections.⁴

Another data which calls very much the attention in those two collections is the absence of works from researchers from Latin America as references in sports sociology in international terms. Facing this briefly cited framework, a more urgent issue incurs: Could it be that sports sociology is an area of investigation which has been neglected in Latin America or rather the sociological works of sports developed in this continent are not taken into account by the agents and institutions in condition to define and impose a vision of what would primarily be Sociology and, after that, sociology of sports?

In an attempt to foster a more solid reflection about this issue, the need was felt to refer to a more tangible and concrete reality. Hence, the option was for concentrating, in this article, in some crucial aspects of the development of sports sociology in Brazil. This option is justified by the fact that it is a closer and more tangible reality, besides sports in Brazil assuming a

⁴ For amore updated basis, see COAKLEY, J; DUNNING, 2002.

peculiarly diversified social connotation, and which, in turn, is not external and absent from the process of development of sports sociology practices in the country.

One consideration to be immediately introduced is that the field of sports sociology in Brazil gives some important steps towards the path to consolidation in this beginning of the 21st century. And this is not simply an event from the current stage of scientific discussion, but due to some first efforts and engendered movements, under determined circumstances and historical constraints, in the field of Social Sciences and in the academic field of Physical Education.

More precisely, the central argument that is defended is that the development of sports sociology in Brazil happened from some keynotes, that were essentially divided into three possibilities: (1) through football sociology or, in other words, socio-anthropological studies of football; (2) through the critical theory of sports, preconceived by the authors of Physical Education from 1980; (3) through the history of sports practices.

The first keynote that is possible to be identified is established in the apparently conflicting relationship made feasible between sports sociology and sociology of football, as the development in the first area seems to have been fostered, at least in Brazil, due to the development of the second. A better dimension of what has been proposed could be given if, for example, it was decided to map the state of the art of the studies which from the 20th century on were produced in the scope of Social Sciences which suggested some significant paths for the implementing of a sociology of football in the country.

It is worth remembering, to this end, that the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, already from the late 1920s, had the sensibility to notice football as an object that could be sociologically questioned (SOARES, 2003). Another contribution for the sociology of football was accounted for by the journalist Mário Filho, who in 1947 publishes the first

edition of the book *O negro no futebol Brasileiro* (Black men in Brazilian football), which was prefaced by Gilberto Freyre himself (FILHO, 2003).

It is appropriate to mention that, although Mário Filho did not have connections with the academy and much less so with Sociology, his book was exhaustively reproduced in the scope of Social Sciences and used as a reference to think some problems regarding the insertion of black people and of the lower sectors of the population in the socio-cultural universe of football (SOARES, 2003).

A more incisive example of the reference to football as the scope of sociological analyses in Brazil may be seen still in the work of the anthropologist Roberto Da Matta, mainly in those published from the late 1970s and early 1980s (DAMATTA, 1979; DAMATTA, 1982a; DAMATTA, 1982b). Already as a more recent illustration, there is the work of Murad (2007), Helal (1997), Helal, Soares, Lovisolo (2001), Rodrigues (2003; 2007) and Toledo (2002).

This last author, whose area of education is also in Anthropology, calls the attention for presenting at a determined moment of his work, "*Lógicas no futebol*" (Logics in football), a review of literature (1982-2002) about what he understands as an incursion into Social Sciences in the empirical domain that constitutes the sports phenomenon, making it clear that, for the author, sports are presented as a drama embodied in the symbolic dimension of football (TOLEDO, 2002).

Obviously, those are only some of the studies about football which have been produced in the scope of Social Sciences in Brazil along the 20th century and early 21st century, not to mention, moreover, the much closer initiatives which have been made feasible in the field of socio-cultural research in Physical Education, in the field of History, Geography etc. As for the Physical Education area, it is important to mention the works of Soares (1994; 1998), Kowalski (2001), Daolio (2005), Reis (2006) Reis, Escher

(2006), among countless other contributions resulting from dissertations, theses, participation in events, publications in periodicals and production of books.

However, and independently from the original areas to which those above mentioned studies are linked, a clearer consequence may be generally noticed in their theoretic-methodological structures and scope: both converging in the sense of supplying an interpretation on Brazilian society from football, which reinforces the argument that such initiatives contributed, in the first place, with the emergence of a field of sociology of football and, afterwards, of sports sociology.

A second keynote which, in a certain way, supported the development of sports sociology in Brazil, starts to be built in a more incisive way from the 1980s, together with the ascension of the so called critical movement of Physical Education, whose protagonists sought to rethink the professional intervention and knowledge production in the area beyond the anatomic-motor perspective.

For such undertaking, those researchers sought theoretic-methodological supports in the work of consecrated authors in Human and Social Sciences, which allowed then to question more effectively and consistently some issues pertinent to the practice of Physical Education in school, to the aesthetic standards disseminated in society, the social manifestations of sports and an infinity of other subjects.

Regarding the thematic of sports, i.e., the perception of sports as a social practice full of meanings and plain with ideologies, several researchers from Physical Education in Brazil were considerably critical and incisive in their arguments, mainly those who were guided by Marxist chains so fashionable in the context of the critical re-establishment in the referred field of practice and academic intervention in the 1980s in the country. Some studies oriented in the Marxist direction should be remembered, to this end, such as, the one by Medina (1983), Taffarel (1985), Castellani Filho (1988), Bracht (1992), Soares (1992).

It is worth stressing here that such researchers sought to report, among other concerns raised by their works, the role of sports practices as a tool for the reproduction of bourgeois society values. In this more specific way, those authors, with such important reflections in the historiography construction of the Brazilian Physical Education thought, were maybe the first to look at sports in a broader dimension and, at the same time, with a critical view.

However, the role of those researches in the development of sports sociology in Brazil seems to have an auxiliary value, as they constitute a theoretic-conceptual *corpus* which emphasizes the negative, reproductive and ideological issues of sports in the scope of school Physical Education, fulfilling the objectives proposed by the referred authors in their texts, but leaving a gap of discussion to be more specifically and deeply questioned in the sports universe.

Among other undertakings, this gap was resumed in Brazil by Valter Bracht, in 1997, when the author presents the first edition of his book *Sociologia crítica do esporte: uma introdução* (*Critical sociology of sports: an introduction*). In his work, Bracht states that the relationship between sports and the state depends on the way civil society is articulated with the later. Hence, sports may be presented, according to the author, as a channel for the reproduction of work force; as an element of huge potential of political instrument to be used by the state, or even, as exerting a kind of stabilization effect and decreasing social tensions (BRACHT, 2005).

A third, and maybe decisive, keynote of sports sociology in Brazil was built, as it has already been mentioned before through the history of sports. This trend of development of specific sports sociology starts becoming more perceptible from the 1990s and, among other resuming and circumstances, due to the efforts of the historian and Physical Education professor Ademir Gebara, who performed a fundamental role in the creation of National Meetings of History of Sports,

Leisure and Physical Education, and the first one was conducted in 1993, at Universidade Estadual de Campinas.

As vital points in those meetings, two visits of the English sociologist Eric Dunning to Brazil are stressed and, mainly, the fostering of a preliminary discussion of sports from the historic-sociological perspective based on the works of Elias and Bourdieu, recently translated in the country at that time and maybe the main known sociologists to dedicate a considerably significant space for the discussion of the sports phenomenon in their works (GEBARA, 2006).

Moreover, it was under the guidance of Ademir Gebara that some of the most consistent studies in sports sociology in Brazil were produced and which would start marking in the transition from the 20th century to the 21st, a moment of greater representativeness for this field in the country. Among those studies, two deserve more attention for presenting a due maturity in the reading of texts of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu: the doctoral thesis of the economist Marcelo Weishaupt Proni, about the structuring and transformation of football in sports-show conducted by mercantile laws (PRONI, 1998) and the doctoral thesis by professor Wanderley Marchi Júnior about the changes operated in Brazilian volleyball during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in the sense of transition from amateurism to professionalism and the re-significance of this sport as a sports show (MARCHI JÚNIOR, 2001).

Given those ways of development of sports sociology in Brazil, which obviously are not the only existing ones, it is worth stressing, however, that only in the beginning of the 21st century is that the same starts being recognized in the international scenario and due to the good empiric studies theoretically directed which have been produced from Elias' configurational sociology of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology.

It seems fit to remember here the considerable role of the Centro de Pesquisa em Esporte, Lazer e Sociedade (CEPELS) from the Physical Education Department of the Universidade Federal do Paraná in consolidating those

sociological perspectives as references for reading on sports and leisure in Brazil. Including, the referred group led by professor Wanderley Marchi Júnior works directly interconnected to the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios Socioculturales Del Deporte* (ALESDE), recently registered in 2008 which has Marchi Júnior himself as the vice-chairman.

By the way, in the end of October 2008, the first meeting of the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios Socioculturales del Deporte* was conducted in the Universidade Federal do Paraná, in Curitiba, Brazil. In this first edition of the event, the chairman of the International Association of Sports Sociology (ISSA), Professor Steve Jackson from Otago University, in New Zealand; the vice-chairman of the European Association of Sports Sociology (EASS), professor Jerzy Kosiewicz from Warsaw University, in Poland and the sports sociologist Coakley from Colorado University, in the United States took part as lecturers (MARCHI JÚNIOR; SONODA NUNES; ALMEIDA, 2008).

However, the importance of the event was not restricted only to the presence of those internationally well-known researchers but, rather, it was once established, that this opportunity registered, i.e., it institutionalized, the insertion of Latin America in the global scenario of discussion fostered around sports sociology. In the specific case of Brazil, the referred event confirmed the Universidade Federal do Paraná as one of the main centers of development of sociology of sports in the country, with projections that the referred institution will in the future join recognized global centers for development in sports sociology.

As for the causes which explain the late insertion of Brazil, or better, of Latin America, in this international area of research and studies in sports sociology, it is suggested that a more dense discussion should be made available taking into account, besides the scientific issues themselves, cultural, political and economic development factors. Another interesting measure consists on approaching this panorama in

a macro-procedural perspective, which, consequently, does not mean to dismiss the particularities of development of sports sociology in each one of the constituting and ruling realities of social life in a whole range of Latin-American countries.

3 CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

The historical recovery of knowledge production in the field of sports sociology, as summarized in this article, has a double aim. The first more directly connected to the importance of getting to know some scientific productions which resumed sports from the sociological appraisal, so as to be able, afterwards, to structure an instrument of neutralization and minimizing of possible theoretic effects which are exerted by those researches. The second directed to the more generalist understanding of objectives and of social relations of complicity established between the structural development of sports in society and the interest of researchers in taking hold of them as empiric object and/or instrument for their theoretical reflections.

Following this first perspective, it was sought to elucidate, from the development of a well delimited theoretic framework, how important it would be to develop an exercise of reflexivity that Bourdieu (1989) called “theory of the effect of the theory”. For the author, “[...]social science should include in the theory of the social world a theory of the effect of the theory, which while contributing to impose a more or less authorized manner to see the social world, contributes to make the reality of this world” (BOURDIEU, 1998, p. 82).

In other words, knowing the historical background, at least generally, of the sociological and epistemological production reserved to the field of sports practices– which, within certain limits, was quickly attempted in the previous pages – is the first condition for it to be possible to understand, under different angles, the problems which will be placed on this space, as the academics dispositions legitimated by the

body of experts who focus on sports, many times, they condition the researchers to have a somewhat *trained* view about the tensions demanded by the sports field.

By the way, it is exactly to break with this persuasion imposed by the universes of production of scientific goods that Bourdieu advocates in favor of sociologists doing a social history of problems, of the objects of research and of instruments of thought, so as to install a breakthrough with the learned *pre-constructed* or, in clearer terms, with *scientific common sense*.

Thus, the urgency of listing and, moreover, systematizing some of the main tensions created in the referred field, especially among those agents and institutions which contributed for the emergence of this space, is crucial to be able to improve towards a sociology reflexive of sports. And this is exactly why a sociology reflexive of sports prescribes the production of an analytic framework which allows the understanding, beyond the transpositions of concepts and schemes of analysis, the production of knowledge created over, between and in this space.

A second perspective of discussion which may be viewed based on this general panorama presented here about the constitution of a field of specialists around sports sociology, is established as it is considered that their interest for the theme is not isolated from the process of significance, relevance and questionings that sports have raised, in a practical way, within the most distinct social fields.

This reading conducts to the understanding that the progressive interest the thematic of sports have raised both in researchers linked to the academic field of Physical Education as to Sociology, among other factors, may be explained by the doubts, dimensions and global proportions that this phenomenon has taken in the historical and structural course of development of society. In other words, the fact that sports was legitimated and is still being procedurally manifested as one of the most important, emotive and questionable social

scenes from daily life, maybe reserves some relationship with the social circulation of historical, sociological, anthropological and economic researches produced about it.

It is important to stress that sports, as an object of study in the field of Sociology, differently from what many may think, obtained its treatment and had its own place. Moreover, the fact that some sociologists from the 19th century and early 20th century did not give so much importance to the practices with sports character in their analyses, may be explained by the fact that they are still in an incipient process of development and affirmation in the webs of social interdependence and inter-relations. In other words, it would be unfair to condemn those sociologists for having treated in a secondary way a phenomenon which was still not manifested as such in the society where they were inserted.

However in the academic field of Physical Education in Brazil, sports have been approached by several views and theoretical frameworks, which, in turn, represent the reach that determined productions from important authors of the field of Sociology, Anthropology, History, Economy have obtained within the referred field of production and circulation of scientific assets about the sports and corporal practices. It is worth noticing, still, that this interface is made through the approach of researchers and authors of Physical Education with Human and Social Sciences.

Regarding the area of Physical Education, sports still retains the particularity of being one of the most decisive political and cultural paths in the sense of contributing for the constitution of identity and function of the discipline. There is no doubt that sports, as it was resumed in Brazilian society, is one of the corporal manifestations that is historically and predominantly linked to the scientific production and the practical action in the field of Physical Education in Brazil.

In this scope of scientific productions engendered in the academic field of Brazilian Physical Education, some approaches about sports have been predominant. A first

tradition identified prioritizes more the technical, motor and biological focus of sports. A second one, in turn, tends to combat record and performance sports and, mainly when it is linked to Physical Education classes in schools. The argument defended, in synthesis, is that there should be a displacement in the sense of understanding and formatting of specific sports for school.

There is still another more recent front of appreciation which seeks to understand the socio-cultural dynamics regarding sports in the way they are, in fact, presented in society and not, simply, as some would like them to be presented. The conclusion from this angle is that only the de-construction of sports (commercialized, made into a show and televised) does not enable the de-construction of a system where the privileged and more and more privileged and the underprivileged are more and more underprivileged. Notwithstanding, the assumption of readapting the competitive approach to school sports is shared without, however, de-constructing it to the point where it cannot even be called sport anymore.

In short, it is believed that the social effectiveness of sports sociology in the resuming of Physical Education, to borrow the terms of Professor Mauro Betti (2006), establishes links both at research level as in practical actuation itself. It is worth noticing that this statement does not imply compromising with the typical oppositions that were perpetuated in the area of Physical Education (theory and practice, body and mind etc.), because even a sports sociology as it is defended here is concerned in demonstrating that both the theory of social knowledge and the theory of social world are parts of a same process of sociological doing.

Hence, from the side of the field of scientific production, it is understood that one of the roles of contemporary sports Sociology in resuming Physical Education in Brazil is established in the sense that it represents a crucial improvement when it enables the understanding that

the study of sports only for the sports, i.e., as an end in itself, is a rather substantial, reductionist posture, and which does not make knowledge improve either on the universe of sports or, even less, on the society where the sports practices are inserted.

Whereas on the side of the actual practical application, it is important to re-affirm that it also passes through issues regarding the fields of scientific production, as the intellectual autonomy, one of the main instruments to read the social reality with its oppressions now more covert, now more explicit, is developed through a strict reflexive and systematic sociological training from the researcher. As well advised by Bourdieu:

To raise the awareness to mechanisms which make life painful, even unfeasible, is not neutralizing them; to explain the contradictions is not solving them. But, no matter how cynic one may be about the social effectiveness of the sociological message, the effect that it may exert cannot be cancelled when it allows the ones who suffer to discover the possibility of attributing their suffering to social causes and hence to feel excused; and broadly acknowledging the social origin, collectively hidden, of unhappiness under all its forms, including the as most intimate and the most secret.

This contract, despite the appearances, is not despairing at all. What the social world did, the social world may, armed with this knowledge, undo. (BOURDIEU, 1997, p. 735).

In fact, thinking that Sociology may cure the social problems and weakness or even that sports sociology may solve the demands of Physical Education in Brazil, seems to be a naive understanding of the relationships which cross the production of knowledge and the transformation of society. Notwithstanding, Sociology and even sports sociology have

their own social role and significance, i.e., that of enabling the agents for the development of an intellectual autonomy to the point of understanding the social places where they are inserted, as well as reporting to those who suffer and who cannot afford the access to develop their autonomy, at least, to know that those responsible for their suffering might not be they themselves.

In short and according to the Bourdieusian reflexive sociological analysis, for it to be possible to change and remake the social world, it is primarily necessary to change the ways of seeing the social world. In a way, this panorama of sports sociology which was reassembled here, though not yet dried, points to this perspective, as before understanding sports it is necessary to know who has already proposed to understand it and, at a deeper level of understanding, to justify the reason for such undertaking of the authors.

Consequently, this degree of understanding might not enable the direct interference in materialized and externalized relations in the sports field and in a broader society. Even less is the objective of reflexive apprehensions on the production de knowledge. Moreover, the social reality which the researcher is dealing with is dynamic and it cannot be appropriately understood through a theoretic inaugural act.

On the other hand, this same empirical reality which is not static, reserves as a general property the fact that it is full of pre-notions of the common-sense and of the academic-sense. Here is the function of reflexive sociology of the production of knowledge in scientific fields: enabling researchers to control the effects of *pre-built learned* in the construction and in the clipping of an object of research, so that empirical reality is not deformed or, even worse, obscured so as to hide what is hidden by “nature” already.

As a last observation, it is worth reaffirming that the intention of the article was not to leave the theme dry, but to show the urgency in systematizing an agenda of research dedicated to the mapping and the understanding of the

scenarios and the perspectives of the outset and the development of the field of sports sociology, which, including, cannot be broadly formulated in all its unfolding in all its perspectives, the deeper it is. Hence, the challenge is proposed and it will be resumed, with a higher degree of empiric-theoretical accurateness, in future opportunities.

Por uma gênese do Campo da Sociologia do esporte: cenários e perspectivas

Resumo: No presente artigo, procura-se apresentar e estruturar um breve panorama histórico-sociológico sobre a constituição do campo da sociologia do esporte no cenário internacional, fazendo, em seguida, algumas inferências e transposições para pensar o cenário brasileiro e, talvez, latino-americano. Para essa investida, parte-se de uma abordagem bibliográfica de cunho exploratório, de modo a resgatar alguns elementos históricos do desenvolvimento da sociologia do esporte e, além disso, elaborar um panorama geral que contemple algumas das principais matrizes teóricas e os respectivos autores que se ativeram ao estudo do fenômeno social chamado esporte moderno e, por conseguinte, contribuíram para a institucionalização desse espaço de discussão acadêmica.

Palavras-chave: Sociologia. Esportes. Pierre Bourdieu.

Por una Génesis de lo Campo de la Sociología del Deporte: Escenários y Perspectivas

Resumen: Lo presente artículo tiene por objeto proporcionar una estructura y un breve resumen del estudio histórico y sociológico sobre el establecimiento de la sociología del deporte en la escena internacional, lo que hace a continuación algunas conclusiones y transposiciones a pensar el escenario brasileño y, quizás, latinoamericano. Para este ataque, parte se de un enfoque bibliográfico exploratorio con el fin de rescatar algunos elementos históricos del desarrollo de la sociología del deporte y desarrollar una visión general que incluye algunas de las principales teorías y sus autores que permanecían en el estudio del fenómeno social llamado deporte moderno y, por consiguiente, contribuyó a la institucionalización de este espacio de discusión académica.

Palabras clave: Sociología. Deportes. Pierre Bourdieu.

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