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What is Sport (Philosophically Speaking)?[1]

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Abstract:
This paper proposes an analysis of *sport* from an analytic-philosophical point-of-view. The authors argue that although a definition in the traditional sense (*per genus proximum* and *differentiam specificam*) – conceived as analytic, synthetic, or regulative – is rather impossible, a conceptual description, using some key intuitions, can be achieved. These intuitions are suggested by taking into account phenomena such as physical culture and its properties, Olympic games and their regulations, or the popularity of sport as perceived by direct spectators and indirect observers, particularly on television. Various examples suggest that sport is a complex phenomenon, generally consisting of the actions of people, subordinated to rules that govern how sport actors behave. Hence, a normative aspect of sport must be taken into account in any conceptual analysis of *sport*. If the traditional manner for defining a concept is considered unavailable, then Wittgenstein's strategy of analysis, via the notion of *family resemblance*, is recommended. The authors show that this can also be applied to the concept of *sport*. After mentioning Renford Bambrough's interpretation of Wittgenstein, the authors propose to treat the name *sport* as referring to a mereological collection of parts, unified by several factors and forming a family resemblance.
Keywords: definition, family resemblance, rules, Wittgenstein.

1. Introduction

The philosophical question of *What is sport?* is a complex one and as such, requires a complex answer. This article attempts to provide a coherent answer based on analytic philosophy and on the understanding that such linguistic analysis is object-oriented. We begin by presenting certain observations in line with "ordinary" widespread opinions about sport. We then attempt to explain the philosophical aspects of this question. In the following stage, we present a number of popular, as well as philosophical, definitions of the term *sport*, as seen in a range of dictionaries and encyclopedias. This leads to a general problem of what it means to define something. We report on various descriptions of the concept of definition and its species. The next section applies these settings to the concept of sport, but we do not limit our remarks only to formulations that pretend to be definitions. We consider characterizations of sport as physical culture, leisure and entertainment, competitiveness and rivalry, and something related to rules in a kind. In general, while we claim that an essentialist definition of sport is not possible, we consider professionalism[2] to be a key feature in contemporary sport. Finally, although sport cannot simply be defined through traditional means, we believe that some paradigmatic cases of sport do exist – thereby claiming that later Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and related views can be applied to the analysis of sport.

2. Certain intuitions regarding sport

On a day-to-day basis, the question of *What is sport?* probably does not arise. In some cases, people may ask if something is still considered sport, such as after observing an exceptionally brutal boxing match, inadmissible cases of drug-induced winning, or huge amounts of money being paid for transferring players from one club to another. Similarly, such a question may arise, for example, when players from the US National Basketball Association (NBA) were allowed to play in the Olympic Games, and thus violating the amateur code. Such questions assume that those who are asking them have some knowledge about sport and their related issues. This is not limited to sport, but can also be seen in the fields of art, literature, music, politics, science, and religion.

When 400 million people watch televised *El Classico* football matches between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, suffice it so say that this sport is highly popular around the world. As such, sociologists have every reason to investigate sport as an important social phenomenon – especially as it has multiple relations with other social elements, such as economics, politics, law, morality, and art. Moreover, almost everybody in today's world has a connection to sport – direct or at least indirect. Even the statement, *Thankfully, the streets will be empty tonight, as everyone will be home watching the Super Bowl final*, conveys that the speaker has at least some knowledge pertaining to American football. Perhaps some intellectuals are still convinced that sport is associated with lesser values than true spiritual ones, and as such should be disregarded as they are not worthy of proper discourse and debates in elite societies. Indeed, the philosophy of sport is often considered *a contradictio in adiecto*, undeserving of serious attention. That being said, a significant change has been seen in such attitudes over the past years.

The specific question of *What is sport?* however, is of more general characteristics. In this paper, we will refer to this question using the bold capital letter **Q**. While we have no general criteria for defining what a philosophical question is, we rely on related intuition. Consequently, the question **Q** may function as a fragment of philosophy. If we ask *What is time? What is space*?, *What is number?*, *What is morality?*, or *What is law?*, etc., we can refer to a theory, for instance, what is time (space) via classical (relativistic) physics (physical theory) in order to conduct a philosophical discussion about the nature of time (space, number) since, let say Pythagoreans and Aristotle to Einstein and Hilbert (unlike such discussion on morality or law, where less established views and theories are likely to be applied). When discussing philosophical issues regarding time, space, or numbers, for example, referring to physical and mathematical theories is reasonable –

despite the claims of certain philosophers who maintain that philosophy is independent of (e.g., Wittgenstein) and even prior to science. The topic of sport is no exception, as it too can be a subject of philosophical explorations. While it would be an exaggeration to say that we have a theory regarding sport, we have vast accumulated knowledge of the field, based on years of practical and theoretical experience. Thus, in this paper, we attempt to conduct in-depth analysis of **Q** and certain related answers based on common and specialized knowledge regarding sportive phenomena.

3. Defining the term *sport*

The attempt to address and answer **Q** can be embedded in field of philosophy of sport, which is a relatively new sub-field of philosophy. The popular 1967 *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (edited by Paul Edwards and published by Collier Macmillan) has no entry for the term *sport*. In 1998, a short paper entitled "Sport, Philosophy of" by Drew Hyland is included in 9th version of *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (edited by William Craig). The much later 2020 publication of *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (see Devine & Lopez Frias, 2020) offers a comprehensive survey of sports. In addition to introductory historical remarks and the place of sport in culture, the authors discuss "What is sport?" (i.e., the theories of formalism, conventionalism, and broad internalism [interpretivism]) and "Topics in the philosophy of sport" (i.e., Sportsmanship; cheating; performance enhancement; violent and dangerous sport; sex, gender, and race; fans and spectators; disability sport; and the aesthetics of sport). While not all of these topics could be classified as philosophical, it is important for us that the question **Q** became explicitly qualified as philosophical as well as formalism, conventionalism, and interpretivism as the main answers to it.

The simplest way to answer **Q** consists in providing a definition. The concept of definition was a core aspect of traditional logic and its teaching. Let us start with the following quotation (Marciszewski, 1981: 86):

> To define an expression is to introduce it into a language by specifying its meaning or its use in terms of those expressions which are already available in the language in question. This formulation covers all varieties of definitions with the exception of the so-called axiomatic and ostensive definitions. Definitions in a more restrictive sense are singled out by calling them normal. [...]. A definition is said to be *normal* if it enables us to eliminate a newly introduced expressions by replacing it with older ones, in any sentence of the given language.

As such, a normal definition could fall under the following scheme:

> **(*)** $\boldsymbol{A} =^{\mathbf{df}} \boldsymbol{B}$,
> where *A* is the definiendum (i.e., the term that is being defined); *B* is the definiens (i.e., the expression used for defining), and $=^{df}$ is the symbol that indicates that any (normal) definition functions as an equality. This equality can concern either meanings or scopes (extensions) of *A* and *B*, with the former account being stronger than the latter, because two synonymous (co-intensional) expressions are co-extensional, but not vice versa (we omit examples). To be correct, a definition must comply with certain conditions, the most important errors being: (1) *idem per idem* (the definiens is more or less equivalent to the definiendum); (2) *ignotum per ignotum* (unknown by unknown); (3) *crculus viciosus* (circularity consisting of coming back to the definiendum after some steps of defining); (4) operating with ambiguities, unclarities, etc.; and (5) If $A \subset B$, then by referring to extensions, we claim that the definition is too broad (i.e., the definiendum is a strong subset of the definiens); if $A \supset B$, then the definition is too narrow (i.e., the definiens is a strong subset of the definiendum).

Next, the scheme

> (**) $A =^{df} CD$
> represents the so-called classical definition, whereby *C* expresses the *genus proximum*, but *D* is the *differentia specifica*. For instance, *a square is a rectangle which has all congruent sides* (all sides are of the same length)". In this example, being a *rectangle* constitutes the genus proximum, but *congruity* functions as the differentia specifica. Classical definitions are central in Aristolelian logic, justifying the following rule: *definitio fiat per genus proximum et differentiam specificam* (a definition is formed by the narrowest species and the specific difference). However, this assumes an ontology in which we have a regular map of categories (i.e., a scheme of the reality in which every category occupies a distinguished place in the world). While Aristotle believed that the universe is as such, more contemporary views claim that there is no universal (global) scheme of species (genera) that is organized by specific differences. We can eventually point out local universes that fall under this model, such as a mathematical reality (particularly a geometrical one) or that which occurs in natural sciences, biology for example (Linneus' renowned classification of vegetables and animals). Yet Aristotle's approach to definitions is favored by those who seek the essence of phenomena.

A range of normal definitions exits, yet in this paper, we mention two (see Robinson 1950; Ajdukiewicz 1965, for a more detailed account): (I) real vs. nominal definitions; and (II) analytic (reportive), regulative, and synthetic (stipulative) definitions.

Ad (I): A definition is nominal if it concerns a word (for simplicity, we limit our remarks to definitions of terms being common names and adjectives); a definition is real if it refers to entities. A dictionary from one language (e.g., English) to another (e.g., Hebrew) can be viewed as a collection of nominal definitions of English words (as definienda) into Hebrew phrases as definiensa. On the other hand, our example of defining a rectangle provides an example of a real definition. Yet this explanation shows that the distinction (I) is extremely relative, as most (or even all) nominal definitions can be transformed into real definitions and vice versa. Qualifying a definition as nominal (real) can depend on the situation – for instance if we learn Hebrew in English (or vice versa), we are interested in words, yet if we are doing geometry, we are looking at objects.

Ad (II): If a definition explains the meaning of a word as it functions in a given language, it is *analytic*. For instance, one meaning of the term *duty* (in English) refers to what one is obliged to do by a normative system. On the other hand, if we say that water has the chemical code H_2O, we use a stipulation proposed (we cannot identify the author) in chemistry as a science. Clearly, stipulations become analytic definitions after some time. Lawyers very frequently use *regulative definitions*: by proposing to identify *adults* as persons of at least 18 years of age, they regulate the meaning of the term *adult*. Although *analytic definitions* follow linguistic regularities, the two other types of definitions (i.e., synthetic and regulative), have a more conventional characteristic. On the other hand, there is usually something substantial behind conventions, as, for example, we expect adults to deliberately govern their actions. Regulative definitions are frequently used in the case of vague terms, which may be reasonable, as in the case of the term *adult*, but may be completely counter-productive in other cases, such as when attempting to create a regulative definition for the term *bald*, which would seem nonsensical.

The above account of definitions, albeit a brief and simplified one, immediately highlights certain issues relating to **Q** and its possible answers. Assume that one is looking for a definition of *sport* falling under the scheme (*). Clearly, it cannot be of the type (**) since there is no categorial scheme in which sport could be located by *genus proximum* and *differentiam specificam*. Furthermore, a real definition is expected rather than a nominal one, since this issue concerns real

phenomena, in contrast to linguistic customs. Furthermore, people do not want a stipulation, but rather are interested in an analytic or regulative definition, especially as for the term *sport*, the latter is changeable and vague. Even these very elementary observations show that formulating a "good" definition for the term *sport* is problematic. Although at first glance everything could be defined, so-called, this does not mean that such a definition will be satisfactory.

This becomes fairly clear when looking at the authoritative source, i.e., *The Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage* regarding the term *sport*, which includes amusement, fun, not seriously, cricket, football, hockey, rugby, tennis, activities performed outdoors, exercises, and involving a risk of losing. This is quite a complex collection, is it not? This variety is comprised of a range of different elements, such as disciplines of sport (e.g., cricket), feelings or attitudes (e.g., amusement), activities (e.g., exercises located outdoors), and even gambling (with chance of losing). However, not all of these definitions are always suitable, as sport can be fun or competitive, pleasant or painful, indoors or outdoors, etc. As such, the definition provided in *Fowler's Dictionary* does not suit the (*) definition scheme, nor do we have a way for checking its adequacy (not too wide and not to narrow).

Yet definitions can also be understood in a less technical sense, with explanations or characterizations of words that do not meet the requirements of correctness relating to the scheme (*). This can be seen not only in day-to-day life, but also in the humanities and social sciences. Thus, the statement, "Define sport by a formula falling under (*)" is frequently replaced by the following weaker postulate, "Show what is sport by ostension or mention a characteristic or specific property of sport, even if this feature does not give a necessary and/or sufficient condition of the application of the concept in question." The ostensive definition was mentioned above in the quotation by Witold Marciszewski. In general, such a definition consists of pointing at an object while saying "It is *A*". For instance, point at a red apple and say, "The color of this apple is red."

This procedure can be used to exemplify adjectives referring to sensory qualities, as with some philosophical approaches to empirical science. Yet the problem is that in order to use ostensions effectively, a concrete ostensive specification must assume that some general terms are already known, in our example, *color* and *apple*. This leads to the problem of explaining general terms via ostension. The term *sport* is a good example. Let us think of a father taking his son to see a soccer match. On the way to the stadium he says, "We are going to watch a soccer game." If the child has never previously attended such a game, then something more is required for him to understand what happens on the field. Simply hearing the words, "a soccer match" will not suffice. Even actually watching the game without further explanations will only result in a partial understanding of the objectives and rules of the game.

4. Characterizations of sport by specific properties

Let us try to offer some possible characterizations of *sport*, without claiming that these serve as definitions in the strict sense of the word (nor do we claim to provide an exhaustive list). Indeed, we may sometimes use the term *quasi-definition*. The first idea is to identify sport with **physical culture**. This understanding dates back to ancient times, with Cicero's meaning of *culture* relating to the cultivation of certain values. While the Greeks maintained, *Νοῦς ὑγιὴς ἐν σώματι ὑγιεῖ* (a sound mind in a sound body), the Latin phrase, *mens sana in sano corpore* (formulated by Roman poet Juvenalis), became even more well-known. However, this definition is inadequate in the contemporary world. While it may be eventually applied to mass, recreative sports or sports exercises in schools, it does not suit competitive sports. Yet the latter is a contemporary paradigm of sport. It is this observation that determines the direction of our further considerations, as we are interested in the aforementioned paradigm of sports. There are two additional reasons against equating competitive sports and physical culture. If we seriously address these ancient maxims, they propagate and are related to two values, namely physical beauty and mental intelligence. Yet it would be difficult to consider the postures of many contemporary athletes as resulting from the cultivation of physical values. Moreover, mental (intellectual) values are not required on the part of

contemporary sports-heroes. To sum up, while competitive sports may not *always* be at odds with the beauty of the body and mind, they are often not in line with these values, yet they still remain sports. Furthermore, physical culture was and continues to be perceived as instrumental for achieving something else, for example *health* (some sports exercises may be healthier than others). As such, it is not autonomous, but rather subordinate to something else. On the other hand, contemporary competitive sports are regarded as valuable in themselves, although they are sometimes (or even often) instrumental subordinates for other tasks, such as political or economic purposes. As such, defining *sport* as physical culture is inadequate.

Instead of attempting to identify sport with physical culture, we could say that *sport* is reduced to **entertainment or amusement**, it is a manifestation of being *homo ludens* (using the title of Johan Huizinga's renowned book), deeply rooted in human nature; perhaps not so essential as *homo sapiens*, but still deserving of serious attention. Thinking of sport in this manner has numerous illustrations (also in Fowler's survey) as the adjective *sporty* is being used on some occasions, for instance: "do business in a *sporty* (risky) manner", "regarding science as *sporty* rivalry" or "collecting sexual adventures as *sporty* successes". The nouns *game* and *play* can also be seen in a range of sport-related contexts directly or indirectly, metaphorically or not. If we say that sport is a kind of entertainment, we should add the difference (not necessarily *differentia specifica*) between sport in this sense and singing or dancing, for example. However, it seems that this can only be achieved by saying that *sport* is solely *sporty entertainment* – which brings us back to our starting point (circularity should be avoided even in quasi-definitions). Yet entertainment is not the only aspect of contemporary athletes and sporty publicity – in many cases it is not even the most fundamental, as competitive sports require hard work and dedication.

The third characterization of sport relates to **rivalry aimed at success**. This approach explains the very existence of sport through the need for competition and success that is deeply rooted in human nature as (in analogy with Huizinga) *homo competitivus*. However, we can make practically the same claims (or objections, if one prefers) as in the attempt to define sport as entertainment. More specifically, sooner or later we arrive to the statement that *sport* is the *sporty rivalry* oriented toward a success. Clearly, not every sport is a rivalry and not every rivalry is a sport. We could, however, add that this rivalry is governed by specific rules, yet this would just be another way of saying that these rules are just sporty. Reverting to rivalry, we could ask what (and with whom) is the rivalry of a climber who reaches a peak that had already been conquered previously by other climbers. The same could be said about sailors alone on boats, who take the same route as many sailors before them. Saying that rivalry concerns the sportsperson himself or herself, and their own weaknesses, this would be an obvious over-simplification. As such, this definition is also unsatisfactory – even if we admit that rivalry and striving for success are closely associated with human nature.

The fourth characterization of sport relates to **rules** (the main proposals are listed above). According to *formalism*, sport is governed by written rules, according to *conventionalism* – by rules and unwritten conventions, and according to *interpretivism* (broad internalism) – by rules, conventions and intrinsic principles; the last concern, for instance, is excellence in sport. Yet this terminology seems improper, as the difference between written rules, conventions, and maxims are rather vague. Moreover, if we set aside the terminological matters for a moment, this approach perceives the essence of sport in its normativity. Thus, we arrive at the contrast between the descriptive characterizations and the normative ones of the term *sport*. This situation is similar to approaches regarding the concept of law, specifically known from legal philosophy. In particular, Kelsen's normativism places law in the normative realm, yet other types of realism (for instance, American functionalism) places it in the sociological and/or psychological sphere. Legal theorists tend to perceive such attempts to characterize law as defective, due to their one-sidedness. The following two examples depict how facts and norms can be associated with sport. The first is anecdotic, occurring when Polish television began broadcasting soccer games in the 1960s. Because private television sets were rather rare at this time, people tended to gather at a friend's home to watch the games together. Once following a forward shot that hit the goalpost, most of the audience

cried, “Och, what a pity”, but one lady remarked, “I don’t understand why you’re unhappy, it’s much more difficult to hit the goalpost than the entire gate”. Clearly, she did not understand the situation, nor was she familiar with the rules.

The second example is a more serious one. The second author of this paper visited the United States for the first time in 1989. Having played soccer in his youth on a regular junior team, he was very interested in sports, including athletics, basketball, volleyball, handball, ski jumping, and boxing. He began watching American football, yet had difficulty comprehending the rules of the game. Aware of this, he attempted to use analogies, seeking similarities between games to further understand the rules. Yet some of the mystery disappeared after learning the more normative structures of the players’ behavior. This observation is not new. Assume that we wish to investigate a primitive unknown culture. We can start with observations concerning physical moves of the members of that society, yet our knowledge of the culture in question is very limited, despite some typical, perhaps global behaviors. Next, the mental state of the investigated people should be addressed, to further enhance our knowledge of this society. While these new data are important, they are still insufficient. A comprehensive understanding of the examined society requires correlated and factual behaviors with normative patterns of action. Even if we were to employ our own normative structures to understand the subjects of our research, the results would still remain incomplete. In other words, the successful investigation of a culture is dependent on appealing to intrinsic social norms, written or conventional. The same goes for sports, that are difficult or even impossible to understand without knowledge of normative factors.

To avoid misunderstandings, the aforementioned analysis does not propose abandoning the above four attempts to characterize or quasi-define *sport*, nor does it deny that sporty phenomena are not related to these four main characteristics: physical culture, entertainment, rivalry and normative structures. We do, however, claim, that none of these features alone are sufficient for a univocal characterization of sport; on the one hand, this phenomenon shares the mentioned features with other phenomena, yet on the other hand, it also possesses other attributes, or at least similar properties. Limiting our attention to these four main characterizations, we then turn to the question of which of the four is more basic or more important than the others. Our answer, however, is *none*, not even normativity. To paraphrase Kant’s famous saying, “Sporty rules without factuality are empty, sporty facts without normative structures are blind.” This assertion additionally justifies the view whereby we should not expect a standard definition for the term *sport*. On the other hand, we should adopt Kant’s paraphrase as the starting point for further remarks, an aspect to be considered as the paradigm of sport in its contemporary understanding. To further address this issue, we relate to *professional sport* as the pattern; only by assuming that sport is a profession can we delimit the core scope of the adjective *sporty*. Yet we must then be precise of what qualifies as professional sport or sport as a profession.

Contemporary sport is a complex phenomenon with numerous dimensions, including activities of sport practitioners, sporty organizations, administrative structures, financing, and fan behaviors. This situation de-actualizes baron Pierre de Coubertin’s concept whereby true sport is and must be amateur. Hence, so called professionals, i.e., sport persons who considered sport as a means for gaining income, were excluded from the Olympic Games. Thus, sport around the 1920s was represented by a different paradigm, whereby professional boxers, for example, were not considered practitioners of sport. However, this situation radically changed at the end of the 20th century, where the borderline between amateur and professional sport became very vague. This evolution was dictated by the ever-increasing demands made on people aspiring to become successful sport persons. First, they must begin training as a young child or teenager. It requires a reconciliation of attending schools and takes a heavy financial toll of the athletes and their families. Indeed, a sponsor is often necessary to finance training and competitions. Later in life, these athletes cannot usually work at a regular job while training and competing. Without even addressing institutional aspects (such as clubs, sport associations, and the sports industry), it is clear that sports must be professionalized. In fact, the situation in which sports people are paid for their sporty work appears to be more morally fair than artificial amateurship. This may have been particularly visible

in former communist countries in which sports persons were fictively appointed as coal miners or soldiers in order to maintain their artificial amateur status. One could perhaps say that this situation, enforced by the expectations of fans, degenerates the concept of sport as a critically independent activity, free of any financial aspects. Yet while this may be inconsistent with the traditional view (although there are serious doubts whether such an ideal was ever realized), sport serving as an element of mass culture has created a new climate. Moreover, there is no rational reason as to why profits from sports are at odds with the proper hierarchy of moral or social values. In other words, the view whereby athletes should gratuitously perform their activities is not realistic or justified. Thus, recognizing sport as a profession should be taken as an official standpoint.

Thus, if we say that sport is a profession, we have a simple way to determine the scope of the term *sport* by mentioning disciplines. Yet this does not provide us with a definition, and some additional steps are required. For example, lists of disciplines, even if they change over the time. An appeal to social practice is helpful, because, so to speak, practice "knows what it is doing". More seriously and using a sociological parlance, sport should be considered an element of social structure, a definite type of social labor. This approach enables a rational account of the organization of sport and its financing. Thus, the social characteristic of sport comprises its material structure. On the other hand, perceiving sport by people (sport publicity in particular) is principally independent of its material basis. Athletes and their achievements are on the target of social consciousness, except for certain pathological facts, such as corruption or crimes. As such, we could say that athletes and their achievements are the final product of the entire professional-organizational sport mechanism; sport in its phenomenal manifestation. And sport in this understanding has additional aspects, which supervene on its material basis.

The first such aspect is normative. A sporty game is highly standardized and organized through conventional rules, indispensable for understanding what is going on. People who do not understand what is considered a penalty, fault, corner, offside, or shot cannot understand soccer as a game – the same situation concerns other games. The next aspect of sport is moral, or governed by moral rules, such as the concept of fair play, which can be addressed from different axes or various pathologies, such as administering inadmissible chemical substances. Furthermore, sport can be evaluated from the aesthetic point-of-view – not merely the attractiveness of the athletes, but also the aesthetic characteristics of their performance (in ski jumping, figure skating or artistic gymnastic, for example). Sport is also a spectacle, often very dramatic, associated with the great emotions of both the players and the spectators. This aspect is further strengthened by the fact that the final result is unknown. Technically speaking, sport is a game without a dictatorship strategy, even if a particular game has a favorite. It is not true that sport only appeals to lower levels of human consciousness; various political and national aspects may also be at play here, as seen in the 2022 Olympic Games in Beijing and the Russian-Ukrainian War. While sporty games create occasions for patriotic celebration, they also result in chauvinistic attitudes and behavior, intolerance, xenophobia, and so on. On the other hand, sport teaches just and positive attitudes, contributing to something positive, such as the role of African American athletes in the emancipation of Black people in the United States. To sum up, the following aspects of sport should be addressed when attempting to characterize the term *sport*: professional, organizational, normative (rules of the game, also legal), moral (ethical principles), aesthetic (feelings of special beauty) cultural, political, consisting of rivalry, and recreational (we do not claim that this list is complete). As such, sport is a complex integrity of a variety of aspects. More generally, two types of aspects can be distinguished: factual and normative (in the broad sense of the word). This complexity calls for further philosophical examination.

5. Wittgenstein on language-games and family resemblance[3]

Someone says to me, "Show the children a game." I teach them gambling with dice, and the other says, "I didn't mean that sort of game". In that case, must he have had the exclusion of the game with dice before his mind when he gave me the order? (PI, 33 n.)

Considering the problem of using a classical definition, or even a quasi-definition, to capture the meaning of sport, we would like to suggest a Wittgensteinian approach as an alternative model, namely utilizing Wittgenstein's remarks about the concept of game as a paradigm. To clarify the technical notion of *family resemblance* (*Familienähnlichkeit*), we shall begin with Wittgenstein's celebrated example of *number* (PI, §67):

> …Why do we call something a "number"? Well, perhaps because it has a – direct – affinity with several things that have hitherto been called "number"; and this can be said to give it an indirect affinity with other things that we also call "numbers". And we extend our concept of number, as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread resides not in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.
> But if someone wanted to say, "So there is something common to all these constructions – namely, the disjunction of all their common properties" – I'd reply: Now you are only playing with a word. One might as well say, "There is Something that runs through the whole thread – namely, the continuous overlapping of these fibres".

Thus, the thread metaphor elucidates the anti-essentialist view upon which the *family resemblance* notion is based. As opposed to what Graham McFee (1992: 16-21) characterizes as the "exact fit" of a definition, capturing the essence of (or that which is common to) all things that fall under a given concept (i.e., "that one fibre runs through its whole length"). Wittgenstein proposes the family resemblance notion, where the unifying strength stems from what McFee (2019: 17) refers to as "an alternative version of 'unity-in-difference'" (i.e., "the overlapping of many fibers"). In other words, there may be similarities between cases that form a family without there being one essence that is common to all (cf. McFee, 2019: 17, for a vivid graphic illustration). As in the metaphor of the overlapping fibers, the similarities are not transitive: A first fiber can overlap with a second one, and the second may overlap with a third one; yet this does not imply that the first overlap with the third. Likewise, Wittgenstein says (PI, §67):

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family – build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, and so forth – overlap and criss-cross in the same way. – And I shall say: 'games' form a family.
> And likewise the kinds of number, for example, form a family.

However, before harnessing the implications of the earlier section of this paper to explain *sport* as a family resemblance concept, a note of caution is in order. In fact, perceiving the last quotation from *Philosophical Investigations* as promoting a *thesis* of family resemblance concepts may be considered by some as erroneous (e.g., McFee, 2019).

6. Bambrough's interpretation of Wittgenstein

We are taking Renford Bambrough's account as one plausible reading of Wittgenstein, given its widespread adoption by others, and its direct connection to other debates (for instance, realism/nominalism) – that is addressed in the remainder of this section. This view appears in Bambrough (1960) as well as Bambrough (1984). The former opens with the bold statement that Wittgenstein has *solved* "the problem of universals." The scholarly evidence for what Bambrough calls "the essence of Wittgenstein's solution" is drawn from *The Blue and Brown Books* and *The Philosophical Investigations*. Moreover, Bambrough (1960: 211) points to the well-known claim, whereby "[t]here is a clear parallel between what Wittgenstein says about games and what he says about reading, expecting, languages, numbers, propositions," i.e., relating games and family resemblances to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and the theory of universals. But of outmost

importance here is that "in all these cases we have the idea that there is a common element or ingredient, and Wittgenstein shows us that there is no such ingredient or element. The instances that fall under each of these concepts *form a family*" (Bambrough, 1960: 211). It is interesting to observe that a similar solution is suggested in the Tractarian ontology in the context of the unity of a state of affairs (i.e., atomic fact). While the objects in the *Tractaus* are constituents of states of affairs, there is no additional element (component) in the state of affairs that relates the objects together. Wittgenstein stresses that, "In a state of affairs objects fit one another like the links of a chain" (TLP 2.03). This point is also stressed in Wittgenstein's comments to Charles Kay Ogden regarding the English translation of the *Tractatus* (Wittgenstein, 1973: 23):

> Here instead of "hang one on another" it should be "hang one in another" as the links of a chain *do*! The meaning is *that there isn't anything third* that connects the links but that the links *themselves* make connexion with one another. So if "in" in this place is English please put it there. If one would hang *on* the other they might also be glued together.

As such, there is no relation that is a component of the state of affairs and that relates or "glues" the objects together (Berber, 2011: 427-430). Likewise, there is no common element or ingredient that is common to all things that fall under the *family resemblance* concept.

As Bambrough puts it, Wittgenstein's remarks do not strive to convey a theory for settling the nominalism vs. realism debate. In fact, Bambrough eloquently makes this point when he writes that the kernel of his essay is to argue that "[Wittgenstein's] remarks can be paraphrased into a doctrine which can be set out in general terms and can be related to the traditional theories, and which can then be shown to deserve to supersede the traditional theories" (Bambrough, 1960: 212). Thus, in PI §66, Wittgenstein says:

> Consider, for example, the activities that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic games, and so on. What is common to them all? – Don't say: "They *must* have something in common, or they would not be called 'games' " – but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. – For if you look at them, you won't see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! Look for example, at board-games, with their various affinities. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. – Are they all '*entertaining*'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball-games, there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck, and the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of singing and dancing games; here we have the element of entertainment, but how many other characteristics features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way, can see how similarities crop up and disappear.

And the upshot of these considerations is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small.

The aforementioned features have, in one way or another, been subsequently offered in the philosophical sport literature for defining games; perhaps the most notable are the attempts of prominent figures such as Johan Huizinga (1944), Roger Caillois (1958), Paul Weiss (1969), Bernard Suits (2014), and Randolph Feezell (2006). Yet there is certainly no consensus, as Wittgenstein envisaged, regarding a feature that may be common in all instances.

In relation to other readings of Wittgenstein's account of games, Bambrough (1960: 215) argues against some of them, the main one being: “It is correct, though not at all enlightening, to say that what games have in common is their being games.” Although agreeing, of course, about its correctness, Bambrough (1960: 215) refuses to accept that it is unenlightening: “the platitude that all games have in common that they *are* games is denied by the nominalist, who says that all games have nothing in common except that they are *called* games.” Likewise, the realist also shares the misunderstanding regarding the value of what is rightly supposed to be shared by games. Namely, when the realist “is provoked by the nominalist’s claim that all games have nothing in common except that they are called games, and rightly wishes to insist that games have something more in common than simply that they are called games, he feels that he must look for something that games have in common apart from *being* games” (Bambrough, 1960: 215). Yet although this feeling might be perceived as rather natural, Bambrough stresses that it is incorrect. In other words, what is needed to confront the nominalist’s position whereby the only thing that games have in common is their *being called* games is in fact saying that they *are* games.

As Bambrough diligently argues, this philosophical truth, namely “that what games have in common is that they are games” is partially recognized by *both* the nominalist and the realist. In the case of the nominalist, this is manifested “by rejecting the realist's talk of transcendent, immanent or subsistent forms or universals” (Bambrough, 1960: 216). Yet the nominalist is wrong in insisting that their being *called* games is the only thing that they have in common. On the other hand, the aforementioned philosophical truth is seen as partially recognized by the realist, that is “by his hostility to the nominalist’s insistence that games have nothing in common except that they are called games” (Bambrough, 1960: 217). That being said, considering “transcendent, immanent or subsistent forms or universals” manifests where he goes wrong.

Finally, Wittgenstein’s solution is brought to light by Bambrough (1960: 218) as follows:

> Wittgenstein thus denies at one and the same time the nominalist’s claim that games have nothing in common except that they are called games and the realist’s claim that games have something in common other than they are games. He asserts at one at the same time the realist’s claim that there is an objective justification for the application of the word “game” to games and the nominalist’s claim that there is no element that is common to all games. And he is able to do all this because he denies the joint claim of the nominalist and the realist that there cannot be an objective justification for the application of the word “game” to games unless there is an element that is common to all games (*universalia in rebus*) or common relation that all games bear to something that is not a game (*universalia ante res*).

For the purpose of this paper, the crucial issue is the *objective justification* for using general names. As noted by Bambrough (1960: 219), “In teaching the use of a general word we may and must refer to characteristics of the objects to which it applies, and of the objects to which it does not apply, and indicate which of these characteristics count for the application of the word and which count against it.” In particular, the objectivity of the similarities and differences underlies any genuine classification of objects within the extension of genuinely general name. Although there is a clear distinction between genuine classifications of objects, as opposed to an arbitrary system of names, Bambrough (1960: 221) clarifies that, “In no case will it appear that we must choose between rival systems of genuine classification of a set of objects in such a sense that one of them is to be recognized as *the* classification for all purposes.” Thus, we may conclude with Bambrough (1960: 222), whereby on the one hand, “The nominalist is so impressed by the infinite diversity of possible classifications that he is blinded to their objectivity,” while on the other hand, “The realist is so impressed by the objectivity of all genuine classifications that he underestimates their diversity” (Bambrough, 1960: 222).

7. Bambrough's interpretation of Wittgenstein revisited

As noted at the outset of the previous section, this position concerning the novel solution to the problem of universals is readdressed two decades later by Bambrough (1984: 201):

> Suppose a philosopher were to say: 'I believe that Wittgenstein solved what is known as "the problem of universals", and I would say of his solution, as Hume said of Berkeley's treatment of the same topic, that it is "one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters".

If you recall, these are the very same words in which Bambrough (1960: 217) opens his earlier paper. As mentioned above, Wittgenstein's idea is not supposed to be a continuation or development of nominalism or of realism, but rather a new alternative that has not yet been contemplated. This problem of continuity in philosophy is emphasized by Bambrough (1984: 206):

> We had also heard that there had been a revolution in philosophy, and those of us who had some acquaintance with the philosophers of the ages before the revolution were disturbed about the continuity of the very notion of philosophy, and about the question, 'If all this *is* so new, if everything has changed since 1904, or 1933, what is the relationship between what is being said now and what went on before which allows what is being said now to count as a *corrective* of what was done before? If it is *not* a philosophy but only "an heir of the subject that used to be called philosophy", how is it that we are supposed to be learning how misguided people have been in the past history of what we do call philosophy?'

Bambrough's answer to the issue of continuity can also serve as the answer to those who criticized him – both "well known centers of Wittgensteinianism" and "well known centers of anti-Wittgensteinianism" (Bambrough, 1984: 201). According to the former Wittgenstein "held no opinions in philosophy: he did not put forward any philosophical propositions, he did not state or deny any theories, he could not be summarized or generalized, he offered descriptions but no explanations." According to the latter it is a "gross misattribution of a doctrine. The doctrine, whatever its demerits, is one that the critic cannot find in the master's writings" (Bambrough, 1984: 202).

The answer to both groups of critics is given by addressing Wittgenstein as well as John Wisdom. Thus, Bambrough (1984: 208) says:

> I suggested that it was then time, and I think it is still opportune, for efforts to be made to formulate what we have learnt from Wittgenstein and from Wisdom in terms which may make other followers and acceptors of their insights accuse us of disregarding or forgetting what they have said. This is the risk that I was consciously taking in the offending paper on universals, and that is why I was not surprised that there was a fuss.

And, indeed, formulating what is *learned* from Wittgenstein in this context is precisely the purpose of this section of the paper. Addressing his earlier paper, Bambrough points to what both Wisdom and Wittgenstein had identified in relation to the problem of universals (Bambrough, 1984: 211):

> …that if your mind is mastered by the model of the common element, if you are a slave to that picture of what *must* constitute the unity of a kind, and you look fairly and squarely at chairs or at games, you will find that there is no *interesting* element, there is no interesting *unity* of the kind that you are seeking. If you insist on saying how these things are united, in a single sentence or formula, all you will do is to repeat that they *are* related in the ways in which they *are* related as unity.

Importantly, Babmrough (1984: 211) then adds:

> We all know, until Wittgenstein's way of putting it loosens our grip on it, that chairs *are* related in ways that justify us in calling them *all* (and nothing else) chairs. Wittgenstein is drawing our attention to the character of that unity when he says that *there is no such unity*; or rather, when he says something which our preconceptions may dispose us to take as amounting to saying that there is no such unity. He says that they have *nothing* in common; but to say that they have nothing in common is ordinarily to say that they are not related in any way that would justify us in applying to them the same general term and recognizing it as a term of our language. He surely did not mean to suggest that they were unrelated, but rather to show us something about *how* they were related.
> Furthermore, Bambrough (1984: 211-212) draws our attention to Robert Newell's surprising insight that "the expression 'in common' – 'having something in common' – is itself a family resemblances expression; that there are innumerable ways in which things may qualify to be called things in common."

Regarding the question of continuity, Bambrough (1984: 212) then says:

> The apparent shape of the question as we had inherited it led us to seek what is common, on an over-simple model of what is common, as what unites the instances. But what does unite them is *whatever* confers the community of the instances as instances of a kind, even if it is of such a nature that it is reasonable for Wittgenstein on some occasions to say they have *nothing* in common.

Thus, we are now in a position to present the response to the above-mentioned criticism against Bambrough. Considering the critic who represents the anti-Wittgensteinian camp, Bambrough's answer takes the form of a conversational implicature. As such, it could be reasonably asked, "'If Wittgenstein said this, where did he say it? Where is the chapter and where is the verse?' But one use of the words 'Wittgenstein said' is to draw attention to the import or upshot of something that he said, without using the words that he used in saying it" (Bambrough, 1984: 214). To use the Tractarian distinction between what can be clearly said and what can only be shown, we can nevertheless *attempt* to put into words what is only supposed to be shown (cf. Berber [2007] in trying to do so with logical terms). In a nutshell, this is also the response to the Wittgensteinian camp's allegations. Thus Bambrough (1984: 210) asks:

> When the critics of my paper about universals pointed out that I was attributing to Wittgenstein at least the aspiration to solve a problem, to defend a theory, why couldn't I reply – why shouldn't I now reply – that they were behaving in a most un-Wittgensteinian, un-Wisdomite manner? They were taking over from Wittgenstein *forms of words*. They were fulfilling his prediction that he would 'sow a jargon'. What I was trying to convey to some to whom it had not been conveyed by repeating the jargon something of what had been achieved by the author of the jargon.

To see this, Bambrough (1984: 208) asks us to consider a quote taken from Wisdom's memorial article on Wittgenstein in *Mind* from 1952. Wisdom says that if he must capture in a single sentence what he finds to be Wittgenstein's most significant contribution to philosophy, it would be his question, "*Can you play chess without the queen?*" Clearly, the question does not mean much without proper acquaintance with Wittgenstein's work. Yet Bambrough (1984: 209) justly asks, "Is there here, as Wisdom was sometimes inclined to say, a question without an answer, or, as I was often inclined to reply, not a question without an answer, but a question without an answer in the form 'yes', 'no', 'of course', 'of course not'?" In other words, there is something that is above and

beyond two simple answers. Consider, for example, the following variant of McFee's (2019: 20-21) version of Wisdom's story. Imagine, I am playing a game of chess with my younger son. If I give him a queen advantage (removing my queen to give him a lead) and he wins – this would manifest a positive answer to Wittgenstein's question. Namely, playing chess without a queen is feasible. Yet on the other hand, imagine I receive a queen advantage from the Norwegian Chess Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen. Even if I somehow manage to win, this would not be registered as a viable win, as playing without a queen in a world chess championship is prohibited by the rules of the tournament. As such, this manifests the so-called *occasion-sensitivity* of understanding.

The philosophical importance of Wittgenstein's question is thus spelled out by Bambrough (1984: 209-210) as follows:

> The effect of the debate between the two answers, the two simple answers, was to contribute to a grasp of the ramifications of removing the queen from the chessboard, the effects on the powers of the other pieces and on the moves. To have acquired that understanding is to be no longer puzzled by the question, is in other words (this is one permissible, legitimate, *correct* way of putting it) to have learnt the answer to the question. All this could be said about a great many other concepts, and this is what Wisdom had in mind in choosing that question about chess as the summary of Wittgenstein's achievement in philosophy. Other concepts to which a similar oblique procedure could be applied, and from which it would breed similar fruit, would be concepts of question and answer and proof and examination and explanation and description and theory and thesis and opinion and problem.

Within the scope of this paper, we cannot delve deeper into the controversy between rival interpretations of whether Wittgenstein was a sceptic or was trying to promote a genuine explanation of the *family resemblance* notion. Nevertheless, Bambrough supplies a solid scholarly point-of-view for applying Wittgenstein's solution to our problem of defining *sport*. Yet before we reembark on this quest, we would like to mention additional support to our line of thought, provided by Severin Schroeder in his addressing of the logic of the *family resemblance* notion (2006: 144):

> The crucial point of a family resemblance concept, as described by Wittgenstein, is that classification under it is based on a sub-classification that is logically prior. If you know that chess and draughts are games, you will recognize backgammon as something of the same kind: a board-game, and therefore clearly a game. Is there a set of properties that board-games have in common with all other games and only with games? We don't know of such as set of properties. And even if it exists, it is irrelevant, as we don't rely on it for our applications of the word 'game'.

In particular, tying up our earlier discussion concerning definitions, Schroeder emphasizes that this sub-classification, as with *games*, is clearly manifested in *art*. Thus, Schroeder (2006: 144-145) says:

> Beethoven's opus 111, for instance, is a most impressive piece of music, and music is one of the fine arts, so opus 111 is a work of art. And similarly for specimens of other art forms. The question, however, as to whether music, architecture, poetry and the rest can be defined *per genus et differentiam* is purely academic and irrelevant to our practice of calling them all 'arts', which stands in no need of such a definition. Each art bears obvious resemblances to some other art (poetry and drama both involve skillful use of language; drama and music are both performance arts; non-abstract painting and drama are both forms of visual representation, and so on); that is enough to explain the use of the same word 'art' (or to make it more than a coincidence as in the case of homonyms, like 'bank').

8. What is sport – Once again

We now wish to return to the initial question of this paper, addressing the common properties of sport once again, while examining our assumption that *sport*, as with *art*, is a family resemblance concept, and consequently suggesting an explanation of the term *sport* (or perhaps, the concept of *sport*, if you like). Our description here might be helped by reiterating Wittgenstein's game example, addressed in PI §100:

> "Still, it isn't a game at all, if there is some vagueness *in the rules*." But is it really not a game, then? – "Well, perhaps you'll call it a game, but at any rate it isn't a perfect game."

This means: then it has been contaminated, and what I am interested in now is what it was that was contaminated. – But I want to say: we misunderstood the role played by the ideal in our language. That is to say: we too would call it a game, only we are dazzled by the ideal, and therefore fail to see the actual application of the word "game" clearly.

Wittgenstein stresses the *ideal* that is being *assumed* here, all too often, of the kind required for definition *per genus et differentiam* (the classical definition). As noted above, Wittgenstein agrees that someone who says, "You'll call it a game but it isn't really, because (say) there is vagueness in its rules" is imposing an unreasonable requirement – the cases are not merely *called* games, loosely or "by convention", but *are* games. We principally agree with Wittgenstein, but do not reduce the issue to the relationship between sport and rules of games.

In Bambrough's (1960) presentation of Wittgenstein via the nominalists-realists' controversy, we see one weak point, namely attribution by the former of the traditional theory of names to the latter. Further elaborating on this, let us recapitulate this traditional conception or rather conceptions, since we have two main theories of names. One is related to English and languages with articles (but was developed in mathematical logic) and distinguishes between proper (individual) terms and predicates. The most popular semantics (used in first-order logic) in question relates to individuals as denotations of proper names and sets as references of predicates (for simplicity, we are not addressing empty nominal expressions here). A different idea is associated with the account of names related to Greek, Latin, and other languages without articles – it distinguishes singular names (they have one object as its designatum) and general ones (they have many designata). Aritotle's logic, for instance, is based on this distinction.

Bambrough ascribes the first "English" theory to Wittgenstein. Technically speaking, the contemporary version of the controversy between nominalists and realists stems from first-order semantics (eventually its higher-order extensions), although it could be articulated within the Aristotelian approach. However, it is unclear whether Wittgenstein employed this semantics in his later philosophy, contrary to his view in the *Tractatus*. Consequently, it is not surprising that the issue of realism and nominalism has no adequate representation in *PI*. In fact, later Wittgenstein was not interested in extensional properties of names, but rather in their meaning as manifested in their use. If the paradigm-case argument or family resemblance are ways to explain what terms mean, then there is no hope to formulate realism or nominalism, except for trivial hints such as, "Look, numbers are typical individual objects, but sets are paradigmatic cases of abstracta" or "If you take arbitrary individual objects, you should find a family resemblance holding between them". Extension of such settings via family resemblances or the paradigm-case argument seems to be very problematic.

We would like to address yet another distinction of names, much more visible in Aristotle's framework than in the first-order one – namely the division of distributive vs. collective (mereological) terms. Roughly (semantically) speaking, the former refers to individuals and sets of individuals; the term *set* is understood here in the standard mathematical (set-theoretical) sense (hence, distributive names can be easily interpreted as predicates). The latter, on the other hand, refers to complexes (sums) consisting of parts (see Simons [1987] for a detailed analysis –

ontological as well as semantic); such complexes are called mereological classes. If, for example, someone observes that natural numbers are *parts* of the *set* of natural numbers, but that California, Oregon, and Florida are *parts* of United States (i.e., a *set* of particular states), they should be aware that the same terms, *part* and *set*, have different meanings in these two cases. There are some formal differences between both understandings of sets and classes (both conceptions can be expressed via both notions, that is, as a *set* and as a *class*). For instance, mereology (the theory of wholes and parts) does not distinguish between individuals and singletons (sets consisting of one element). More precisely, if a is an individual and $\{a\}$ is a set that has a as its only element, then $a = \{a\}$ according to the mereological theory of classes (mereology prefers the term *class*), yet $a \neq \{a\}$ according to the set-theoretical conception (which prefers the term *set*). Hence, while the mereological conception does not distinguish between individuals and related singletons, the set-theoretical conception does. As a corollary of this principle, it follows that every mereological class can be considered an individual object – as its name is singular by assumption. If X is a mereological part of Y, and Y is a mereological part of Z, then X is a mereological part of Z. Intuitively, a part of a part of a mereological sum is a part of this sum. Under set theory, if X is a subset of Y, and Y is a subset of Z, then X is not a subset of Z, but rather an element of the latter. Intuitively, a part (as a subset) of a set is not a part of an overset of the set in question. Clearly, the second property relating to being a part of a complex is closely associated with the first, concerning the relation between singletons and their elements.

Wittgenstein did not care about which kind of terms – distributive or collective – his later philosophy applied to. In fact, there is no *a priori* reason to say that the use theory of meaning (in Wittgenstein's understanding) excludes any species of terms. Nevertheless, it seems that the idea of family resemblance better fits collective terms. Consider, for example, the name *city*. We can interpret it as distributive by saying that *being a city* expresses a property that is predicated on particular cities (interpreting *city* as a predicate is very suitable in this case). However, this interpretation must meet several difficulties, particularly as far as it concerns ordinary common nouns. Perhaps Wittgenstein observed that in many cases, family resemblance better fits the spirit of natural languages, as illustrated by the noun *game*. In the case of the name *city* the following strategy might be used: Take *London*, for example Explain that London is a city because it has such and such structure and number of inhabitants. Eventually, note than London is a large city, yet there are smaller cities, such as Jerusalem or Warsaw. Clearly, we proceed by analysis of London as a mereological complex. Thus, we conclude that family resemblance in Wittgenstein's sense is particularly applicable to collective names. In particular, if applied to such names, we can omit the problem of the controversy between realism and nominalism, because if we understand the terms *game* and *sport* as referring to mereological wholes, the references in question are always individual concrete objects. Of course, we do not claim that the concept of family resemblance has no application to distributive names, but we do think that mereology constitutes a strong ontological framework for *Familienähnlichkeit.* In particular, when looking at what "is common" or "interesting" (as described above in the discussion of Bambrough) for items designated by *game* and *sport*, it is easier to find answers by pointing at a mereological element than by finding a "common" or "interesting" property, even fuzzy. When comparing between their complex structures, we can see that what some sports have in common is rivalry, some are executed in teams, and others still are performed individually – in rivalry or not. Some sports are especially interesting due to their rules in a definite context, such as people from Europe who show an interest in American football; others are appealing due to their aesthetic value, such as artistic gymnastics. As such, this requires the identifying of specific elements at their "essence", whatever that means.

In light of the above considerations, it is important whether the term *sport* is understood distributively or collectively. If we define or characterize sport by jointly or separately taking the physical-cultural characteristics, entertainment, rivalry aimed at success, or regulated by rules as its attributes, we understand *sport* as a set of items that fall under a set of properties. This assumes that distributively, *sport* ("is sportive") is a general name or predicate. We have already noted the difficulties of such definitions or quasi-definitions, and as concluded (not only by us) all mentioned

attempts are inadequate. What about the proposal to address sport as a profession. Here we have a predicate – "is a profession" – that can then be specified by transforming it into, "is a sportive profession". Consequently, we can obtain formulas, such as (i) "sport is a profession" and (ii) "*a* (soccer, tennis, volleyball, etc.) is a sportive-profession". The first formula is at odds with logical syntax, since it is not an instance of "*a* is a profession", unless the word *sport* is understood as a proper name. The last possibility can be executed by interpreting *sport* (or *the sport*) as the individual name of sport as an abstract object (universal). However, this interpretation is not coherent with seeing sport as something that is happening *hic et nunc.* The immediate solution consists of assuming that *sport* is a collective name and that it refers to a complex. In this case, *profession* should also be regarded as related to a collection. We can replace "sport is a profession" by (iii) "sport is one of the professions". This reading is consistent with the logic of names (i.e., ontology) proposed by Polish logician Stanisław Leśniewski (see Srzednicki, Rickey, and Czelakowski, 1984), which was elaborated on as a formal basis of mereology. In relation to (ii), we can establish a list of disciplines to say that this inventory constitutes a set that is a subset of the set denoted by *is a profession*. Yet now we return to the status of a particular discipline, i.e., the similar problem as in the case of (i). In this case, it is much better to look at disciplines as sub-professions of the sport-profession. In other words, every sport-discipline is one of many sportive-professions. In this sense, Wittgenstrein's solution is novel, offering a new manner in which to examine the goings on in using a language.

At this point, the key issue consists of how the name *profession* is interpreted. In our opinion, it should be considered a collective name. Any list of professions can only be established through factual analysis, i.e., by collecting and comparing various data, including legal, economic, cultural, and traditional input. The settings achieved in this manner enable the delimiting of the collection of professions. There is a striking similarity between the terms *profession* and *game*, yet despite every profession being related to certain normative principles, they cannot simply be reduced to mere rules. Thus, rules serve as only one aspect of professions. The paradigm-case argument is difficult to be generalized, due to the large number of professions that could be seen as paradigmatic. On the other hand, looking for family resemblances assumes that something is needed to serve as the initial pattern.

There is no other way to complete the analysis of professions than with fiat, yet still leaving a possibility for supplementation through new elements. In other words, the complex named *profession* is open at every stage of its functioning in social practice. The same is true for sport as a profession. We can consider games as the most important element of any sportive profession. Any list of games must be taken as open and suitable for a completion. Even if we disregard rules, financing, spectators, institutional parameters, etc., we are still unable to predict the development of a given field of sport. Ski jumping, for example, was traditionally a winter sport. Yet summer skiing now takes place using artificial snow. Do these comprise the same discipline or two different ones? The rules are the same, yet there is no common classification of jumpers in winter and summer competitions. Tennis is also played year-round – in winter in indoor courts and outdoors in summer. Yet points for general classification of players are summarized for all tournaments. We can offer endless examples in which the family resemblance plays a fundamental role in each one, even though their results do not fall under general criteria, such as boxing and kick-boxing shows. Hence, the terms *sport in general* and *is sportive* – in reference to particular sportive phenomena – should be interpreted as collective names that denote complex structures.[4]

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Notes

[1] This paper is partially based on Woleński, J. (1980). Co to jest sport? [What is Sport]. In J. Lipiec (Ed.), *Duch sportu* [The spirit of sport] (pp. 42-62). Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza.

[2] For other accounts of the idea of "professionalism" in sports, see Morgan (1993), Schneider and Butcher (1993), Allison (2005), and McNamee (2008).

[3] The symbol *PI* abbreviates Wittgenstein (2009), and *TLP* abbreviates Wittgenstein (1974).

[4] We are especially indebted to discussions with the late Graham McFee. Although he helped us considerably, especially with the sections on Wittgenstein, he nonetheless had reservations regarding the overarching thesis defended in this paper, which we humbly and gratefully acknowledge. We are deeply saddened by his recent passing away, and dedicate this paper in his memory.