

Introduction

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“Eracle. Journal of Sport and Social Sciences” has been in existence for several years now, and we are approaching its tenth anniversary. There has been a lot of hard work, but above all a lot of satisfaction for a journal that has sought to stimulate debate on the social sciences and sport among the Italian and international scientific communities.

Over the years, we have chosen to focus the articles in each issue on specific topics, based on the countless stimuli provided by current debates or historical circumstances.

However, we have often received proposals for articles outside the proposed themes, a sign of growing interest in the work of the journal, as well as in the social study of sporting phenomena. We therefore decided to collect some of the most promising proposals we have recently received in a special issue, one capable of capturing the effervescence of an international dialogue that has gathered around our editorial efforts.

The result is this rich and varied miscellany, which we hope will prove stimulating and insightful in its analysis.

The collection of articles explores the intersection between sport and the broader cultural, social, political and media phenomena of our time, crossing very different geographical, temporal and socio-cultural areas.

The first article in the issue – written by Marcelo Alves de Resende, Leda Maria da Costa, Ronaldo Helal and Fausto Amaro – examines the symbolic production associated with sport and its socio-political connotations. The authors analyse how the Brazilian right wing, especially Bolsonaroism, has appropriated the green-yellow jersey of the national football team as a political symbol, examining disputes over national identity and efforts to “de-sequester” the jersey ahead of the 2022 World Cup.

The focus then shifts to an analysis of the relationship between sport, personal experience, cultural dimension and identity formation.

Federico Czesli presents an ethnographic study of young footballers in Buenos Aires, investigating how sporting careers gradually reconfigure identity, economic and social capital rather than producing abrupt existential ruptures.

Nicola Strizzolo and Nico Bortoletto’s study analyses the parallels between extreme and lifestyles sports and shamanic practices, focusing on transcendence, ritual, ecstasy and ecological connection in the contemporary sporting experience.

Maria Frezza, in her sociological analysis of the autobiography of Stefano Borgonovo, a former Italian footballer who died of ALS, explores how the disease transformed his identity from celebrated athlete to public symbol of vulnerability, solidarity and resistance to illness, showing how narrative can repair biographical ruptures.

This article links to the latest articles in the issue, which focus more explicitly on the artistic, narrative and media spheres.

Emanuele Rinaldo Meschini investigates the “football turn” in contemporary art, showing how football, from a simple form of mass entertainment, can emerge as an artistic subject within a hybrid cultural ecosystem.

Sara Virnicchi examines the 1964 Tokyo Olympics as a crucial moment in the global mediatization of sport, marking the rise of global sports broadcasting and establishing sport as a global, spectacularized media ritual, while contributing to Japan’s postwar recovery.

Finally, Lorenzo Di Paola analyses Italian sports comics – specifically Carmelo Silva’s *disegnata* – and their role in myth-making, fandom, collective memory, cultural consumption, and digital transformation.

In the commentary section, Luca Bifulco discusses the Kings League, the new football format that seeks to fully exploit the commercial and spectacular potential of the contemporary sports industry in the digital age, while also seeking to reconfigure the canon of sport.