CHAPTER 4: MOTIVATION FOR SPORT IN PORTUGUESE YOUTH - biological and social dimensions

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INTRODUCTION

Participation in sport is a common feature in the lives of children and adolescents throughout the world. The form of participation, however, varies from informal sport activities (e.g., a game of football (soccer) among neighborhood boys) to recreational sport (e.g., basketball or volleyball at a recreational center) to organized sport (e.g., regular practice and competition with a formal team or club). Organized sport implies the presence of a coach, and regular practices and competitions during the course of a season. The structure of sport programs for children and adolescents varies among countries (De Knop et al., 1996) and sport opportunities vary with cultural context. An issue of central importance for those who directly work with youth sport programs is understanding why children and youth participate in sports.

Initial insights about the motivations of children and adolescents for participating in sport are based largely on data for North America (Gill et al., 1983; Gould et al., 1985; Ewing and Seefeldt, 1988). Recent information for urban Mexican youth 9-18 years is provided by Siegel et al. (this volume).

Corresponding data on motivations for sport among Portuguese children and adolescents also emerged in the 1980s. For example, the Portuguese version of the Participation Motivation Questionnaire was adapted by Serpa and Frias (1990) and published by Serpa (1992) as QMAD. It was preceded by another Portuguese version from Cruz and Cunha (1990) which was mainly used by Cruz and psychological researchers from University of Minho (Cruz and Costa, 1988; Cruz et al., 1988; Cruz and Viana, 1989). The QMAD was used in Lisbon (Costa, 1992; Varela-Silva, 1993), Oporto (Serpa, 1992; Fonseca and Fontainhas, 1993; Costa, 1991; Fonseca and Ribeiro, 1994), Vila Real (Vasconcelos Raposo and Figueiredo, 1997; Vasconcelos Raposo et al., 1996), and Azores (Ávila and Vasconcelos Raposo, 1999).