

Philosophy of Sport in Latin America

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the evolution of the philosophical analysis of sport in Latin America from the nineteenth century to the present. To do so, this paper identifies the main themes and the leading works that emerged throughout this period as well as their relation to regional philosophical traditions. Likewise, to situate the philosophical analysis of sport in Latin America in a broader perspective, this paper makes reference to its relation to the philosophy of sport in parts of the English-speaking world and the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain). This paper also includes an account of the character and extent of philosophical thinking in relation to sport in contemporary Latin America and speculations about the future of the discipline in the region.

Given the contested nature of the notion “Latin America,” this article starts with a brief discussion of its history and meaning. This is followed by a brief account of the historical underpinnings and cultural connotations of sport in the region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All of this is necessary to contextualize the regional evolution of the philosophy of sport and to bring conceptual clarity to the analysis. In this regard, the intension and extension of the notion “philosophy of sport” as used in this article are also briefly discussed. Finally, it is important to clarify that the article follows the chronological development of the philosophy of sport in North America proposed by R. Scott Kretchmar. Kretchmar (26) identifies three periods in this development: the first (1875-1950) was influenced by concerns in the philosophy of education, the second (1950-1965) by competing philosophical systems, and the third (1965-1995) by the attempt to establish a specific field of inquiry based on the research methods of philosophy. Kretchmar’s chronology is useful for comparative purposes, and most important, to establish the unique trajectory of the philosophy of sport in Latin America.

Latin America, History, and Sport

What does “Latin America” mean? Although this straightforward question would seemingly be amenable to a similarly straightforward answer, Latin America has been a contested notion. It was only a century after Christopher Columbus’ descent into the so called “New World,” which led to the cruel conquest and colo-

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nization of a vast portion of the Americas, that Spaniards born in the Americas started to develop a sense of collective identity different from that of their European forebears. Initially, neither the indigenous populations nor the Africans brought by the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers shared in this nascent identity, but slowly their descendants were drawn to the colonizers' worldviews. Eventually, in the eighteenth century, the collective identity of Spanish Americans grew stronger among the elites in the entire continent and would play a vital role in the quest for independence. It was precisely after the wars of independence that the term Latin America emerged. The shift expanded the meaning of the common identity, history, and future based on Spanish or Hispanic America to include Portuguese and French America. The French, who popularized the term to advance their political ambitions, argued that their culture was as "Latin" as that of Spain and Portugal. Later on, Latin America also took another layer of meaning as a common identity different from the history, culture, and experience of the United States.

The most traditional conception of Latin America emphasizes its common political and historical heritage along with linguistic, historical, and cultural similarities. Thus, Latin America is typically designated as including the nations that gained independence from Spain, Portugal, and France. This approach tends to minimize or exclude "non-Latin" regions, especially in the Caribbean and Northern South America, as well as former Spanish, French, and Mexican territories that by treaty, war, or purchase became part of the United States. Interestingly, ODESUR, the South American Sports Organization, includes presumably "non-Latin" Aruba, Guyana, the Netherlands Antilles, and Suriname among its members. By contrast, the recently created Community of Latin American and Caribbean States clearly differentiates the former from the latter and reinforces the most traditional conception of Latin America. This is the approach that will be used throughout this article. We are conscious of its limitations, omissions, and fragmentation, and thus of the contested nature of the unit called Latin America. However, given the thematic focus and spatial constraints of this paper, we believe that as an operational definition, the more traditional conception of Latin America helps us carry on with and bring clarity to our purpose.¹

Similar to the complexity of the term Latin America, only the broadest elements of the diverse and nuanced history of sport in the region can be mentioned here. When the Iberians arrived in Latin America, they witnessed the diverse physical cultures of the indigenous peoples. They could not but conceive pre-Columbian physical cultures as secondary to their European counterparts. It is not surprising that the Iberians repressed indigenous physical cultures and imported their own to Spanish American colonial society. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a period in which modern Latin American states consolidated, British émigrés, mainly English, brought with them a set of physical practices that were attracting peoples all over the world: modern sports. From tennis to football,² from field hockey to rugby, from cricket to golf, modern sports became increasingly prominent in the rapidly growing Latin American urban centers. The novel practices were first adopted by the local elites and then rapidly embraced by the masses. The success of modern sports in Latin America arose from its openness to incorporating different cultural ideas. Joseph L. Arbena (4) argues that even as early as the "mid-1800s sport was increasingly tied [in the region] to the spread of

so-called modern, European culture and its evolving recreational practices” (p. 929). The adoption of modern sports was accompanied by discourses condemning indigenous and folk physical cultures as hindrances to modernity and progress.

In the early twentieth century, the increasing role that the United States played in Latin America also meant the arrival of modern sports either originated or popularized there. Thus Latin Americans adopted baseball, basketball, and volleyball. Much like their British ludic predecessors, these modern sports were also constructed as the carriers of modern and progressive values. This second tide of ludic diffusion further endangered indigenous and folk physical cultures and minimized the role of past Iberian ludic imports. By the 1920s, modern sports were fully consolidated in Latin America and a decade later regional sport bureaucracies were not only well organized but also integrated into the nascent world sport system. Around mid-century, the regional sporting scene resembled its contemporary profile. Modern sports were “not only fully embraced, but also subjected to a complex process of cultural adaptation in which locals infused them with new connotations, meanings and imageries” (67: p. 559). In this process, different Latin American nations developed different ways to make sense of and inquire about their national experience and identity through modern sports. Although the Latin American sporting landscape is as diverse as its geography, football and, to a lesser extent, baseball have become the region’s most consuming passions.³ Through these sports, for example, Latin Americans have imagined defining traits in their national characters.

Philosophy of Sport in Latin America

Historically, the academic endeavor known as philosophy of sport has extended well beyond what is usually associated with the term “sport.” Indeed, its focus of research has come to include, as philosopher of sport Spencer Wertz expounds, “all kinds of human movement activities, dance, and the less institutionalized forms of play” (78: p. 88). In spite of its porosity and resulting lack of precision, this generic sense of “sport” is the one that we will adopt throughout this article, while recognizing its shortcomings.⁴ The advantage of such use is its widespread familiarity. Perhaps a bit less controversial, in this article we will also adopt the presumption advanced by Klaus Meier, another philosopher of sport, that the disciplinary “investigation—undertaken from the perspectives of varying contemporary philosophic orientations, positions, and investigative methodologies—facilitates the clarification and understanding of the nature, purpose, and significance of these phenomena”—that is, all activities that “sport” is meant to identify (37: p. 105).

Much as in North America,⁵ the philosophy of sport in Latin America has its origins in the work and concerns of educators. As Kretchmar explains, from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the mid 1950s, North American educational progressive reformers such as John Dewey, G. Stanley Hall, and Edward L. Thorndike “attacked pedagogical traditions that placed order over freedom, work over play, effort over interest, prescription over election, and intellectual content over a broader range of subjects” that prepared students for what Herbert Spencer “had earlier called ‘complete living’” (26: p. 183). At the core of progressive edu-

cation was the idea that schools could be agents of both individual improvement and democratic change. This paved the way for the rise of physical education as a subject matter in schools, which in turn prompted efforts to articulate the ways in which physical education could contribute not just to biological ends but to such complete and democratic living. Thus, figures such as J. B. Nash, Clark Hetherington, Jesse Feiring Williams, and Thomas D. Wood, among others, emerged as the leading figures of the "New Physical Education." They all saw great value in sport, dance, and play as educational tools and justified their inclusion in schools' curricula. Because of their specific and narrow interest, however, these educators "produced little knowledge about the nature and promise of these activities apart from their role in schooling" (26: p. 187). Despite their philosophical shortcomings, these educators did inspire change in North American physical education and beyond.

Latin American educators of the time, like their North American colleagues, produced some philosophy of sport that was similarly limited in scope and insightfulness. One of these educators was Argentine José B. Zubiaur. His participation in the 1889's Universal Exposition's International Congress for the Propagation of Physical Exercise held in France and his visit to Canada and the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, convinced Zubiaur that sports and physical education could play a decisive role in building healthy, vigorous, and progressive nations. Thus, he sought to include sports and physical education in the school curriculum and promote them among the masses. To justify his educational reform, Zubiaur appealed to the ideas of Dewey, Spencer, and William James, among many others. Although his extensive written production does not include a treatise devoted exclusively to the unique characteristics, values, and efficacy of sports and physical education, Zubiaur mused about these issues in several of his books. He thought that sports and physical education were powerful means to achieve a well-rounded education and that they could teach the values needed for responsible citizenship. In short, for Zubiaur, sports and physical education were to be pursued primarily for their cultivating holistic and moral force.⁶

Argentine educator and physician Enrique Romero Brest shared Zubiaur's overall views on sports and physical education and wrote at length on them. In 1906, Romero Brest established in Buenos Aires the first physical education teacher training institution in Latin America. He also created what became known as the Argentine System of Physical Education. Romero Brest's system of physical education was meant to develop rationally and scientifically grounded pedagogical practices taking into account Argentine characteristics and conditions. Yet, Romero Brest emphasized the "spiritual" significance of physical education. Even though Romero Brest never fully articulated what he meant by the concept "spirit," its inclusion as the ultimate goal for physical education represented a departure from his previous mainly positivist views. His is a movement from purely organic ends to more encompassing ends, which expanded into the social, emotional, and moral spheres of life. In his pursuit of a spiritual physical education, Romero Brest proved to have nondualistic tendencies. Discussing his spiritualist physical education, Romero Brest argued that human beings are a whole composed, on the one hand, by the psyche and the body and, on the other hand, by the "speculation we call spirit" (45: p. 13).

While Romero Brest included sports, as well as other physical activities, in his physical education system, he not only made a distinction between the two but also stated that they could, at times, be antagonistic. This was the case when sports did not have clear educational aims or lost sight of such aims. Romero Brest thought that professional sports were an example of misguided sports because they were not meant to educate those involved in them. The same applied to instances in which sporting outcomes were seen as primary to the way in which they were established. It is only consistent with his views that Romero Brest emphasized the value of playing fairly.⁷

During this period, Brazilian educators and physicians articulated a vision of physical education coalescing pedagogical, hygienic, and moral goals. Once again, the work of Spencer was quite influential, which, by equipping physical activity with educational, hygienic, and moral principles, was oriented to promote both healthy individuals and vigorous nations. Fernando de Azevedo, Renato Kehl, Jorge de Souza, and B. Vieira de Mello, among others, were at the forefront of this tendency. Some of these professionals went beyond the promotion of a hygienic pedagogy and emphasized the role of physical activity and sports in eugenics. Their eugenic theory demanded a physically active populace and a strong athletic culture to improve the "race." Although the schooling system was seen as the natural institution for the inclusion of physical education and sports, they were also promoted among the whole of society. At the core was the idea that healthy, strong, and disciplined individual bodies would regenerate the social body and make it compliant and productive. It is not surprising then that physical education was presented, and advanced, under the positivist label of "scientific."⁸ Discourses with analogous undertones were also present in, for example, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay. Moisés Sáenz, a Mexican educator who served as member of the International Olympic Committee from 1927 to 1932, is an exemplar of this trend.⁹ Chilean educator Luis Bisquertt Susarte (10), however, sought to promote a "social" physical education that would democratize Latin American nations.

During the first half of the twentieth century, there were a few books that touched upon issues in the philosophy of sport that went beyond those specifically related to physical education. One such book was *Moral y deporte* by Próspero Alemandri (1), an educator and sport official who led the Argentine Olympic Committee from 1934 to 1938. Alemandri's short book extols the practice of sport to strengthen desired virtues. Another example is Argentine philosopher Sisto Terán, who in 1935 published *Aproximaciones a la doctrina tradicional* (66), a book in which he devoted an entire section to analyze the relationship between philosophy and sport. Inspired by the Aristotelic-Thomistic tradition, Terán argued that philosophy and sport are convergent and comparable activities. For him, both philosophers and sportspeople engaged in a quest to free themselves from what hinders the revelation of being and thus achieve a higher spiritual state. Terán seemed to have been ahead of his time in highlighting not only the rapport between philosophy and sport but also the power of sport to develop human potential, order spiritual life, and transmit moral values. In this, Terán's reflections also seemed to have been a reaction against prevalent positivist discourses.

Terán's interest in and praise for sport's philosophical possibilities did not reverberate among his fellow professional philosophers. The proceedings of the

first Argentine national congress of philosophy organized in 1949 exemplify the status of the philosophy of sport in Latin America. The congress, which attracted philosophers from Argentina, Latin America, and beyond, such as Mexico's José Vasconcelos and Germany's Eugen Fink and Hans-Georg Gadamer, to mention only a few, had multiple sessions on an array of different philosophical topics, from the philosophy of law to aesthetics to axiology and ethics. Predictably, the only papers that referenced issues related to the philosophy of sport were delivered in the philosophy of education sessions. These references touched upon play and physical education and were made almost in passing.¹⁰

Until the mid twentieth century, the philosophy of sport in Latin America and North America traversed similar paths. The discipline was dominated by educators and physicians who, influenced by prevailing positivist paradigms, sought to inject the scientific approach amenable to the empirical sciences to physical education and sport. While there were different emphases, their ideas only differed marginally. In Latin America, these educators were part of the larger movement called "New School." Philosophers of sport of the time departing from the main core of ideas were exceptions. All throughout the continent, philosophic thinking in sport was more concerned with pedagogy than philosophy and thus its claims were left largely unattended and unsubstantiated, for example, about the nature of sport, its axiological status, or its ethical quandaries. Following Kretchmar, it could be summarized that for all their achievements, these philosophers "proceeded to do relatively little of any philosophic significance" (26: p. 187).

The development of the philosophy of sport in Latin America and North America changed noticeably in the two decades prior to the institutionalization of the discipline in the early 1970s. From 1950 to 1965 North American philosophers of sport expanded their concerns and procedures of the previous era, albeit education still was the main frame of reference. They described and compared competing philosophic systems (i.e., idealism, realism, and existentialism), applied the insights of each one to the demands of physical education, and deduced practical applications (26: pp. 188-191). Kretchmar refers to those using this approach as systems philosophers. Although Latin American educators continued to think about the philosophical foundations of their subject matter, they do not seem to have been seduced by the potential of competing philosophic systems to advance their analyses and practices. Perhaps one of the exceptions was Brazilian educator Inezil Penna Marinho, who published several papers and books analyzing the importance and influence of classic and modern philosophers on physical education. Strictly speaking, Penna Marinho was not a systems philosopher but believed that the understanding of physical education required the study of the history of philosophy. His short essays *Os clássicos e a Educação Física* (35) and *Aristóteles, Descartes e Bergson: diferenças no estudo das relações entre corpo e alma* (34) are worth mentioning in this context. In these essays, Penna Marinho explores the relevance of classical authors for physical education and the differences among some ancient and modern philosophers regarding their conceptualization of the body and the soul.

In addition to educators, an increasing number of Latin American journalists intrigued by the quandaries of sport started to produce works with some philosophical content during this period. Football, the most popular sport in the region, was frequently their object of analysis. Argentine Dante Panzeri as well as the

Brazilian brothers Mário and Nelson Rodrigues Filho and their compatriot José Lins do Rego are among this group of philosophically-minded journalists.¹¹ Although they were not trained philosophers, these journalists were troubled by the plentiful unexamined assumptions about the nature, status, value, and beauty, or lack thereof, of football. In spite of the analytical limitations of their work, they opened new vistas on these issues that were probably read by countless people interested in football and, more generally, in sport. Among these new vistas figure, for example, examinations of football as a form of cultural expression, its connection to nationalism, and the status of players' performances.

Mário Filho's *O negro no futebol brasileiro* (20) was an influential account of the history of football in Brazil. Though narrated as a journalistic chronicle, the work included important historical, sociological and, implicitly, philosophical strains of thought. Most notable is its emphasis on analyzing the evolving place of Afro-Brazilians in the practice of football in that country. Initially, football was played by young men from the socioeconomic elites who were considered white and belonged to exclusive sporting clubs, while Afro-Brazilians were excluded from playing football, at least in the clubs and official amateur leagues. Nonetheless, playing in vacant urban and suburban lots, they gradually developed an original style of play, influenced by elements of their culture such as samba and capoeira, a musical and dance genre and a stylized, rhythmic martial art respectively, both of African origin. However, Afro-Brazilians would not gain their rightful place in the practice of football in their country without the resistance of the elite, which used various strategies to keep teams of players of various "races" and from lower economic classes from being able to compete or from succeeding at competition. One such strategy was the enforcement of amateurism—while rich young men, supported by their families' wealth, had enough leisure time to play football, poor Brazilians could not work and play football competitively at the same time. The advent of professionalism, in the 1930s, finally opened access for Afro-Brazilians to play at the highest levels while making a living, and as they excelled so did Brazilian football.

Mário Filho's chronicle is undergirded by at least three implicit philosophical arguments or philosophical considerations. The first is the interpretation of football as a form of cultural expression, as a practice that is rooted in and manifests the culture of a people; in this case, the culture of Brazilians with its many elements of African heritage as expressed by playing a sport of European origin. The second is that social, political, and economic differences inhere in the practice of modern sports, including football. In this case "race," as an identifying social category closely linked to economic class, determined who had a right to practice competitive football, and to reap its benefits, in Brazil. The third is a defense of professionalism in competitive football on utilitarian grounds. The advent of professionalism in Brazilian football was defensible due to its beneficial moral consequences, namely, the access of Afro-Brazilians not only to the practice of football at the highest level of skillful performance and competition but also to the economic and social benefits of that practice. In fact, professional football provided for Afro-Brazilians, who make up a large proportion of Brazil's overall population, one of the first routes to socioeconomic ascent in a society divided by rigid economic classes closely associated to "racial" and ethnic origin. Whether

Filho's chronicle provided sufficient grounds to defend these theses or not, it forcefully suggested their plausibility and put them forth for further study.

Nélson Rodrigues' *À sombra das chuteiras imortais. Crônicas de futebol* (43) collects a series of chronicles that further develop the interpretation of Brazilian culture through football and that describe the role of the sport in the formation of Brazilian national identity. Most striking and worthy of critical consideration is Rodrigues' recurrent thesis that the World Cups victories of 1958 and 1962 helped to establish and secure among Brazilians a deserved sense of national worth in the international scene—after those sporting victories, Brazilians could assert the worth of their national identity in front of any other nation.

Dante Panzeri was fascinated by the capacity of football to captivate the masses universally. Although in his *Fútbol. Dinámica de lo impensado* (39), Panzeri analyzed several issues surrounding the practice of football, at the core of the book is the attempt to clarify the sport's grounding logic. He argued that football has a "spontaneous nature" (p. 24) which he associated with play and called the "art of the unforeseen" (p. 52). Following these ideas, Panzeri argued that to succeed at football fundamentally demands that players be good at deceiving opponents and denied that this can be taught. Moreover, he claimed that "thinking" gets in the way of successfully deceiving opponents. For Panzeri, the dynamics of football also demand to resolve its unfolding situations improvising, acting spontaneously, rather than enacting plans of actions conceived in advance. He summarized his view musing that what occurs on the pitch "is organized by the circumstances and decided by the unforeseen" (p. 71). Panzeri's book speculates about the nature of football and the knowledge embodied by players. It also contains pedagogical and moral implications. His metaphysical and moral speculations about football exemplify the way in which his book prefigured some of the issues with which philosophers of sport would concern themselves in the following decades. To make his case, Panzeri cited, for example, Dutch anthropologist Johann Huizinga and Spanish philosophers José Ortega y Gasset and Julián Marías. No wonder that he admitted finding the most interesting writing on football in "some sociology and philosophy books" (p. 28).

In his second book, *Burguesía y "gangsterismo" en el deporte* (38), Panzeri deepened his criticism to what he had described before as the effects of the "industrial revolution" on football (39: pp. 39–47). In this book, he criticized the assorted excesses and moral standing of the business of sport as well as the motives of those who organize and profit from it. Panzeri lamented the denaturalization and dehumanization of sport brought about by the obsession with winning and money. To highlight this point, he poignantly stated that sport was "an atrophied and at the same time hypertrophied giant" (38: p. 14). The metaphor was in line with Panzeri's condemnation of the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport. Once again, his arguments against doping, perhaps phrased in a sensationalistic tone and not fully developed, constitute an early approach in Latin America to what would become a vexing moral dilemma. His criticism of sport was in line with the work of, for example, José María Cagigal in Spain and Luigi Volpicelli in Italy.¹²

Alfonso Rojas Sucre, a Panamanian trained in philosophy and physical therapy, was also worried about the dehumanization of sport, especially boxing. In the early 1950s, he wrote a short essay arguing that boxing is a barbarous sport that

repels every “spirit that has reached a normal dose of human goodness” (44: p. 55). After reviewing the historical evolution of boxing, its medical risks, and some social and cultural aspects of its practice, Rojas Sucre concluded that it is an “anti-aesthetic, anti-ethical, and anti-sporting” physical activity (44: p. 63). For him, boxing has nothing of the romanticism of the nineteenth century, is brutal and dangerous, does not contribute to a harmonious morphological development, and goes against the notion of fair play. Moreover, it cannot be considered a sport. While many of his arguments are groundless, the questioning of boxing and the attempt to elaborate a case against it through, in part, some philosophical arguments is worth noting. Although Mexican philosopher Samuel Vargas Montoya did not mention boxing in his lengthy book *Ética o filosofía moral* (74), which has been reprinted numerous times, he devoted a few of its pages to argue that sport should be a means to achieve spiritual order.

The differences in the development of the philosophy of sport in Latin America and North America deepened even further since the 1970s. The demise of the system approach gave way to what Kretchmar called the disciplinary period (26: pp. 193-196). Starting in the 1970s, the philosophy of sport established itself, at least in North America, as a specific and legitimate field of inquiry. The creation of the Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport (PSSS), which later became the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport (IAPS), and the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* in the early 1970s not only reflected the growing interest in but also helped cement and disseminate philosophic inquiry in sport. Although the academic production during the initial years of the disciplinary period was uneven, it

stimulated a new generation of scholars and a new way of thinking and writing philosophically about sport. Research was no longer limited to educational philosophy, the content of human movement was regarded as legitimate and interesting subject matter for serious philosophic inquiry, some philosophers from the parent discipline began to write about sport, and the quality of work from inside physical education reached ever higher levels. (26: p. 195)

Although the North American philosophy of sport has faced several challenges in the last forty years, it is clear that the disciplinary movement has led to considerable progress. Unfortunately, that has not been the case in the Latin American philosophy of sport. Regional progress in this field of inquiry has been slow, unmethodical, and disconnected. During the 1970s, Latin American educators and journalists continued to produce works related to sport with some philosophical content, albeit at a seemingly slower rate than before. Such was the case, for example, of Uruguayan educators Alberto Langlade and Nelly Rey de Langlade, who wrote *Teoría general de la gimnasia* (27), among other objectives, to discuss the value of gymnastics for the “health, education and beauty of man” (p. 10). A similar case is that of Brazilian educator Mauro Soares Teixeira (65). Argentine writer and poet Roberto Jorge Santoro edited *Literatura de la pelota* (50). Santoro’s anthology, possibly the first of its kind in Latin America, included the work on football that several Argentine writers, poets, and intellectuals had produced during the twentieth century. Although *Literatura de la pelota* is not an anthology of philosophic analyses of football, it manifestly exudes philosophic

preoccupations with football, and sport in general, and marks a budding interest by writers and intellectuals, though not philosophers, in sport.¹³

The pace of philosophic analysis of sport did not accelerate much in 1980s and 1990s Latin America. This contrasted with the moderate increase in interest of Latin American social scientists in cultural phenomena, including sport, that up to that point had been generally considered not worthy of academic attention.¹⁴ During these decades some Latin American philosophers seemed to have taken seriously sport as an object of study, even if their concentration on it was somewhat short-lived.

A case in point is Mexican Juan Parent's *Un cuerpo propiamente dicho* (41) published in 1983. In this short book Parent analyzed the relevance of physical activity to give meaning to life and how it achieves a "living body," which for him is the body proper. Seven years later, Parent also published a short book dedicated to the relationship between ethics and sport. In his *Para una ética del deporte* (40), after making some analytical distinctions among sport, play, leisure, and work and reviewing the history of sport, Parent criticized amateur and professional sports and studied the intermingling of sport, culture, and politics. He admitted that in this book he did not want to go beyond a description of ideas and hoped to suggest a convenient direction for sport to follow. In 1994, Ecuadorian Williams Sánchez Díaz (47) published *Filosofía, sociología y política deportiva*, which despite its title does not do much philosophical analysis of sport.

Uruguayan phenomenologist Homero Altesor published *Fenomenología del cuerpo: anatomía filosófica* (3) in 1986 and a year later *Fenomenología del deporte* (2). While in the former, Altesor applies phenomenology "to the analysis of the different parts of the human body as a function of the total harmony of humankind" (9: p. 350), in the latter he collected brief essays published a few years earlier in a weekly magazine that describe the experiential dimension of moving bodies.

Also during the 1980s, Argentine scholar Graciela Scheines started an extended philosophical engagement with play and games. Her methodology had a distinctive phenomenological flavor. In 1981, she published *Juguetes y jugadores* (58) and four years later she edited *Los juegos de la vida cotidiana* (57), a collection of interdisciplinary essays that were the product of a conference on play held in Buenos Aires the year before. More than a decade later, she published *Juegos inocentes, juegos terribles* (56). Like others before her, Scheines argued that humans needed to play, that it allows the violation of the limits of our existence, and that, if even for a short while, it puts people back in touch with the whole (57: p. 14).

Latin American physical educators continued searching for the philosophical foundations of their subject matter. Brazilian Penna Marinho, whose academic career had started decades earlier, published in 1985 *Introdução ao estudo da filosofia da educação física e dos desportos* (33), in which he presented an introductory philosophy of physical education rooted in the history of Western philosophy but adapted to the social, political, economic, cultural, and biological reality of the Brazilian people. Accordingly, alongside chapters on hedonism and the philosophy of pleasure from Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus to Sigmund Freud, and Herbert Marcuse, and on the body-mind relation in Aristotle, René Descartes, and Henri Bergson, for instance, he also included an in-depth chapter on the philosophy of education in Brazil. The most original chapter is a proposal to develop

a new “Brazilian gymnastics” beyond the then current physical education by a method more capable of “attending to the needs of the Brazilian people, [i.e. a method] inserted above all in their bio-psycho-historic-philosophical context” (33: p. 17).

Penna Marinho’s compatriots Silvino Santin (48; 49), Manoel José Gomes Tubino (72; 73), and Uruguayan Hugo Lovisoló (32) followed this line of inquiry and expanded into other areas beyond epistemological concerns about the status of physical activity and physical education. Others followed their expanded research.¹⁵ In part, all these educators were inspired by the work of their Portuguese colleagues Jorge Olímpio Bento and Manuel Sérgio.¹⁶ Even others, such as Argentines Daniel Calmels (12; 13) and Miguel Sassano (52), sought to blend phenomenology and psychology to better understand human corporeality and implement more holistic pedagogies. Although these educators expanded their investigation beyond the confines of physical education, their production, as important as it was, was not only uneven but also still reflected some of the limitations of past educators whose main concern was education rather than philosophy.

More intellectuals, writers, and journalists were progressively attracted by the Latin American passion for football since the 1980s. For instance, Argentine writer Juan José Sebreli published *Fútbol y masas* (63) in 1981 and *La era del fútbol* (62) in 1998. In these books, Sebreli criticized football’s reproduction of capitalist production and its effects on Argentine society. Similarly, Brazilian academics working in areas akin to philosophy have published interesting studies accessible both to academic and general readerships. Among them, J. Sérgio Leite Lopes’ studies of the relationship between the practice of football in Brazil, its democratization, professionalization, and gradual globalization, and the construction of Brazilian national identity are particularly noteworthy (29; 30; 31). José Wisnik recently published an essay in which he examines the meaning and value of football in Brazilian culture, placing central emphasis on philosophical considerations (79).¹⁷ Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano (21), and more recently, Mexican Juan Villoro (76), and Argentine Juan Sasturain (53), to mention a few writers, penned some books on football that touch upon its significance, character, and values, and what it reveals about the human condition. However, as these authors are not philosophers, their books did not add much of philosophical interest. The value of the books resides in the topics and questions raised, even if left at that.

There are signs that the philosophy of sport is expanding, albeit gradually, in Latin America. Since the year 2000 a small number of specialists have brought greater visibility to the discipline. Argentine Claudio M. Tamburrini published *¿La mano de Dios? Una visión distinta del deporte* (64) in 2001, probably the first attempt at a comprehensive approach to the philosophy of sport in Latin America. Tamburrini has published numerous other books and articles in professional journals, mainly in English, and has championed the discipline in the region. In 2006, Cesar R. Torres and Daniel G. Campos coedited *¿La pelota no dobla? Ensayos filosóficos en torno al fútbol* (71) and in 2008 Torres edited *Niñez, deporte y actividad física: reflexiones filosóficas sobre una relación compleja* (68). While the first is a collection of philosophical essays discussing different aspects of football, the second group of essays investigates many of the

moral dilemmas surrounding youth sport and physical activity, and both feature philosophers of sport from North America, Latin America, and Europe. Interestingly, Tamburrini, Torres, and Campos were partially trained and work outside Latin America. In addition to regularly publishing in the pages of this journal, they also write in Latin American newspapers, hoping to keep raising awareness of the discipline in the region.

In the last ten years, the philosophy of sport has also expanded in other areas of Latin America as well. Venezuelan lawyer Rafael J. Chavero Gazdik has analyzed some corrupting forces in sport as well as issues of justice related to its practice and organization. He published *La integridad del deporte: no todo es un juego* (16) in 2005 and two years later *La otra cara del deporte* (15). Brazilian scholars have also contributed to the literature. For instance, Lamartine Pereira DaCosta (18), who has a distinguished career in different areas of physical education and sport, has studied the philosophical foundations of Olympism. Silvana Vilodre Goellner has developed an interesting series of feminist studies on women and sport in Brazil. Her articles include a meta-philosophical analysis of feminist epistemologies as theoretical tools to understand the historical processes through which women entered and broadened their participation in physical and sporting practices (23), a study of the insertion and often invisible presence of women in the practice of football in twentieth century Brazil (24), and an analysis of the role of eugenics and nationalism in the political promotion of access to sport for white women in Brazil in the early decades of the twentieth century (22). Reflecting the importance of continental European philosophy in Brazil, there have been published, for example, a Nietzschean study of football (42) and a critique of physical training in sport—conceived as a sacrificial form of human domination over nature, where the body, as nature, is dominated by human rationality—on the basis of Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (75). Moreover, given the widespread practice of Asian martial arts in Brazil, there are studies on the philosophical perspectives that undergird and inform their practice (5). In addition, regional scholars occasionally publish papers on the philosophy of sport. Likewise a sporadic philosophy of sport paper is presented in regional or national physical education, sport, or philosophy congresses.

In spite of the recent progress, the philosophy of sport remains in an inchoate state in Latin America. A major problem is the lack of disciplinary organization. Efforts continue to be individual and atomized. To the best of our knowledge, there is no regional or even national organization for philosophers of sport. Consequently, it is not surprising that Latin America has no specialized scholarly association, professional meeting, or journal. Similarly, we are not aware of any regional undergraduate or graduate program dedicated to the philosophy of sport. This, of course, does not mean that there are no undergraduate or master theses and doctoral dissertations dealing with philosophy of sport issues; rather it indicates that the discipline has not been formalized and lingers in relative invisibility. Undergraduate curriculums in physical education, leisure, and exercise and sport science programs typically require a philosophy class. What is taught in these courses and what are the qualifications of the faculty in charge is not clear. There does not seem to be curricular research on the content of these courses. In this regard, there is no introductory, much less an advanced, textbook in the philosophy of sport.

Perhaps the congress organized in 2009 by the Universidad de Cuyo to commemorate the first Argentine national congress of philosophy organized 60 years earlier exemplifies the standing of the philosophy of sport in Latin America. Last year's congress was organized around ten areas that "open the doors to the main branches of philosophic study."¹⁸ Needless to say that sport was not among one of those ten areas. The unwillingness of philosophers to treat seriously what they may perceive as a "trivial" or "popular" pursuit seems to be the most important barrier to the development of the philosophy of sport in Latin America. Kretchmar identified a similar problem in North America during its disciplinary period (26: p. 195-196). It did not help either that renowned writers, such as Argentine Jorge Luis Borges, considered sport a tedious activity.¹⁹ Another barrier may be the perception in the physical education profession that philosophical inquiry and discoveries do not lead to straight practical applications. For the most part, physical educators have adulated scientific discoveries and applications that increase their efficiency. Ironically, philosophers in the region may find the philosophy of sport too applied for their analytical acumen.

Looking Ahead

Admittedly, this paper's account of the development of the philosophy of sport in Latin America and its index of authors and scholars that have contributed and are contributing to the discipline are not exhaustive. The same goes for the works cited. Nevertheless, the authors and scholars mentioned as well as the works discussed are representative of the discipline's trajectory in the region. This paper reveals a picture of the topics and themes that have been and are of interest in the literature as well as the discipline's achievements, troubles, and omissions. In this sense, it also points to potential directions for individual researches and the discipline as a whole.

Back in 1967, Dante Panzeri, the Argentine journalist, complained that philosophers had relegated sport because of their underestimation of those activities that seem to be made "to play." He wished that philosophers helped people question and understand their reasons to play football. Even more, Panzeri wished that the sporting masses lived their passion more philosophically. He dreamed that by the year 2000 his wishes would not have to be reiterated (39: pp. 27-28). Panzeri's dream might not yet have been fully realized, but progress, albeit slow and irregular, has been made. The challenge for Latin American philosophers of sport is to deepen this progress, convince their colleagues that sport is not only a legitimate subject of study in its own right but also that its investigation reveals unique aspects about the human experience, and participate in the larger sporting agora to address with the general public the most pressing issues in sport. Philosophers of sport have to make their trade relevant and communicate in a clear manner not just among themselves but with all of those interested in sport. In the past, hosting international sport events such as the Olympic Games has helped develop diverse forms of scholarship on sport. The 2016 Olympic Games to be held in Rio de Janeiro may present various opportunities to foster the philosophy of sport in the region. If those opportunities do not arise, philosophers of sport should carve them out.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the history of the term Latin America see Marshall C. Eakin (19). A survey of the most prominent texts in Latin American studies, especially in Latin American history, provides not only historical analyses of the term but at the same time clearly manifests its contentiousness as their authors also attempt to shape its definition.
2. In this paper, "football" refers "association football."
3. See Richard V. McGehee (36) and Cesar R. Torres (67) for systematic presentations of sport history's status in Latin America and introductory accounts of sport in the region. See also Torres (69).
4. What "sport" designates here seems to be similar to David Kirk's concept of "physical culture" (see 25). Although "physical culture" might be a better descriptor for the philosophy of sport's disciplinary focus, it has limitations of its own.
5. Like the term "Latin America," the term "North America" is contested. Geographically, it includes the territories of Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Culturally, it sometimes refers to the United States and Canada in contrast to Latin America, thus excluding Mexico. We are aware of the difficulties and ambiguities involved in using the term. For the sake of brevity, we will here use the term "North America" to refer to English-Speaking North America only, while acknowledging that Mexico is culturally part of Latin America and geographically part of North America.
6. See Cesar R. Torres (70) for an account of Zubiaur's life and ideas.
7. For analyses of Romero Brest's life and ideas see Jorge Saraví Riviere (51) and Pablo Scharagrodsky (55).
8. André Codea, Heron Beresford, Lamartine Pereira DaCosta, and Alberto Reppold have written a brief profile of the philosophy of sport in Brazil, see (17).
9. See the essays in (54) for details of the Brazilian, Colombian, and Uruguayan views on physical education. The work of Moisés Sáenz is found in (46).
10. The proceedings of the congress can be found in: <http://www.filosofia.org/mfb/1949arg.htm> [Last Accessed: March, 2010].
11. A small number of the more than 1,500 football articles that José Lins do Rego wrote in Rio de Janeiro's *Journal dos Sports* from 1945 to 1957 were published in *Flamengo e puro amor* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 2002).
12. See (11) and (77).
13. For a biographical essay of Santoro, see the 2007 edition of his anthology (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lea).
14. See Cesar R. Torres (67) for an analysis of the development of sport history in South America.
15. Maria Lisbôa and Rosane Pereira, for example, published *Filosofia da Educação Física* in 1994 (28). Although they provide a survey of themes in the history of philosophy that could be relevant to physical education, the actual treatment of physical education is very superficial. This suggests that what is understood to be and accepted as philosophy of physical education is still very unclear in the region. See also (8).
16. For example, see (6, 7, 59, 60, and 61).
17. For an extensive critical review, see (14).
18. See http://ffyl.uncu.edu.ar/?id_rubrique=431 [Last Accessed: March, 2010].
19. See (71: p. 19).

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