

70 - MEDIATIZED SPORT

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SPORT AS A PHENOMENON

The role of sport in modern society is of great relevance. Inside any society, from the most primitive to the most technologically advanced, sport is intimately connected to the whole social framework. It is a sphere which belongs to the social framework, but has certain autonomy. From popular games to modern sport, society has transformed itself, and consequentially, has become more complex. The scopes of world and reality perception depend on narratives about facts. There's no way to witness all the facts, but there's a way to search information about them. The concrete level changes from mediated into mediatized. The sport as one of the largest contemporary cultural phenomena, takes shape in sports practices, which gain meaning as social practices through their recognition.

Nowadays, in Marchi Júnior's (2002) opinion, sport has been considered as one of the cultural expressions that, perceptibly, have presented more evolutions and transformations, either in technical order or referring to the form of its presentation and absorption by society. Thus, emerges the perception of sport as a social phenomenon in a constitution process, that is, sports practices reflect, in the analysis of their historical context, continuities and ruptures which characterize the expansion of their frontiers and assure them as a study object which can be interpreted in the light of different theories and methodological proposals.

In order we can have a clear perception of what is meant by sport as a whole, Santin (1996, p. 60) tells us: "The sports practices constitute, today, a social-cultural system constructed as part of the human movement culture and as a decisive factor on the socialization process of the human being".

In fact, modern sport is a competition, and it's becoming more and more a great show that gathers thousands of people together inside stadiums and multiplies them by millions, through television sets. At Olympic Games time, this statement is more evidenced, and the games make every sport seem like a spectacle.

In Barreau and Morne's (1991) view, the sports show is more than an occasion for individual dreams. It's about group or individual games that, in a way, are a fight. When the competitions are over, the best must be announced, and in the authors' opinion, the best is the one who can achieve victory. The sports show is the history of a victory. These elements evidenced by Barreau and Morne are individual (they allude to the winner). The symbolic construction of the sports show for consumers passes through result, but transcends it. The identity traits, the cultural elements that are so deep-rooted in sports matches need to be "exercised" somewhere else: in the media.

The reasons which lead these people to consume sport are the most diverse. We point out that entertainment by means of media has increased significantly (for example, the audience by television, radio, etc.). Our intention is to discuss sport as a social component which is co-opted by media. In this point, the sport as a show, allied to media is the most expressive way to accomplish that.

SPORT AS A SHOW IN MEDIA

In order to promote that spectacle, we need media, which in a proportion, during the Olympic Games are of great relevance to the event. Constantino (1992, p. 204) reports the relation of Media with Sports:

What "sells" is naturally the sports show, its stories, its characters. And it sells because there's naturally a "demand" from which cultural requirements confronted with sport find in this kind of Social Communication an appropriate "supply". Hence, it's understood that Social Communication is an integrant part of the sports show itself. The sports show needs Social Communication in the same proportion that the latter needs the first: it would be unthinkable one living without the other.

In Lovisoló's (1997) opinion, in contrast, there's a considerable agreement to characterize modern or post-modern culture, as a spectacle culture. The word spectacle or spectacular has started to mean the grand, the thrilling, the admirable. Great part of the production defined as cultural is meant for generating shows, if possible, spectacular. Sports are integrated in this logic and hold a growing prominent place in the production of shows.

The spectacle needs the audience in order to signify itself socially, at the same time as they are part of and constitute the sports shows. In that sense, Helal (1998) points out that at the same time when the media, the public, and the idols are part of different social fields, they coexist inside a universe (as a whole), where each one doesn't make sense without the other. In the author's opinion, audiences aren't passive, but witnesses that are part of the "spectacular ceremony".

According to what was mentioned above, we believe that sport is a field of confluence of interests, even if there is an imposition by sports shows promoters, they are offered to social "consumption" through the field of media. The spectacle, as a trend to make one see (by means of different specialized mediations) the world which can't be directly touched anymore, uses sight as the privileged sense of the human person (DEBORD, 1997). The field of media is co-responsible for these different specialized mediations, for it orchestrates, organizes and gives new meaning.

Sport offers itself to the mediatic field with some differences regarding other cultural events such as cinema and theater (PIRES, 2002). Pires analyzes that the first differential aspect is the language universalization, that is, its recognition due to codes and rules imposed by international organizations. Therefore, in the author's opinion, the imagetic and symbolic language of sport allows it to be understood everywhere. The sport as a show takes shape when it displays itself as a previously recognizable form in the receivers' experience list.

In view of that, we agree with Bourdieu (1997) when he points out that sport as a show is produced twice: first, in the place and moment of the fact, by everyone involved (athletes, technical committee, referees, organizers, etc.) in the competition; and secondly, by those who transform images into speeches from this show.

We include here that the sports show is also produced in advance by media, which through their pre-coverage set an agenda for the audience. This coverage doesn't always have in its contents elements which are restricted to the sports field. Media are responsible for the transcendence of senses and meanings of the sports field. The appeal to cultural, identity-forming

aspects is the most recurrent in pre-coverage (we refer to aspects which transcend the field). During the coverage, the spectacularization takes shape due to technological resources, as well as to an increase in the number of "specialists".

The spectacularization of sports by television, mainly soccer, happens with the intention of making the TV viewer keep watching this or that channel each time more. There are dozens of cameras, microphones for environmental sound capture, instant replays, action replays to clear up doubts, sports commentators, refereeing experts, special guests, among other special features in order to make the viewer watch the broadcasts. This technological war among television stations ends up seducing the viewer so they can stay in the comfort of their home, in front of their television set.

Like television, newspapers have more and more experts writing about results, discussing how teams and referees were selected. Each time more these "specialists" relate technical/tactical issues to the economical ones. In these sports analysts' view, athletes who are not receiving wages are a synonym for bad results in the game field. Because they don't know how to explain results, everything is understood as the financial issue. At World Cup time, we find in the great Brazilian newspapers, artists, politicians, specialists from other publications writing about the Cup and their results.

Nevertheless, at Olympic Games time, the "specialists" in sports coverage have been pointing out elements from other fields to discuss the sports published. The first criterion is the expected result, logically the possibility of winning some medal is considered. The ones who have more chances of stepping atop the podium are honored with more prominence in newspapers, having their lives dissected by communication vehicles. Through media, the readers' imaginary is stimulated, because they want to dissect these athletes' social, professional and private life.

In that sense, media exercise a kind of power as for society and, logically, over sport. Matta (1999) presents the change in paradigm regarding perception among the media and society, establishing specifically this relation through culture. Then, we start to talk about mediatized society and not mass anymore. The media stop being the messages conductors and become a new matrix to understand the expressive forms, the discursive and reception strategies.

THE MEDIATIZED SOCIETY

Mediatized society isn't homogenous, therefore the media penetrate and alter every social relations, but don't produce a homogeneity. Social activities remain, distinct, each one mediatized in its own way, dialoguing with the media. Not every social practices are, homogenously, mediatized in the same way. Economic differences, for instance, end up by making the process unequal. Mediatization is becomes relative because of the social context in which it is perceived.

When saying that mediatization configures itself as an order of socially accomplished mediations in the sense of communication understood as an informational process, Sodr  (2002) refers himself to a particular sense of interaction "techno-interaction" characterized by a sort of technological and market prosthesis for sensitive reality, denominated *medium*.

This definition debated by Sodr  makes reference to a "new" ambience through the media field. The facts which are spread in the field of media don't go through a single technological device, but are reconfigured according to mediatic logic, starting to produce derived senses and meanings.

The segmentation of reality, starting from the cut, edition, the camera's objective lens, the choice of this or that line, that is, the mediatic *bios* is a segmentation place, telereality, an imposition of values and rules which come from obtuse places that must be investigated.

In that same direction, Henn et al (2005) comment that mediatization, in a wide sense, is an already disseminated phenomenon in contemporary societies and has been taking diverse formats in the same proportion to which mediatic processes of the most complex nuances are pulverized. There's a whole behavioral choreography in which the media crossings are felt in the same way that handling technological devices with ease transforms entire culture extracts in potential producers.

Signification processes of symbolic goods, treated here as cultural, sometimes historically constructed, sometimes fragments from others, demonstrate to be constructed in various semantic fields. The significations occur in the most diverse social fields and starting from this instant, the media get interested, take possession and reinterpret, giving a new connotation. Nothing consensual, nothing in agreement, but signified and signifier many times get mixed up. The image on the screen seems to be something, but it's not. Mediatization takes shape. The essence of the sports field becomes relative due to the metadiscursivity caused by the media. The anticipation of the result from the sports field as discursive expression from media, becomes a new discourse about the fact.

Journalism has a fundamental role in the mediation among diverse social fields, where innumerable subjects from those fields pass through the mediatization process, being a space of interests and competition. Because the field of media is a symbolic actions producer, it has great importance in the social context. As an example, we can mention the role sport has in the formation of identities, in various social practices and cultural values either individual or collective.

These aspects are reassured in the media, which is the place where social events are produced taking into consideration subjects that are part of the general public's everyday life. In this particularity, Helal (1998) points out that media is one of the few privileged spaces for production and circulation of social discourses. Thus, modern sports shows have become one of the main agents of the "mediatization process" of cultural events.

In that same direction, Berger (2002) comments that the "mediatic culture" has produced an intuitive knowledge which informs groups that they need to cross media in order to achieve an existence status. The author mentioned observes that the media has the power of producing senses, projecting them and legitimatizing them, giving visibility to phenomena that were able to attract journalists' attention. Berger (2002) states that the media isn't just an intermediary for voices on an event, but something that selects, emphasizing and even intervening through words and images in the symbolic construction of events.

THE SOCIAL MEANINGS OF THE SPORTS FIELD THROUGH MEDIA

It's something ordinary the fact media does sports coverage. Each medium (newspaper, radio, television, etc.) provides sense to sports facts based on their strategies, starting from their readers' profile, taking as an example the newspaper, as well as the company guidelines.

We understand that sport is not limited to represent a competition, for it also reflects cultural, economical, social, political aspects and so on. Considering that, the sports field becomes a complex place, a crossing of multiple agendas, where we can't consider only competitors as participants of the spectacle, but the also audience, the competitors' families, the managers, the sponsors, that is, media.

The newspaper works with what's prior to the sports spectacle, because of that it pre-constructs sports events. It imposes its frames, as Mouillaud (2002) points out. The same author also brings up an example from the sports field in order to elucidate the pre-construction of events in which the field (physical) is marked by limits which cut the game area and separate the field of what's outside the game, as the before and after.

Inside this perspective, it's not only the match duration which determines time and space. What's after the sports event

takes shape in media. The mediatic agenda frames what's before, during and after within its strategies and logics produced with its readers, in the case of newspapers. The sports event includes its audiences in Mouillaud's (2002) opinion, in a frame which is not restricted to the field (physical), but, comprehends the stadium, that is, the frame is overflowed. "The event and the media are mixed up in a point in which the media speech becomes performative and not just descriptive anymore" (MOUILLAUD, 2002, p. 66).

"Specialists" in sport who write for newspapers, use other media as sources. This or that columnist not always has time or the possibility of being present in all sports events *in loco*. This promotes an interaction of media through media, at the same time when the columnist has to resort to other sources to produce his or her text, being evoked innumerable speeches by them. The agendas cross each other and, thus, there will be a multiplicity of fields acting over news.

This agenda crossing is surrounded by tensions, for each social field is going to defend its own sovereignty and its agenda's. In this representation, there's going to be heterogeneity in the construction of the news sense. No one writes to themselves the same way they don't write to everybody. Plurality is an untrue fallacy, for every medium serves a specific demand, weather local or national. Daiane dos Santos takes shape in a sports event coverage, first for being Brazilian and, second, for being one of the best gymnasts in the world. In France she's going to have "prominence" in sports coverage just because she's one of the best in the world.

The print media gives sense to the sports field supply based on polyphony, for the sports event is polysemous, as Mouillaud (2002) points out. It tries to create themes for the sports events by means of various speeches, players, sport fans, specialists, coaches, managers, sponsors, medical doctors, that is, everyone is taken as a source for the news construction.

The great contemporary sports events become "reality shows". All the technology used by media, turn the Olympic Games coverage into a real Big Brother. All competitions are broadcast, sports of higher popular interest, according to country, have great prominence in the coverage. How do athletes get ready for the Games? What do athletes do in the Olympic Village's everyday life? How is the training going to be? Where do they come from? And their families, what are their expectations? All of this is considered as a content of the coverage.

How can't one say that sport is different regarding this supply for the mediatic field? The agenda setting is enriched by this field's processuality, which offers its rehearsals (trainings), works with before and after, that is the results prior to the Games and the implications of what comes after the competition, so that the athlete's private drama, life story, that is, everything is supplied in the coverage as an element which constitutes the competition.

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MEDIATIZED SPORT ABSTRACT

This theoretical essay represents an outline of sport as a mediaticized social phenomenon, being able to articulate various social argumentative spheres. The sports show, in which we point out in particularly the Olympic Games and the World Cup, is also produced in advance by media, which through their pre-coverage set an agenda for the audience. This coverage doesn't always have in its contents elements which are restricted to the sports field. Media are responsible for the transcendence of senses and meanings from the sports field. The appeal to cultural, identity-forming aspects is the most recurrent in pre-coverage (we refer to aspects which transcend the field). In that sense, we understand that since the field of media is a symbolic actions producer, it has great importance in the social context.

Key-words: sports; mediaticized; agenda

**MEDIATISE SPORT
RESUME**

Cet essai théorique représente un aperçu du sport comme phénomène socialmédiatisé, être en mesure d'articuler différents domaines sociaux argumentatifs. Le sport spectacle, dans lequel on peut signaler en particulier les Jeux Olympiques et la Coupe du monde, est également produit à l'avance par les médias, qui, par leur couverture pré-établie un ordre du jour pour le public. Cette couverture ne se fait pas toujours dans son contenu des éléments qui sont limités à le terrain de sport. Les médias sont responsables pour la transcendance du sens et de significations dans le terrain de sport. L'appel à la culture, l'identité des aspects de formation sont les plus récurrents dans le pré-couverture (nous nous référons aux aspects qui transcendent le terrain). En ce sens, nous comprenons que, depuis le domaine des médias est un producteur actions symboliques, il a une grande importance dans le contexte social.

Mots-clés: sport; médiatisé; ordre du jour

**EL DEPORTE MEDIATIZADO
RESUMEN**

Este ensayo teórico presenta un delineamiento del deporte enguanto fenómeno social mediatizado, capaz de articular diferentes instancias sociales argumentativas. El espectáculo deportivo, donde destacamos particularmente los Juegos Olímpicos y la Copa Mundialista, es también producido antes por las medias, que a través de su cobertura previa agenda sus espectadores. Esta cobertura no tiene siempre en su contenido elementos restringidos al campo deportivo. Las medias son responsables por la trascendencia de los sentidos y significado del campo deportivo. El apelo de los aspectos culturales, y de identidades son los mas recurrentes en las coberturas previas (hablamos de aspectos que trascienden el campo de juego). En este sentido, entendemos que en función del campo de las medias ser el productor de las acciones simbólicas, este tiene grande importancia en el contexto social.

Palabras clave: deportes; mediatizado; agenda

**O ESPORTE MEDIATIZADO
RESUMO**

Este ensaio teórico representa um delineamento do esporte enquanto fenômeno social midiático, capaz de articular diversas instâncias sociais argumentativas. O espetáculo esportivo, onde destacamos particularmente os Jogos Olímpicos e a Copa do Mundo, são também produzidos antes pelas mídias, que através de sua pré-cobertura agendam os espectadores. Essa cobertura nem sempre tem em seu conteúdo elementos restritos ao campo esportivo. As mídias são responsáveis pela transcendência dos sentidos e significados do campo esportivo. O apelo a aspectos culturais, identitários são os mais recorrentes nas pré-coberturas (falamos de aspectos que transcendem o campo). Nesse sentido, entendemos que em função do campo das mídias ser produtor de ações simbólicas, este tem grande importância no contexto social.

Palavras-chave: esporte; midiático; agenda.