

Núria Puig: A Biographical-Professional Outline¹

Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
- C) analysis and interpretation of data
- D) manuscript preparation
- E) obtaining funding

Núria Puig^{A-D}, Susanna Soler^{A-E}, Anna Vilanova^{A-E}

Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

ABSTRACT

This article presents a biographical-professional outline of the career of Núria Puig. The authors place this outline in the Spanish socio-political context stretching from 1976 until the present day. A brief biography is followed successively by descriptions of formal training, mentors, institutional projects, teaching experience, and research. In the conclusion, a general evaluation is made of her professional career.

KEYWORDS

academic biography, profession and context, Spain, sociology of sport

Introduction: A professional biography influenced by the context

By request from Jerzy Kosiewicz, I here present an outline of my personal and professional career for inclusion in the collection of portraits of the members of the Editorial Board related to their scientific achievements. At the outset, I must confess that the task has not been an easy one, since when speaking of oneself one might fall into the trap either of being excessively modest or of exaggerating one's accomplishments. In order to avoid this, therefore, my first decision was to ask two former students of mine, who subsequently became both professional colleagues and friends, Susanna Soler and Anna Vilanova, to contribute to the conclusion by modulating, criticizing, and extending what I have written.

My second decision was related to how to approach the narrative. In order to understand a professional career, the context in which it unfolded must be taken into account. In my case, this context encompasses events that occurred in Spain between 1974 (the year in which I conducted my first research project) and 2016 (when I retired). I have sought invariably to provide a response to major social issues that have arisen periodically in my country. Thus, everything I have done reflects debates that took place at given moments.

To begin, I will make a number of autobiographical notes. I was born in 1951 in Aiguafreda, a small town 49 km north of Barcelona. The Spanish Civil War had ended twelve years earlier and Franco was in power. As far as my professional career is concerned, I recall the importance that my mother and father attached to our family's education (we are four sisters and one brother). My father nurtured the hope that I would become an engineer (I had to disappoint him in this), while my mother invariably said that in order to be free, women had to have a profession. And now, aged 93, she continues to believe this. I completed my

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secondary education in Barcelona at private schools that perpetuated the legacy of the pedagogical reforms introduced during the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1936), which, despite Franco, had managed to survive, albeit within the framework of conditions imposed by the regime. I lived with my maternal grandmother, a woman from Madrid who had settled in Barcelona after marrying my grandfather and who imbued me with a sense of freedom and the desire to live a full life.

Alpine skiing was the family sport. My mother and father shared this passion from the day they met, and I remember how, when I was still a child, the entire family would go skiing on winter weekends. As the years went by the passion increased, and we began to take part in competitions. My sisters, Conchita and Montse, and I came at different times to form part of the Spanish Alpine skiing team. Conchita competed at the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics. And the tradition lives on: two of my nephews have become Olympic skiers, while my father, my sister Mercè, and my brother have held positions of responsibility in clubs and in the winter sports federation.

I never imagined that sport would become the center of my professional activity. I studied at Barcelona University, and my original intention was to teach the Social Sciences at a primary-school level. Everything changed when one day, by chance, I learned that the National Physical Education Institute (INEF) was to be opened in Barcelona, and I decided to go and ask whether they needed a teacher of History or Sociology. It turned out that the team who had set the initiative in motion consisted of the doctors who had taken care of me during my sporting career, and they welcomed me with open arms, saying “sport has come back to sport.” I passed the regulation tests, and from 1976 until my retirement I worked at this institution. I spent forty years at the INEF of Catalonia, which for me has been much more than a place of work; it has been the gateway that provided me with access to the professional world and many close friendships. If I were to have the chance to do it all over again, I would not hesitate to work at the same place.

Formal training

I began studying the Arts, specifically Modern History, at Barcelona University in 1967. The events of May 1968 in France made a deep impression on me, and they gave rise to many debates in Barcelona about the way we lived our lives. We had great teachers; in particular, I recall Emili Giralt i Raventós, who was in charge of my specialty and who took us to the archives to teach us how to engage in research. His tutorials were also a valuable gift. In 1973, I completed my undergraduate studies, and in 1975 I defended my graduation thesis, supervised by Professor Giralt and titled *La sociedad de Vic en el siglo XVIII. Ensayo metodológico sobre la utilización de las fuentes catastrales en estudios de tipo social (Vic society in the 18th century: Methodological essay on the use of land register sources in social studies)*. This marked the beginning of my interest in research methodology.

I was able to study in Paris for a period of just over five years (1975-1980). For two years, and against all odds, I was privileged enough to be awarded a scholarship by the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. At that time, being given the opportunity to study abroad was a rare occurrence.

At the Institut National du Sport et l'Éducation Physique (INSEP), I studied for the Certificat d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées (CESS), which would be the equivalent of a present-day master's degree. My final dissertation was on *L'évolution et l'usage des équipements sportifs dans la Région de Paris (The evolution and use of sport facilities in the Paris region)*. We were organized into research teams, mine being the one devoted to the Social Sciences, and we were directed by three professors (Pierre Leblanc, Borhane Errais, and Michèle Metoudi). Besides the classes, we met once a week to monitor our progress. We were taught to speak in public and acquired knowledge of the formal rules for presenting scientific works. I shall always be grateful to them for this.

Having completed my studies at the INSEP, I went on to obtain my doctorate at the Université de Paris VII-Jussieu. Although he was not my director, Antoine Haumont, Professor of Geography at the Institut de Sociologie Urbaine in Paris, gave me great support. and it was he who encouraged me to work in a field that was still largely under-developed in Sociology of Sport (Sport and Space). In October 1980, I

defended my “Thèse de troisième cycle,” titled *Les équipements sportifs et les rapports sociaux (Sport facilities and social relations)*, which was clearly inspired by the theories of Marx.

Continuing with my training, in 1993 I obtained a doctorate in Philosophy and the Education Sciences at Barcelona University under the supervision of Professor Manuel García Ferrando, with my thesis titled *Joves i esport. Influència del proces de socialització en els itineraris esportius juvenils (Young people and sport: The influence of socializing processes on youth sport itineraries)*. Thanks to this thesis, I was able to undertake an in-depth study of socialization theories fundamental to understanding the way in which different sectors of society relate to sport.

Mentors

Four men have been crucial to my professional life. Each one, in his own way, provided me with the strength and the knowledge I needed to progress in a male-dominated environment.

The first of these was Jordi Cortadas, my husband from 1973 until his death in 1985. He believed in and conscientiously applied the criteria of equality between men and women. He was deeply offended by the notion, very widespread at the time, that when a woman gave birth it was normal for her to work less or give up working altogether. He invariably insisted that this would not occur in our family. Unfortunately, he was unable to demonstrate this; nevertheless, his stance always made me feel strong and capable.

Jesús Galilea, a medical doctor by profession, was the first Director of the Barcelona INEF. He formed part of a group of open-minded men (José María Cagigal, Antonio Elola Olaso, and Juan Antonio Samaranch, among others) who, although limited by the structures of the Franco regime, began the process of modernizing sport in Spain. Galilea, for example, refused to open the Barcelona INEF in October 1974 because it had been conceived for men only. Although it took him one year to convince the authorities, in October 1975 – one month before Franco’s death – the institute was opened for men and women. On a personal level, Galilea was the first person to encourage me to write articles and publish them. He defended my taking part in congresses, where I criticized the position of women in sport under the Franco regime, despite threats of expulsion that reached me from the upper echelons of power. When I hesitated, he encouraged me to take advantage of the opportunity to study in Paris.

Manuel García Ferrando, Professor of Sociology, has accompanied me through the course of my professional career ever since I first met him in Madrid in 1983. By then, he had already conducted his first survey on the Spanish population’s sporting habits, which struck me, just having recently obtained my doctorate, as an astonishing achievement in view of the vast number of resources and the vast amount of knowledge such a study required. He supervised my doctoral thesis for Barcelona University, and I shall never forget how he advised me to read *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* by Thomas and Znaniecki, the volumes of which were published between 1918 and 1920, to help me interpret what I was told by the young people I had interviewed. His recommendation proved to be very useful, especially when it came to understanding the context in which the desire for recognition develops and the way in which this desire is transformed depending on prevailing environmental circumstances. He has invariably given me very sound advice; it was he who introduced me into international organizations, and to this day we have continued to conduct joint projects of different kinds.

Alongside Klaus Heinemann, with whom I have shared my life since 1990, I reached professional maturity. His criticisms, though very harsh, are nonetheless highly accurate and, although he invariably insists on differentiating between the person and his or her scientific work, his comments are sometimes hard to swallow. On the other hand, all of us who have been fortunate enough to work with and learn from him know that when he gives his approval we can be sure that at last we have hit the nail on the head.

Institutional projects

Besides the teaching and research activities I have been engaged in throughout my academic life, I have taken part in institutional projects that have contributed to creating useful structures for the development of research and pedagogy in the Sports Sciences.

The first project in which I was involved was the creation of the Spanish Association for Social Research Applied to Sport (AEISAD – <http://www.aeisad.org/>). It all began in San Sebastián in 1989 when Manuel García Ferrando, Javier Asin, and I were contemplating La Concha Beach during a break in the Spanish Sociology Congress. The need occurred to us to set up an association geared specifically towards sport. In 1990, the AEISAD was founded as an interdisciplinary entity in that instead of focusing exclusively on Sociology, it embraces all forms of social research applied to sport. Twenty-nine years have gone by since then and the association continues to serve as an instrument of exchange between those of us who work in this field. In addition, it holds a congress every two years and, besides publishing the corresponding proceedings, also publishes a newsletter every three months.

One day in 1991, Paco Lagardera, Eric Dunning (who had been invited to Barcelona), and I were talking about plans for the future. The Erasmus programs had recently been instituted, and we were highly enthusiastic about the idea of intensive courses, brief encounters during which students and professors from different European universities might exchange views. We looked for partners and managed to get Klaus Heinemann (Germany), Jean Camy (France), Nicola Porro (Italy), Rui Gomes (Portugal), and Ivan Waddington (United Kingdom) to join the project. During the many years that have passed since 1992, we have held an annual encounter in one of the countries involved. Such encounters have proven to be a way to initiate many people into the techniques of research as well as to foster intercultural understanding among the countries of Europe.

In 2006, Andreu Camps, who was then the Director of the INEFC of Catalonia, proposed that I set up the Catalan Sport Observatory (<http://www.observatoridelesport.cat/index.php>) with the aim of gathering all the existing information on the sport system in Catalonia. As Director, I set the project in motion together with Anna Vilanova (Coordinator). We identify the most important indicators of the sport system along with information sources. When we observe gaps in such information, we seek resources with which to conduct the appropriate research. For over ten years, the Observatory has been providing periodical information on the most salient aspects of the evolution of sport in Catalonia.

In 2008, Susanna Soler proposed that we reply to the call issued by the Generalitat (Autonomous Catalan Government) for applicants to be acknowledged and funded as research groups, such as the one devoted to the social sciences and education that had been gradually forming over the years at the INEFC Social Sciences Laboratory. She further proposed that we make the application with me as the Principal Researcher, since we were beginning to acquire a certain degree of experience in research and it seemed to her that this would be an opportunity to gain consistency and visibility as a group. The application was successful, and as a result we obtained acknowledgement and funding and have continued to do so with each subsequent application. The GISEAFE (Group of Social and Educational Research in Physical Activity and Sport – <https://inefcgiseafe.com/>) has helped us endow everything we do with meaning and, furthermore, serves as a permanent stimulus to surpass ourselves and progress in our scientific work.

Since 2009, Spain has been immersed in a crisis which, though initially economic, has subsequently spread to many other areas. Criticism is aired, sometimes in the context of considerable ignorance, against the “78 Regime” (in reference to the year in which the Spanish Constitution was approved), and the pressing need also exists to settle the issue of Spain’s relations with Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque Country, all of which have specific political, social, and cultural characteristics that are not always respected. From the Observatory and the GISEAFE, we have just launched an initiative titled “Dialogues on Sport (1975-2020),” which will consist of a series of successive actions whose aim is to engage in debate on sport in Spain and establish commitments that will enable us to advance a further forty years as we have done since 1978.

All these projects are deeply rooted in our social and political circumstances and respond to needs that these circumstances generate. I am happy to have been able to contribute to them.

Teaching experience

The subject I have taught most often is the Sociology of Sport at the graduate Sport Sciences level. This aspect proved to be very important when it came to deciding on my approach. Students engaged in these studies usually regard sociological thinking as being far removed from their daily lives; from the outset, therefore, I had to devise a complementary program and associated exercises to show the extent to which sociology might prove to be useful in their professional careers.

For a while, and further related to my first PhD thesis, I also taught Sport Facilities. In this particular case, I strove to provide Sport Sciences students, as users of these facilities, with a facilities analysis perspective that differed from the one habitually adopted by architects, though without necessarily creating conflict. For this reason, I put special emphasis on issues related to the demand for facilities in which to practice sport as well as their functionality, safety, and sustainable development.

On successive occasions, I have also imparted classes on Research Methodology, Sociology of the Sport Space, Sociology of High-Performance Sport, Sociology of Sport Organizations, and Emotions in Sport.

The greatest challenge I had to face in my career as a teacher was in 1998-1999 and 2000-2001, when the Institut für Soziologie at Hamburg University asked me to deliver a set of seminars on processes of change in contemporary Spanish society. This meant temporarily putting sport aside and focusing on other sociological aspects. It involved great effort, but I believe the students were satisfied, and I learned a tremendous amount.

One of the most gratifying activities I have participated in, with varying degrees of responsibility, was MEMOS (Master Executif pour le Management des Organisations Sportives), which was instituted by Olympic Solidarity with the support of several universities. The students attending MEMOS belonged to sport organizations from countries all over the world and studied for this master's degree with a view to improving their training. Thanks to the interest, the courtesy, and the harmony of the different groups, this was an unforgettable experience.

Besides my work at the INEF of Catalonia, I have also been a guest professor at the Université de Lyon I, France (1992); Pedagogical University of Tallinn, Estonia (1994); Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua, León, Nicaragua (1998); Institut für Soziologie and Fachbereich Sportwissenschaft at the Universität Hamburg, Germany (1998-1999; 2000-2001); Universidad Metropolitana de Santiago de Chile, Chile (2004); and the Instituto Superior de Educación Física de Montevideo, Uruguay (2001; 2004).

Although I have co-authored several educational texts, I should like to highlight the *Sociology of Sport* handbook, to which a considerable number of people who impart this subject at several Spanish universities contributed. The book has gone through four editions, the latest being:

García Ferrando, M., Puig, N., Lagardera, F., Llopis, R., & Vilanova, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Sociología del deporte (Sociology of Sport)*; 4th edition. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Research

As I stated in the introduction, all the research I have conducted has invariably been closely linked to important issues at the time of effectuation.

Spaces for the practice of sport

My first research studies addressed the territorial distribution of sport facilities, initially in the province of Barcelona and eventually in Spain as a whole. I conducted my first study in 1974, near the end of the Franco regime and at a time when there was major concern as to the number of existing sport facilities. The regime had not generated structures characteristic of a welfare state, and there was a vast dearth of collective social services. Furthermore, the problem arose of making a reliable diagnosis of the situation since our ignorance was practically total. The results of the first census conducted in Spain on the total number of existing sport facilities were not published until the late 1980s, after over fifteen years spent learning to diagnose the territorial distribution and situation of sport facilities. Our analysis invariably took into account the differences in wealth between the different regions and their respective social characteristics. Major inequality was observed that, with the passage of time and thanks to action on the part of municipal councils and other high-ranking institutions, has gradually been mitigated.

Since the 1990s, the number of people who engage in sport outside conventional facilities has been on the rise, the figure reaching 69% in 2015. It seems that conflict has arisen between different sectors of society over the use of such facilities (sportspeople, families strolling with small children, elderly people, etc.), as well as problems of sustainability associated with mass exploitation of the natural environment, either of the sea or of mountains or rivers. I have contributed to research studies devised to reach an understanding of several aspects associated with this new situation. Regarding the use of urban public spaces for engagement in sport, having studied the social networks that emerged around this phenomenon in the city of Barcelona, we discovered that there was less conflict than we had been led to believe, and that elements existed in these groups that were constitutive of social capital. Regarding sustainability, the PhD thesis by Eduard Inglés, which I supervised together with Klaus Heinemann, reveals the extent to which forms of governance and relations with stakeholders may attenuate or intensify the effects of sport practice in the natural environment.

In this area of research, I should like to highlight the following publications:

- Martínez del Castillo, J., Puig, N., et al. (1991). *Las instalaciones deportivas en España (The Sport Facilities in Spain)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Consejo Superior de Deportes, Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación Física y el Deporte.
- Puig, N., Burriel, J.C., Masnou, M., & Ibáñez, J. (1990). Le sport comme générateur de mobilité et structurant de l'espace (Sport as a generator of mobility and space-structuring element). *Espaces et Sociétés*, 54-55, 119-133.
- Puig, N., Martínez del Castillo, J., Pellegrino, P., & Lambert, C. (1993). Sport facilities as a revealing of a society: The Spanish case. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 28(2/3), 203-222.
- Puig, N. & Ingham, A. (Eds.). (1993). Sport and space. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 28(2/3 – Special issue).
- Martínez del Castillo, J. & Puig, N. (2002). Espacio y tiempo en el deporte (Space and time in sport). In M. García Ferrando, N. Puig, & F. Lagardera (Eds.), *Sociología del deporte (Sociology of Sport)* (pp. 151-178). Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Puig, N. & Maza, G. (Eds.). (2008). El deporte en los espacios públicos urbanos (Sport in urban public spaces). *Apunts. Educación Física y Deportes*, 91(Special issue).
- Inglés-Yuba, E. & Puig-Barata, N. (2015). Sports management in coastal protected areas. A case study on collaborative network governance towards sustainable development. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 118, 178-188.

Socialization

From the socialization perspective, I have successively addressed the situation of women in sport, that of young people, and that of elite sportspersons.

Women and sport

When I was a top-level sportswoman, I experienced discrimination against women first hand. The different way in which we were treated and prevailing inequality at all levels, even when we obtained better results, infuriated me. I was not the only one to react in this way, so when the first Catalan Women Conference was held in Barcelona in 1976, a group of sportswomen, including myself, presented a talk titled *Women and Sport in Spain*. This greatly displeased the upper political echelons, who threatened a colleague and me with expulsion from the INEF, which did not transpire thanks to the intercession of the Director at that time, Jesús Galilea.

Since then I have worked regularly on this issue, almost invariably from the perspective of the theories of Difference, which, to my mind, have yet to be fully appreciated in certain sectors of Feminist Sociology. Discovering what is characteristic of female culture and making it visible strikes me as the first necessary step towards a deeper understanding of the world of women. In Spain, as elsewhere, there has recently been a radical turnaround in gender studies, which has given rise to a breakaway from dualisms and gender and sexual hegemonies. It is with great interest that I observe this process in which I am no longer involved as a researcher.

In this context, I should highlight the following publications:

- Balagué, G., Puig, N., et al (1980). Propuestas para otra metodología en el estudio de la mujer y el deporte (Proposals for a different methodology in the study of women and sport). *Apuntes de Medicina Deportiva*, 67, 135-150.
- Puig, N. (1981). Les étudiantes en éducation physique et la coéducation sportive (Women students in physical education and sport co-education). In B. Errais (Ed.), *La femme d'aujourd'hui et le sport (Today's Women and Sport)* (pp. 119-124). Paris: Amphora.
- Puig, N. (1987). El proceso de incorporación al deporte por parte de la mujer española (1935-1985) (Spanish women's process of engagement in sport [1935-1985]). In *Mujer y Deporte (Women and Sport)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Instituto de la Mujer (serie debate, 3).
- Puig, N. & Martin, M. (1992). Mujeres deportistas de alto nivel y deporte (Elite sportswomen and sport). In *El ejercicio físico y la práctica deportiva de las mujeres (Physical Exercise and Women's Sport Practice)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales, Instituto de la Mujer.
- Mosquera, M.J. & Puig, N. (1998). Género y edad en el deporte (Gender and age in sport). In M. García Ferrando, N. Puig, & F. Lagardera (Eds.), *Sociología del deporte (Sociology of Sport)* (pp. 99-126). Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Puig, N. (2001). Differenz und Geschlechterbeziehungen im Sport (Difference and gender relations in sport). In K. Heinemann & M. Schubert (Ed.), *Sport und Gesellschaften (Sport and Societies)* (pp. 257- 278). Schorndorf: Hofmann.
- Puig, N. (2002). Weibliche Differenz im Sport. Die Situation der Frauen im Sport zu Beginn des neuen Jahrhunderts (Female difference in sport: The situation of women in sport at the dawn of a new century). *Sportwissenschaft*, 32(1), 48-67.
- Puig, N. & Soler, S. (2003). Women and Sport in Spain. In I. Hartmann-Tews & G. Pfister (Eds.), *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective* (pp. 83-101). London and New York: Routledge, International Society for Comparative Physical Education and Sport.

Young people and sport

In the mid-1980s, much talk was heard of young people dropping out of sport. This caught my

attention because surveys continued to show that young people engaged in sport to a greater degree than adults. Theoretical instruments were therefore needed to explain this apparent contradiction. The research studies we conducted, which coincided, incidentally, in time and results with those carried out in other countries, revealed in fact how young people were dropping out of organized sport in the school framework. It was verified, furthermore, that young people's sport biographies are highly changeable, as is their socialization process. The concept of the *sport itinerary* served to identify changes in sport practice during youth associated with each individual's socialization process. As fruit of these studies I should highlight:

- Puig, N. (1995), *Itinerarios deportivos juveniles y definición de la situación* (Youth sport itineraries and definition of the situation). In *Actas Congreso Científico Olímpico 1992. Actividad Física Adaptada, Psicología y Sociología* (Proceedings of the 1992 Olympic Science Congress. Adapted Physical Activity, Psychology, and Sociology) (pp. 456-464). Malaga: Instituto Andaluz del Deporte, 1.
- Puig, N. (1995). Sport in the youth phase is an itinerary. In O. Weiss & W. Schulz (Eds.), *Sport in Space and Time* (pp. 170-178). Vienna: WUV-Universitäts Verlag, Wien.
- Puig, N. (1996). Spain. In P. De Knop, L.M. Engstrom, B. Skirstad, & M. Weiss, *Worldwide Trends in Youth Sport* (pp. 222-230). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Puig, N. & Mosquera, M.J. (2017). Edad y deporte (Age and sport). In M. García Ferrando, N. Puig, F. Lagardera, R. Llopis, & A. Vilanova (Eds.), *Sociología del deporte (Sociology of Sport)* (pp. 125-144) (4th ed.). Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Elite sportspersons' entry to the job market

My career as a top-level sportswoman undoubtedly influenced my curiosity concerning this issue. I observed how excellent sportspersons ended up experiencing great frustration when their career in sport was terminated and they sought to embark on a professional career. I supervised Anna Vilanova's PhD thesis on this subject, in which her theoretical approach was to examine the strategies – or non-strategies – of job market entry adopted by Olympic sportspersons, as well as to make observations about how the context (family, trainers, friends, etc.) influenced the effectuation of such strategies. By strategy, we understood the set of actions spread out successively over time in order to achieve a goal. This perspective contributed to improving knowledge of the dual careers of sportspeople. Anna Vilanova has continued to develop this line of research with her team. From our collaboration, I should highlight:

- Vilanova, A. & Puig, N. (2013). *Compaginar la carrera deportiva con la carrera académica para la futura inserción laboral: ¿Una cuestión de estrategia?* (Combining the sport career with the academic career for future job market entry: A question of strategy?). *Revista de Psicología del Deporte*, 22(1), 61-68.
- Vilanova, A. & Puig, N. (2016). Personal strategies for managing a second career: The experiences of Spanish Olympians. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 51(5), 529-546.
- Vilanova, A. & Puig, N. (2017). Olympic athletes' job market entry strategies: A typology. *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, 75(1).

Emotions in sport

This line of research was generated by aspects that emerged from our research into young people. In the interviews we conducted, time after time we came across the expression of a highly intense emotion that we identified as *passion*. Passion binds people to something so tightly that, even in the presence of negative aspects, they cannot break away from the object of their passion. Of these emotions, the most common would be love, but the accounts to which I refer clearly revealed the existence of passion for sport. Further to this initial interest, we worked on several occasions on emotions in sport by analyzing their cultural nature (for example, the way victory is expressed depending on the sport or on societies), the way they are

conveyed (emotions cannot be seen, but there are different ways to express them), their strategic use in sport competitions (faking an emotion to mislead an adversary), and so on. Alongside a video we filmed on the occasion of a seminar – which we have used many times – I should highlight:

- Morell, S. & Puig, N. (1995). Sport passions in top level sport: A sociological analysis. In B. Van Reusel & M. Taks (Eds.), *Sport and Contested Boundaries*. Leuven: ACCO.
- Heinemann, K. & Puig, N. (1998). Emocions en l'esport. Esbós d'una anàlisi sociològica. (Emotions in sport: Outline of a sociological analysis). *Revista catalana de sociologia*, 5, 117-146.
- Puig, N., Lagardera, F., & Juncà, A. (2001). Tot ensenyant sociologia de les emocions en l'esport (Teaching emotions sociology in sport). *Apunts. Educació Física i Esports*, 64, 69-77.
- Puig, N. & Vilanova, A. (2011). Positive functions of the emotions in achievement outdoor sports. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 82(2), 334-344.

The sport system and sport policies

The responsibilities I assumed as the head of the Catalan Sport Observatory enhanced several research studies we had been conducting since the transition and endowed them with greater consistency. The early 1980s were marked by major concern over the sport development model to be implemented in Spain. The sport structures we had inherited from the Franco dictatorship were impregnated with the ideology of the regime, which we fully rejected. In these and subsequent years, we observed what was happening in other countries and contributed to an understanding of what was happening here in order to progress towards the construction of a new sport system. Further to our initial reflections, based on interviews and extant documentation, over the years we have conducted successive studies on the Spanish people's sport habits, the evolution of the job market in sport, and the situation of sport clubs and municipal councils (the public sector and, above all, municipal councils, play a prominent role in fostering sport for all in Spain) so that, over time, we have managed to establish development trends (particularly in Catalonia), which we hope to have proven useful in the decision-making process. These assessments have been made periodically in reports on the situation of sport in Catalonia, the most salient of these being the one we prepared to mark the tenth anniversary of the Observatory:

- Observatori Català de l'Esport (2017), *L'esport a Catalunya. 10 anys de l'Observatori Català de l'Esport (2006-2016)*. (*Sport in Catalonia. 10th anniversary of the Catalan Sport Observatory [2006-2016]*) Barcelona: INDE; Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya. Report prepared by Puig, N.; Camps, A; Andrés, A; Sánchez Martín, J.; Mateu, P.; Cusí, M.

Publications I should highlight along these lines of research include:

- Puig, N. (1996). Sports policy in Spain. In L. Chalip, A. Johnson, & L. Stachura (Eds.), *National Sports Policies: An International Handbook* (pp. 346-369). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
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Conclusion

Compiling and summarizing such an intense, varied, and complete academic career as Núria Puig's involved reviewing the history of the Sociology of Sport in Spain in the first person singular. As she herself mentions, she was a pioneer in a field where everything was yet to be done at a crucial moment in the development of sport in this country, a moment when the foundations were being laid for the return to democracy and the development of the Welfare State. During this critical moment, Núria Puig made a major contribution to the Sociology of Sport.

Thanks to her solid academic grounding and eagerness to continue learning, together with her experience in sport, the support of people who have been her traveling companions, and her international standing, she has invariably been at the forefront of research into and the teaching of the Sociology of Sport, not only in Spain but also worldwide. Besides her two PhD theses, throughout her prolific career she has published over thirty books, seventy-six book chapters, and more than seventy scientific articles, together with hundreds of outreach articles and scientific papers delivered at academic gatherings. At the same time, as she tells us, she has had powerful mentors who have supported and guided her. She herself has also been a mentor for many other people in the field of sociological research, for women in particular. Given her direct, open nature, she has invariably shared all her knowledge and managed to get the best out of everybody, always emphasizing the importance of team work, collaboration, exchange, and internationalization. Thanks to her contributions, this field of knowledge has become consolidated, attaining high degrees of excellence and its own scientific tradition.

From the very outset of her career, Núria Puig has paid special attention to social problems and issues, as a result of which her work has invariably been characterized by her capacity for innovation and outreach. Furthermore, her studies and knowledge have often provided a framework for public sport policies at the local, regional, and state levels. Throughout her itinerary she has engendered a multitude of projects that have contributed to fostering a particular sport as well as a fairer and rather more prosperous society. Evidence of this is the fact that, despite initial resistance, she was among the first to introduce gender analysis in sport. A courageous, even defiant stance in the face of the conventional hegemonic discourse has always been present in her work, and she has never hesitated to address issues hitherto regarded as taboo, such as the analysis of sexual harassment in sport.

Her commitment to the university and to all those institutions to which she has contributed knowledge denotes a vocation to serve society and absolute loyalty to the institute that witnessed her entire career unfold, the INEFC, where for over thirty-five academic years she trained professionals in the Physical Activity and Sport Sciences. Over this period, she developed a set of professional principles she managed to convey to everybody who has worked with her and which is reflected in the AEISAD, the Catalan Sport Observatory, and the GISEAFE.

Thanks to her passion for knowledge and for the Sociology of Sport, coupled with her ability to convey this passion in the classroom and at her tutorials, seminars, and international crash courses, as well as her efforts to organize conferences and congresses and serving as the driving force behind scientific organizations, she has opened up new paths and inspired all subsequent generations of researchers and professors of sport and the Sociology of Sport in Spain. In present-day terms, we might say that Núria Puig has been an *influencer* of great impact throughout her academic career. Her legacy undoubtedly makes her a point of reference in the field of Sociology of Sport in Spain and an inspiration for future generations.

AUTHOR'S ADDRESS: Anna Vilanova
INEF de Catalunya
Avda. de l'Estadi, 14
08038 Barcelona
Spain
E-mail: anna.vilanova@gencat.cat

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