

WHY A BRAZILIAN JOURNAL OF SPORT HISTORY? A FEW WORDS ABOUT THIS SCIENTIFIC PERIODICAL¹

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Abstract

This article aims at presenting *Recorde: Journal of Sport History* from a overview of the Brazilian historiography which has sport as a central object of study.

Keywords: sport history; historiography.

Resumo

Por que uma revista brasileira de história do esporte? Breves palavras sobre esse periódico

Esse artigo tem por objetivo apresentar a *Recorde: Revista de História do Esporte* a partir de um balanço da historiografia brasileira que tem o esporte enquanto objeto central de estudo.

Palavras-chave: história do esporte; historiografia.

This number starts out the path of *Recorde*, the first journal in Brazil dedicated exclusively to Sport History. Although it does not mean closing doors to dialogue with other disciplines, the central subject is indeed the path, over time and space, of institutionalized corporal practices (sport, physical education, dance, gymnastic, capoeira, among others), as well as leisure/entertainment activities, in all historical periods.

¹. Translated from Portuguese by Rafael Fortes.

Why taking the challenge of launching a Brazilian journal dedicated to such thematic? Throughout the world, the different institutionalized corporal practices have called the attention of social scientists and historians as subjects which may contribute to broadening our vision over the social context they are part of. Among many others, Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias directed a privileged look towards sport, acknowledging its relevance in the cultural frame of modernity and contemporarity.

The beginning of a “sub-discipline” called “Sport History” should be understood from the emergence of the New Cultural History, which, apart from prior roots, occurrences and influences, is better systematized in the 1970s, according to Peter Burke (2005). From dialogues established with Anthropology, in the scope of valorization of culture as a subject in social and human sciences, the different “practices” gain relevance and start to be issues of historical research:

“Practices” are one of the paradigms of New Cultural History: the history of religious practices, not theology, the history of speaking, not of linguistics, the history of experiments, not of scientific theory. Due do this turn towards practices, sport history, which was a theme for amateurs, became professionalized, a field with its own journals, such as *International Journal of History of Sport* (Burke, 2005, p. 78).²

This recent organization brings many conceptual problems which need to be faced. Can we really call “Sport History” a sub-discipline (which would express the idea of something already consolidated or in the way of consolidation) or, dialoguing with the ideas of José de Assunção Barros (2004)³, it is one more of the many dominions of history, which “arise and disappear rapidly, sometimes following the dictates of fashion and leaving the foreground as soon as it becomes saturated” (p. 186)?

². BURKE, Peter. *O que é história cultural?* Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2005.

³. BARROS, José D'Assunção. *O campo da História*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2004.

Anyway, in order to demonstrate that there is a strong tendency towards consolidation, one should acknowledge the emergence of national (e.g. *North American Society of Sport History*, among others) and international (e.g. *International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport*) societies; journals (the already cited *International Journal*, *Sport History Review*, *Journal of Sport History*, among others); scientific meetings (e.g. the International Congress of the European Committee for Sports History, on its 12nd edition) and specific departments in European and American universities.⁴

The conceptual imprecisions reach this “movement’s” own definition: Sport History, Physical Education and Sport History, or Physical Activities History? When we speak of Sport History, is gymnastic history included? What to say about dance history, which is linked to Art History? Particularly, with no intention of solving the problem definitely, we have worked with the idea of “Institutionalized Corporal Practices History”, something that would include in the same field of investigation (without excluding other possibilities of dialogue) phenomena such as sport, capoeira, gymnastic, the relatively recent “alternative” physical practices (antigymnastics, Alexander technique, etc.), Physical Education (understood as a school subject and as a relatively autonomous field of knowledge), practices called “pre-sport”, among others.

Apart from these polemics and conceptual discussions, it seems clear that, in the last decades, a “Sport History” emerges as a new professional field for historical investigation, if not lead exclusively by “historians by formation”, certainly by researchers who, independent from their original academic affiliations, seek to make use of History field’s methodological discussions.

⁴. An overview of those initiatives can be found at www.sport.ifcs.ufrj.br/docs/navegue.html.

Brazil didn't scape this process. After many years in which Brazilian production was limited to a few references, from the 1990s on one can see an exponential increase in the number of historical studies taking institutionalized corporal practices as the subject of investigation (Melo, 1999)⁵. One can identify some factors connected with quantitative increase in articles, books and postgraduate works:

a) the opening of constant spaces for discussion in scientific meetings; in the field of Physical Education, we can observe such occurrence in meetings such as the Brazilian Congress for Sport Sciences (which dedicates one working group to the theme) and regular reunions of the National Congress for Sport, Leisure and Physical Education History (its 10th edition was held in 2006, in Universidade Federal do Paraná); in the field of History, stands out the specific Thematic Simposia in the national and regional congresses of National History Association (Anpuh);

b) incentive to publication in national journals; the subject was, for example, the main thematic in three editions of Brazilian Journal for Sport Sciences⁶ and one number of Historical Studies⁷;

c) recognition of the subject's relevance by researchers of many fields of study, besides Physical Education and History: Sociology, Anthropology, Communication, Law, among others; privileged spaces have been opened in the activities of some scientific societies, such as Brazilian Association of Anthropology (Aba), Brazilian Association of Graduate Programs and Research in Social Sciences (Anpocs), Brazilian Association of Interdisciplinary Studies in Communication (Intercom); it is worth citing the position

⁵. MELO, Victor Andrade de. *História da Educação Física e do Esporte no Brasil*. São Paulo: Ibrasa, 1999.

⁶. Volume 25, numbers 1, 2 e 3; September 2003, January and may 2004. The journal is edited by the Brazilian College for Sport Sciences.

⁷. Number 23, 1999; the journal is edited by the Center for Research and Documentation of Recent Brazilian History (CPDOC) of Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV). It is scheduled for 2008 a dossier about the subject in the Journal of Brazilian Geographical and Historical Institute.

taken by Anpuh, which recently demanded to the National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq) the inclusion of Sport History as a specialty in the entity's new fields of knowledge table.

d) increase in the number of research groups; a search on the CNPq directory found around 30 groups involved with the thematic in some way.

In such context, it is worth pointing out: a) the growing number of books with information for the non-academic public, written mainly by journalists and usually launched at commemorations or to honor a sports idol; b) in the ambit of academy, the concern with methodological improvement of investigations, through a more constant dialogue with the theoretical framework from social and human sciences.

Thus, it is in such context that we launch Recorde: Journal of Sport History, a publication of "Sport": Laboratory for Sport and Leisure History and of the Post-Graduate Program in Comparative History at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), aiming to contribute to structure historical studies having institutionalized corporal practices as subject.

With these objectives, although it is a scientific magazine, our journal seeks to open wide spaces for any kinds of production that may contribute to the development of sport history: in our sections we will have space for reviews (of books, films, expositions), for thesis and dissertations' abstracts, for news about the thematic (congresses, journals, groups etc.), in Brazil and in the world.

One of our goals, by the way, is to contribute to amplifying the network of contacts with colleagues from other countries who dedicate themselves to research this thematic. That is why we make a point of accepting articles in four languages (Portuguese, Spanish, English, and French) and inviting important researchers from

different universities in the World to integrate our Editorial Board. The ready acceptance of our invitations filled us with joy and hope that we are following the right paths. To these colleagues, from Brazil and from the World, our gratefulness for their company and helping in the journey we are starting.

Accepting the challenge of launching this journal, with all difficulties – including operational ones – that it means in our country, has only been possible due to the enormous involvement of the members of “Sport” - Laboratory for Sport and Leisure History, a group seeking to be an excellence center involving graduate and post-graduate teachers and students from different fields of knowledge, from Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and other higher education institutions.

I should cite specially the names of Andre Schetino, Cleber Augusto Dias, Maurício Drumond, Monica Carvalho, Mônica Monteiro, Rafael Fortes, and Ricardo Pinto dos Santos, members of the journal’s editorial team. They are a group of young enthusiasts for academic labor as well as for sport, who decided to dedicate part time to pursue a dream which starts to come true.

On behalf of myself and the group, I assure we will do our best efforts to make it as good as possible. We count on your company and your help, dear reader.