

## THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE

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### “PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT” IN THE THEORETICAL RETROSPECTIVE AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Michailo Ibragimov**

*National University of Physical Education and Sport of Ukraine,  
Physical Education str., 1, Kyiv, 03680, Ukraine,  
rectorat@uni-sport.edu.ua*

Based on a retrospective analysis of theoretical guidance, the aim of the article is an attempt to describe the subject matter of life and justify the need for the development of “Philosophy of Sports” as a theoretical and ideological foundations of sports science. To solve the problem, the author proposed outline of the concept “Philosophy of Sports” in cultural-anthropological discourse and argues that its subject is the doctrine of the nature of sport as a social and cultural phenomenon that in images of physical culture imitates the processes of bodily self-contradictory man. The study indicated that the prospects for a selected object are determined by a number of reasons: 1) the crisis in public health, which requires the formation of a new ideological paradigm of physical culture and sports, and 2) the need explication specially applied research of sports industry knowledge to the overall humanitarian science.

*Keywords:* philosophy, sports, physical culture, retrospective perspective.

According to the program of XXIII World Philosophy Congress (Greece, August 2013). The “Philosophy of Sports” problematic was actively considered in a special section where sports were represented as an important construct of a modern cultural and civilization process. As the humanitarian community recognized the sport life to be one of the areas of public life as “the world of sport”, which actively influences all aspects of human existence, the Congress delivered a strategic objective – to single out “Philosophy of Sports” from the totality of numerous scientific, cultural and anthropological discourses in the subject of special integrative thinking about sports. Thus, the problem of making a specific philosophical tools arose, which differ from other system of knowledge about physical culture and sports like “Sociology of Sports”, “Sports Pedagogy”, “History of Sports”, “Sports Psychology”, “Philosophy of Olympics”, etc.

For half a century in the United States and Western European scientific journalism “Sports Philosophy” exist as a separate area, but in the national philosophical thought it is not widely accepted, although the necessary prerequisites were established. In today’s science the sports research activities in related humanitarian areas actively developed: recently two doctoral thesis have been defended: The Transformation of the Institute of Sport in the Contemporary Ukrainian Society (O. Kyrylenko, 2013) and the Formation and Development of the Sports Industry: A Sociological Dimension (V. Lukaschuk, 2012). In addition, the sports discipline which in the

middle of the twentieth century was singled out from pedagogical continuum in the independent applied and theoretical sphere. It became a powerful scientific basis of human study that surfaced a number of topical issues. Does Ukraine have a theoretical basis for the development of "Philosophy of Sports" and what is the practical feasibility for sports science of philosophical discussion? Answers to these questions can be promising for philosophical studies. Currently, we are making their theoretical and ideological contours, based on the reconstruction of theoretical achievements.

In Ukraine, as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, there was a somewhat paradoxical situation. In recent years, the philosophical thought has actively incorporated the problem of human corporeality, its moral and aesthetic culture, somatic existential in the subject of its research, but it rarely turns to the experimental data and theoretical generalizations in the field of sports science, the direct studying object of which is the body. In its turn, experts studying existing and potential bio-psychological qualities of athletes' body during their training for the competitions, also the researchers in physical education, who deal with the harmonization of spiritual and physical health of young people, almost do not turn to the existing philosophical reflections about the sense, relevance, social significance of sport, its place and role in the system of ideological preferences of the people, while struggling to elicit the cultural potential of physical culture and sports.

Based on a retrospective analysis of theoretical guidelines that exist in the post-soviet and, in particular, the Ukrainian philosophical continuum and in the theory of physical culture and sports, the purpose of the paper is an attempt to outline the vital need for the development of «Sports Philosophy», so in a way to attract the attention of national philosophical and sports community to the cooperation in solving theoretical and practical problems. Reservation: from a multifaceted substantial amount of the term "theoretical retrospective", which historiosophical analysis provides we use it in terms only in the text to emphasize the genesis of sports philosophy in various discourses.

The relevance of the chosen discourse suggests that in philosophical and scientific community the descriptivity between philosophy and sport is still ambiguously interpreted, that is the very possibility of this type of research project as the "philosophy of sport". Some experts talk about the need for the development of "Sports Philosophy" as an integrative knowledge in the system of sports science, and others have expressed doubts about the feasibility of its existence. For example, Russian philosophers M. Shimin and A. Shimina state: "The study of sport has become differentiated: there is Psychology of Sport, policy in the field of sport, the legal basis of physical activity, Sports Sociology and so on. For all multiplicity of sports activities and different ways to its studying there is a need for the integrative knowledge, which gives the overall picture of the sporting world" [15, p. 70]. In contrast to their thoughts professor in Sociology of Sports Yu. Fomin expresses doubts about the possibility of such discipline as "Philosophy of Sports" because he thinks it is an "indifferent mind trick" that does not correspond to the nature of traditional philosophy as "general science" (Aristotle) and curses the modern philosophy of arhaeovanguard (F. Hirenok), calls postmodernism "an empty talk" and therefore, in his view, the phrase "Philosophy of Sports", "Philosophy of Biology" and, etc. "can not be considered as parts of Philosophy of Science, or if, for example, there will be the philosophy of fire or sewerage" [14, p. 97].

At the same time, researchers in the field of sports science try to penetrate into the essence of physical training in the theory of which "the connection between the integrated individuality (in its somatopsychic and socio-cultural unity) and the essential meaning of physical activity is clearly

shown, which has an internal (ideal) and external (receptive – motor) sides” [9, p. 14]. Professor of Sports Pedagogy Yu. Nikolayev emphasizes that the key to determine the merits of physical culture is spiritual and personal development of an individual which “eliminates a contradiction between the motor component as the principal element of physical activity and socio-cultural component that lasted for decades” [9, p. 4].

Modern sports discipline urgently needs a philosophical re-evaluation of the past stage of its development as a science. Many scientists complain that the problem is still a conceptual vision of the theory of physical culture. Being separated out of educational scope and based on the biomedical and other natural sciences, it has long accumulated experience of its theoretical basis in structuralism methodology. Historically, it has paid off, because there was a practical need for metaphysical description of individual properties of the human body that could be used in empirical measurements of athlete behaviour and develop sport and training process aimed at achieving good results and victories in the competitions and apply the results in the development of methods that improve the efficiency of health bodily motor activity in physical education. But in today’s environment of rapid development of sports science structuralism methodology can not capture the richness of the experimental experience and theoretical part of it gradually loses its methodological function for applied research. On this occasion M. Visitey notes that “it would be more useful to try, based on the initial concept, to deepen the essence opinions expressed in them, not just try to expand them and actually complicate the conceptual blur of methodologically defocused judgments, as it was tautologically forming the relevant definitions” [2, p. 27].

Modern theorists of physical culture express opposing views on the construction of its methodological axis. Some complain that they are still “classical theory of sport which originated in the 1950–1960’s, as the theory of sports training, so far have not been able to go beyond the teaching theory of training process formation” [11, p. 16]. Other theorists, expressing dissatisfaction with the fact that physical culture “still does not have “integrative” theory, because it was designed not as a science but as an academic discipline” [8, p. 15–20]. They believe that in physical education “the system of knowledge right-on is overloaded with the martial arts techniques health preservation, “Successful Career” and survival” [8, p. 15–20].

Professor V. Sutula concludes: “Recent development of a generalized theory of physical culture is clearly seen in the works of N. Ponomarev (1974, 1996), G. Natalov (1998, 2005), V. Vydrin (1974, 1996, 2003, 2008, etc.), L. Matveev (2003, 2009), Y. Nikolaev (2001–2012). According to these experts, the current approaches to the study of physical culture should be based on a rethinking of integration processes unfolding in this area of social life, thus it is reasonable to use social and culturological approach, and the law interconnection of needs and activities” [12, p. 82]. That is, if to talk about a crisis in the theory of physical education, it is a “growth crisis”. Similar crises arise in each science at a certain period, and its overcoming is always in philosophical methodology or rather, in the need to change its paradigm.

So humanists insist on the necessity of philosophical reflection of sports science achievements, and experts in the field are concerned about the specifics of philosophical thought and the very possibility of its penetration into previously unknown layers of life. Characteristically, the experts did not consider sports motor activity in itself, and see it in the realm of cultural and civilization of human development, preservation of their psychosomatic integrity. The philosophical and anthropological component of physical education and sport is found in their social and cultural values, as they demonstrate the contradictions, complexities, adaptive challenges that exist in

contemporary computerized and informative society. Human dimension, in all its versions – the “rights (distribution) dimension”, “man (no) dimension”, “man (above) dimension” – in sports activities is presented as sense-expedient and most important of its constructs [5, p. 229–234].

The philosophical and literary data analysis suggests that since the late 80’s of the XX century the Ukrainian philosophical thought has occasionally applied to problems of sports science. Thus, I. Tyshkovska’s philosophical research paper “Dialectic of social and biological in building of a general theory of physical culture” promoted the formation of sports science in Ukraine [13, p. 6]. Currently, sports phenomenon is considered mainly under social philosophy, philosophy of culture, although it briefly highlights the spiritual and personal, personalistic, epistemological and axiological components.

As already noted, in recent years the number of scientific studies on the diverse dimensions of sport has increased (A. Zinyuk, V. Lukaschuk, Y. Semenov, O. Kyrlylenko). In the current dissertation papers there is a tendency of authors to give a conceptual presentation of sport as a social phenomenon that is “in the process of constant legitimization, solves important social and institutional objectives”, but they point to the impossibility of its unambiguous definition in social versatility that is constantly expanding. Researcher S. Batsunov in the Ph.D. thesis on Social Philosophy of Sports as a Social and Cultural Phenomenon considers the integrity of sport “in unity and interplay of all its structural elements, and unifying role, in his view, is done by a human-oriented sport, which is realized through socio-cultural, symbolic, integrating, such generating, cognitive, communicative, hedonic, compensatory, social and emotional, aesthetic and emotional, political functions, as well as through the tool of socialization, social mobility, value orientation” [1, p.18–19]. The author’s views on the social life of sport as a specific entertainment production and demonstrative superpotential of a man can be considered sufficiently promising as a sport, “being an integral part of the permitted forms of a society, is a cultural activism of human game competitiveness” [1, p. 15].

The disclosure of existential and phenomenological essence promotes the intensification of public attention to the practical problems of sports movement. French philosopher B. Zhou believes that sport – an association of socio-cultural elements of higher order and develops the idea of sport as “”. At the World Scientific Congress “Sport in Contemporary counter society with many contradictions Society” (Tbilisi, 10–15 June 1980) G. Lyushen (Germany) said: “Now I think it is very beneficial to the fact that we first have done a descriptive and phenomenological analysis, when talking about the dialectical structure of the sporting event and its world effects” [6, p. 561].

In terms of the existentialistic and phenomenological approach in the concept of “Philosophy of Sports” as a socio-cultural phenomenon we should pay attention to the research by S. Mogileva on Modern Sport in the Existential, Social and Communicative Dimensions. She said that in the company of a crowd, or the “public performance”, the ability of sport to influence the relations in society is very powerful and at the same time is not always predictable and responsive in its aftermath. A tension between the existential dimension of sport that is inherently impossible outside the atmosphere of freedom, and its social and communicative dimension, which it creates and thus limits [7, p. 3].

The latest researches of the specialists in this field are denoted with a variety of approaches to philosophical problems in physical education and sport. M. Sayinchuk successfully completed a thesis on physical education, written in the philosophical and axiological aspect, Formation of Value Orientations in the Field of Physical Culture and Sports of High School Students in Physical Education, which contains guidelines on the saturation of physical education classes with

culturological material that is diverse and attractive for students (M. Sayinchuk, 2012). Professor A. Tsios developed a system to attract students to studying of national cultural wealth of Ukraine in physical education classes, which contributes to the development of various interests and correction in the behaviour of some careless students. At the same time, scientists in the field of physical education uniquely interpret the philosophical problems of inter-subjective relationship of the subject of education, appealing the teacher to know not only the individual student but also an atmosphere of collective class, where he is formed: “the core of the impact of each individual student separately is in relation to the impact of the entire public educational system” [3, p. 34].

From these examples it is interesting that the bilateral movement of thought to the formation of a new special field of knowledge – “Philosophy of Sports” due to the introduction of philosophical instruments in the sports science and conversely the enrichment of philosophical problems with the sports practice. As public opinion tends not to include physical education lessons in the social settings that make up the cultural value in the educational process, the philosophy of sport has to step around the positive impact of physical education on the health of the younger generation.

In sports science of the former Soviet Union countries, this approach has not sufficiently developed yet, and its conceptual integrity is mainly on the scientific methodology basis. Philosopher V. Stolyarov, who devoted most of his life to formation of Sports Philosophy, calls it comprehensive, integrative and interdisciplinary. Denoting “subsidiary” characteristic for the science way of referring to the problems of sports, and “special” inherent in the Philosophy of Sports as a review of his basic and major subject of analysis. He says: “It would seem that the inconsistent problems of this discipline are united not only by their close relationship, but the fact that they all involve the re-thinking of the limiting grounds, fundamental prerequisites for the forms of social life and activity that are related to sports and corporeality of man” [10, p. 30].

For example, the implementation of the tasks involves the development of a new concept of scientific and theoretical positions that reveal the nature and content of recreational activities with the various segment of the population, identifying its components, connections and relations. The building of sports recreation concept as a public sphere of life is possible only under the terms of epistemological methodology, where a person is regarded as a subject and object of his own creative life. Sports recreation with all complex of recreational technologies is organic and direct, productive and progressive form of reproduction of life.

Therefore, conventionally we can talk about several methodological dimensions in the research on sports recreation. First off, the usage of structural and functional methodology that includes a set of methods and procedures which made up a specific research potential of the very science as a study about them.

To the next dimension we can attribute cultural and anthropological methodology, including the historical and sociological aspects of physical recreation development, highlights important pedagogical issues related to the formation of public interest in physical recreation, its educational role and its impact on the individual and society. Fruitful in identifying historical stages of recreation, physical education and sports science development in general would be to use paradigmatic approach (T. Kuhn). It incorporates a wide range of conditions and characteristics in organizing and conducting experiments and the whole study, retains chronologically problematic principle of its structure and follows the procedures selection requirements established in the scientific society to ensure the receipt of the actual material, its primary processing and correlation with empirical evidence (K. Popper).

To the analysis of problems named the author proposed position relative to the object, the structure and methodology of Sports Philosophy that was outlined in specialized physical training and sports and philosophical journals (2007–2013), where sports activities are considered in the existentialist – phenomenological dimension. Theoretical framework for the study of the subject field “Philosophy of Sports” as a new trend in the national science studies would help to enrich the philosophical anthropology with the sports science achievements in the study of the changing nature of a man. In such a context the philosophical community was proposed a definition of the “Sports Philosophy” object as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge about the nature of sport as a social and cultural phenomenon that in the images of Physical Education fakes the contradictory processes of corporal, psychosomatic self-perfecting of a man [4, p. 168].

Thus, we can say that our experience of bodily practices and its experimental use in the sports and competitive activities developed in this area of knowledge the effective method of physical education currently require a philosophical reflection. Philosophy of Sports in the suggested anthropological discourse has to show the value of philosophical tools in the further development of the physical culture and sport theory, updating its terminological arsenal and use of the philosophical foundations of modern culture to enhance the credibility of athletes and other professionals in physical education as creative individuals that deal with the population health. Urgent and priority tasks in the development of the “Philosophy of Sports” as a new trend of cultural – anthropological research can be:

- analysis of the investigated problem, summarizing domestic and international experience and definition of the problem field in the area of “Philosophy of Sports” as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge;

- determining the content of concepts and categorical apparatus of “Philosophy of Sports”, which on the one hand, comports with the traditional forms of thinking in the field of physical education and sport, and the other - complements the current trends in the development of national philosophical thought with a new concept of “bodily experience” gained in the sports activities;

- determining the structure of the “Philosophy of Sports” as an educational discipline and urgency of the further theoretical development of its problematics for use in the teaching practice of educational process;

- study for the theoretical and philosophical foundations of sports activities, such as that manifested in a common culture “body image” of the world and promotes the man’s internalization of his self-sufficiency, and it helps to intensify its own motor activity;

- summarize the experience of the social sciences and humanities research in the field of physical education and sport and show their practical orientation in the fields of public opinion on cultural potential of physical culture and value orientations of different population groups to physical education classes ;

- disclosure the integrative role of philosophy in the further development of theoretical and methodological foundations of sports discipline as a specific sphere of science aimed at deep study of the adaptive capacity of a human psychosomatic being to new historical conditions ;

- explore the moral and professional qualities of an individual athlete, his creative potential, showing the need for consideration of individual qualities of a single athlete, his holistic worldview perception of professional activities in the cultural and civilization process;

- actualization of the sports worldview development as a special area of the general ideological paradigm that preserves the integrity of the person with the intellectual diversity of



postmodern culture varieties and meets new “turn” (B. Vandelfels), applying it to the study of natural and cultural attitudes as “diversity of the human body”.

Of course, the following list does not cover all the richness of perspective “Philosophy of Sports” as an interdisciplinary, integrative discipline, which manifests the culture of human physicality. But in passing we note that the national theoretical ecumene forms a new direction in the human cognition, which is what could be called a humanitarian sports science. Its core philosophy may be, once again justifying his appointment be initiated by the mastermind in the high and bloody ascent of mankind to the knowledge of its essence, meaning of life and purpose in this world.

*Author's translation of the article*

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