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From 'philosophy of sport' to 'philosophies of sports'? History, identity and diversification of sport philosophy

Abstract

My goal in this article is to give a portrait of how modern sport philosophy, which started in 1972, developed from relatively narrow paradigmatic borders to become a diverse and multi-paradigmatic international discipline. This development has included several changes but also some continuity. I identify three main tenets that may be viable in the future. One is to focus on the traditional sport philosophical paradigm, which had an ambition to identify the essence of sport. A second option is to develop more specific approaches, focusing on single sports or types of sport, like football or climbing. A third alternative is to develop a philosophy, not only of sport but of 'homo movens', studying the moving human being in different environmental and socio-cultural contexts. All three options are viable and should be welcomed.

KEYWORDS: Sport, sport philosophy, historical development, diversification, future, identity

Introductionⁱ

Since the start in the early 1970s philosophy of sport has undergone many changes and has developed from an academic discipline inside relatively narrow paradigmatic boundaries to become a much more diverse field of study. It is my goal in the following presentation to describe some central aspects of this development and to reflect upon where sport philosophy is now and where it may go in the future. I became aware of the possibility of something like a philosophy of sport while attending the Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress in Munich in 1972 and I have since then been able to observe and take part in the interesting growth and changes of sport philosophy as a serious academic study. I underline that it is my own perspectives, impressions and experiences of the growth and future of sport philosophy which I will present. And I should add that my reflections are presented from a European viewpoint, in fact from a small country in Northern Europe.

In the first part of the article I reflect upon what one should expect from a scientific discipline and how philosophy of sport got its first paradigmatic foundations in the early 1970s. I then give a sketch of how sports philosophy in the next decades widened its scope with respect to object of study as well as alternative philosophical approaches. It seems like a move from 'philosophy of sport' to philosophies of sports'. I then reflect upon how sport philosophy might expand its visibility and attraction and take a look at who the sport philosopher is and how perspectives from the practitioner's, as well as spectator's, viewpoints may complement each other. Finally I reflect upon some future directions of traditional sport philosophy exemplified by three recent approaches.

What should we expect from a full-blown philosophy of sport?

A well-established scientific discipline is characterized by, among other things, continuity through time, well-established scientific content, clear concepts, agreed-upon methods, competing schools and paradigms, and stable research groups. I think it is fair to say that it took some time before sport philosophy became a well-established discipline with well-defined alternative paradigms and schools. According to Kuhn (1962) well-established normal science is disrupted on the one hand by scientific revolutions and on the other hand by an initial phase with pre-paradigmatic confusion without agreement and with many competing views.

According to Osterhoudt (1978) embryonic sport philosophical inquiries started in the nineteenth century with, for example, John C. Warren's (1830) *The Importance of Physical*

Education, George Santayana's article (1894) 'Philosophy on the Bleachers', and H. Graves' (1900) article 'A Philosophy of Sport'. More formal scholarship developed in the 20th century, with a focus on physical education and then the sport philosophical inquiries by Howard S. Slusher's (1967) *Man, Sport and Existence: A Critical Analysis*, Eleanor Metheny's (1968) *Movement and Meaning* and Paul Weiss' (1969) *Sport: A Philosophic Inquiry*. During the 1960s many sport scientific sub-disciplines were developed and gained some independence and identity in relation to their mother disciplines. We got sport psychology, sport sociology, exercise and sport physiology, sport medicine, and so on. For many sub-disciplines this was a period with pre-paradigmatic confusion. Physical education had long suffered some confusion about identity and content and the same happened to the sport sciences as they developed in the 1970s and 1980s. As late as around 1990 Newell (1990) and Renson (1989) discussed the confusion about terms and goals, disciplines and boundaries, and organization of teaching and research. New names, such as 'kinesiology' or 'kinanthropology' tried to give sport studies a new start. One central problem was the role of practice and practical knowledge. According to Newell (1990) the development had favored *declarative knowledge* at the costs of *procedural knowledge*, and *theoretical knowledge* had been favored above *practitioner knowledge*. In sport philosophy the discussion of *knowing how* versus *knowing that* has also been surprisingly sparse. But let us go to the start of philosophy of sport as an academic discipline.

Development of sport philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s

At the Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress before the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 an overview of the state of art in different sport sciences was presented through key lectures and collected in the book *Sport im Blickpunkt der Wissenschaften* (Grupe et al. 1972). As a student participant at the Congress I was impressed by the German philosopher Hans Lenk's (1972) presentation of philosophy of sport as a field of study. He gave a portrait of a variety of philosophical interpretations of sport from various philosophers, authors and commentators. I will come back to that later.

In the same year as the Pre-Olympic congress was held in Munich *The Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport (PSSS)* was founded at the Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association held in Boston, Massachusetts. The first scholarly sport philosophy journal, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, appeared with its first volume in 1974. The sport philosophy that was developed during the first two decades after the start in the early 1970s

was dominated by American sport and its ideology and by the American academic milieu. It meant among other things that sport philosophy became academic and serious, and consequently split off from society and public life, as was the case with philosophy in general (Boradori 1994). Analytical philosophy with a focus on conceptual approaches dominated the discussions. The debates came to focus on formal characteristics of sport, the role of different types of rules, and on definitions of play, games and sports. A certain essentialism dominated; the focus was on what was considered common or essential elements of all sports. In practice, however, this often meant physical games or team sports. The analytical dominance was, however, not total. There was some important input from phenomenology, with Bill Harper and Scott Kretchmar, both students of Howard Slusher, as good examples. Another input came from the coupling of philosophy and history of sport, as exemplified in Eleanor Metheny's (1968) book *Movement and Meaning*. These influences modified somewhat the analytical dominance. A central figure in these first years was Warren Fraleigh and the milieu he created at State University of New York, Brockport, where he was for some time Dean at the College of Physical Education and Recreation. (For more details see McNamee and Morgan 2015.)

Another consequence of the American embedding of sport philosophy was the focus on ethics and the normative identity of sport. Sport was perceived according to American ideology as part of the school system and with clear moral and ideological overtones and underpinnings. As Harry Edwards (1973) maintained, sport was a perfect mirror of the American society and its ideology. Sport ethics, mainly virtue ethics, with a focus on fair play and sportsmanship, became an important topic. The type of sport that was portrayed has later been called 'the hegemonic sport' (English 2017). It is the sport favored by middle or upper class males (mostly white) in Western societies.

If one should summarize the development from 1972 and the following two decades, the PSSH association and the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* were the identity markers of the new discipline. Especially two paradigms attracted a lot of discussions. One was related to Bernard Suits' (1967; 1973) definition of games and sport and the other to virtue ethical ideals connected with British and Olympic sport. Later, Alasdair MacIntyre's (1984) idea of practice communities based on Aristotelian ethics became a dominant paradigm.

Marching on in the 1990s and onwards towards the present

In the 1990s, and in some cases earlier, new members of the small sport philosophical community came on board. This included scholars from Great Britain, Japan, Germany, Australia, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and increasingly people from Eastern Europe (Slovenia, Czech republic, Poland), from Eastern Asia, and from South America. Sport philosophy is now on all continents.

New associations and journals have appeared during the last decades, like the *British Philosophy of Sport Association* (BPSA) (2002) with the working group *European Association for Sport Philosophy*. The BPSA publishes since 2007 the journal *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*. Also Slovenia (2009), and the Czech Republic (2011) have developed national associations with ties to Poland and Hungary. Japan was quite early in establishing the *Japan Society for the Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education*, which was founded in 1978. A more recent association is the *Asociación Latina de Filosofía del Deporte (Latin Association for the Philosophy of Sport)*, created in 2013. It publishes the journal *Fair Play. Revista de Filosofía, Ética y Derecho del Deporte/Fair Play, Journal of Philosophy, Ethics and Sports Law*.

With new nations, new associations, and new conceptions of philosophy, came a greater diversity of sport philosophical approaches; phenomenology, existentialism, pragmatism, neo-Marxism, critical theory, hermeneutics, neo-structuralism, post-structuralism, and so on. Also Asian philosophical approaches, both traditional and more modern, increasingly entered the scene.

Similarly the object of study came to include new and wider activity types, not restricted to traditional competitive sport. The new studies focused on quite diverse activities like lifestyle sports, risk sports, fitness and training, outdoor sports, hunting, hiking, recreation, animal sports, duels and fights, yoga, and various Asian sports.

The new approaches from new countries often meant less academic distance, less normativeness, more involvement with society and politics. While American philosophers, according to a study by Boradori (1994), have remained somewhat exclusive and at a distance from the rest of society European philosophers have been more involved in politics and public discussions. A recent example is Habermas, renowned academic philosopher, but also one of the most cited intellectuals in general media in Europe. The connection with public debates has for many sport philosophers mainly been through ethical dilemmas in sport, especially the doping problem and the general enhancement debate.

The notion of sport philosophy thus gradually became more open to new approaches, for instance more contact with empirical work in social sciences, cultural studies and neurosciences. A recent example is the combination of sport history and sport philosophy by Kretchmar, Dyreson, Llewellyn, and Gleaves (2017) in their *History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Activity*. Another example is the special issue on sport philosophy, ethics and neuroscience edited by Jeffrey Fry and Mike McNamee (2017) in *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*.

The gender balance has also changed. Even if women were part of the philosophy of sport community from early on the female sport philosophers have become better represented, bringing their interests and perspectives more strongly on to the sport philosophical scene. The sport philosophy field has thus become much more interesting with a diversity of perspectives. While not forgetting earlier studies, like the ones of women in masculine sports (Postow 1980) and gender and sexuality in sport (Schneider 1995), recent articles have focused on topics that are part of the broader feminist culture testing gender borders and gender equality in various areas of life. Recent contributions by female sport philosophers show the diversity of the new testing, which include topics such as transgender women in sport (Bianchi 2017), gender equality in tennis (Davis and Edwards 2017), lesbian athletes and the heterosexual matrix (Tredway 2014), gender in fighting sports (Weaving 2014), gender and competition (English 2017), gender equality in the Olympic movement (Koenigsberger (2017), sport and gender in Japan (Mizuho 2014), and the hot topic of 'equal play, equal pay' in soccer (Archer & Prange 2019).

Continuity – some of the old themes are still marching on

The concepts of sport and sport philosophy have in many ways changed during the last decades. Nevertheless the paradigm developed by Suits and central sport philosophers like Fraleigh, Kretchmar and Morgan is still very much alive. It is enough to compare the main chapters and themes in two sport philosophy anthologies, one from 1979 and the other from 2010.

Table 1. The content of two sport philosophical books with similar content.

<p>Gerber, E.W. & W. J. Morgan, eds. 1979: <i>Sport and the Body: A Philosophical symposium</i>. Second edition. Pittsburgh: Lea & Febiger.</p>	<p>Hardman, A. C. & C. Jones, eds. 2010: <i>Philosophy of sport. International perspectives</i>. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of sport • Sport as a meaningful experience • The body and being • Sport and value-oriented concerns • Sport and aesthetics • Sport and metaphysical speculation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of sport , play and games • Sport and meaning: art, literature and spirituality • Sport and the body • Sport and ethics • Sport and internationalization

The main chapters in both books are about ‘the nature of sport’, ‘sport and meaning’, ‘sport and the body’, ‘sport and ethics’. The parallels are striking even if the chapters about aesthetics and metaphysics in the Gerber and Morgan book have no follow up in the Hardman and Jones book. Instead there is, in accordance with the outlook of the book, a chapter on ‘sport and internationalization’.

The Hardman and Jones book shows that there is some continuity in philosophy of sport. The paradigm developed in the early years is still in vogue. But one could ask if the paradigm was too narrow and not broad enough to include the breadth and diversity of a broader movement culture. Maybe this broader perspective could have been realized much earlier.

A contrafactual possibility: what if Hans Lenk had won in the 1970s?

It took some time to get from normative orthodoxy of sport and sport philosophy to the more diverse views of the present day. But what if Hans Lenk had won in the 1970s? Or phrased differently: What did sport philosophy by marginalizing Hans Lenk? In the book *Sport im Blickpunkt der Wissenschaften* that appeared to the Pre-Olympic Congress in 1972 Hans Lenk (1972) had a chapter about sport philosophy, actually the first chapter in the book, called “Sport in philosophischer Sicht”. Here he presented a variety of philosophical views on sport. Let me just summarize the views and their main proponents:

- Sport as play (Huizinga)
- Sport as class struggle (Nitschke, Kleine)
- Sport as aesthetics (Barthes, Fraysinnet)
- Sport as ethical training (Berry, Kuchler)
- Sport and psychoanalysis (Beisser)
- Sport as adaptation to industrial society (Plessner, Habermas)
- Sport, evolution and aggression (Lorenz)
- Sport as existential self-realization (Weiss, Slusher)
- Sport as Creativity and life (Ortega y Gasset)
- Sport as a system of signs (Bouet)

Lenk here opened up a panorama of different general interpretations of sport as a biological, social, psychological and metaphysical phenomenon. The presentation had a generous view of what should be considered a worthy object of study. Not only sport in the narrow sense but a wide variety of play-, life- and sport-forms were portrayed and discussed. The presentation had also an open and generous view of what can be called philosophy since it included literary, evolutionary, psychological, semiotic and historical interpretations as part of the philosophical attitude.

The portrait Lenk gave of sport philosophy did not survive as a trend-setter. As already mentioned a relatively narrow, academic, normative and formal view came to dominate for a while. What would have happened if Lenk's portrait had been followed up? 40 years later we are more open to the picture Lenk painted for us in 1972. It took a while to get there.

Evolution or revolution – the development of a broad movement culture

Right from the start in the 1970s it was clear that philosophy of sport could not be restricted to competitive sport of the Olympic or American type. During the next decades the object of study was expanded from the paradigmatic competitive model to sport for children, sport for elderly, mass sport, elite sport, wilderness sport, motor sport, extreme sport, even exercise, fitness training and recreation.

I can exemplify the change with an example from my home ground. The *Norwegian School of Sport Sciences* is an institution at university level which was raised with strong support from the Norwegian Sport Federation. It was originally meant to serve the voluntary sport organizations and physical education in the schools. The paradigm that dominated from the start in 1968 was competitive sport in the British and Olympic tradition. During the 1970s

new activities like dance, fitness and outdoor education (Norwegian 'friluftsliv') were included in the curricula and the research portfolio. This widening of the focus continued with new activity forms being included during the 1980s and 1990s. Around year 2000 the Board decided that the object of teaching and research was all forms of human movement or *homo movens*, the moving human being. There were several good reasons to do so. In order to study the relation between brain, mind and movement or between human movement and physical and mental health, it is necessary to cross conceptual borders between work and leisure or between competitive and non-competitive physical activity forms. This widening of the object of study for sport sciences in general also had implications for philosophy of sport.

Homo movens – a phenomenological-existential model of sport as exploration

This wider concept of human movement invited philosophical reflection on how human beings explore movement possibilities in relation to different natural elements and inside different socio-cultural settings. In my presidential address to the *Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport* in 1997 I made a first attempt to define this wider context in the form of a four-fold model (Breivik 1998; see also the more elaborated and extended version in Breivik 2019). I took my starting point from the experiences of the playful human being that explores the world through bodily movement. This exploration takes place in different dimensions with quite different phenomenological and experiential characteristics. The existential *I* relates at least to four basic existential dimensions: *Nature*, *Society*, *Oneself* and the *Other*.

Philosophers have concentrated differently on these dimensions; the early Sartre on the individual, the *I* and its consciousness; Buber and Levinas on the *You*; Marx on *Society*; Arne Næss on *Nature*. Similarly different forms of play and sport concentrate on different dimensions and hence different experiential qualities. The experience of the lonely runner on the road or the gymnast in the rings is different from meeting 'the other' in a duel in the fencing or the boxing ring. The experience of being on a team trying to outscore another team in soccer or rugby is different from interacting with hard vertical rock or kayaking down white water falls.

This model illustrates how a wider concept of sport must include activities that have quite diverse ontological and experiential qualities. Philosophers of sport have been more occupied with the *Society* relation than with the relation to the *You* and have focused more on the individual *I* than on *Nature*, which has only recently become a theme. The original narrow concept of sport as a physical game, and the focus on sport as competition, can thus be expanded to encompass a wider field of activities and even transcend the special frame of

Western sport with its historical, social and cultural ramifications and include movement activities from other parts of the world. Let us take a look at some possibilities for further expansion.

What is interesting about sport – from a wider philosophical viewpoint?

This wider focus was addressed by Mike McNamee when launching the new journal *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* in 2007. ‘While across Europe the paradigmatic sports we recognise as Olympic ones were practised and promoted, so too were alternative movement cultures including fitness- and health-related activities groups, and sport-for-all organisations, which bore only a family resemblance to the rule-governed and competitive activities we typically think of and classify as “sports” in the West’ (McNamee 2007a, 2). Instead of more discussions of the triad of play, game and sport or the distinction between test and contest the new journal would seek to publish essays concerned with ‘movement activity practices such as coaching, health promotion and education. It will also publish essays in cognate intellectual areas such as the philosophy of the body, philosophy of education and physical education, philosophy of health and medicine, philosophy of technology and so on in so far as they challenge and critically inform our understanding of sports – widely instantiated – as social practices’ (McNamee 2007a, 4). While ethics had dominated many sport philosophical debates McNamee welcomed more work in ontology, epistemology and philosophy of action. The new vision invited wider explorations and to new perspectives. One could go in two different directions. One could either open up and study sports and other similar activities across different contexts. Or one could close down and study specific sports or specific types of sport. Let us first look at the wider perspective and give some examples.

A first example could be to look at performances of the human body – across different environmental, social and cultural settings. We could look at what is common to *homo movens* across different contexts like play, sport, transport, expeditions, circus, warfare, ballet, etc.. This approach would focus on basic, as well as advanced, physical and mental capacities of the human being across different socio-cultural and environmental contexts. In fact many sport philosophical articles using for instance Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, or Dreyfus in their analyses of bodily movement operate on this level.

A second example is to focus specifically on the mind aspect of the bodymind and how it can be studied across socio-cultural settings. What is the role of motor intentionality across movement areas? What is the role of consciousness in human movement in general and in

sports? Can for instance extreme sport performances help us see how consciousness is involved even at the highest motor skill levels? (see Breivik 2013; Montero 2016)

A third example is to look at competition and the idea of human perfection across different performance areas, such as sport, music, circus, handicraft, paintings, chess, working skills, science. It would be a philosophy of competition with a focus on fairness and the idea of human perfection. Sport can contribute here since, as von Krockow (1972), maintained, there is no other area where winning is so important and where winners are selected and rewarded more fair according to performance than in competitive sport.

A fourth area that is very interesting and promising in relation to the general public debate is doping and in general the various means of enhancement in sport. Sport philosophers have already contributed here but there is more to come. As discussed in the recent book *Homo Deus* by Yuval Noah Harari (2017) new means of enhancement may bring more pleasure, better health, longer lives but at the cost of being increasingly controlled by algorithms and artificial intelligence. Sport has for a long time had to deal with the various legal and illegal methods of enhancing physical and mental capacities. It has something to offer to the debate. What will then happen to sport or the movement culture in general if Harari's predictions become true?

The four examples sketched above shows the possibility we have to use methods and insights from sport philosophy to expand our object of research and to shift our attentional focus into neighboring areas and thus become more relevant and interesting for general philosophy, other sciences and the public debate. An example of a wider perspective crossing the borders between different activity groups is Davies (2011) philosophy of the performing arts.

A more narrow view: From philosophy of sport to philosophies of specific sports.

Another possibility is to move in the opposite direction and focus on specific types of sport or even single sports or physical activities. One can develop a philosophy of nature sports or duel sports. Or even more narrow, a philosophy of a single sport such as football or golf. An argument for studying specific sports can be found in Eleanor Rosch' (1978) theory of concept formation. According to this theory our concept formation operates at three different levels, a superordinate level, a basic level and a subordinate level. 'Sport' is at superordinate level, 'swimming' at basic level and 'breaststroke' at subordinate level. Our conceptual grasp

is at its best and the class of objects at its richest at the basic level: 'Basic level objects are the most inclusive level of classification at which objects have numbers of attribution in common' (Rosch 1978, 32). This means that a philosophy of a specific sport like football will have a richer conceptual content than a superordinate concept like sport. This may be an argument for developing philosophies of specific sports, rather than going on with a more 'anemic' general sport philosophy. It would, however, stand in some contrast to a common opinion according to which philosophy is supposed to operate at high levels of abstraction and not to be occupied with specific phenomena, except when they are used as examples. Abstraction-seeking philosophers should consequently be aware that they operate in 'thin air' where the mind is not at its best and where the task is especially demanding.

In sport philosophy today we see tendencies in both directions, philosophy of specific sports at basic level as well as philosophy of sport in general at superordinate level. The tendency towards more specific approaches seems have a growing support. Let me give some examples. Whereas Steven Connor (2011) writes a book about philosophy of sport at superordinate level, Mike McNamee (2007b) has edited a book about a specific type of sport, the adventure sports. Even more specific and at basic level are philosophy books on specific sports, such as T. Richards (2010) on soccer, M.W. Austin (2007) on running, S.E. Schmid (2010) on climbing, and J. Illundain-Aguruzza, M. Allhoff and L. Zinn (2011) on cycling.

Similarly the type of approach is becoming more precise, for instance by using a phenomenological approach, such as in the book *Phenomenological Approaches to Sport* edited by I. Martinkova and J. Parry (2012). Earlier W. J. Morgan (1994) wrote a book on *Leftist Theories of Sport*. Also Eastern philosophies are used such as in the book by J. Stevens (2001) on aikido and by F. Boedicker and M. Boedicker (2009) in the book on Tai Chi Chuan.

Some pessimists may maintain that the development sketched here will lead to post-paradigmatic chaos. We will have crisscrossing mosaics of philosophy books on specific sports with different philosophical approaches and few stable paradigms to secure continuity over time. Others will welcome the diversification and extension of sport philosophy towards a broad multitude of approaches, out of which more specific and stable paradigms gradually may evolve.

An important factor in the development of sport philosophy in the future will be the sport philosopher. What kind of sport philosophers will we have in the future? Will they be

practitioners or spectators, will they be attached to sport sciences or to general philosophy? Will they be generalists across movement areas or specialists of specific sports?

Who is the sport philosopher?

The philosophers of the past and sports

A well-known book by Heather Reid (2002) has the title *The Philosophical Athlete*. We could turn it around and ask for the athletic philosopher. Who is he or she? If we with Reid go back to classical Greece we observe that sport and philosophy were developed at the same time. We find athletic philosophers like Plato who was a wrestler. Socrates and others discussed at the gymnasias, the sport stadiums. The philosophical schools were closely linked to the sporting grounds. Plato thought that education of the body was important as part of a harmonious development of body and mind. The strong and beautiful body was part of the ideal of *kaloskagathos*, the good and the beautiful. The virtue, the *arête*, included morality in sport.

Later the link between philosophy and sport weakened. One could, as Torres (2014) does, point to Plato, Socrates, Cicero, Erasmus, Hobbes, and Nietzsche who showed interest for sporting or bodily activities. One could point to Ortega y Gasset and his interest for hunting, Sartre's notes on skiing, Derrida who was a goalkeeper, Ayer a football fan and cricketer. Heidegger played football and was an expert skier. But in general the link between sport and philosophy weakened after the Greek start. The philosophical athletes as well as the athletic philosophers disappeared. In his interesting book *The Philosophers. Their Lives and the Nature of their Thought* Ben-Ami Scharfstein (1980) maintains that it is typical for many of the great philosophers through history to combine on the one hand being a precocious child and having intellectual superiority with on the other hand showing bodily clumsiness and inaptness for sports.

Bodily clumsiness is well attested for Montaigne, Kant, Hegel, Mill, Russell, and Broad. Montaigne was surpassed by almost everyone in physical agility, except in running, in which he was just fair. Montaigne writes about himself: 'At dancing, tennis, wrestling, I have never been able to acquire any but very slight and ordinary ability; at swimming, fencing, vaulting, and jumping, none at all. My hands are so clumsy that I cannot even write so that I can read it' (Scharfstein 1980, 366). Kant's friend and disciple Wasiansky says about Kant: 'As skillful as Kant was in brainwork, he was clumsy in handiwork. He could govern only the pen, but not the pen-knife. I therefore usually had to cut the quill to fit his hand' (Scharfstein 1980,

366). Mill said: 'I never could, nor can I now, do anything, requiring the smallest manual dexterity, but I never put even a common share of exercise of understanding into practical things' (Scharfstein 1980, 366-367). A friend of Russell wrote: 'Bertie was, in fact, almost a caricature of the unpractical philosopher, and the idea that he should actually know what to do in a domestic/mechanical emergency was laughable' (Scharfstein 1980, 367). He could not even make his own tea.

To be fair some philosophers had some practical capacities. Descartes was a physician and spent much of his time with anatomical experiments. Locke was an expert physician. Santayana loved drawing and other handiwork. Wittgenstein was skilled in building models of machines, was a gardener for some time, and designed a house for his sister. Popper attempted to become a manual worker and practiced cabinet-making (see Scharfstein 1980, 368).

All of the clumsy philosophers mentioned above were also precociously intellectual. So were Pascal, Leibniz, Hume, Peirce, Collingwood, Kierkegaard and Sartre. So an athletic philosopher has been a relatively rare specimen in the history of philosophy. It seems that being a genius in philosophy has had some bodily costs. But what if the leading Western philosophers had been practical, bodily active, experts on knowing how? What if, as a contrafactual possibility, they had typically been athletic philosophers? Would mind-body dualism then have been a prevailing position? What if a philosopher like Merleau-Ponty and the interest in the bodymind had come much earlier? And what about the sport philosopher of today and tomorrow?

The modern sport philosopher – identity and affiliation

When modern sport philosophy developed from 1972 and onwards it was forwarded by two different groups, one attached to philosophical departments and one to sport scientific or physical education departments or schools. The steering group that founded the new society *Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport* in 1972 consisted of two philosophers (Paul Weiss and Richard Zander) and two physical educators (Warren Fraleigh and Ellen Gerber) (see Torres 2014, 2). Since then philosophers coming from general philosophy departments as well as sport philosophers coming from sport scientific departments (kinesiology, physical education, etc.) have contributed to the development of the new discipline. To take an example from the Nordic countries: While Sigmund Loland and myself have been active in a sport scientific school that educates students to professions that are related sport or physical activity, the Swedish sport philosophers Thorbjörn Tännsjö and Claudio Tamburrini have

worked in general philosophical departments. Their personal backgrounds and interests made them active in sport philosophy, not their professional affiliation.

I think we will need both groups in the future. Sport philosophy as part of sport sciences and institutionalized at sport scientific schools make for continuity and stability while the input from sport-interested general philosophers add both to new ideas and contact with general philosophy. In addition we have people coming from other areas: from anthropology, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, history, neuroscience and so on. They are welcome and they contribute to the widening of the sport philosophical perspectives.

The participant view versus the spectator view

Sport philosophy can be developed from two perspectives, that of the spectator and that of the participant. I think the perspective that dominated during the first developmental period in the 1970s was the spectator view which maybe was inherent in the analytical and detached perspective on sports as rule-based physical games. While the spectator perspective is a view from the outside, the participant perspective is the perspective of the actively involved sportsperson. This perspective is more associated with existentialistic and phenomenological approaches. I would add that also engaged spectators can be studied from within: They are participants on the bleachers, but they are not on the fields (see Mumford 2012). It may be that the participant perspective and the focus on the view from within is easier to develop at schools and departments that educate people to practical professions as coaches, trainers, guides etc. This does not exclude the practitioner perspective among general philosophers, such as Colin McGinn (2008) who writes surprisingly little about philosophy and many would say too much about his own practical engagement as practitioner in various sports.

Where did we come from and where do we go from here?

Let me end by going back to the start, to the kind of sport philosophy where only sport, descriptively or normatively defined, is focused. Is there still a place for a philosophy of sport which is about sport and only sport, neither about general physical activities, nor about specific types of sport? Let me suggest three alternative roads that may be interesting to explore further if one wants to develop a philosophy of sport in the traditional sense, as a theory of sport and only sport. Let me underline that it is the method or approach used by the philosophers I discuss in the following that is of interest. I do not endorse the results, as is evident, for instance in my discussion of Papineau.

The first alternative

The first alternative represents in many ways a continuation of the early attempts to find the essence of sport. The alternative is exemplified by Steven Connor (2011) in his book *A Philosophy of Sport*. Connor states: ‘What I want to do is to bring to bear some perspectives and procedures from certain kinds of philosophy to try to focus as closely and interestingly as I can, and with as little precomprehension as possible, about the kind, or kinds, of thing sport is’ (Connor 2011, 13). Connor wants to look at sport with fresh eyes: ‘I try to make out what sport means, in the sense of what it *means to do*, almost, one might incautiously say, what sport (in the mind it does not have) *might have in mind*’ (Connor 2011, 14). Connor accepts his approach being called ‘cultural phenomenology’, where the goal is to understand the way in which things appear and are experienced. Contrary to those who see these experiences as inner or individual Connor wants to focus upon the sporting phenomena as external and collective phenomena.

While Connor’s approach in many ways is a perspective from the outside, a spectator view, another possibility is the view from within, the participant’s perspective. It is the perspective of phenomenal consciousness, of the *qualia*, of *what it feels* like to be an active sportsperson. The participant perspective is well developed in the existential phenomenology used by Kenneth Aggerholm (2015) in his book *Talent Development, Existential Philosophy and Sport* and in some of the essays in in the book on phenomenology of sport edited by Martinkova and Parry (2012).

The second alternative

The second alternative problematizes philosophy of sport as a specific discipline. It is exemplified by Graham McFee (2004) who maintains that general philosophical concepts and ideas cannot simply be transferred to sports philosophy: ‘One cannot typically find concepts or ideas “ready to hand” in *general* philosophy to apply straightforwardly to the philosophy of sport’ (McFee 2004, 15). He admits, however: ‘Of course, there may *sometimes* be such concepts or ideas in a developed state which—*mirabile dictu*—fit the bill; but we should neither expect this nor be surprised not to find it’ (McFee 2004, 15).

Later he states even more strongly that there is no place for a philosophy of sport (McFee 2013). There are some ethical, definitional and other sport-related questions but they do not justify a philosophy of sport as a study area. What we have is just general philosophical problems exemplified in sport contexts. The main point for McFee is that philosophy is one

subject, one single discipline (McFee 2013, 416). This means that philosophers should be generally informed and versed in all areas even if they specialize in one or two. And it means that sport philosophy should not be isolated from other philosophy areas and philosophy as such. Philosophy of sport should take part in the general Wittgensteinian therapeutic mission of clearing up pseudo-problems and misunderstandings.

McFee's perspective is interesting and useful, not least for connecting sport philosophy to general philosophy and for clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions. I think, however, that there is more to do, and more to develop, in the intersection between philosophy and sport than McFee's views admit.

The third alternative

A third approach is exemplified by David Papineau (2017) who in his recent book *Knowing the Score* wants to study what sports can teach us about philosophy and what philosophy can teach us about sports. He writes about his book: 'If there is a common form to the chapters, each starts with some sporting point that is of philosophical significance. A first step is to show how philosophical thinking can cast light on the sporting topic. But in nearly all cases the spotlight of illumination is then reversed. The sporting example tells us something about the philosophical issues' (Papineau 2017, 4).

I think this is an excellent idea but Papineau instead focuses too much on the psychology of fast reactions in sport in the first chapter and in the remaining chapters tells us too little about philosophical perspectives and their implications. But I applaud the idea that philosophy of sport should use philosophical theories and perspectives and test them on sport. Not only in sport ethics can sport be a laboratory, as argued but McFee. I think there is much more to do in ontology, epistemology, philosophy of mind/body and philosophy of action. This third approach is maybe not a philosophy of sport but a 'philosophy AND sport' where philosophical problems such as skill and knowledge, consciousness and movement, mind and body, fairness and perfection, are tested and illuminated by sporting phenomena. It is an undertaking open to analytical as well as phenomenological perspectives, and to bridging the gap between British-American and Continental approaches. A good example is the Dreyfus-Searle debate on consciousness and skillful coping where both agree that we need descriptive phenomenological content as well as conceptual analyses. While Searle starts with description and focuses most on analysis Dreyfus wants it the other way around. But they are on the same debate platform, which is something to which we should aspire.

Conclusion

My goal in this article has not been to present a continuous and coherent interpretation of the historical development of sport philosophy but rather to identify some trends and tenets, some twists and turns, some possibilities and options. The title of this article suggested a possible development going from a 'philosophy of sport' to a diversity of different 'philosophies of sports'. As we have seen this has to some extent been confirmed. There is a main general trend running from pre-paradigmatic efforts in the 1960s and earlier, through a period of paradigmatic agreement in the 1970s to the 1990s, and towards multi-paradigmatic diversity during the last couple of decades.

There is change but also some continuity, especially represented by analytical approaches trying to identify the essence of sport (understood as a unitary phenomenon). We found this continuity in the thematic similarity in the sport philosophy books by Gerber/Morgan and Hardman/Jones as well as in the attempt to identify the essence of sport in the recent monograph by Connor. Continuity is maybe best exemplified in the long and continuous debates around such key theoretical concepts as 'formalism', 'internalism', 'conventionalism', 'objectivism' and 'relativism'. They all try to identify and carve out something of the essence of sport, a project started by Suits and other early pioneers.

In contrast to the continuous debate around the essence of sport I pointed to contrafactual possibilities represented by the example of Hans Lenk. Sport philosophy could have been more open to grand theories from various academic fields right from the start in 1972. The opening up for greater diversity came later, exemplified in the program for the new journal *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* (2007). During the last couple of decades we have seen an increasing diversity of philosophical methods and approaches and a narrowing as well as a widening of the object of study. The new development represented a geographical and cultural expansion to new countries and continents and to a better gender balance. I think the sport philosophy field thus has become much richer, more open and diverse.

In conclusion I guess we will have to live with, and welcome, three typical approaches in the future, a) the traditional philosophy of sport looking for the essence of sport, b) philosophies of specific sports, like the philosophy of football or philosophy of climbing, c) philosophy of *homo movens*, focusing on bodymind, skill, movement, knowledge, etc. as well as ethics and value problems across a wide panorama of action fields.

It seems that there are still many old problems to solve, and many new problems to develop and define, as sport philosophy in the narrow, as well in the broad, sense has reached maturity.

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