Jogos Eletrônicos e a Busca da Excitação

Electronic Games and the Search for Excitement

Leoncio José de Almeida Reis[*]

Fernando Renato Cavichiolli[**]

Resumo: No ramo do entretenimento, a indústria dos jogos eletrônicos foi a que mais cresceu na última década, tendo atraído atenção de pesquisadores de diversas áreas, dentre elas a Educação Física. Por que os jogos eletrônicos têm despertado tamanho interesse como opção de lazer para crianças, jovens e adultos? Neste estudo pretendemos discutir sobre uma possível forma de interpretar, a partir da teoria de Norbert Elias e Eric Dunning, os jogos eletrônicos como opção de lazer, utilizando como ferramenta auxiliar questionários respondidos por indivíduos que jogam videogames. A intenção é tecer algumas reflexões que colaborem para o entendimento desta prática lúdica.

Palavras-chave: Jogos de vídeo. Atividades de lazer. Emoções. Indústria eletrônica.

1 INTRODUCTION

When visiting a friend, we observed an unusual situation: while the father, sitting on an armchair, was playing videogame and sometimes took some peanuts and sipped some beer, his son, an eight-year old boy, was playing in the parking area of the building where they lived. At first glance, both were participating in fully distinct activities, but soon, after more detailed observations, it was possible to find similarities. From the window, we could see the son playing a game called by the boys as "police catch robbers". From above, the silent movements of the children were evident. They hid between cars, behind pillars, watched through openings, communicated through gestures, making careful and precise movements, as they wanted to surprise the opponent and obviously survive in the game. The emotion they felt in the game was perceptible. The facial and motor expressions and the body movements precisely indicated the emotions they felt in each situation. We could notice their hesitation and anxiety before running to a safer point, happiness when saving a friend, deception and sadness of being eliminated from the game, fear, insecurity, etc.

The father, although involved in an activity whose style and form fully differ from the activity describe above and that occurs in a different physical space, was having fun

---

[*] Student in the postgraduate program (Master's degree in Physical Education) of the Teaching Licensure in Physical Education, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, PR, Brazil. E-mail: leojar_edf@yahoo.com.br

[**] Doctor's degree in Physical Education, Professor of the Department of Physical Education, Teaching Licensure in Physical Education, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, PR, Brazil. E-mail: cavicca@ufpr.br

with an electronic game that presented very similar mechanisms to the game the son was playing simultaneously. It was a videogame that simulated the view of the game character[1], in which the player controlled a policeman and should invade a casino protected by outlaws. The player should have a good target and be careful to avoid being attacked by the enemies. Then, in several moments, we could notice, through the character's movements in the game, the same level of precaution observed in the children playing down there. The character was slowly guided through corridors, watched from the wall end and under the doors, or sometimes ran to a more strategic position. The player clearly demonstrated emotion, through facial expressions and rough movements of hands and arms, especially when was caught unprepared or when he noticed he targeted by the enemy. The tension felt by the player in certain moments was evident, very similar to what was happening with the children. This tension was easily perceptible when observing the attitudes represented in the game combined with the player's real expressions.

However, the intention is not to identify elements to correlate these two leisure activities or show advantages and disadvantages of one in relation to the other, but both activities, no matter how different (or similar!) they seem to be, present elements in common that attract these individuals. We assume that this element in common would be the increase in levels of tension-excitement - and the consequent entertainment - that these activities provide. This way, our intention in this study is to discuss about a possible way to interpret, based on the theory of Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, the utilization of electronic games as a leisure option. The intention is to create some reflections that help understand this entertaining practice. We will try to identify, with the help of questionnaires answered videogames players, some reasons that make these people look for these games and what kinds of experiences they want to have with them.

However, before this analysis, we think it is essential to contextualize the presence of electronic games while a leisure option in the modern life. Many information regarding this activity need to be analyzed to provide the reader with an overview of the comprehensiveness and growth of this phenomenon we are addressing.

2 ELECTRONIC GAMES IN MODERN SOCIETY

---

[1] In this type of electronic game, the image simulates the view of the character controlled in the game, that is, the image reproduced on the screen is what the character sees.

The first electronic games appeared approximately in the 1960s. Since then, due to their attractiveness and acceptance as an entertainment tool, they have become increasingly more popular. The technological evolution generated mainly with the development of computers has enabled to transform electronic games in such way that many of the games created today are considered works of art.[2] The latest videogames have reached such technological levels that, due to their extraordinary processing capabilities and fast generation of graphic resources, can reproduce images that are each time more similar to the real ones - which is an attractive point.

Today, the industry of electronic games and videogames is regarded as the world's largest entertainment industry, with incomes that exceed those of the film industry:

> The market of games has become the largest modern entertainment industry; it operates around thirty billion dollars [...]. The market is expected to grow 20.1% a year in the next five years. The segment of electronic games in the world has grown so much that it has exceeded the earnings of the film industry [...] (RAHAL, 2006, p. 1).

Rahal (2006) says that in 2001 the industry of electronic games made US$ 21 billion, almost three times more than the film industry of Hollywood, which made US$ 8,4 billion[3].

The investments in the sector are increasingly higher and the commercial dispute of the industries is tough. After all, the number of people interested in this type of products is expected to grow, as well as the number of fanatics about this type of entertainment. In Brazil, despite the strong market for this industry, the development of the sector is hindered mainly by tax issues, unlike other countries such as the United States, Japan and United Kingdom, whose populations represent the large consumer markets of this entertainment (RAHAL, 2006, p. 3). The high cost of these products in the national market and the low purchasing power of the population restrict the access to these products. However, the recent interest of the producers and distributors of electronic games in our country confirms the growth expectation of the internal market in this sector.

Also, it should be noted is that, in contrast to what we used to think, the electronic game is not an entertainment only for children. A study conducted by the Consumer

---

[2] For more information, see: MATIAS, Alexandre. **Videogame enquanto arte.** Benzaitem, 2002.

[3] An example of this growth in the industry of electronic games is the videogame *Halo 2*, that sold 2.4 million units for 50 dollars on the first day only, reaching 120 million dollars on just one day. Until that day, the movie with the highest capitalization on the launch day was *Spider Man 2*, which took in 40 million dollars.

Electronics Association showed that adults play more than adolescents (KOPPE, 2007). In agreement with this study, Lee (2006) stated that in 2006 the mean age of the players was 33 years. These statistics show that videogame, before considered an entertainment only for children and adolescents, is reaching a broader area and therefore is an important leisure instrument to several age groups.

However, the electronic games are not restricted to leisure. Many of them have reached a high dispute level and have become competitive activities of high level. In these cases, characteristics that are similar to those of modern sports are evident, such as payment of athletes and governmental incentive. The quotation below illustrates this statement:

> The most skilled [players] are sponsored by computer companies or manufacturers of games and dispute championships whose awards reach US$ 100 thousand [...]. In Russia, England and, more recently, in China, the cyberathletes are officially considered sport people. In South Korea, where 70% of the people have fast internet connection, the annual gain of the best cyberathletes exceeds US$ 100 thousand. They take it seriously: train up to 12 hours a day and live under pressure, as they are constantly observed on screens by the supporters (AZEVEDO, 2004).

The intensive training, physical and mental fatigue, body care and even spectacularization are evident in these high level competitions, as observed in the following quotation, from another report:

> The environment of an event as the World Cyber Games reminds of a sport competition, for instance a soccer or volleyball game. Even the cyberathletes that took relatives or friends to cheer for them in Belo Horizonte had to comply with the rules of concentration before the game, as exclusive floors were reserved in the hotel for the competitors. Besides, some Brazilian players already have sponsors, receive salaries, train daily and take care of aspects such as diet, to keep a healthy routine, characteristic of sport players (AZEVEDO, 2005).

As electronic games are increasingly present in everyday life, innumerous discussions result from this context. For instance, debates are held about the influence of violence[4] in electronic games on the children formation or about the lack of physical

---

[4] In 1999, two students entered the Columbine High School, in the United States and shot 13 classmates, killing them. The massacre aroused the discussion on the influence of violent electronic games, as the murderers would have supposedly been influenced by games (*Doom* and *Quake*) considered extremely violent. Discussions on similar cases are constant and some games are prohibited in several countries, such as *Carnagedom* in Brazil.

activity that the excessive interest in videogame causes, as observed in the following statement: "Another study suggests that British children spend two month a year in front of videogame screens - aggravating obesity and lack of exercises in a country where the health of children is a serious problem" (LEE, 2006).

With such evidences, it is impossible to forget the influence of electronic games on the modern life. Several areas of knowledge enable the interpretation and discussion of subjects connected to these themes, including Physical Education. Besides the themes addressed above, such as violence stimulated by electronic games or increased time sitting in front of a television and a videogame to the detriment of physical activities, we could identify other focus of study: Costa (2005) addresses the body virtualization in the spectacle sport and electronic games and the effects of the utilization of virtual images by the children; Gama (2005) discusses about new epistemologic frontiers related to sport and human movement studies, given the appearance of concepts such as cyberathletes, cybercultures and digital games; Feres Neto (2001) talks about the appearance of new sport experiences resulting from the so-called sport virtualization.

It is important for the physical education professional to recognize the influence of electronic games in children's behaviors. Many of them are full of fantastic stories, heroes, monsters, exotic worlds and other attractions, and it is no wonder children - and not only them! - feel interested in them. Some of this electronic experiences of children can, for instance, be brought to the physical education classes and reinterpreted in games, entertaining activities and body expressions. Costa (2005, p. 175) agrees with that opinion: "[...] Physical Education should have several "experience categories" [...]; for this reason it should make virtualization and actualization processes of games / sports "oscillate", and one way to do that is by "actualizing" what is only an electronic experience into body experience".

In this brief introductory topic, we tried to reproduce some aspects that show the increasing participation of videogames and electronic games as a leisure option. Some interesting questions that have been addressed and discussed regarding this practice were also mentioned, showing that studies related to this theme are more frequent and that there is a concern about and need to expand the understanding about it. However, we will not address any of the questions above. As mentioned before, we opted for discussing the electronic games based on the theory of Norbert Elias and Eric Dunnig. From this initial

idea, we will discuss and create some reflections that can help understand the electronic games as a leisure activity.

3 THE SEARCH FOR EXCITEMENT IN ELECTRONIC GAMES

The title of this article makes a reference to a compilation of articles and essays published in the forma of a book in 1985, titled the Search for Excitement. In this book, the authors Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning studied and tried to understand the configurations of leisure activities.

For these authors, in most leisure activities, the essential ingredient to pleasure - and what is in fact sought after in these activities - is, in general, pleasant excitement, (ELIAS; DUNNING, 1992). When one watches a movie, plays ball with friends or jumps from a bridge with only one elastic rope attached, this person wants to experience emotions that are not frequently in his/her everyday life, or that, if present, do not offer a sufficiently high level of tension-excitement, which is necessary to the his/her wellness. In contrast to usual statements, people do not look for leisure activities to compensate for their tensions or attenuate emotional loads acquired after an exhaustive work day, but to increase tension levels, place themselves in exciting situations, experience moments that incite or favor various emotions. That's excitement and not relaxation that constitutes the main element of most part of leisure activities.

In more advanced modern societies, the serious critical situations in the everyday life that cause increased tension-excitement are much less frequent if compared to less developed societies (ELIAS; DUNNING, 1992). Besides, enhanced social control and self-control prevent experienced tensions and emotions from being demonstrated publicly. Exaggerated public demonstrations of any feeling are only allowed in spaces and occasions recognized for that – leisure activities, party occasions, funeral, celebrations, etc. Out of these spaces, manifestations of emotions should be restricted and the public expression of feelings through shouting, crying, gestures and exacerbated attitudes is condemned, being subject to extreme fine of prison or confinement (ELIAS; DUNNING, 1992). Then, some leisure activities are social spaces where manifesting and expressing feelings are allowed – although in a restricted and controlled manner - with public acceptance and without punishment.

Based on the studies of Elias and Dunning, some questions appear for the debate in this study: do people play videogames because this practice can cause a pleasant increase

in tension-excitement levels? In this leisure space, is it possible to experience different emotions from those in everyday activities? Is the expression of feelings in these spaces socially allowed?

We collected some data for this study through questionnaires answered by people who play videogames. The answers involved questions such as age, profession, favorite leisure activities, how long the person has played, how many hours a week are dedicated to videogame, favorite types of electronic games and why they practice and like this activity in leisure moments.[5] In total, 31 questionnaires were spontaneously answered through three discussion forums in internet. The forums belonged to websites specialized in subjects related to videogames and electronic games in general. The purpose was not to collect a significant sample of players and then obtain a significant quantitative result or generalize the result obtained, extending it to all the population. We used this questionnaire as an auxiliary tool of qualitative study, with the purpose of identifying relevant questions to the subject discussion. It also acted as a way to notice, even superficially, if the players that participated in the study considered the electronic games as this study supposed.

The characteristics of the group that voluntarily answered the questionnaire available in the forums will be briefly described to facilitate the understanding and the discussion of the answers of these people while videogame players. The intention is describe this group exclusively, and not to perform quantitative analyses of the data obtained.

The mean age of all 31 people who answered the questionnaire is 27.7 years old (standard deviation: 5.96), ranging from 14 to 41 years old. This information confirms the statistics initially presented, showing that most players are adults. Each one played videogame 16.86 hours a week on average (standard deviation: 9.09), with the answers ranging from 5 to 40 hours a week. It should be noted that, when analyzing the answers individually, we can say that almost everyone analyzed started playing videogame, or had the first contact, during childhood. Perhaps, after this age group, some stopped playing videogame for a while and others did not, but in the long run they did not discard it definitely as a leisure option. The mean age at which they started playing videogame was 7.1 years old (standard deviation: 2.86). Only one person had the first contact later, at 13

---

[5] The questions and answers of this questionnaire are posted at these websites: http://www.portalxbox.com.br/e107_plugins/forum/forum_viewtopic.php?74330, http://forum.jogos.uol.com.br/viewtopic.php?t=1188890, http://gamertags.uol.com.br/index.php?option=com_smf&Itemid=44&topic=101.0.

years old. Among their favorite leisure options, the most usual were obviously electronic games. Other frequently mentioned options were: going to the movies and watching movies.

It is not difficult to see that electronic games can incite in players certain types of emotions. Through synthesis of images[6], possibility of interaction with these images using a control[7] and the utilization of sound resources, these games can directly affect our senses, which, combined with a script and imagination, provide sufficient ingredients to create situations that stimulate our emotions. Many of the games produced today are similar to movies, not only for the impressive graphic quality, but because they invest in the elaboration of deep scripts and stories, but with a radical advantage: the possibility of interaction. The result is an exciting and attractive activity:

> In fact, such games seem to provide those who manipulate them with a possibility to be inserted in a "reality" with more emotion than that they could find in their own experiences, particularly when these experiences do not correspond to their potential for creation. While reality is many times taken as illegitimate, what matters in the game is the electronically experienced fantasy. This way, videogames, mainly those suggesting violence, possibly work as a type of catharsis for affliction and dream, and for the inclination of young people and children to dangerous situations, competitive challenge and experience (CABRAL, 1997).

The answers in the questionnaires show comments that demonstrate the observation above. Some of these answers suggest the electronic games have, besides the capability to arouse emotions, the possibility to provide players with different emotions from those experienced in everyday life. Fear, anger, cheerfulness, euphoria, tension, pleasure and happiness were some of the words mentioned in the questionnaires.

When analyzing our everyday life, it is easy to observe that the situations we experience are extremely habitual. Family obligations, cleanliness care, satisfaction of vital needs and mainly work-related activities (which almost always demand more time) are examples of these habitual activities, from which, in situations considered as socially normal, no one is free. They are routine activities that should be complied with, but that do not bring satisfactory levels of excitement or when rarely present high levels of tension, the

---

[6] "Computerized images are called synthesis images, as they are obtained by joining mathematical matrices plotted in differential algebraic equations. Then, they derive from logic operations caused by numerical meta languages condensed into programs." (LYOTARD, 2000, mentioned by GAMA, 2005, p. 170)

[7] Joystick in videogames and even mouse and keyboard in case of a computer.

expression of such tension is either not socially allowed, or the tension itself is unpleasant. The leisure occasion ends up as the moment when individuals can escape from routine and search for high levels of tension, which are reduced or restricted during routine activities. This way, sports and many leisure activities "[...] are intended for moving the body, stimulating emotions, evoking tensions in the form of controlled and well balanced excitement, with no risks and tensions usually related with the excitement of other life situations" (ELIAS; DUNNING, 1992, p. 79).

This view is shared by the players that participated in the forum, as they posted comments indicating electronic games acted as a relaxing entertainment, a form of distraction, a way to escape from reality. Some of these sentences are listed below and each of them belongs to a different person. They are parts of the answer obtained to "Why do you like electronic games?". The words in bold are my highlights:

> "Experiencing situations that I could never have in my life and **relax** while playing."
>
> "I guess this is the best way to **escape from problems**, you simply sit, take the control and **relax**, and forget everything that happened during the day, etc."
>
> "For the possibility of entertainment and **"escaping" (in a positive sense)** that they provide."
>
> "For me, this is a way to **forget the problems** and everyday headaches. I **relax** a lot when I play videogame. Another factor is the entertainment it provides."
>
> "Because it is great if you want to **forget the problems**, no matter what kind of problem."
> "To **relax**, **forget** the everyday stress or something that disturbs me. Well, to abstract..."
>
> "**Forgetting** the world is good."
>
> "**Escaping a little from the reality** is good sometimes. You end up experiencing situations that you wouldn't have in your everyday life."

These are only some examples, but many answers showed this idea of escaping from the reality. Comments about forgetting and escaping from problems were present in many other answers. Either in an explicit or implicit way, most of these people defended that they played videogame because with it they could be distant from the habitual activities, unpleasant subjects, family obligations and work-related concerns. We can

conclude that, for them, playing videogame requires certain concentration and that, initially for this reason, the game ends up deviating all their attention from the surrounding reality towards the game itself. This way, it temporarily takes away any thought that afflicts or disturbs the person, replacing it with thoughts the person knows they are not real and that will disappear when the entertainment ends. It explains the several posts showing this opinion.

Like in other leisure activities, playing videogame really assumes a certain level of attention and concentration (as it requires fine motor skills and coordination) and may make them "forget the problems". However, this fact cannot be understood as the only or main factor, as the players themselves defined that it make them perform such activity. If this was the case, maybe children would not feel interested in these activities, as they do not have responsibilities, concerns and problems that are exclusive to the world of adults. "The escape from reality" can be a consequence, but not the end itself of this entertaining practice.

Some opinions of players suggest that the electronic games are attractive because they can off different experiences in different environments and situations, arousing imagination and fantasy:

> [...] what attracts me in the games is especially the possibility to explore a new world, where you get to "outwit" the rules and experience something totally original without getting out of you house. It would be something like a book, telling a complex and engaging story, combined with the cinematographic presentation, full of visual and sound effects, as well as the interactivity you would have with it, a lot greater than you have with a movie or a book.

> [...] distraction, it takes me to places where I can never be (wars, crusades, medieval kingdoms).

> An opportunity to "diving" in places/worlds/situations that would be impossible in the real life. Not to mention the therapy it represents.

> [...] games are a way to be in contact with realities that are different from mine.

These players refer to modern electronic games and, if we look at older games, we can see that this feeling of being attracted by the rich fantasy of games cannot be so

determining like that. If we consider Pac-Man[8], we can conclude that it was not its environment comprised of dots, straight lines, circles and a little more than 16 colors that made it attractive at the time, but probably the fun provoked mainly when increasing the tension-excitement levels from the interactive participation in the game. In modern electronic games, the quality of images, sound effects, music and stores are unquestionably superior. However, just as in older games, the companies that develop these games seek to essentially offer scenes and situations, through various possibilities and styles of games, that are adequate to increasing the players' excitement level. Perhaps, the possibility of experiencing exciting situations and increasing tension levels is an important component, or maybe the main element of this leisure practice.

The origin of many of the feelings aroused by leisure activities is in the everyday feelings. What fundamentally differs is the risk factor. In leisure, it is possible to experience several situations that transmit a sensation of risk, danger or fear, without causing a direct risk to the life of participants. It is just like the feeling of fear aroused when watching a terror movie. Elias (1992) considers this peculiarity of leisure activities according to the concept of "mimetic activities", which are activities that:

> [...] arouse emotions of a specific nature that are closely related in a specific and different manner, such as those people experience in their ordinary life, not in leisure (ELIAS; DUNNING, 1992, p. 183).

According to him, these mimetic activities also indicate that:

> [...]feelings dynamized in an imaginary situation of a human leisure activity have affinities with the feelings provoked in real situations of life (ELIAS; DUNNING, 1992, p. 71).

In mimetic activities, it is possible to experience situations that are similar to the reality and experience true tensions-excitements - also similar to those in real situations - without, however, affecting life.

Many of these mentioned characteristics are also present in the electronic games, as illustrated in some players' speeches (the words in bold are my highlights):

---

[8] Pac-Man is considered as one of the classics in the videogame history. Produced to Atari 2600 console in early 1980s, it became a very popular game. The game mechanics is the following: the player is represented by a round head with a mouth that opens and closes, in a maze full of dots. Four ghosts roam the maze, trying to catch the head. The purpose is to eat all dots without being caught by the ghosts.

"Emotion from violating the laws of the world, knowing that I **won't hurt anyone in fact** [...]".

"I guess it's real fun, because it alleviates everyday pressures without exposing us to fatigue and causing **no harm.**

"And I guess this is a wonderful way to **do things we would never do in our real life**."

"A way to **be bad without really being bad**, be the best without really being the best, only for the fact that we are all children!!!"

"Playing is **doing something you will never be able to do**, or taking a different attitude from that you would take in real life just for fun, NEVER mixing real and virtual worlds."

"It's a way to "enter" another reality and **make things you would never be able to do in real life**, and it makes me forget my problems for some moments;"

As mentioned before, in the electronic games, just as in other mimetic activities, the players can experience situations and consequently resulting emotions, similar to real ones, without causing any real damage. The player can incorporate the hero and experience the emotion of facing monsters and dragons; be a soldier and experience a war tension, the coach, the captain and the top scorer of the team and be frustrated with a goal of the opponent in the last minute; can feel the fear when commanding soldiers to the final battle or the excitement of risking all money in a card game. In these examples, each of these electronic experiences will awaken emotions of specific natures and various levels.

No matter how these mimetically aroused emotions completely differ from the emotions in real situations (and so far it has not been scientifically determined) and how elevated the intensity levels of the latter are if compared to the first, we can deny the cerebral stimulation that will probably cause changes, at higher or lower intensity, to the tension levels of the person.

Many players mentioned the possibility of making a decision or doing something in the game that could not be done in real situations. This is a very attractive characteristic of the electronic games. It enables the players to experience - in a mimetic manner - socially prohibited situations or even situations that cannot occur in real life. For this reason, the electronic games and most leisure activities end up generating emotions and feelings that definitively are not easily aroused by everyday activities, mainly because many of these feelings are related to situations that are allowed by neither the society nor the players themselves. Then, in a game where the main character robs a car and frenetically drives

away from the police, the player can experience in a mimetic manner the emotion of escaping, knowing that, in contrast to reality, any failure would not affect his/her freedom or life. Besides, the player makes it with the social and his/her own support, and will not be blamed for doing something that is not socially allowed.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The idea we tried to develop in this study was that the electronic games are like many other leisure activities, in which the search for excitement is the main attraction and source of pleasure. And this idea was well illustrated by the situation described in the beginning of this article, about the different activities performed by the father and his son. Perhaps, despite of the innumerous differences, the father and his son wanted exactly the same thing: play "police catch robbers". If we consider why children play and are interested in the two activities mentioned in the introductory topic, while adults would not invite friends to play hide-and-seek, we can partly understand this fast ascension of the electronic games as entertainment.

The electronic games as a leisure option has a strong ally: convenience. After all, moving to a leisure area - square, museum, club or movies - can take a long time, be uninteresting or even stressing, not to mention fear and lack of safety caused by urban violence. In addition, playing games with other people in internet is increasingly common[9], which eliminates being dependent on specific friends or groups of friends that would be essential to the performance of many other leisure activities, a fact that causes changes in people's habits and behaviors, contributing to emptied public areas and leisure practices restricted to private and family environments.

Regardless of any judgement in terms of advantages or disadvantages of the electronic games if compared to other leisure activities, we point out the importance and need for studies directed to understanding this activity. Like it or not, it is a leisure option that has increasingly acquired new adepts, and, who knows, using the time dedicated to other leisure practices? Would physical activities and physical education itself be victims of this expansion?

---

[9] The electronic games have strongly explored the possibility of interaction with other players via internet. With the latest videogames launched in the market, for instance, it is very easy and fast to connect to internet by simply turning on the videogame and pressing some buttons. After that, it is possible to play the same game with people in many places in the world.

This is polemic question to parents, who are placed in a true dilemma when pressured by the children to buy a videogame. On the one hand, they feel their child is safe at home, far from the dangers in the street, but on the other hand, they end up questioning whether the child's development would not be affected. At this point, it is impossible to define to what extent playing videogame would be healthy or not. But this is a relevant concern, as this excessive practice, whose immoderation itself it not beneficial, ends up avoiding the performance of other practices that would be essential for the child's motor, cognitive and social development. Besides the good sense to recognize exaggerations regarding the time spent with such entertainment, the parents should worry about offering their children other leisure activities that are as interesting as or more interesting than the electronic games. Providing the children with the opportunity to practice other activities that also increase their tension-excitement levels seems to be an essential point, as this characteristic seems to be - according to everything we discussed in this text - exactly what makes them attractive. On the other hand, we understand that prohibiting this leisure option or deny its existence does not seem to be the most sensible attitude either, as many electronic games offer positive aspects, such as the opportunity of mimetic experiences. This way, children can experience situations that cause emotions without having to submit themselves to real risks, an experience that would stimulate the central nervous system (KANITZ, 2005).[10]

Considered the greatest industry of modern entertainment, the electronic games are not really immune to the interests of the cultural industry. As it occurs in music, cinema and entertainment in general, the electronic games are inserted in a dominating capitalist logic and are developed with the intention of having the highest possible financial return. This way, many developers make excessive use of violence or polemic issues in their titles and many games are nothing but reproductions of slot machines that follow recipes for success guarantee: explosion and blood. For this reason, besides good sense to impose time limits to games, the parents should be careful and select what their child can play.

One last aspect is related to the association of interactivity and body movement. In the latest generation of videogames launched in the market, the most successful model was a videogame that tried a differentiated way to play, very distinct from the traditional forms of the player sitting in front of the television for many hours stopped. The control (which

---

[10] Kanitz defends in his article the importance of stimulating the child's brain in order to prevent synaptic regression, with electronic games as an excellent tool for that, because they can cheat the brain when simulating hostile and dangerous environments.

seemed very complex for those who had never been interested in games) was changed into a simpler object, similar to a remote control, but fully sensitive to movements. With this change, the players had the possibility of simulating directly with their own bodies, the action they wanted the character to perform in the game. Then, in a tennis game, pressing a button will not strike the ball back anymore, but the respective movement executed in real life, simulating the striking moment. A sword attack in a medieval game is not produced by pressing a button, as now the player holds his/her own sword (the control) in his/her hands and the arm movements will determine the action in the game. Undoubtedly, such technological progress, which seems small or slow to inattentive people, can directly influence the practice of sports and physical education. A useful tool, who knows?

These are some questions that, although they are complex and even non-temporal in the perspective of some people, can and should be discussed especially by physical education and leisure professionals, after all it seems the future of games is each time more related to human movement.

Electronic Games and the Search for Excitement
Abstract: In the entertainment segment, the industry of electronic games presented the highest growth rate in the last decade, having attracted the attention of researchers from several areas, including Physical Education. Why have electronic games aroused such a great interest as a leisure option for children, young people and adults? In this study, we intend to discuss about a possible form to interpret, from the theory of Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, the electronic games as a leisure option, using as auxiliary tool questionnaires answered by people who play videogames. The intention is to create some reflections that help understand this entertaining practice.
Keyword: Videogames. Leisure activities. Emotions. Electronic industry.

Juegos electrónicos y la búsqueda del entusiasmo
Resumen: En el rama de la diversión, la industria de los juegos electrónicos era la que más crecieron en la década pasada, atrayendo la atención de los investigadores de áreas diversas, entre ellas la educación física. ¿Por qué los juegos electrónicos tienen despertar interés tan grande como opción del ocio para los niños, los jóvenes y los adultos? En este estudio nos preponemos discutir en una forma posible para interpretar, de la teoría de Norbert Elias y de Eric Dunning, los juegos electrónicos como opción del ocio, usando como cuestionarios auxiliares de la herramienta contestados para los individuos que juegan juegos de video. La intención es tejer algunas reflexiones que colaboren para el acuerdo de este juguetón práctico.
Palabras clave: Juegos de vídeo. Actividades recreativas. Emociones. Industria electrónica.

REFERENCES

ASSIS, Diego, MATIAS, Alexandra. Próxima Jogada. **Gamenet.** São Paulo, 2004. Available at: < http://www.gamenetpr.com.br/gamenet.html>. Access on June 24, 2007.

AZEVEDO, Théo. World Cyber Games, a olimpíada dos jogos eletrônicos. **Uol Jogos**, São Paulo, 2005. Available at: <http://jogos.uol.com.br/reportagens/ultnot/ ult2240u52.jhtm>. Access on April 30, 2007.

AZEVEDO, Théo. Jogar via internet vira profissão para aficionados. **Folha Online**, São Paulo, 2004. Available at: <http://jogos.uol.com.br/reportagens/ultnot/ ult2240u52.jhtm>. Access on April 30, 2007.

BRESCIANI, Antonio Alex. A breve e lucrativa história de consolidação dos jogos. **Mercado B**. São Paulo, 2003. Available at: <http://www.benzaiten.com.br/artigo/consolidacao_jogos.htm>. Access on April 30, 2007.

CABRAL, Fátima. Jogos eletrônicos: técnica ilusionista ou emancipadora? **Benzaitem,** 2007. Available at: <http://www.benzaiten.com.br/artigo/ilusionista_emancipadora.htm>. Access on May 2, 2007.

COSTA, Alan Queiroz**.** Mídia e jogos: do virtual para uma experiência corporal educativa. **Revista Brasileira de Ciências do Esporte,** Campinas, v. 27. n. 2, p. 165-178, jan. 2005.

ELIAS, Norbert; DUNNING, Eric. **A busca da Excitação**. Lisboa: Difel, 1992.

FERES NETO, Alfredo. **A virtualização do esporte e suas novas vivências eletrônicas**. 117 f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Faculdade de Educação, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, 2001.

GAMA, Dirceu Ribeiro Nogueira. Ciberatletas, cibercultura e jogos digitais. Considerações epistemológicas. **Revista Brasileira de Ciências do Esporte,** Campinas, v. 26, n. 2, p. 163-177, jan. 2005.

KANITZ, Stephen. A favor dos games. **Revista Veja**, v. 38, n. 41, p. 22, 12 out. 2005. Available at:<www.kanitz.com.br>. Access on April 20, 2007.

KOPPE, Jennifer. Coisa de gente grande. **Gazeta do Povo**, Curitiba, 06 de maio de 2007. Caderno ViverBem.

LEE, Reuters Gaetan. Exposição em Londres questiona se videogames seriam "benção" ou "maldição". **FolhaOnline**, São Paulo, 2006. Available at: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/informatica/ult124u20820.shtml>. Access on April 28, 2007.

MATIAS, Alexandre. **Videogame enquanto arte**. In: **Benzaitem**, 2002. Available at: <http://www.benzaiten.com.br/artigo/videogame_enquanto_arte.htm>. Access on June 24, 2007.

RAHAL, Fernando de Castro. **Desenvolvimento de jogos eletrônicos**. 2006. 32 f. Trabalho de conclusão de curso (Bacharel em Engenharia da Computação). Centro Universitário Assunção, São Paulo, 2006.