The ethnosport theory: postulation, experiment, implementation

A teoria do etnoesporte: postulação, experimentação, implementação

La teoría del etnodeporte: postulación, experimentación, implementación

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Abstract: The cultural study of sports with reference to Kylasov's theory of ethnosport allowed us to take a fresh look at modern gaming culture and identify paradigmatic shifts in the sports field: sport in the anthropological dimension, ethnosport, becomes one of the important factors of ethnic, national and civil identity and self–identification, as Fassheber also pointed out, as well as sport in the sociological dimension, in the axiological dimension, strengthens the reunification of sport with the gaming heritage, which is what ethnosport should be considered, increasing the value of sport itself as a historical heritage by an order of magnitude, and also changes the attitude towards this value. As a result of the study, the cultural problem of inheriting gaming traditions was posed and solved, which made it possible to establish the key role of ethnosport in preserving and updating traditional sports and games, which are an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Keywords: Ethnosport. Heritage. Traditional Games. Unesco.

Resumo: O estudo cultural dos esportes com referência à teoria do

etnoesporte de Kylasov nos permitiu dar uma nova olhada na cultura moderna dos jogos e identificar mudanças paradigmáticas no campo esportivo: o esporte na dimensão antropológica, o etnoesporte, torna-se um dos fatores importantes da identidade étnica, nacional e civil e da autoidentificação, como também apontou Fassheber, assim como o esporte na dimensão sociológica, na dimensão axiológica, fortalecem a reunificação do esporte com a herança dos jogos, que é o que o etnoesporte deve ser considerado, aumentando o valor do esporte em si como herança histórica em uma ordem de magnitude, e também muda a atitude em relação a esse valor. Como resultado do estudo, foi colocado e solucionado o problema cultural da herança das tradições dos jogos, o que possibilitou estabelecer o papel fundamental do etnoesporte na preservação e atualização dos esportes e jogos tradicionais, os quais constituem parte integrante do patrimônio cultural imaterial da humanidade.

Palavras-chave: Etnoesporte. Herança. Jogos tradicionais. Unesco.

Resumén. El estudio cultural del deporte con referencia a la teoría etnodeportiva de Kylasov nos ha permitido echar una nueva mirada a la cultura del juego moderno e identificar cambios paradigmáticos en el campo del deporte: el deporte en la dimensión antropológica, el etnodeporte, se convierte en uno de los factores importantes de la identidad étnica, nacional y civil y la autoidentificación, como también señaló Fassheber, así como el deporte en la dimensión sociológica, en la dimensión axiológica, fortalece la reunificación del deporte con el patrimonio de los juegos, que es lo que debe considerarse el etnodeporte, aumentando el valor del deporte en sí mismo como patrimonio histórico en un orden de magnitud, y también cambia la actitud hacia este valor. Como resultado del estudio, se planteó y resolvió el problema cultural de la herencia de las tradiciones del juego, lo que permitió establecer el papel clave del etnodeporte en la preservación y actualización de los deportes y juegos tradicionales, que son parte integral del patrimonio cultural inmaterial de la humanidad.

Palabras clave: Etnodeporte. Herencia. Juegos tradicionales. Unesco.

Introdução

An interest in the development of ethnosport in the world is due to the processes of globalization, which creates challenges in relation to the self-identification of peoples, their desire (in the context of our research) to present their gaming traditions in sports, which has become one of the world systems, along with banking, industrial technologies, the entertainment industry, and telecommunications and transport. Consideration of sport as a "world system" (Wallerstein, 2004) made it possible to identify its etymology in gaming culture and find a rational explanation for the fact that sports organizations are now engaged in the preservation and development of traditional sports and games (formerly cultural practices).

The cultural study of sports with reference to the theory of ethnosport (Kylasov, 2015) allowed us to take a fresh look at modern gaming culture and identify paradigmatic changes in the sports field:

– **Sport in the anthropological dimension**, if considered as a single whole, including all aspects and historical phases of ethnocultural development, which are most fully manifested in ethnosport, becomes one of the important factors of ethnic, national and civil identity and self-identification (Fassheber, 2010), filling the dichotomy "sports / non-sports" with new content;

– **Sport in the sociological and sociocultural dimension** has a significant impact on the social structure and cultural life of society, and this influence only intensifies when sports disciplines coexist with ethnosport, which appeared against the backdrop of an awakening interest in cultural traditions and civilizational specifics. As a result, new types of professional and human solidarity and new forms of culture emerge. Thus, along with athletes from professional clubs, amateur athletes appear – participants in traditional games; they form their own clubs, which become formal institutions of ethnosport. Ethnosport organizations at the international, national and subnational (regional) levels are emerging, reflecting and strengthening the international joint responsibility for preserving the ethnocultural and civilizational diversity of the world. Accordingly, the circle of sports organizations and media structures is expanding, providing work

to a huge number of agents, managers, coaches, lawyers and other employees;

– **Sport in the axiological dimension** not only forms a new type of quasi-religious cohesion *religio athletae* (Coubertin, 1931), the factors (bonds) and manifestations of which are "team spirit", "ideals of sports" and, finally, "faith in sports" itself, but also when expanding its boundaries due to interest in traditional games, it returns respect for deep religious feelings and social ideals. The reunification of sports with the gaming heritage, which is what ethnosport should be considered as, increases the value of the sport itself as a historical heritage by an order of magnitude, and will also change the attitude towards this value.

The social priority of sport that has formed in literally all countries of the world has led to a total change in the system of values, cultural attitudes and goal setting itself, that is, in the terminology of M. Foucault (Foucault, 1969), the dispositive – the attitude towards basic rules, including sports ones. The result, and mostly a negative result, was a massive deconstruction of pre-sports competitive practices aimed at transforming them into sports of the Anglo-Saxon model. However, the ethnic styled sports created as a result of these heterogeneous transformations did not become widespread due to the fact that they (note, quite predictably) could not accommodate the whole variety of traditional sports and games, taken out of the cultural context of rituals and therefore devoid of the eventual symbolism of rituals ethnic groups (Kylasov, 2019-1). Against this background, the statements of representatives of such federations that they have become a platform for preserving gaming practices can be called paradoxical. However, they have received state recognition and even hold tournaments under the auspices of UNESCO (Kylasov, 2019-20).

Ethosport and its movements

The current situation requires active intervention from the scientific community, the intellectual potential of which can and should be used to understand the described processes and is aimed at developing fundamentally new forms of authentic representations that meet the needs of modern society in terms of preserving cultural diversity and developing

the event industry of culture and sports. Based on these premises, as well as in conditions when the sportization of traditional sports and games became a gestalt (Gomes, 2019), the author conducted an interdisciplinary and multi-stage (with the publication of intermediate results) research work, the conclusions of which were presented in the theory of ethnosport with empirical justification of the possibilities and permissible the limits of adaptation to modern conditions of archaic gaming practices in order to preserve their authentic ethnocultural image.

In the course of our ten-year longitude research (2010–2020), we experimentally identified the optimal form of updating traditional games and competitions, which allows preserving the autochthonous flavor and ensuring the cultural dominance of the bearers of local traditions (critical of changes in the ethnic composition of the participants, which was identified in during research), as well as use authentic equipment and preserve the original rules. We called this form "ethnosport" and considered it as a cultural phenomenon. The results of our research were published in specialized scientific journals in order to provide the scientific community with evidence that traditional sports and games represent the "missing structure" (Eco, 1968) of modern sports and have the necessary and sufficient potential for subjectivation as a folklore form (Eichberg, 2015), available in other types of activities (art, fashion, construction, trade, transport, etc.).

Conceptually, ethnosport appears in our study as the result of scientific experiments conducted in different countries of the world, which we used to describe the functional semiosis of the gaming culture of ethnic groups, causally correlated with the practice of applying the provisions of the UNESCO International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

As criteria for the authenticity of the reproduction of gaming traditions in ethnosport competitions, the deep-rooted ideas of ethnic groups about their own gaming culture as a set of provisions of the ethics of competition and the aesthetics of movement were taken as a basis. This approach made it possible to identify the patterns of perception and global spread of ethnosport, in order to then critically comprehend the results of its global implementation, which made it possible to develop a universal

methodology for assessing the state and prospects of the emerging world movement based on a system of indicators of social efficiency in ensuring the sustainable development of the gaming culture of modern society.

The sources of the research were three main groups of materials, as well as different publications on history, economics, ethnology and other sciences used to analyze ideas and concepts:

– Cultural and philosophical sources made it possible to use the apparatus of general scientific discourse of fundamental research in setting and solving scientific and practical problems for the safeguarding of gaming heritage;

– Ethnographic materials form the empirical basis of the study;

– Visual forms of recording and the results of participant observation of gaming practices represent field materials collected in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Gambia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and other countries.

The methodological foundations of the study are the philosophical concepts of the ontology of the game and the cultural concepts of the game as a cultural text. Turning to the theory of institutional economics (North, 1990), game theory, theory of nations and nationalism, ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 2002), as well as various theoretical aspects of the sports sciences was due to the need for a comprehensive study of the phenomenon of modern gaming culture.

General scientific methods were used: the structural-functional method, which made it possible to present the gaming heritage as a systemic element of modern culture and social practice; semiotic analysis, which made it possible to study the translation of meanings and values and determine changes in the contexts of social communication in the game; a cultural method that made it possible to reduce all forms of subjectivity of the gaming heritage to a single denominator and evaluate their representation in ethnosport.

The gaming heritage was examined using special research methods in the context of ethnocultural identification in the context of changing

social priorities and correlated with the global phenomenon of sports as a paradigmatic phenomenon of modern culture. The commodification of formal and informal institutions of traditional games and competitions was studied using statistical, comparative historical, structural and logical methods, and subjected to theoretical analysis in order to systematize and generalize the collected field research material. The diachronic method made it possible to identify aspects of the authenticity of gaming practices and describe the conditions for the sustainable manifestation of the experimentally established effect of hyperrealism (Eco, 1990) in the use of the ethnosport model in the sociocultural design of events.

The scientific novelty of the research is as follows (but is not limited to this listing):

– The concept of ethnosport was introduced into scientific circulation and substantiated through an appeal to the method of "structural lattices" of the concept of "absent structure" (Eco, 1968), which made it possible to discursively connect the new concept with a homological series of cultural contexts of folklore and position ethnosport as a folklore component of modern sports;

– Adescription of ethnosport is given as a tool for constructing ethnocultural identity, achieved through folklorization of traditional sports and games, which was established during cultural analysis based on the results of studying scientific experiments;

– The understanding of the boundaries of gaming culture was clarified and expanded through the inclusion of animals in its subjectivity (Lorenz, 1964), which opened the way to understanding the cultural conflict in the ambivalent connection of "l'uomo e l'animale" (animality and humanity) by Agamben (Agamben, 2002) and understanding the essence of the rules of the game, widely used in the intellectual modeling of processes in various types of activities;

– The relationship between the constant expansion of sports, which has become one of the world systems (Wallerstein, 2004), with the inclusiveness of sports content, organically fitting into each of the five registers of modern cultural space in the theory of "imaginary worlds" (Appadurai, 1996), is

revealed, while the global spread of sports was comprehended with using the formational approach, civilizational method and world-system analysis;

– The influence of formal institutions of actual practices of organized events (commodification) on informal institutions of initial ritual practices of traditional games has been established with reference to the evolutionary model of social institutions described in institutional theory (North, 1990), as well as to the method of latent semantic indexing of narrative identity (Ricoeur, 1990);

– Speculative strategies of international organizations in using the cultural potential of gaming heritage have been identified, the characteristic features of which were manifested in the apologetics of macrostructures described in economic theory (Keynes, 1936) and the structuralist theory of social space (Bourdieu, 1980) about the interaction of macrostructures and agents at the microlevel;

– The need for a combination of corrective actions and changes necessary to make optimal decisions about the future state of the categories and their elements of gaming heritage included in the UNESCO ICH List is substantiated, with reference to the "wheel of fortune" formula (Harrington, 1996), based on the "SixSigma" methodology – structured management of sociocultural processes;

– The results of dispersion analysis of data on key cultural and economic indicators of events and performance results of ethnosport organizations are presented, carried out using univariate and multivariate statistical methods, based on which ethnosport indices were created (Kylasov, Gureeva, 2017).

The result of the study was the introduction into scientific circulation of the very concept of "ethnosport" (2010), to describe the modern (folklore) form of tournaments of traditional sports and games. The use of the "sport" component in the lexigram "ethnosport" is due to the fact that sport is deeply determined in modern gaming culture. The "embryological method" (Gennep, 1935) made it possible to conduct a study of the roots of gaming culture and empirically accurately identify the "survival state" of gaming traditions that anticipated the emergence of ethnosport as a folklore component of modern sports, which has become a unifying concept in the

sociocultural design of events, the program of which consists of traditional sports and games.

In order to achieve authenticity, ethnosport competitions are held according to the rules and equipment of local traditional games, but with the use of sports infrastructure, with the participation of athletes and folklorization of the playing space. During the study, it was found that the discursive field of the concept of "ethnosport" is formed in the interdisciplinary space of sports sciences, while the cultural approach allows us to identify trends in localization, hybridization and cross-cultural perception of this phenomenon.

The culturological method of studying the folklorization of traditional sports and games made it possible to confirm the hypothesis that maximum efficiency in the representation of pre-sports competitive practices is achieved using authentic rules and costume and decorative surroundings, and the reproduction itself should be carried out within the framework of the festivities of the gatherings. A comparison of the experimental results with the proposed methodology made it possible to identify, during cultural analysis, a typical model of ethnosport events that contributes to the formation of ethnocultural identity within the framework of self-identification processes.

Expanding the boundaries of gaming culture through the inclusion of animals in its subjectivity opens the way to understanding the cultural conflict "between animality and humanity" (Agamben, 2002) and encourages a reassessment of the cultural significance of the whole body of objects of intangible cultural heritage, taking into account the updated provisions of ethics and ethology, in which. The ideas of non-violence are becoming increasingly important. We proceed from the fact that gaming practices exist not only as a result of intellectual modeling – the perfect ability to do something playfully, but also accompany the inverse process – games with the denial of rules or simulation of their execution, which was comprehended in the context of a cultural analysis of the existing dichotomy of "barbarization" of games and gamification of science.

Sport has a global distribution and its organizations (core) are interested in cross-cultural promotion in all countries of the world

(periphery) in order to create a world system (Wallerstein, 2004), which is consonant with the theory of communitarianism (Etzioni, 2004) – a global set of local communities guided by the values of the "common good". The formational research method allowed us to identify the universal demand for sport in all types of societies, contributing to the formation of its total priority in the social policy of states, as well as the demonstration of technological superiority (sports facilities and equipment). The civilizational approach made it possible to explain the emergence of new cultural forms of sports that arose and are emerging under the influence of geopolitical, ethnocultural and religious factors. The most striking worldwide phenomena of civilizational influence on sports are: Anglo-Saxon sports, Eastern martial arts, Northern winter sports, Islamic sport and Zionist sport. Separately, ethnically styled sports were considered in the context of theories of nationalism, ethnomethodology and analysis of self-identification processes.

During field research, it was found that the narrative identity (Ricoeur, 1990) of traditional games and competitions in modern conditions is subject to changes caused by the replacement of informal institutions of ritual practices with formal institutions of organized events (commodification). Turning to institutional theory (North, 1990), the coexistence in one social field of several legal (quasi-legal) systems (common law, sports law, church law and others) in the regulation of gaming practices is revealed, forming the singularity of a special "social order" of gaming heritage, presented as a totality formal and informal institutions, considered in the context of ontological multinaturalism (Viveiros de Castro, 2009) – a reversion of multiculturalism with justification for the internalization of indigenous knowledge in modern cultural anthropology. We have found that the division into formal and informal institutions in conditions of total commodification is rapidly being eliminated. Only the ethnosport model, in which the influence of commodification is determined by the authenticity of perception, allows preserving the original narrative identity of traditional gaming practices.

It must be taken into account that on a global scale, a situation of speculative realism has developed (Meillassoux, 2008) in the sportization of the gaming heritage by international organizations due to comfortable

conditions within the infrastructure of the sports industry for holding any types of competitions, therefore, interest has arisen in the maximum adaptation of traditional games and competitions to the requirements of sports management, ensuring the desired socio-economic effect.

Traditional games and competitions in a sporty form are turning into a classic resource for event management; they do not require any investments (unlike the same sport), but at the same time successfully serve the formation of political capital, and also serve as a source of income for tournament organizers through diversification of sources - from government grants to standard marketing tools. Based on this, we conclude that the trend of sportization of traditional games and competitions should be considered in the context of speculative strategies of macrostructures described in the economic theory (Keynes, 1936) and structuralist theory (Bourdieu, 1980) of social space on the interaction of macrostructures and agents at the micro level.

It is necessary to correct the current situation with the sportization of traditional sports and games, which is encouraged by UNESCO as a universal means of preserving the gaming heritage. Achieving this goal is possible by turning to "wheel of fortune" formula (Harrington, 1996), based on the methodology of structured management of sociocultural processes "SixSigma", which will create the desired combination of corrective actions and proposed changes in the categories of the UNESCO ICH List. Cultural significance should be placed at the forefront (at the top of the "wheel of fortune"), the prioritization of which should be guided by the opinions of carefully selected experts (the spokes of the "wheel of fortune"), empowered to proactively discuss future List nominations with national governments, which will ensure a balance of interests in upcoming decisions.

The determination of the key parameters of the methodology for assessing the state and prospects for the development of ethnosport was carried out in the context of interdisciplinary research using variance analysis of data based on univariate and multivariate statistical methods (Kylasov, Gureeva, 2019). The developed system of social efficiency indicators for the implementation of cultural policy programs is based on ethnosport indices: the ethnosport promotion index (EPi) was compiled in the process of studying the effectiveness of forms of promoting traditional

games and competitions, where the best illustration is the cognitive and behavioral reactions of consumers of these events; the Ethnosport Federation Index (EFi) is compiled on the basis of the hypothesis that the effectiveness of the activities of such organizations is determined by the ratio of the number of mentions in the media and social networks, which makes it possible to record the behavioral reactions of consumers to the role of the organization in the development of this type of competition; The Ethnosport Events Index (EEi) is compiled to assess the social effectiveness of events and allows the analysis of the ratio of event participants and the number of visitors, including costs in relation to both monitoring categories.

The theoretical significance of the study lies in the substantiation of a new approach in the methodology of studying modern gaming culture. The concept of ethnosport developed by the author includes an interdisciplinary toolkit for a comprehensive study of the interest in modern society in the actualization of traditional sports and games caused by the processes of self-identification of ethnic groups. The implementation of ethnosport as a reproducible model (scientific experiment) was studied using a comprehensive analysis of the structural-morphological and procedural-dynamic aspects of the institutionalization of this phenomenon.

A systematization of the various identification practices of local communities in the use of the ethnosport model was carried out, which made it possible to identify the inseparability of the signified and the signifier in this concept. The culturological approach to the implementation of the concept of ethnosport for the preservation of traditional games and competitions in the context of the provisions of the UNESCO ICH Convention has significant heuristic potential for extrapolation to other ICH objects and allows for a deeper understanding of the significance of this phenomenon of modern gaming culture, both taking into account its tendencies towards globalization and in the context of emerging challenges regarding the need to safeguarding of cultural diversity.

The implementation of the research results is carried out by the World Ethnosport Society (EWS), accredited NGO by UNESCO (2020), which unites scientists, organizers of traditional games and ethnosport events from 48 countries on all continents. The results of the activities of the EWS can be used to amend national and regional legislation in the field of culture,

education and sports, as well as in the development of intergovernmental agreements on the establishment of cultural ties and the development of long-term cultural initiatives.

But in Turkey (2018), an alternative organization was established – the World Ethnosport Confederation (WEC), which ignores the activities of the World Ethnosport Society, because it aims to spread exclusively Turkish gaming traditions, guided by the ideas of pan-Turkism. The EWS opposes Turkish colonization, which is aggressively spreading within the framework of the World Nomad Games project.

The degree of reliability and testing of the research results is due to a comprehensive study of the problem of preserving the gaming heritage by scientists from different countries who used our proposed theory of ethnosport in different ethnic groups (scientific experiment) and obtained similar results published in 419 scientific papers according to Google Academy.

Final considerations

As a result of the study, the cultural problem of inheriting gaming traditions was posed and solved, which made it possible to achieve the stated goal – to establish the key role of ethnosport in preserving and updating traditional sports and games, which are an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Proof of the reliability of the theoretical conclusions and the ethnosport program developed on their basis was the decision of the 8th session of the General Assembly of the state-parties of UNESCO International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on the accreditation of the World Ethnosport Society as an advisory organization accredited NGO by UNESCO.

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