

# **Projecting physical activities into the passage of the third millennium**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As we have moved towards the third millennium the projection into the future of any field of knowledge has been a most fascinating exercise. In the specific case of the role physical activity, several factors decidedly come to mind in the organization of the projection of these future perspectives. The fact that the number of practitioners of physical activities is considerably increasing in the world and, also, that the concern of the international media is growing each day in regard to Sport, leads me to consider this study or analysis as highly relevant.

In this sense, I this presentation will be divided into two parts:

1. Analysis of the current societal and political context as a foundation of these future tendencies;
2. The future projections of the role of physical activity as we enter the third millennium.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT CONTEXT AS A FOUNDATION OF FUTURE TENDENCIES**

There is no doubt that the present picture of the role of physical activity in the world has great complexity and deserves criticism and analy-

sis. Thus, the intellectual exercise of projecting a logical context from the present, will be challenging and, through a logical analysis, may lead to a better future, albeit a complex and perplexing one.

In this paper, I analyzed sport and physical activity:

1. Analysis of the present context of society;
2. Analysis of the search for new paradigms;
3. Analysis of the present picture of physical activity.

The analysis of the present picture of physical activities will be developed in the projections made in the following section, because, it will be related to the more specific processes which led to these projections. The two other analyses were developed independently. They are related to specific processes whose direction interferes in general with the conduct of society.

**Analysis of the present context of society.** A form of inquiry by the intellectual community for the evolution of any field of knowledge, is the development of a contextual societal framework which one can make evident, through general and permanent indicators. In this sense, one recognizes some macrocharacteristics of the present time.

- a. The technological revolution that we are going through is recognized by Alvin Tofler in the books *The Third Wave* and *The Future Shock* as a revolution which explains that the agrarian and industrial revolutions are already distant, and that the computer and the improvements of the media of mass communication influence all actions in society.
- b. In a mass society, that directs planning and politics, transforms people into numbers, deeply alters the relationships among the state, society and people requires that all field of inquiry needs to work in altering priorities to respect the rights of people and cares for the collective needs.
- c. Conceptual revisions. In all areas of knowledge, there is a consequence of the already mentioned technological revolution and the mass society.

- d. One's relative nature with the environment occurs in all contemporary areas of knowledge and human action, starting from the conviction that man has been the great predator of the XX Century.
- e. The perception that we are in a world of dissension, in which consensus was extinguished and where monological reason was replaced by dialogical reason.

It is obvious that these symptoms of the present world are explicit and help to interpret the international scene. There are also other important symptoms in this demanding order, such as: exaggeration of technology and science over humanism, the growing social-economic picture resulting in a world divided into first, second and third order status, and overcoming the trend towards formal education over non-formal, including the relevance of leisure.

In the analysis of the search for new paradigms, on the other hand, reference to paradigms is common, especially, when one wants to analyze the epistemological "cuts" or the scientific revolutions. It was Thomas Kuhn who used the expression "paradigm" to explain the so-called scientific revolutions that humanity has witnessed. In a synthesis of modern paradigms, one can say that through our present paradigm, the Newton-Cartesian perspective is perceived by the present society as a fragmented vision of the universe. Therefore, a search for a new paradigm and a universal perspective is occurring and needed. We can project that this new paradigm will be one of humanity should be holistic in perspective. As Pierre Weil noted, a holistic paradigm may lead the whole and each of its synergies into a connection through interactions, leading each element of a field to be an event, which will contain all the dimensions of the field. There will be no more parts, but synergies, that can be explained as energetic events in harmony. All this is explained by the paradoxes of quantum physics.

## **2. THE FUTURE PROJECTIONS OF ROLE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS WE ENTER THE THIRD MILLENNIUM**

As a consequence of the present context, of the emerging new paradigm to humanity and of the present picture of the role of physical acti-

vity, it is possible to list four essential projections into the future as we pass into the third millennium. They are:

1st Projection - Physical activities will be in the perspective of an integrated physical culture.

2nd Projection - Physical activities will be incorporated and understood in a theoretical field of science.

3rd Projection - New transformations will emerge in the international sport movement, from a redefinition of sport.

4th Projection - Physical Education will be a component of a renewed educative process with new cross- and multi-disciplinary references.

The perspective of a Physical Culture (1st projection). In projecting and accepting that the physical activities will be understood in a new major concept of Physical Culture, I cite Manuel Sergio who places man between the "bios" and the "logos", that is, between life and spirit. Physical Culture infers that people express themselves through motor behavior and one may observe that these physical activities in general are strong manifestations of a new Physical Culture. When it occurs in educative situation, such as Physical Education and educational sport, it includes the socio-cultural. Jose Maria Cagigal contributed to the concept of Physical Culture, when he stated:

- a. Man knows the world that surrounds him starting from his body entity;
- b. Man lives in movement, living his existence in the body, from the body and through the body;
- c. The integration of brain-motor equipment is a guarantee of personal improvement, which invokes the conclusion that the movement is one of the first anthropological needs and providence of the human being.

In this interpretation, Cagigal left in the concept of Physical Culture the understanding that its manifestations (rest, physical activity, dance and sport) through physical education should still be considered fundamental for the development of this physical culture. One can affirm now that in the period of the passage into the third millennium, physical education and sport will remain in the theoretical field of a Physical Culture.

Physical Activity will be part of a science (2nd projection). Presently, one of the main questions is where to place physical activity in a theoretical field of research.

The so-called Sport Science, according to Herbert Haag, involves: (a) Sport Medicine; (b) Sport Psychology; (c) Sport Biomechanics; (d) History of Sport; (e) Philosophy of Sport; (f) Sport Pedagogy; (g) Sport Sociology and other fields of human knowledge that represent themselves with scientific connections to the physical activities or sport science.

Nevertheless, there are two other scientific trends that choose other denominations: The Science of Human movement, from the French Le Boulch, and the Science of Human Motricity, from the Portuguese Manuel Sergio.

The basic difference between these trends is that sport science selects scientific facts or its content from all the other research and theories about physical activities in general. On the other hand, the Science of Movement and the Science of Human Motricity suggest that sport is only one more sub-area of its content, because they involve all the scientific investigation about the movement or human motricity, without distinguishing this or that specific field.

In analysing the present international picture it is possible to believe that in the movement of the passage into the XXI Century there will be a Sport Science with a theoretical field well defined and already established with a highly important collective knowledge.

Besides these applications of other sciences to the physical activities, mainly to sport as already explained, this new theoretical field of science also will contain research related to the body, incorporating content of area, from specific disciplines, but focusing on the multi-disciplinary perspectives.

**The perspective of the Sport.** From conceptual revision to the new consequent trends (3rd projection). Modern sport, born in a pedagogic notion from Thomas Arnold, in the last 20 years of the past century, received great import with the restoration of the Olympic movement by Pierre de Coubertin, at the end of that century. The sport world, although with fast evolution of the number of areas and with the growing involvement

of government's role, appeared to remain stable until the 1930's . The Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 constituted the first effective political manifestation using sport for its political goals. This picture of sport, based in political-ideological objectives came to such an extreme condition that astonishing reactions from the international associations community were provoked, and from intellectual reflection it even led to the emergence of the Sport for All Movement. However, the main consequence of this exacerbation of the sport phenomenon was its conceptual revision. After the sport manifest of 1964, the coming of Sport for All Movement, the reaction of the "intelligentsia" and other important manifestations, came the International Declaration of Physical Education and Sport, by UNESCO, in 1979. This movement enlarged the comprehension of the concept of sport to an understanding that everybody had the right to sport practice. Sport, became school sport, popular sport and performance sport. Presently, national constitutions are based in these sport manifestations. This revised the concept of sport, took it to a major social meaning and to a redefinition of roles of the government in regard to sport matters. For this reason, it is possible to foresee that this concept of sport will cross the end of the century and open the sport perspectives for the XXI century. Therefore, there are other consequent factors in the present sport movement that certainly will design the sport facts for the beginning of the next millennium:

1. The continuing emergence of sport areas relative to nature, and utilizing certain industrial equipment companies with their economic support. This movement is already strong and in each season new sports have emerged (Ex.: Windsurfing, Jetskiing, etc.). This movement, although it is considered a promotion of the intersection of sport with nature, has concerned the ecologists, due to the exhaustion and destruction of the environment as sport moves closer to the environment.
2. The continued proliferation of sports derived from Oriental martial arts, mainly in the Occidental world. This movement can be explained by the need of the Occidentals to search for new spiritual ways. The sport areas derived from martial arts, bring in its content more

than a sport or a fight, because they also hold philosophies of life, with great spiritual base. The number of martial arts that turned into sport areas is large and they will continue to increase.

3. The international organization of sport performance shall have a new institutional accommodation, due to the emergence of new areas, the division of other international entities and the attractive commercial interest. Since the eighth decade of this Century, sport performance has turned to business as becoming dependent upon existent media schemes. Evidently, new national and international interests have emerged, provoking the development of new institutions of sport administration, new derived activity areas and, the total professionalization of sport performance. John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, in the book *MegaTrends*, foresee the replacement of the media's and business's interest in sport, by the arts. I disagree with this proposition, and I reinforce my argument by showing that the arts do not have such gigantic events as the Football World Cup, . Tennis Tournaments and the Olympics, to place them on an equal footing. A saturation of sport programming might occur bringing about its demise but it will never replace the importance of sport and physical activity to the person. Undoubtedly, there is a rebirth in the arts world but it can never replace sport. What shall occur, in my view, is a reaccommodation of interest in sport. Only the sport areas that surround tragedy or death (like Boxing, Car Race, Motorcycling and Rallies, for example), and those of complex financial and managing organization (like Tennis, Golf, Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, for example) will share all the space in the media and in commercial television.

4. On the other hand, due to the commercial interest for sport, it is not hard to foresee that great conflicts will occur in the beginning of the third millennium over which organization is in power. International Boxing for several with several international federations and divided Tennis and Basketball with one entity of world level and another at the professional level in the United States; the Car Race with its options for competition are clear examples of the projections that will occur in all sports. Sports options to challenge man will continue to

emerge, such as rallies and combined competitions like Triathlons. The permanent need for superiority leads to the emergence of new sport areas in adventure sports. Some of these competitions and sports, will be sport competitions related to nature, like mountain climbing and endurance walks.

5. With the concept of sport education, and popular interest in sport performance, the governments will limit their direct actions in the two first, and they will tend, in certain cases, only to normalize the sport performance as to aspects of national sovereignty, of preservation of human and environment rights, of mediation in the superpositions of autonomy, and whenever society claims corrective actions on its behalf for the questions and conflicts of sport. For these reasons, one can perceive a new picture of sport conflicts, such as: violence in the stadiums, lack of respect for limitations in sport competitions, drugs in sport, precocious use of sport activities not recommended and many others that have already begun to be identified.

**The perspective of Physical Education.** It will be part of the renewed educative process and it will be multidisciplinary in nature. Physical Education, after being considered a foundation of Physical Culture and, after overcoming a long period of identity crisis shall enter the beginning of the XXI Century contextualized in the renewed educative process, that one also will incorporate into non-formal education as well as into the already traditional and formal education.

In this perspective, the Physical Education, in its multidisciplinary action shall seek the following objectives:

- a. Education for leisure;
- b. Education for health;
- c. Education for environmental preservation;
- d. Initiation for sport practice.

It is natural that new principles emerge and that a necessary integration occurs with sport education, where the game will be restored to all its richness of content and each time gaining more relevance for physical education.