



BUENOS AIRES YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES: MEANINGS CONSTRUCTED BY SOUTH AMERICAN ATHLETES

*JOGOS OLÍMPICOS DA JUVENTUDE DE BUENOS AIRES:
SENTIDOS CONSTRUÍDOS POR ATLETAS SUL-AMERICANOS* 

*JUEGOS OLÍMPICOS DE LA JUVENTUD DE BUENOS AIRES:
SIGNIFICADOS CONSTRUIDOS POR LOS ATLETAS
SUDAMERICANOS* 

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Abstract: This research aims to understand the meanings constructed by South American athletes about their most remarkable and meaningful experiences in the YOG-2018. For such a purpose, we focused on a qualitative approach based on the theoretical-methodological assumptions of ethnomethodology using guided interviews. The results indicate that the mentioned games reify the common and socially shared knowledge among a select group of elite athletes, especially linked to the identification of the dimension similar to the adult version of the OG. We conclude that despite their different origins, in some cases, different languages, such individuals share a set of dreams, goals, and certain values in the context of the games performed in the capital of Argentina.

Keywords: Youth Olympic Games. South American athletes. Ethnomethodology.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sports can be considered an axiological metalanguage whose origins date back to ancient times. According to DaCOSTA (2009, p.17), “From the Western civilization’s perspective, sports as a pedagogical tool - initially as physical exercises and games - is as old as education itself, from its common origin in ancient Greece.” It is not surprising, therefore, that in the modern and contemporary world, sports practice is identified as an educational tool. However, cases of violence, corruption, doping, various cheating, and political exploitation that have occurred throughout the contemporary history of sports can make anyone doubt that sports practice is naturally educational, especially at its highest competitive levels.

This observation should not be surprising since Pierre de Coubertin¹, the creator of the Olympic Movement and one of the most important ideologues of modern sport, recognized the morally neutral nature of sports practice in the early stages of the movement he organized and led (COUBERTIN, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to look at the Olympic Games as mega-events of ambivalent and complex interests. As problematized by Tavares (2003, p.104):

Given this ambivalence, competitive sport has met with opposing appreciations. For its enthusiasts, sport, notably Olympic sport, may genuinely be the way to promote a balanced developed human being, international understanding, and tolerance, among other qualifications. For skeptics, sports competition has become synonymous with the degradation of human values, violence, and chauvinism. As a world reference for competitive sport, a considerable number of these positions are concerned with the Olympic Games as an event, the Olympic Movement as an organization, and Olympism as a foundation.

The historic experience demonstrates that after being recreated, the Olympic Games differ from any other sports event by explicitly linking to a valuative ideology, whose reference axis is circumscribed by the Olympic Movement and its guiding values (TAVARES, 2008; RUBIO, 2011). In this context, the education of young people through sports is inscribed among the functions that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) must develop to fulfill its mission (IOC, 2020).

It is of particular interest for this study to observe that the educational dimension of the Olympic Movement is generally known as ‘Olympic education’. This term can be translated as education in values through sport with reference to the values, symbols, rituals, stories, and traditions of the Olympic Movement. As Naul, Binder, Rychtecky, and Culpan (2017) have already demonstrated, Olympic education can assume a high plurality of forms and possibilities that encompass four domains: physical, psychosocial, moral, and cognitive, integrated in terms of formal teaching and integral formation² (NAUL, KRÜGER; GESSMAN; WICK, 2017). Methodologically, it can be characterized by four approaches: the one oriented to the knowledge of events, dates and facts, the one oriented to the true or emulated Olympic experience in Olympic-

¹ Baron de Coubertin - as he was known -, tried to re-edit some rites and symbols of the ancient OJs, seeking to present them under a modern guise (MEINBERG, 2007). His ambition was to promote an integrated culture of sport and education (MAASS, 2007).

² Olympische Erziehung e Olympische Bildung in the original German.

type events, the one oriented to sports performance and the one oriented to the world-of-life (NAUL, 2008).

In light of these limitations, the Youth Olympic Games (YOG), the youth version of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games, and its Education and Culture Program (CEP) potentially represent an integrated manifestation of Olympic education in its four domains and four approaches.

First held in its Summer version in 2010 in Singapore and its Winter version in 2012 in Innsbruck, the YOG is a relatively recent phenomenon. As such, their meaning, expression, and impact are still to be fully evaluated and understood.

Nevertheless, there is a growing interest from the academic community in the subject. Wong (2011) investigated low youth viewership rates, excessive costs, and social impact. Hanstad, Parent, and Kristiansen (2013) examined the similarities with the “adult” Olympic Games, and Parry (2012) explored ethical issues that could arise in these events. Some critical observations came from MacIntosh’s work (2017) on the educational component of youth events, while Berdnikov and Krieger (2019) attempted to understand the low interest of young athletes in educational activities.

A systematic literature review conducted by Souza and Tavares (2020) also identified seven articles that investigated possibilities, contingencies, challenges, and resistances to the educational objectives proposed by the YOG’s Education and Culture Program from the perspective of young athletes (KRIEGER, 2012; KRISTIANSEN, 2015; KRIEGER; KRISTIANSEN, 2016; MACINTOSH; PARENT; CULVER, 2022; PARENT; KRISTIANSEN; MACINTOSH, 2014; PETERS; SCHNITZER, 2015; SCHNITZER *et al.*, 2014). In summary, such investigations have shown that the YOG is a significant experience (KRIEGER; KRISTIANSEN, 2016), a great intercultural learning platform (PARENT; KRISTIANSEN; MACINTOSH, 2014; PETERS; SCHNITZER, 2015), a platform for Olympic values and knowledge for career management (KRIEGER; KRISTIANSEN, 2016; PETERS; SCHNITZER, 2015; SCHNITZER *et al.*, 2014), and for social interaction (KRIEGER, 2012; MACINTOSH; PARENT; CULVER, 2022).

However, many athletes associated this experience with simply being in the Olympic Village and not necessarily participating in the CEP activities (KRIEGER, 2012; PARENT; KRISTIANSEN; MACINTOSH, 2014; KRIEGER; KRISTIANSEN, 2016). In fact, many athletes had limited experiences in the CEP or simply did not participate in its educational activities. Some prioritized their competitions and team, while others considered such activities “childish” (KRIEGER, 2012; PARENT; KRISTIANSEN; MACINTOSH, 2014; SCHNITZER *et al.*, 2014; KRIEGER; KRISTIANSEN, 2016).

According to Berdnikov and Krieger (2019), the absence of non-traditional learning spaces, low adult support, narrow scope, the use of clichés, and underestimation of skills are also significant reasons for non-participation in activities. The review of this literature indicated that the above-mentioned studies lack incorporating a concept of Olympic education that includes the YOG as such, and not just juxtaposing the activities of the CEP to those inherent in competition, in the analysis of the experience of young athletes.

Given the foundations of Olympic education presented above, it seems more productive to examine the formative experience of young athletes in the YOG holistically. That is, considering participation in the YOG as an experience of Olympic education in which the four approaches (knowledge, experience, performance, and world-of-life) are clearly discernible, although at different levels. Thus, the focus of interest in this study is on the experience of young athletes as an immersion in a holistic experience of Olympic education. For the purposes of this research, the investigated mega-event was the third edition³ of the YOG, held in the city of Buenos Aires in 2018 (YOG-2018).

Our interest, therefore, lies in capturing the meanings constructed by individuals situated in a specific time and space, manifested in the concreteness of a complex network of intersubjectivities, interactions and inter-knowledges (CHAUVIN; JOUNIN, 2015), based on their most significant experiences in the YOG-2018, and thus verifying the possibility of understanding the YOG as a non-systematized experience of Olympic education in itself.

2 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This scientific investigation is centered on a qualitative approach from the fieldwork developed during the YOG-2018. Our interest, hence, pervades the capture of the meanings constructed by individuals located in a given time and space, manifesting, therefore, through the concreteness of a complex network of intersubjectivities, interactions, and inter-knowledge (CHAUVIN; JOUNIN, 2015).

For such a purpose, we resorted to the theoretical-methodological assumptions of ethnomethodology (GARFINKEL, 1992; COULON, 1995). Based on the ethnomethodological perspective, the erudite sociological interpretation should not serve as a pretext for the destruction of the initial and indicial contextual information produced by social actors in the routine of their actions (SILVA, 2012).

Therefore, we resorted to the guided interview (RICHARDSON, 2015), which guides the individuals interviewed toward reporting their experiences. That is, such an interview format does not intend to establish a structured relation of questions and answers but an interactive process with/among such individuals. According to Certeau (1994), reports have a routine and magisterial role in delimiting some uses of place, such as a narrative appropriation, that is, practices of space and time.

Objectively, we attempted to emphasize the reports produced by the young South American athletes regarding their experiences in the YOG-2018. The choice for such a public derives from a gap found in the literature regarding the referred mega event, with mostly North American or European athletes (SOUZA; TAVARES, 2020).

After immersion in the field, the conversation script was operationalized from the second half of the YOG-2018 with the main topic covering the most remarkable

³ Two other editions preceded the Games held in the Argentine capital, which were hosted in the cities of Singapore (2010) and Nanjing (2014), in Singapore and China, respectively. It is also worth mentioning that two editions of the Winter YOG were also held, hosted in Innsbruck (2012) and Lillehammer (2016), in Austria and Norway, respectively.

and meaningful experiences of the young athletes in that specific Olympic context, therefore encompassing the routine of the Youth Olympic Village (YOV) and respective sports competitions. For such a purpose, we resorted to the difficult and fruitful access to the YOV, between October 13 and 17, authorized by the organizers.

In line with our theoretical-methodological background, it is worth highlighting that the choice of the number of individuals composing the chart of the guided interviews sought not to meet the criteria of probabilistic sampling but occurred intentionally and by convenience. Due to language proficiency, we chose to approach South American young athletes who were moving around the YOV spaces and who showed accessibility and availability to participate in this research.

Thus, according to the chart below, a total of nine individuals of both sexes, belonging to five different countries who competed in individual or collective sports modalities constituted our guided interviews.

Chart 1 – Composition of the guided interviews.

Country	Sex		Sport modality		Participating individuals
	Male	Female	Individual	Collective	
Argentina	2	-	2	-	2
Bolivia	-	1	-	1	1
Brazil	1	2	-	3	3
Ecuador	-	1	1	-	1
Uruguay	-	1	1	-	1
Venezuela	1	-	1	-	1
TOTAL	4	5	5	4	9

Source: The authors.

As recommended by authors such as Barbot (2015) and Richardson (2015), when approaching the referred individuals, we briefly introduced ourselves and explained our object of study to obtain their respective consent. In addition, we made sure to assure them proper anonymity by identifying them only by their respective nationalities. Thus, holding the authorization of the referred individuals, we recorded their reports in audio for further transcription and analysis.

Aiming to support the analyses and interpretation of the empirical material produced, we based our work on three ethnomethodological key concepts, which were systematized by the French sociologist Alain Coulon, namely: indictment, reportability, and concept of the member. The first one is represented by a “margin of incompleteness” of words, such that the indicative terms – particular to a certain group – can only be understood in a given context and particular circumstances of production. The second key concept refers to how daily scenarios are described by social actors, making the reality that they produce and experience understandable, shareable, analyzable, and reportable. Finally, the concept of member transcends the idea of a member socially belonging to a certain group to the ability to dominate and share a common language that aggregates the individual into the group, thus providing acceptance and recognition (COULON, 1995).

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that this study was appreciated and approved by the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo Research Ethics Committee (REC) under decision number 99991018.0.0000.5542.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In presenting the results, we used Coulon's (1995) indexical terms based on the mapping of ideas, words, and expressions that emerged with greater prominence in the treatment of on-site produced data, whose interactive process with/among South American young athletes was directed towards discussing their participation throughout the mega-event, with an emphasis on the experience that had most impressed them from the opening ceremony until the moment they were being interviewed (which varied between October 13th and 17th, 2018)

3.1 INDEXICAL TERM 1: "IT IS AS IF YOU WERE WATCHING ON TV"

Based on the prerogative of reporting the experiences beyond the space of the Village, we identified that most of the athletes interviewed pointed out a correspondence between such a remarkable/meaningful experience and the dimensionality concerning the Olympic sports competitions, either due to their respective dispute locations or the high competition level involved, as demonstrated below:

What has most impressed me are the competition venues: very well organized and everything is very well placed because everything has everything, nothing is missing, there is good security, everything is well organized and very impressive (Athlete from Venezuela).

Ah! What impressed me the most was the location of the competition. [...] **It is as if you were watching on TV, then you say:** "I am watching on TV, the whole world is watching me. It is an experience like it were from another world (Athlete from Brazil, griffin ours).

Nothing but the sports, the level of athletes, which are very good. I am a fighter, and I am surprised to see people my age fighting in Judo, Taekwondo, who are very good athletes, at very good levels. It seems like adult level, and we are teenagers and that seems to me, wow! (Athlete from Argentina).

By being invited to report (and, therefore, construct) their most meaningful experience in the YOG-2018, the young athletes make use of more pragmatic aspects, such as distinct organization and safety pertinent to their place of competition (arena, track, tatami, etc.), as well as certain indicative characteristics, highlighting: "It is as if you were watching on TV" and "It seems like adult level". Nevertheless, it is worth wondering: after all, what do those pragmatic aspects and such indicative terms share?

Based on the reportability of the group, we can conclude that both aspects manifest satisfaction and/or surprised by their respective members regarding the unique dimension of the games, something more or less equivalent to their background knowledge on the conventional OG, therefore meeting the indicative expression that prominently emerged from the analytical process: "it is like a real Olympics". Well, such an expression seems to corroborate the comparative attitude of young athletes towards the relation between the YOG and the OG.

According to Coulon (1995), by making their experience visible, reportable, and understandable, the social actors are relentlessly demonstrating the respective meanings that are being produced. Therefore, it seems meaningful that despite the young athletes mentioning, for example, some aspects belonging to the Village (like the collective sharing with other athletes), it has been almost immediately and irretrievably followed by other aspects inherent to their preferred sports competitions (as the appreciation of sporting dispute). Thereby, the reports described below seem to represent how those individuals mediated ambivalent aspects:

Ah, many things impressed me! I didn't imagine that it was a Village, I thought that each of us would stay in a hotel, in a different corner, but, like this, all the people together like this is an emotion, it is like a real Olympics for me. The competition is like something from another world. I am considering this [YOG-2018] as the most important option of my life so far. I intend to win more titles, get further ahead, and compete in other [Olympic Games] (Athlete from Brazil).

[...] When we are not competing, there is no rivalry among us. That is, we live [at YOV] with the same people and the competition is behind us, we still have the same friendships, everything is the same, and we are still friends (Athlete from Bolivia).

Well, we came to the [Youth] Olympic Games with the thought like this, as I've already been to the South American and World Championships. We can't imagine how big this is here. And I think that since we are young, sometimes we don't even realize what is going on, so, I kind of came thinking: "It is just going to be a game. But the OG is much bigger than that [...] They have a greater value. So, we only realize this when we are here (Athlete from Brazil).

Such a scenario illustrates that interpreting that the YOG-2018 resembles the "real" OG describes how the Brazilian athlete seems representative of how they cope with the institutionally engineered Olympic and ambivalent narrative. Ultimately, they acknowledge that the OG holds a unique opportunity to share different cultures, the experience of mutual respect and understanding, justifying, for example, the "emotion", or "value", and the consequent comparison with the OG, their values, and symbols, such as illustrated in the abovementioned reports.

In this way, it should be noted that to some extent, such reports are in line with the propagated Olympic spirit, with the desirable association between sport, culture, and education, in an attempt to promote "[...] requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play" (IOC, 2020, p. 11). It can be argued that such a premise is in conformity with the conception of Baron Pierre de Coubertin - the re-creator of the modern Olympic Games and founder of the MO - that the Olympic Games [and, by extension, the YOG] should harmoniously combine sports competitions with artistic and cultural elements, preserving a close relationship with the model idealized in ancient Greece (MÜLLER; TODT, 2015).

Such data indicates how the YOG can function as an Olympic education experience by emulating the real Olympic experience that helps to internalize behaviors and values dear to Olympism in young athletes, as well as stimulate in them the desire to participate in the "real" Olympic Games.

3.2 INDEXICAL TERM 2: “HAVE TO LEAVE A LOT OF THINGS BEHIND”

Despite not delegitimizing the referred cultural and evaluative possibilities (also evidenced in the remaining reports), we can infer that the sports dimension and, consequently, the concept of competition (along with their sacrifices and respective implications) seem to be the most meaningful part in the reportability of the young athletes interviewed, as demonstrated in the following report:

Well, my experience has been that most of the people who are here try, and the people who are not here don't understand the sacrifice that it takes for an athlete to get here, that they **have to leave a lot of things behind**, families, friends... And when you are here, you interact with people who have done the same as you, who sacrifice their lives to give everything in [their sport]. That you have time to prepare for it, and sometimes things don't work out the way you think, because life doesn't always turn in the same direction. And that is what I have learned the most here (Athlete from Ecuador, griffin ours).

Indeed, the reportability of the interviewed individuals demonstrates that they compose a group of elite athletes – within their age group –, illustrating the ‘concept of member’ introduced by Coulon (1995). In this context, it is worth mentioning the systematic review carried out by Souza and Tavares (2020) regarding the participation of young elite athletes in different editions of the aforementioned games. Herein, we identified that because they are elite athletes in their categories, the sports dimension – through their athletic performance in competitions – represented the most prominent aspect of their experience, more remarkably relating to the value of excellence, that is, performance as a dimension of Olympic education approaches.

Thus, we understand that high-performance sport seems to impose the young athletes a primary relationship, demanding a considerable amount of time, effort, and energy in favor of effectively developing their sports careers, thus associating with the idea that such individuals need “to leave a lot of things behind”, such as the demands pertaining to the school/academic environment.

Actually, on this scope, it is worth mentioning a study carried out by Bossle and Lima (2013), who observed that most of the young athletes interviewed (from Esporte Clube Cruzeiro and do Grêmio Futebol Porto Alegrense) understand the relationship between school training and athletic training unevenly since the latter overcome the former. Thus, some school studies end up unevenly representing a sort of plan B in case of possible failure in an attempt in their professional career (in this case, soccer), or simply as a way of advising for interviews, and contracts, among other complementary activities (BOSSLE; LIMA, 2013).

Symptomatically, we have solid clues to understand that the sports competition represents the main horizon in the participation experience of the young athletes interviewed in the YOG-2018, to the extent of considering it the most important option in their lives at that moment, presumably, until achieving the opportunity of an eventual dispute in the OG adult version.

In summary, based on the referred indictment, we conclude that by participating in the YOG-2018, the young South American athletes produce meanings that seem

to meet those produced by the athletes themselves who had participated in the conventional OG, whose focus, broadly speaking, encompasses their performance in sports competition. According to Tavares (1998), by observing the Brazilian athletes participating in the OG of Atlanta, 1996, for example, it was identified that despite having attended the cultural activities offered and even considering them important, they would always let them be overwhelmed by their respective obligations towards sports activities, which the author considers perfectly logical and expected since the subjects are high-performance athletes.

In the case of the young athletes who participated in the YOG-2018, as well as the previous editions of such a mega event – despite being a distinct scenario, marked by the offer of systematized activities by the CEP –, we found that the situation is not that different. According to authors like Schnitzer *et al.* (2014), participating in the activities of the CEP (72%) was less appreciated by the athletes in the Winter YOG of Innsbruck compared, for example, to the mere fact of living with other athletes in the YOY (93.3 %), their tours in the city – capital of one of the Austrian states (93.2 %), and, especially, the participation in their sports competitions (96.6 %), therefore corroborating our data. These data demonstrate that the Culture and Education Program is not understood as part of the YOG as a holistic educational experience, but rather as something complementary and not necessarily articulated to the Games experience.

Peters and Schnitzer (2015), in turn, add that most of the young athletes interviewed described their experience of participating in the Winter YOG of Innsbruck as “excellent”, “wonderful”, “overwhelming”, and “impressive”, especially by correlating it with the sporting competition and opening ceremonies.

Indeed, other studies also corroborate such data by pointing out that the sports dimension – through athletic performance in competitions – represented the most dominant aspect for the young elite athletes participating in different editions of the YOG (KRIEGER; KRISTIANSEN, 2016; MACINTOSH; PARENT; CULVER, 2022). Thus, according to Souza, Mataruna-Dos-Santos, and Tavares (2019), these young athletes end up using such events as a preparation gateway for the conventional Olympic Games. However, competitiveness, the desire to win, always ideally conditioned by a positive ethic of fair play, are objects of experiential learning, not systematized, that reinforce the notion that the YOG can be an educational experience that transcends its specific educational program.

3.3 INDEXICAL TERM 3: “IT DOESN’T MATTER IF YOU WON OR NOT, YOU ARE FROM THE GAMES”

Still regarding such a scope of sporting competition, in addition to the high level of the competitors, organization, and structure of the spaces, it also calls our attention to the importance attributed by the athletes to some details related to the referred sporting dimension, such as in the fragments below:

Like when we went to play, when we went to enter the court and they speak your name, you know? You feel very important. I felt very important at that moment, it was an incredible experience (Athlete from Brazil).

How people look at you in the streets, as if you were famous [...] and ask you for photos, T-shirts, and things like that. [...] Ah! You feel special, you feel valued. It doesn't matter if you won or not, you are from the Games [YOG-2018], so... like when we were on the streets going to the games and the policemen do the escort, it feels like we are important (laughs) (Athlete from Uruguay, griffin ours).

Hearing their name being announced before entering the arena, and/or being escorted by the police towards the spaces of competition may represent trivial aspects to some consolidated athletes; however, they seem to hold great meaning to young athletes. After all, such scenarios represent a certain prestige, with which they are yet to be fully familiarized due to their current search for greater visibility in their respective sports.

Symptomatically, according to our interviewees' discursive productions, it proves to go beyond, especially towards establishing a relationship that makes them particularly moved. It is about their relationship with the group of fans/spectators, referring them to meanings attributed to affection and recognition originating in themselves, either in the streets – such as in the report of the Uruguayan athlete being recognized and cheered –, or in the referred spaces of competition, such as in the following reports:

For me, it was the welcoming of the people, going up on the tatami where the competition was, and the crowd there, that was what impressed me most about the games. The recognition of the public (Athlete from Argentina).

Yes, because when we were leaving, two Argentinean [fans] approached us and said that they had come to see our game and asked: "Please give us your jersey. And I told them that I couldn't give it to them, and they told me that they would go to the last game to see us play. [...] Well, it is very exciting to see that people from other countries are there to support and encourage us (Athlete from Bolivia).

Their discursive productions offer some evidence to reflect on how meaningful feedback from the public is for young athletes, being a great incentive for them to pursue high-performance sports. Actually, such feedback seems to be even more iconic when involving fans from other countries, like in the example reported by the Bolivian athlete concerning local fans. Well, in the sporting context, the uniform used by an Olympic athlete during competition is known to have great representativeness both to the athletes and those who cheer together with them, especially for being the colors in the national flag. Thus, the attitude of someone 'asking for their shirt' is implied with a certain indictment that may, to some degree, reify some admiration, perhaps, a relation of idolatry by the doer.

This last point allows inferring, therefore, that the participants in the YOG-2018 build meanings that allegorically appear as a confirmation that their efforts/sacrifices to reach that point, in fact, were worthwhile, regardless of their respective results – that is, whether medalists or not – making them feel special, valued, prestigious as if they were participating in a "real Olympics".

Such data indicate a change in the lives of these young people that makes the distance between athletic experience and everyday life experience increasingly smaller.

In this process, one enters the still not fully well-studied assumption that the (Olympic) values of sports become part of the values of the subjects' everyday world as well.

4 FINAL REMARKS

The Youth Olympic Games were created with a certain educational intentionality. However, much of the research until now distinguished education and culture programs as the educational dimension of the Games, without taking into consideration that the systematized dimension of Olympic education is only part of its educational approaches. In fact, the experience of living, competing, and approaching other dimensions of individuals' social life seems to be the biggest part of what Olympic education should be.

Based on the theoretical-methodological background of ethnomethodology, we captured some clues regarding the meanings constructed by South American athletes about their most remarkable and meaningful experiences in the context of the YOG-2018, and in this way, understanding the Games themselves as an immersive educational experience.

Our results indicate that the studied games reify the common and socially shared knowledge by the referred a select group of elite athletes – within their age group –, especially associated with the identification of a dimension similar to the adult version of the OG, including their symbols, rites, values, and stories. In the final analysis, although they come from diverse places and, in some cases, speak different languages, it is observed that these individuals share experiences in the temporal and spatial context of the YOG-2018. Hence, despite being clearly diverse, their experience of participating in the YOG-2018 seems to have as the main beacon of their respective Olympic competition, since it is more directly linked to the development of their sports careers. In this context, being an Olympic athlete presupposes the acquisition of a set of physical, psychosocial, moral, and cognitive characteristics.

Despite originating from many different places and, in some cases, speaking different languages, they share a set of dreams, goals, and certain values in the temporal and spatial contexts of the YOG-2018, thus qualifying them as members of a certain group of excellence. Therefore, regardless of their pretensions for Olympic medals, they participated in those games aiming to give their best in their respective sports competitions as if they were participating in a “real Olympics”. Thereby, it is a certain unity amidst diversity.

Finally, if Olympic education has four dimensions - knowledge-oriented, Olympic experience-oriented, sports performance-oriented, and world-of-life oriented (NAUL, 2008), we can say that the meanings constructed by young athletes for their experiences help us understand the YOG as an effective formative experience.

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Resumo: O objetivo do presente estudo é compreender os sentidos construídos por atletas sul-americanos sobre sua experiência nos Jogos Olímpicos da Juventude de Buenos Aires em 2018. Para tanto, esta investigação centrou-se em uma abordagem de natureza qualitativa, baseada nos pressupostos teórico-metodológicos da etnometodologia, com o uso da entrevista guiada. Os resultados apontaram que os referidos Jogos reificam o saber comum e socialmente compartilhado entre os sujeitos como membros de um grupo de elite esportiva, veiculado, sobretudo, pela identificação com a dimensão relativamente proporcional à versão adulta dos JO. Conclui-se que, embora sejam oriundos de lugares diversos e, em alguns casos, falem línguas diferentes, esses sujeitos compartilham simultaneamente um conjunto de sonhos, objetivos e valores específicos no contexto dos Jogos realizados na capital da Argentina.

Palavras-chave: Jogos Olímpicos da Juventude. Atletas sul-americanos. Etnometodologia.

Resumen: El objetivo del presente estudio es comprender los significados construidos por los atletas sudamericanos sobre su experiencia en los Juegos Olímpicos de la Juventud de Buenos Aires 2018. Para ello, esta investigación se centró en un enfoque cualitativo, basado en los supuestos teórico-metodológicos de la etnometodología, utilizando la entrevista guiada. Los resultados mostraron que los mencionados Juegos cosifican el conocimiento común y compartido socialmente entre estos sujetos, considerados como miembros de un grupo deportivo de élite, transmitido principalmente por la identificación de una dimensión relativamente proporcional a la versión adulta de los Juegos. Se concluye que, si bien provienen de diferentes lugares y, en algunos casos, hablan diferentes idiomas, estos sujetos comparten simultáneamente un conjunto de sueños, metas y valores específicos en el contexto de los Juegos realizados en la capital argentina.

Palabras clave: Juegos Olímpicos de la Juventud. Deportistas sudamericanos. Etnometodología.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Adriano Lopes de Souza: Production and analysis of data.

Thayse Mayan Alarcon Ferreira: Production of data.

Otávio Tavares: Text guidance and review.

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RESEARCH ETHICS

The research project was submitted and approved by the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo – Campus Goiabeira Ethics Committee, protocol n. 99991018.0.0000.5542.

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EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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