

THE INTERNAL LOGIC OF MEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS AND AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A HIGH LEVEL GYMNASTIC GYM.

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ABSTRACT

This investigation presents, first, an internal logic analysis of Men's Artistic Gymnastics (MAG) from a Motor Praxiology perspective. Secondly, it describes the dynamic functioning of a high level gymnastic gymnasium. And finally, it presents a transverse analysis trying to reveal the level of congruence between the dominating characteristics of the internal logic and the training culture that is involved in the preparation of high-level gymnasts. The analysis of the internal logic consisted of a theoretical investigation of the content of the accepted rules, in this case the Code of Points edited by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG). The analysis of the training culture of the Gym consisted of a field investigation within an ethnographic feature, developed over a year and half period in the MAG's training Gym of Sant Cugat del Vallès Olympic Training Center (CAR – Barcelona). As a result of this investigation, we present some dominant aspects of six of MAG's apparatuses, which indicate the existence of a modality in which the domain of the body prevails. The MAG is a sport where stereotyped motor actions, mostly acrobatics, emerge through exercises composed according to the established criteria of the Punctuation System. These must be performed precisely according to the technical model established by the rules, and also in accordance with the aesthetic expectations of the gymnastics culture. With respect to the gymnasium, we present the most relevant characteristics of the training dynamic, focusing attention on the social world (participants, hierarchy commandants, social structure), in a space–timing basis of gymnastic preparation, the material used for training, the most important steps of the gymnastic professional career, and the symbolism involved in this activity that defines the Gymnasium as a gymnastic microculture. On a transverse level we notice that the training culture is not only congruent to the internal logic demands, but it also reinforces the values that define the practice of this sport, harnessing the tradition of the secular gymnastics culture that display the hegemony of strict, martial, disciplined training.