

## Social Sciences and Common Perceptions of Sport

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### ABSTRACT

This paper provides a discussion on various aspects and features of the concept of the social sciences of sport. The concept originated recently and was formulated in 2007 during the preparations for the establishment of the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport. The Society, however, was not formed until the beginning of 2009. Among other things, the concept includes such academic disciplines and fields as sport sociology, sport philosophy, sport psychology, sport pedagogy, the history of physical fitness, sport and Olympism, sport politics and the international conditions of sport, sport economics, sport organizations and management, the social and cultural foundations of tourism and recreation, the social relations regarding training and sport tactics, as well as the humanistic theory of martial arts. The author presents a growth in interest of different social aspects and issues of sport at the beginning of the twentieth century. He indicates the significant development of sport during the second half of the last century, especially towards its end and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The social sciences of sport was also underlined as the reason for the creation of a new, dynamically developing cognitive paradigm. According to the Author, it is mainly connected with the institutional and functional, organizational and methodological conditions of the social science of sport which specifically complemented the educational and research standards for the academic community around the globe. The Author emphasizes the social sciences of sport's distinctive and autonomous part in sport science due to its specific and detailed merit-related issues and methodological foundations. He also stresses that not only does natural science (particularly biological science) play an important role in sport science, but also that the social science of sport has a vital and fundamental value in it. In his opinion, natural (biological) science in relation to sport refers mainly to one person's organism, whereas social science refers, for the most part, to the axiological, cultural, symbolical, esthetic, ethical perception of physical exertion. Moreover, research conducted in this field encompasses the professional, pragmatic, utilitarian, cathartic, escapist, ludic, hedonistic, epistemological and recreational aspects of differently perceived professional sports or sport for all. The Author points out that the amount of available courses – lectures, classes, seminars – in the field of social sciences themselves, as well as in the social science of sport, is being gradually reduced, which undoubtedly lowers not only the knowledge, but also the perception, interpretation, explanation and comprehension of sport in the context of the humanistic approach. Furthermore, he indicates this trend's influential role in the development of common-sense thinking, which makes opinion-forming and

**KEYWORDS**

valuable comments on the subject of sport undergo cognitive deformations. He points out its negative influence on the listeners, audience and fans' consciousness, opinion and attitude, as well as on the interpretative context of the observed events – not only ones associated with sport, but also those happening beyond it, for instance in social, family, peer, professional, political and religious life.

social sciences of sport, common-sense thinking, research methodology, hypothesis, research procedure.

**Introduction**

Social or humanistic reflection on the sport has appeared – and appears – in various forms. Originally, these reflections had religious, historical and predominantly common, ordinary character. The religious character concerns, for example, the symbols, statements, and rituals connected with the sacred nature of the Olympic games and the rudimentary record of Saint Paul in the New Testament, referring to sports *agon*. In the second case, the historical character is reflected in the continuously and systematically recorded documents that described Olympic events. In the third case, ordinary reflection on sport is reflected in the occasional, spontaneous comments concerning the Olympic games or other forms of competitive sports. All of these records have provided precious material for historians of religion, culture, and sport. Statements of the strictly cognitive properties can be found only sporadically; for example, in Plato's works. As a philosopher, he considered properties of sports competition. In his anthropology, he stressed the importance of physical activity in the educational process.

Aside from philosophy and history, the major social sciences and humanities include sociology, psychology, and pedagogy. The first two, i.e., sociology and psychology, arose as separate disciplines in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, for obvious reasons, they couldn't have sport as their subject prior to that time. In that period and continuing into the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the common, ordinary, and journalist reflection on sport prevailed, as was seen in the contemporary press. It was at that point that sports activities became points of interests for natural scientists, especially for those from the fields of biology and medicine. Later, reflections on sports from the perspective of the various social sciences began to develop. Among the first in this area was research on Olympic games and considerations connected with them conducted from the perspectives of the histories of religion, the philosophy of religion (for instance Schelling, 2002; Nietzsche, 1907), religious studies, cultural studies, and classical studies. Ordinary, everyday cognition was enriched by studies with social overtones. Testimony to this are the considerations of Pierre de Coubertin on movement and the Olympic games (regarding, among other topics, pedagogy of sport). The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed significant and continuous developments in the social sciences of sport. This is especially true of such disciplines as sociology of sport; philosophy of sport; psychology of sport; pedagogy of sport; the history of physical culture, sport, and the Olympic games; sport organization and management; the social and cultural foundations of tourism and recreation; social relationships associated with sport training and tactics; as well as the humanistic theory of Eastern martial arts.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and this trend continues today) in various countries in Europe and beyond Europe, national and international societies have been established that examine the complex phenomena, situations, issues, and questions concerning sports from various scientific points of view. These scientific viewpoints originated from two basic directions in research: on the one hand, it is research conducted in the natural sciences; on the other hand, it is research conducted in the social sciences that are also called the humanistic sciences of sport.

*Nota bene*, in addition to the aforementioned analogous character (the first approach), we can also distinguish between the social sciences and humanities – taking into account the methodological conditions of the types of science. This is the approach according to which the research ranges of these two types of sciences overlap (the second approach) as well as the approach that emphasizes full autonomy, that is,

independence of the indicated types of sciences (the third approach). However, for formal as well as substantive reasons, I am in favor of the second stance, which emphasizes that there are both similarities and differences between the social sciences and humanities. It is said that the humanities include philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, and pedagogy. Yet it can be also noted that within the first two – unlike the last three – one cannot conduct empirical research.

### **The new cognitive paradigm - social sciences of sport**

Testimony to the development of social sciences can be seen in the large number of individual and collective monographs and textbooks; scientific journals initially published in the native languages of the country of publishing; and then – an already widespread procedure – published in English. The fact that the publications are increasingly published in English facilitates and fosters the ability to refer to them in subsequent publications. These publications become an important and substantial inspiration for further research. The results are submitted and then presented during local and international conferences organized on the continental level (for example, in the United States it is the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport; for Asia: the Pan-Asian Society of Sports and Physical Education; for Europe: the British Philosophy of Sport Association), on the intercontinental level (for South and Central America: ALESDE), and on the global level (for example, the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport; the International Association for the Sociology of Sport or International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport).

The aforementioned development resulted in the creation of corresponding academic classes and curricula, programs of study related to them, and the various syllabuses that refer to them. In some cases, these programs have decades-long traditions. Relevant chairs and departments were established in the structures of schools of higher education and universities. Today, the social sciences of sport are – along with the natural sciences (especially biological sciences) of sport – the main educational subjects accompanying vocational and supplementary subjects connected with the education of physical education teachers, coaches, specialists in the field of tourism and recreation, and physical therapy specialists. The social sciences of sport create the necessary basis for education in institutions of higher education related solely or partly to the aforementioned groups of professionals. Aside from specialized departments in regular universities, there are independent universities in Poland and other countries, including Germany, Norway and Russia, that have several decades of tradition of exclusively teaching the subjects of sport and physical culture.

### **Notes on the institutional and functional ground of the social sciences of sport**

The presence of the social sciences of sport in the scientific and academic community can be considered from the standpoint of the three institutional and organizational (structural and functional) conditions that must be met.

The first condition relates to the didactic characteristics of the social sciences of sport. Based on this condition, it is assumed that the considered science is included in the curricula of higher education; that is, it is taught, depending on the context, in lectures, seminars, and practice classes. Students must attend these classes, for which they receive credit, and on that basis they must pass exams.

The second condition concerns academic research. This concerns empirical and theoretical investigations with social and humanistic overtones that are conducted in academic centers, including universities of physical education, and in strictly scientific institutions, as in the various national academies of sciences.

The third condition is localizing a particular unit in the institutional and organizational structure of an entire institution, that is, within the structure of a university or research institute. For example, the area of knowledge connected with the pedagogy of sport can be treated as the foundation for the functioning of the

relevant educational and scientific institution or the research institution. It might apply, for instance, to the division of psychology of sport, the chair of psychology of sport, or other relevant institute or department.

From an institutional and organizational (structural and functional) point of view, the existence of a particular curriculum must first meet at least one of the two aforementioned conditions: the curriculum must be taught or must become the subject of research (or need to combine the two of the aforementioned activities, i.e., must combine research and teaching). The third condition is not sufficient to be the general – and in this case main – rule for the presence of the social sciences of sport in the scientific and academic community. It is not enough to establish the unit with structural properties (that is, a unit as a part of bigger institution) where there is no curriculum that would imply the teaching activity or academic research activity with which the unit would be structurally and functionally connected. Thus, the third condition is fulfilled when it is necessarily and indispensably associated with at least one of the first two conditions. That is, when the department, chair, or institute of sociology, psychology, and the history and philosophy of sport is associated with either the didactic activities or research activities in any or several of the aforementioned social sciences of sport. The mentioned entities (departments, chairs, institutes, and so on) in the academic (university) centers in the country and abroad usually meet both the first and the second conditions.

The conditions presented above refer to the social sciences of sport that have fulfilled or have yet to fulfill the requirements of maturity and autonomy both in terms of content (for example, the philosophy of sport in relation to the general philosophy and the related exact philosophies) and in the sphere of methodology (with regards to the particular methodologies related to the general methodology and other exact methodologies) (Kosiewicz, 2008/2009, pp. 5-38).

### **Remarks on the methodological and organizational status of the social sciences of sport**

In considering the status of the social sciences of sport from the perspective of the methodological types of sciences (Ajdukiewicz, 1985, pp. 287-313), it must be highlighted that the social sciences of sport are a component of the social sciences in general and the humanities in general (depending on the definition of these sciences), and a component of sports science (or, more broadly, the science of physical culture), for which the methodological and formal status have not yet been regulated due to the diversity and existence of the different, exact methodologies of those sciences.

Presentations during conferences, as well as numerous publications based on individual and team studies, including studies done by international teams, have showed that the social sciences of sport have neither a common nor clearly defined methodology that would be specific only to these sciences and that would have, as it were, a common denominator for all the sciences. Each of the sciences operates within its own methodology relating to the corresponding fundamental disciplines of the science, and – of course – to the main assumptions of the general methodology containing for example, statements about the general assumption of the methodology of the humanities and related exact disciplines (Ajdukiewicz, 1985, pp. 287-313; Kosiewicz, 2012, pp. 65-101). For example, the philosophy of sport operates within the methodological assumptions of the methodology of philosophy, but it also refers to all its various fields and specific philosophies, as well as to the general and theoretical concepts, hypotheses, and substantive assumptions specific to these types of philosophies. A similar situation also occurs in other social sciences of sport including sociology of sport, psychology of sport, pedagogy of sport, and history of sport (Kosiewicz, 2008/2009, pp. 5-38).

There is no doubt, however, that the social sciences of sport are a distinctive, autonomous part of sport science due to their specific content and detailed methodological conditions. They form, along with the natural sciences (especially the biological sciences), a vital and fundamental component of the science of sport.

Generally, it may be said that the natural sciences of sport (biological) mainly refer to the physical bodies of athletes, while the social sciences have in mind primarily the axiological, cultural, symbolic, aesthetic, and ethical reception of the sporting effort. The research conducted within these sciences include

the pragmatic, purifying, escapist, ludic, hedonistic, epistemological, and recreational aspects of the variously understood competitive sport and sport for all.

The representatives of the variety of social sciences of sport have organized separate national, continental, international, and global societies. They have also organized conferences devoted exclusively to one discipline, such as the philosophy or sociology of sport, which, of course, has highlighted the distinctive identity of the particular discipline. Representatives of the natural sciences of sport have their separate organizations. Additionally, however, they have one unifying organization, the European College of Sport Sciences, which has existed since 1995. This organization primarily attracts representatives from the natural sciences. Very few (in terms of the ratio of participants) social scientists attend conferences organized by this society. Presentations during the conferences organized by the European College of Sport Sciences are limited to 10 minutes, which is enough for a narrative presentation of empirical data in the field of natural science, but it is by no means sufficient time for a presentation of the usually complicated and complex considerations and findings in the field of social sciences.

The aforementioned fact became one of the reasons driving the development of a common organizational structure for the social sciences of sport. Thus, the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport (ISSSS) as well as the Polish Society for the Social Sciences of Sport (the Polish abbreviated name is: PTNSS) were established relatively recently. The former organization was established at the beginning of 2009; the latter, at the end of 2009. Both organizations began operations after more than two years of registration procedures. They are both located in the Department of Social Sciences of the Józef Pilsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw. Prof. Dr. Jerzy Kosiewicz was elected the president of both organizations. He is the Head of the Department of Philosophy and Sociology.

Societies and the conferences that have already been organized by these societies provided an opportunity to exchange interdisciplinary experience and to examine different and specific methods and assumptions. They have inspired a comparison of a variety of topics, points of view, and methodological and theoretical considerations. Further, they have examined their empirical, practical, research, and propositional implications and applications. The meetings have led to interesting discussions and more or less in-depth scientific disputes that related to the relationship between the theoretical disciplines, such as philosophy of sport (compare: Kosiewicz, 2008/2009, pp. 5-38), or the history of sport and other sciences that are generally empirically oriented, for example, sociology, pedagogy, psychology or sports organization and management. The aforementioned disciplines are internally divided into the empirical and theoretical subjects. For example, in the sociology of sport we can distinguish between the empirical sociology of sport and the theoretical sociology of sport.

The work and achievements of Prof. Dr. Zbigniew Krawczyk are an adequate example of this type of dichotomy and relations occurring internally between the results of empirical and theoretical research (Kosiewicz, 2012, pp. 87, 89, and 97-98). He is a great sociologist of sport with a global reputation. He has led many research teams pursuing international empirical research projects. *Nota bene*, Professor Krawczyk's *Selected Writings* (Krawczyk, 2005, pp. 21-161) exclusively contains the results of theoretical research. Indeed, Professor Krawczyk stated that the results of empirical studies – even those that are important and highly respected at the time there are published – quickly become irrelevant (just as with other authors' publications), and they lose importance. More immutable – which seems obvious from the point of view of the particular sociologies – and even more memorable and universal are theoretical texts of good quality (good quality in terms of content and methodology). The work of Zbigniew Krawczyk is a clear demonstration of this.

The aforementioned claim, however, is not sufficient to assume the superiority of theoretical inquiry over empirical inquiry, whether in the area of social sciences of sport or in the natural sciences, including issues and questions related to sport. The superiority of theoretical research over empirical research cannot be proved in an irrefutable and definitive way. But neither can the opposite be proven: that is, the superiority

of empirical over theoretical studies. It is not possible to obtain such proof from the perspective of epistemology, philosophy of science, general methodology, or comparative and axiological studies.

### Sport and natural sciences

The research on sport that originated in the natural sciences has a longer tradition. This is due to the fact that sport was largely associated with physical education, physical culture and medical sciences, or more broadly, with life sciences, and to name it even more broadly, with the natural sciences of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The evidence for this associations is the magazine *Physical Culture* founded in 1899 by the Bernarr MacFadden, who was a proponent of bodybuilding, a promoter of autotelic physical activity, an expert of healthy nutrition, as well as an advocate of natural treatments (Piątkowska, 2006, p. 88, www.bernarrmacfadden.com). MacFadden also contributed to *MacFadden's Encyclopedia of Physical Culture*, highly popular in the United States and other English-speaking countries as well as in Europe. It was published in five volumes and reissued several times (MacFadden, 1926)<sup>1</sup>.

The manner of presenting the issues related to the aforementioned forms of activity on the 2,914 pages of the encyclopedia to a large extent influenced the association of sport with the medical and biological sciences. The presented issues were related to the maintenance of health, the causes of diseases, anatomy (volume 1); nutrition, diet with exercise, individual and team training, and training for women (volume 2). The encyclopedia also characterized dance as an art and form of exercise and physical fitness, vocal culture, beauty, treatments to enhance and maintain beauty, tests conducted while fasting, biomechanical testing, hydrotherapy, therapeutic fasting, principles of first aid in dangerous situations and after accidents, analgesics and anti-chronic disease medicines (volume 3); diseases and their general characteristics and symptoms (volume 4). MacFadden also described reproduction and human development, the physiological basis for sexuality and marriage, the female reproductive system, gynecological diseases, pregnancy and childbirth, infant and children health, as well as male reproductive organs, disturbances in the male reproductive system, masculinity, and fatherhood (volume 5) (MacFadden, 1926).

MacFadden, the founder and editor of this comprehensive encyclopedic effort, was primarily focused on the creation of the medical, physiological, and biological context; more broadly, the natural science context of justification of physical activity associated with the human body. He was also interested in theoretical considerations on sport, which was at that time was quite a novel approach. Although MacFadden pointed to dance, vocal culture and beauty care, he did not consider those factors, like the other issues raised in the encyclopedia, in the context of cultural studies or social and humanistic reflection.

The issues, ideas, concepts, hypotheses, and theories presented in MacFadden's Encyclopedia reflected the scientism-based provenance of the representatives of science from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries who were MacFadden's contemporaries. The aforementioned era was characterized by the glorification of natural sciences that were supposed to have almost unlimited possibilities. Natural sciences and related exact disciplines were assumed to be the only manifestation and guarantor of the scientific method, rationality, and valuable knowledge. The importance of the humanities and social sciences (including philosophy and the newly established sociology and psychology) was diminished. The basis for depreciation of the humanities and social sciences was formed by materialism (understood as anti-philosophy (Kołakowski, 2000, p. 19), evolutionism, naturalism, positivism and, in particular, scientism (Cameron, 1979), which was the extreme wing of positivism). Humanities and social sciences, regarded as non-scientific and metaphysical, were considered to have no scientific meaning unless they resembled the natural sciences. By the way, mathematics has – according to scientism – only ancillary value in relation to the natural sciences. That highly simplistic view has been promoted by A. Bain, K. Pearson, and F. Engels. Those who believed in the

<sup>1</sup> I refer to the seventh edition, published in 1926 in New York by Hammond Press W.B. Conkey Company Chicago (the first edition was published in 1911).

mentioned ideas also proclaimed (overly optimistically) that on the ground of the empirically oriented exact sciences and natural sciences, almost all of the essential cognitive problems would be completely resolved (Kołakowski, 2000, p. 18).

The supporters of the scientism worldview (MacFadden and his followers) for physical activity from the area of broadly understood sport created a context of justification based on medicine and science that underpins medicine – especially one connected with human biology. It was the doctors and natural scientists who should be accountable for explaining the positive impact of autotelic physical activity on the development and health of the individual, on the stimulation and normalization of physiological processes, on metabolism, and on the development of the human musculoskeletal system (also called the locomotor system), on the circulatory, lymphatic, nervous, endocrine, and genitourinary systems, etc. In this novel and innovative way, the authors tried to convince people to undertake sports activities, to undertake physical education, physical recreation, tourism, amateur sport, and competitive sport or even professional sport. Innovation and novelty in describing, explaining, and understanding sports lay in the fact that the authors referred to the latest developments of medicine, human biology and related disciplines, as well as to the principles of nutrition, dietetics, and (in particular) to the natural principles of treatment and support for the human body. Authors also introduced into their work issues that had strictly cultural, that is, not biological, overtones. They talked about dance and about something what we would call today vocalism, cosmetology and about the means and procedures that serve to maintain and enrich the body's beauty.

The aforementioned scientism-based interpretation of sport was deprived of a general methodological overview concerning the classification of the types of science. Hence, the characteristics of the various exact disciplines included in the sports sciences (or in the sciences of physical culture) were not recognized. Nor were their substantive and formal scopes defined. This led to scientific chaos, to the pigeonholing of different types of sciences having different methodological grounds into the scope of something that is today referred to as sport sciences or sciences of physical culture.

This situation initiated the cognitive dissonance. Today, however, the problem in terms of content and methodology seems easy to solve. In fact, it can be demonstrated that the sport sciences (the sciences of physical culture) refer in part to the natural sciences and in part to the social sciences. The natural sciences deal with the natural substrate of sport and are primarily related to the human body. They create, in short, the foundation for research related to the functioning of the human body, physical exercise, changes and development, and the more or less permanent injuries sustained by individuals participating in competitive sport. The second, that is, the social sciences, addresses those non-artistic cultural forms, manifestations, and characteristics of movement that have autotelic, axiological, and symbolic character.

Consideration of the concepts of the science of physical culture and the concept of sport sciences shows that, in both notions, cultural values are the principal subject of the research and the key indicator of understanding sporting activities as broadly defined. The effects of physical effort (even those measurable) always refer to the cultural context, as they are assessed from the point of view of the assumptions, criteria, applied categories, and existing cultural conventions. They are the most important and final evaluative indicator, as sport results were and are the most important factor for sports participants in the ancient or modern Olympic games. Thus, after a transitional period – established by the exploratory path taken MacFadden, his supporters, and followers – the social sciences had to (sooner or later) include in their research projects various theoretical and practical manifestations of sporting activities.

The dissonance discussed above stems from the fact that MacFadden's concept of physical culture, and in particular the disciplines related to physical culture, became well established in research and teaching institutions involved in the training of physical education teachers, coaches, physiotherapists, specialists in the field of tourism and recreation, and the professionals related to sport administration and physical culture. This concept became well established among university graduates who were engaged in activities related to the subject of their studies and who were frequently employed by autonomous research institutions or by institutions of higher education. Particularly important in this regard is the increasing quantity and quality of

the teaching and research staff in faculties, departments, and institutions with the provenance of natural science. These employees strongly support – which is understandable, given MacFadden's tradition – the myth of the superiority of the natural sciences in their vision of phenomena relating to sport (physical culture). This myth is also strengthened by the people involved in sports theory (theory and practice of particular sport disciplines) who are mainly concerned about the biotechnical effects of research supporting the human body (and not just the human body) in the pursuit of sporting success.

Though MacFadden (followed by others) called autotelic physical activity the cultural activity, i.e., physical culture, he drew virtually the entire context of justification of physical culture from the natural sciences, human biology, and medicine. To some extent, the prevailing scientism-based paradigm and popularity of scientism influenced such a position. That paradigm was consolidated by the third positivism created in the 1920s (also known as logical positivism, the Vienna Circle, scientific empiricism, logical empiricism, and logistics empiricism). The third positivism avoided the humanities-related, social, and therefore cultural, theoretical base. Although the notion of physical culture included a cultural element, this concept (as well as the concept of sport) was still understood from the perspective of scientism. The representatives of the scientific trend tried to have cognitive reflections on physical culture conform to reflections on the natural sciences.

It is worth noting that the aim of cognitive scientism had an overly reductionist character, and it was (its concept and implications of research) quickly marginalized within philosophy. In the case of logical positivism, it was the very founders of the Vienna Circle, including Rudolf Carnap (1935, 1969, 1973), who contributed to its rejection. The members of the Vienna Circle concluded that the limitation of the concept of science and the related research, so that it would only concern the natural sciences, physicalism, and mathematics and logic (Reinchenbach, 1936), was an obvious mistake. They came to the conclusion that explanation and understanding, the descriptions of the natural facts, and hypotheses and scientific laws that are based on facts, as well as the related contexts of justification, include fundamental metaphysical assumptions. This point of view has been confirmed by modern epistemological skepticism represented by methodologists and representatives of the philosophy of the empirical sciences, such as Leonard Nelson (1994), Thomas Kuhn (1968), Karl Popper (1977), Imre Lakatos (1995), and Paul Feyerabend (1970).

MacFadden's fundamentalism as supported by scientism and third positivism – despite their spectacular philosophical, and therefore strictly cognitive failure – had and still has (even without its substantial validity) a critical impact on the reception of the sports phenomena and the vision of sport sciences (sciences of physical culture), particularly among representatives of biological scientists (Kosiewicz, 2010).

### **The social sciences approach to sport and common-sense knowledge**

The social sciences of sport are testimony to efforts to undermine the extremity, validity, and exclusiveness of using the assumptions of scientism and scientific empiricism (the third positivism) in research. This is particularly true with regards to sociology of sport, philosophy of sport, psychology of sport, pedagogy of sport, history of physical culture, sport and Olympism, sport organization and management, social and cultural foundations of tourism and recreation, social relationships associated with sports training and tactics, as well as the humanistic theory of Eastern martial arts. They now constitute – that is, the aforementioned disciplines and the range of their research interests – an important cognitive phenomenon.

During the progressive development of the exact sciences of sport – both natural and social – general interest in sport has also increased almost exponentially and is still increasing (regardless of the development of sciences). This interest has occasional natural and spontaneous overtones. It is a common phenomenon and experience. It manifests itself not only as an active participation of people in the activities in the field of *sport for all* or in various forms of competitive sport (*top level sport*), but also as a passive participation, that is, in watching various sporting events live, or with the help of means of modern technology. Digitally

broadcast events are sometimes watched by hundreds of millions of viewers at the same time. Sometimes even regular – i.e., not dedicated only to sport – channels (such as National Public Channels in Poland: TV1, TV2) broadcast a few live sports events in one day. A slowly growing number of TV channels – not to mention those existing on the Internet – are devoted exclusively to broadcasting and retransmitting sporting events (this number became even comparable with the number of movie channels).

The sport events are accompanied by all sorts of common-sense comments and journalistic reports that have an incredible reach and power of influence, impacting perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of spectators, listeners, viewers, and fans. These common-sense statements have opinion-forming and value-creating characteristics, thus shaping and influencing people's perceptions of an event. They create the context of interpretation for the observed phenomena (not only for the phenomena related to sports, but also for those occurring in social, family, professional, political, and religious life). These ordinary (*sens commun*) and common sense (*bon sens*) expressions that have strictly persuasive overtones fall on fertile emotional ground.

The minds of the recipients are saturated to a greater or lesser extent (rather greater than lesser) with the content of the aforementioned common-sense beliefs that are reduced to their social, contextual, and common perception of sport as a phenomenon that activates emotional and cognitive needs. The factual content of every-day statements is almost beyond social control, that is, beyond the influence of knowledge from the area of social sciences and the natural sciences of sport. It leads spectators to the situation of being limited by the comforting illusions, the half-truths, the banal truths, the eclectic range of opinions on the perceived phenomena, and by the supposititious images of the world associated with sport (Czerwiński, 1986, pp. 6-8).

The beliefs and views of journalists are preponderantly characteristic for the entire professional group. They are legitimized and reproduced by this group. They are in their own way coherent (even though they are contrary to the spirit of logic as a philosophical discipline); they are in accordance with the content of other, similar statements and statements that preceded them. They are in line with common-sense thinking, in line with the resource, circulation, and influence of knowledge possessed by the recipients of the statements. These common ideas and opinions arise and gain general consensus due to the alleged accuracy of their judgment; this accuracy is associated with skillfully presented unpretentiousness. They create real interacting amalgamation of the judgmental, schematic, and common statements; for instance, in the area of technical, tactic-related or organizational assumptions, a superficially interpreted theory of sport, and the commonly understood social or humanistic values. Unfortunately, these statements enjoy achieving interest, appreciation, and popularity.

The context of justification and related arguments, which are utilized by people who use common sense and the common-sense conceptions, and which are directed against those who criticize these people, have an implicit connotation, one that is supposititious and deliberately hidden. (This applies not only to the press, radio, television, electronic and film – for example, documentary film – but also to sport rapporteurs and commentators). The people who use these common-sense concepts imply that they express “the voice of all”, that is, the alleged truth of the community, which is a kind of common indisputable obviousness: the axiom or even the logical postulate. That “voice of all”, according to Teresa Hołówka, sounds like:

*“The human mind tends to have /.../ an inexplicable tendency to rampant theorizing, sophistry, and speculation that are ‘divorced from life,’ so the prevailing consensus is broken every now and then by a handful of madmen and extravagancy of intellectuals. It is also prone to wander and to be blind to the absurdity of its own products. In such cases, the human mind should quickly return to the basic axioms, as there is nothing else that would serve as a certain foundation. It should turn to its inherent, correct cognitive intuitions, which – as it is confirmed by the experience of countless generations – will never lead him astray” (Hołówka, 1986, p. 15)*

This method and style of thinking includes the conviction that common-sense thinking, the common view of the world, is the natural foundation of our knowledge. It is accompanied by a persistent belief in the

accurate and natural view of the world. The belief in the infallibility of common concepts doesn't go hand in hand with aggression and with the desire for even a cursory – in a strictly cognitive sense, that is, in a scientific or philosophical sense – description and justification of this belief (Hołowka, 1986, p. 16).

When common-sense thinking is subject to “critical analysis, it is revealed that common-sense thinking contains a lot of crudity and falsehoods” (Czerwiński, 1986, p. 8). The result of this critical analysis is the discrediting of common-sense thinking. It strikes at the dignity of the statements promulgated by the concerned person and the related social environment – it strikes at the objectivity, necessity, and universality of common-sense statements. It also falsifies the content, meaning, essence, and substantive cognitive value of common-sense concepts as well as their logical and methodological reasons (because common-sense thinking doesn't have an operative methodology). The analysis exposes the ambiguous, tautological character of common-sense thinking; it exposes the coexistence of conflicting and unpredictable statements and their “incontestability”. It is a demystification indicating that common-sense thinking “is a closed system that does not have the built-in imperative of seeking the truth by sacrificing the convenient beliefs” (ibid, p. 7). It is subject to an overriding restriction. It is a form of thought that cannot be sufficient; it cannot constitute itself into an autonomous system with sufficient cognitive performance (ibid, pp. 9-10).

However, when common sense and common-sense thinking are taken seriously, with excessive honors, they become “the backbone of self-righteous ignorance, which often turns its aggression against thinking that operates with specialized tools and utilizes the critical procedures” (ibid, p. 10). Common-sense thinking “cannot set the program in cognitive issues. Such a program would inevitably mean autosterilization” (ibid, p. 10).

Considering the role and importance of common-sense thinking and its various manifestations, it is worth remembering that “however we belong to a civilization so heavily directed by science, we continue to live in the horizon of common-sense thinking” (ibid, p. 12). Common sense and common-sense thinking not only concern ordinary people but also sometimes even distinguished philosophers. No wonder that common-sense thinking also influences sports journalists.

Sports journalists usually have a background in the social sciences (or humanities). Therefore, their reports, oral comments, or written comments primarily relate to cultural values rather than to the values forming the realm of natural, biological, and medical sciences. Reports in the mass media on sports events are not provided from the standpoint of the principles of anatomy, physiology, biophysics, biomechanics, or biochemistry. Some rudimentary, pseudo-cognitive references to natural or life sciences might occur, but they are mostly superficial and have a common-sense and an ordinary character.

The profession of journalism does not provide journalists the opportunity to return to the study of social sciences. After graduating, they usually never go back to studying. They do not have the intention or simply cannot do this for professional reason. They ended their education as students and devote themselves to some other form of self-realization. They deal with sport considering its various aspects from an everyday, common – but not scientific – point of view. Philosophy of sport, sociology of sport, psychology of sport, sport pedagogy, and other social programs closely connected with sport are rarely a university subject of sports studies' curricula. The absence of these sciences is mainly connected with the fact that, in general, time allocated to social sciences during studies is gradually limited and reduced almost to minimum. There is no time for lectures in social sciences of sport (sic!). This is, for instance, the case at the universities of physical education. Reflection on sport from the point of view of social science requires first teaching – lectures, practices, and seminars – presenting the content of particular social sciences. Only on such a foundation can the objectives and content of social sciences of sport be presented in a descriptive, evaluative, explaining, comprehensive, and synthetic way. The deepening educational and cognitive deficit associated with social sciences of sport influences to a large extent the development of ordinary and common-sense conceptions. It strengthens the growing cognitive chaos, which will only deepen with the next generations of graduate studies in physical education and sports journalists with a background in physical education studies.

This trend shall be stopped and reversed. Only through the expansion and enrichment of educational programs, particularly through the development of various social sciences of sports, can the extent of the impact of common-sense cognition be reduced. This is particularly true for research and the related results. The dissemination of research results can contribute to the occurrence of gradual changes in social erudition among journalists and people who are under their more or less conscious indoctrination. It may also contribute to the more frequent perception of the sport in the context of real cultural and symbolic values of social and humanistic foundation and overtones.

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