



**THE MANIFESTATIONS OF SPORT IN LATIN AMERICA AND BRAZIL'S PLACE:
APPROXIMATIONS, DISTANCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

**AS MANIFESTAÇÕES DO ESPORTE NA AMÉRICA LATINA E O LUGAR DO
BRASIL: APROXIMAÇÕES, DISTANCIAMENTOS E CONTRIBUIÇÕES**

**LAS MANIFESTACIONES DEL DEPORTE EN AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL LUGAR DE
BRASIL: ENFOQUES, DISTANCIAS Y CONTRIBUCIONES**

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Abstract: This article aims to analyze the ways in which sport manifests itself in 19 Latin American countries, as well as Brazil's place in this process, capturing the possible options that approximations and distances can offer. As a qualitative study, it uses the comparative method, documental criticism and the evidential paradigm as theoretical and methodological precepts. The sources are 19 official laws and three national sport policy documents from the countries. Sport is manifested through three axes that are also shown as possible fields of action: 1 – Leisure and Health; 2 - Performance; 3 – Educational. It is necessary to understand sport in its amplitude, but also by capturing its singularities and different appropriations in the Latin American contexts, which is fundamental to think about its policies and its development, especially in the biggest country of the bloc, Brazil.

Keywords: Sport. Training. Sports policies. Sport manifestation. Latin America.

Resumo: Este artigo objetiva analisar a maneiras como o esporte se manifesta em 19 países da América Latina, bem como o lugar do Brasil nesse processo, captando as possíveis contribuições que as aproximações e distanciamentos podem oferecer. De natureza qualitativa, utiliza o método comparativo, a crítica documental e o paradigma indiciário como preceitos teóricos metodológicos. As fontes são 19 leis

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oficiais e três documentos de política nacional do esporte dos países. Percebemos que o esporte é manifestado por meio de três eixos que também se mostram como os possíveis campos de atuação: 1 – Lazer e Saúde; 2 - Rendimento; 3 – Educativo. É preciso compreender o esporte em sua amplitude, mas também captando suas singularidades e diferentes apropriações nos contextos latinos, isso é fundamental para se pensarem suas políticas e seu desenvolvimento, sobretudo no maior país do bloco, o Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Esporte. Formação. Políticas Esportivas. Manifestações Esportivas. América Latina.

Resumen: Tiene como objetivo analizar las formas en que el deporte se manifiesta en 19 países de América Latina, así como el lugar de Brasil en ese proceso, captando los posibles aportes que pueden ofrecer las aproximaciones y distancias. De naturaleza cualitativa, utiliza el método comparativo, la crítica documental y el “paradigma indiciario” como preceptos teóricos y metodológicos. Las fuentes son 19 leyes oficiales y documentos de política deportiva nacional de tres países. Observamos que el deporte se manifiesta a través de tres ejes, que también se muestran como posibles campos de trabajo: 1 – Ocio y Salud; 2 – Rendimiento; 3 – Educativo. Es necesario entender el deporte en su amplitud, pero también captar sus singularidades y sus diferentes apropiaciones en contextos latinos, algo fundamental para crear sus políticas y para su desarrollo, especialmente en el país más grande del bloque, Brasil.

Palabras clave: Deporte. Formación. Políticas deportivas. Manifestaciones del deporte. América Latina.

1 Introduction

Latin America (LA) is a geopolitical division that corresponds to countries located in North, Central and South America, which have the “romance languages” (derived from Latin) as the officially spoken language. These countries also have the majority colonization of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires. Currently, the bloc comprises 20 nations,⁴ 18 of which speak Spanish. Brazil (Portuguese) and Haiti (French) are the only ones with a different language.

This region stands out for its vast territorial coverage and cultural diversity (BARABAS, 2015). Thus, it is necessary to understand LA from a point of view in which the European impacts, especially Hispanics, are visible, whether in cultural traits, language, education, sports and even reflecting on scientific practices and the theoretical/epistemological field that constitutes school and technical/higher education systems (STIEG, 2021).⁵

This movement is also revealed in the field of sports and Physical Education, whether in the field of practices and management (COSTA, 1999; ARBENA; LaFRANCE, 2002) or in the field of academic production (GAMA; FERREIRA NETO; SANTOS, 2021). When talking about South American countries, Costa (1999) highlights that this combination of different cultural values and interpretations gives pluralism to practices and to what is related to sport in this region.

⁴ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁵ It is possible to capture traces of Spanish colonization on a larger scale, but other countries such as Germany, the United States, Portugal, Holland, France and England also participated in the process regarding Latin America.

Thus, it seems reasonable to ask: How does sport manifest itself in these countries? What is Brazil's place in this process? Is there dialog between the countries? What possible contributions can we have to broaden our view and develop our Brazilian sports policies?

Costa (1999) states that, in view of the broad scenario and cultural diversifications, it becomes important to conduct research in the scope of professional training and sociocultural view of sport. "*Para Muchos, la carencia de explicaciones históricas estimuló el carácter arbitrario de las interpretaciones sobre el deporte en América del Sur*"⁶ (COSTA, 1999, p. 206).

For the author, both the professional development and the job market of those who work with sport are correlated to social changes, national integration, the media, and the very cultural identity of the countries and the continent, modified mainly in the globalization process.

For Arbena and LaFrance (2002), the contemporary development of sports in LA and the Caribbean is part of the constitution of these peoples, so it must consider three main sources: the indigenous games and recreation, the activities introduced by the colonizers, and the modern practices spread in the North Atlantic, mainly influenced by English and Americans.

Likewise, Bravo, D'Amico and Parrish (2016), when addressing the theme of the organization of sport in LA, also highlight its correlation with politics, management and diversified cultural contexts, demonstrating that: "[...] over the past several decades scholars have used diverse disciplinary approaches (anthropology, cultural studies, history, comparative sport policy, management, sociology, etc.) to analyze sport in Latin America" (BRAVO; D'AMICO; PARRISH, 2016, p. 4).

We understand that it is necessary to study the sports laws that support policies in a Latin American context, establishing a correlation with training for sport and with sports training, understanding that both require broad policies thought in the long term. Thus, in this study, we aim to analyze the ways in which sport is manifested in LA countries, as well as Brazil's place in this process, capturing the possible contributions that approximations and distances can offer to the sporting development of our country.⁷

2 Methodology

This is a qualitative study, of exploratory and documental nature (CELARD, 2012). It uses critical-documentary analysis, the comparative method (BLOCH, 1998; 2001) and the evidential paradigm (GINZBURG, 1989; 2002) as a theoretical and methodological approach. For Bloch (1998, p. 122-123), the process of comparison

[...] thus understood is common to all aspects of the method, but, depending on the field of study considered, it is susceptible to two applications that are

⁶ "For many, the lack of historical explanations encouraged the arbitrary nature of the interpretations of sports in South America."

⁷ We emphasize that this work is a part of a larger project that is being developed in a Brazilian federal public university.

completely different due to its principles and results. First case: we chose societies separated in time and space by distances such that the analogies observed on both sides, between this or that phenomenon, cannot, with all evidence, be explained by mutual influences or by some community of origins. [Second case] [...] Studying in parallel neighboring and contemporary societies, constantly influenced by each other, subject in their development, due to their proximity and synchronization, to the action of the same great causes, and going back, at least partially, to a common origin.

Thus, we are interested in employing the comparative method to diversified contexts, but which present a shared phenomenon, that is, the legal regulation of sports planned and in force in the LA countries.

Our sources are composed of the official Laws and legal documents on sports regulation from 19 LA countries.⁸ In dialog with Bloch (2001), we highlight the importance of not making assertions without first being able to verify them. We carried out the online survey on official government platforms. We used the descriptors: *Ley deportiva*; *Ley de Deporte* and *Lei Esportiva*. In addition to *Política Deportiva* and *Política Esportiva*. After identifying the documents on the websites, we downloaded their most recent version.

We propose to question the sources and make them speak, seeking to understand them and not judge them.⁹ To this end, we created a questionnaire that served as a common thread when analyzing the documents. Thus, when faced with the documents, we seek to understand: a) Does it present a classification of categories/manifestations of the sport? b) What are the nomenclatures? How are they organized? c) Which countries present a concept of sport in its entirety? For Le Goff (2012), documentary sources allow social understanding in a given dimension of time and are characterized as a form of written memory of events.

For Sá-Silva, Guindani, and Almeida (2009), the use of documents should be valued in research involving Human and Social Sciences, because they are fundamental to the understanding of objects that require a sociocultural and historical contextualization.

We also used the Gephi software as a tool to aid in the analysis and generation of Figure 1. To do so, we made an Excel spreadsheet with data from each country related to the sporting events present in the laws. In the program, the weights of nodes (connection points) and edges (connection lines) formed by pairing the types of manifestation and the name of the countries to which they belong were calculated. Thus, through Gephi, we obtained a graphical representation of connection networks, which demonstrates the correlation between the nomenclatures of sporting events present in the documents of each Latin American country in the sample.

⁸ Haiti was not included in our research because it was not possible to locate sources in that country, due to unavailability of documents.

⁹ We emphasize that, due to the diverse nature of the sources, some countries provided more information relevant to our object in their documents, some less. In addition, each document has its own rationale for writing and the logic of presenting the information is different.

Here, we emphasize that "[...] the user should keep in mind that automatic analysis presents generic results that indicate paths to be explored and interpreted manually" (SALVIATI, 2017, p. 5).

In this way, understanding the sources as culturally constructed artifacts full of intentionalities, we were not interested in judging them, but in questioning them (BLOCH, 2001), analyzing the traces and indications left in the clues and signs (GINZBURG, 1989; 2002) brought by the different contexts that address the legislation on sport in each country in LA.

3 Analysis and discussion

Sport and its manifestations in Latin America: between clues and configuration signs

We realized that, with the exception of Haiti, 19 countries in LA present and make available laws and official materials regarding the regulation of sport, some in a broader and more open way, others in a reduced form and with little information. With an initial analysis of the documents, it was possible to identify various aspects that bring the contexts closer and further apart. In this way, we believe it is necessary to dismantle the monuments (LE GOFF, 2012), unveiling them layer by layer and questioning them in detail.

It seems reasonable to us to deepen our analysis in the search for understanding how our object is configured in the Latin American legislations, establishing a common thread that shows itself, in general, in the correlation between laws/policies, sport manifestations,¹⁰ professional training and possible fields of action. A clue to this configuration is evidenced in the sports nomenclatures/manifestations present in each country, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Countries and sport manifestations

¹⁰Anchored in the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (1978) and in Tubino (2006), we understand that sport manifestations are the different ways in which sport can be classified, worked on, and inserted into society, considering the different groups and purposes for which it is intended in its uses and appropriations.

conceptual approaches between countries are also shown as a trait of LA. This is a factor that is possibly linked to the history of colonization, development, cultural appropriations and also political agreements between nations. This characteristic is no different when thinking about sport and its propositions, since, for certain lines of interpretation, it is part of the constitution of societies and their civilizing process (ELIAS, 1989).

The core of links between the edges materializes the approximations between the countries by means of the clusters formed (different groups of colors). Thus, we have a group of 14 countries that share at least one manifestation with the same nomenclature. We emphasize that we chose to keep the names in their original form and language, as presented in the sources.

Based on the configuration established by the connecting edges in Figure 1, we can see that the terms *Deporte de Alto Rendimiento* and *Deporte Recreativo* are the most shared among countries. When we deepen our analyzes having as a common thread the manifestations of sport present in each law, it is possible to point out that, in LA, the nations present sport situated in three main axes of action.¹¹ In this way, we established the axes as categories of analysis, namely:

1. **The leisure and health axis** – understood as the category in which the manifestations are aimed at the ample practice of sports, performed by the population in general on a leisure/recreation level, aiming at health and fun.

Our first category of analysis is present in practically all the countries (except for Ecuador), in this sense, it has a diversity in the composition of the terms and presents: (a) *Deporte Recreativo* (Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba and Nicaragua); (b) *Deporte Comunitario* (Argentina, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Uruguay); (c) *Deporte Social* (Argentina, Honduras and Mexico); (d) *Deporte para Todos y Todas* (Costa Rica and Peru); (e) *Desporto de Participação* or *Deporte de Participación* (Brazil and Paraguay); (f) *Deporte no Federado e Sistema de Deporte no Federado* (El Salvador and Guatemala); (g) *Deporte Social Comunitario* (Colombia); (h) *Deporte para todos, Recreación y Actividad Física* (Panama); (i) *Deporte Informal o de Tiempo Libre* (Dominican Republic) and; (j) *Subsistema comunal* (Venezuela).

In this case, we understand that, possibly, Latin American sports policies materialize the development of what Tubino (2010) calls **Contemporary Sport**, i.e., a movement that understands sport as a broad phenomenon and a constitutional right of all. "In this new perspective, sport started, in its expanded social scope, to comprise all people, regardless of their ages and physical situations" (TUBINO, 2010, p. 28).

This conception becomes clear when we analyze the way the manifestation is conceptualized in certain countries, such as El Salvador and Mexico.

¹¹ 1 - Leisure and Health; 2 - Performance; 3 - Educational. We have also found manifestations that, in the future, indicate the structuring of a new axis, that of "Specific Groups", aimed at inclusive practices and/or unique populations. Some nomenclatures serve as examples: *adaptado y/o paraolímpico* (Ecuador); *deporte para personas con discapacidad* (Costa Rica) and *deporte militar* (Nicaragua).

El Salvador (*deporte comunitario*) – sociocultural sports practices aimed at social inclusion, promotion of citizenship and community participation through sports and physical activities (EL SALVADOR, 2020).

Mexico (*deporte social*) – sport promoted to all people and that encourages equal participation in sporting activities for recreational, educational, health or rehabilitation purposes (MÉXICO, 2019).

Different from **Modern Sport**¹² (TUBINO, 2010), in contemporary times, the sporting events take on a comprehensive sociological perspective that seeks to work practices beyond high performance and spectacularization, focusing mainly on leisure and health.

In Brazil, Marcelino (2003) has been discussing this correlation for some years, emphasizing the perspective of leisure encompassed by sport in society as a whole and in government bodies. For him, it is necessary to create regional strategies for the implementation and consolidation of Public Policies for Leisure and Sport, since this field must be thought of in a unique way, with the training and development of personnel as fundamental elements and constituents of policies and actions.

Some countries work with this idea directly, including the nomenclatures of the manifestations having terms related to the field of leisure as the central axis. Thus, we observe the following examples:

Panama (*deporte para todos, recreación y actividad física*) – sports practices carried out by the population in general, aimed at leisure, integration, and health promotion (PANAMA, 2007).

Dominican Republic (*deporte informal o de tiempo libre*) – sports activities generally practiced by the population in their free time, for recreational and integration purposes. They also aim at health, quality of life, and social well-being (REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA, 2005).

Conceptually, we notice that the axis of sport focused on leisure and health is well materialized and present in Latin American countries. It is important to highlight that some countries such as Nicaragua, Argentina, Costa Rica, and El Salvador are repeated in the list; this is a common characteristic in all categories, as there is a subdivision in the treatment of the major axes in several laws.

In Argentina, for example, we identified *deporte comunitario* and *deporte social*, in Costa Rica, *deporte recreativo* and *deporte para todos y todas*, and in Nicaragua, besides *deporte recreativo*, there is also *deporte comunitario*. That is, besides pointing out specific characteristics, this subdivision helps to better delimit the lines of action and also resource targeting, since: "*El*

¹² According to Tubino (2010), Modern Sport originated in England in the 19th century, with the institutionalization of rules and sportive organizations, the creation of competitions and clubs, originating the associationism. Furthermore, the very arrival of Olympism, with the first Games of the modern era in 1896, boosted the spread of Modern Sport.

deporte, la recreación y la actividad física son instrumentos de cambio, de unión, de transformación individual y colectiva"¹³ (COSTA RICA, 2020, p.48).

Another factor is that we see the same nomenclatures for manifestations in different countries, this demonstrates an approximation between legislations and also between the way of conceiving sport in these nations, in this case in the specific axis of leisure and health. If we compare, for example, the concept of *deporte recreativo* in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, it is possible to see that they deal with practically the same situation and that they have similar objectives.

Costa Rica (*deporte recreativo*) – sports practices that aim to promote health and social inclusion, performed for fun and pleasure, without the purpose of competition or overcoming the opponent (COSTA RICA, 2020).

Nicaragua (*deporte recreativo*) – practiced in free time without the purpose of high competitive levels. It follows the rules established by each modality and its objectives are entertainment, health, and relaxation (NICARÁGUA, 2005).

We notice that this category has manifestations that, in general lines, show the sport practiced by everyone and in its correlation with leisure and health. However, we must make a counterpoint and note that this scenario is not always established.

Sin embargo, en gran cantidad de países latinoamericanos, no siempre este es el modelo ejemplar a seguir dentro de las políticas deportivas, todo queda en teoría, y cuando se lleva a la práctica son extensos los trámites burocráticos que imposibilitan el desarrollo óptimo de las políticas deportivas, quedando truncadas las posibilidades de desarrollo por la falta de políticas públicas, y este es un ejemplo palpable en nuestro país (BOSSIO, 2006, p. 90).¹⁴

It is fundamental to understand that we are dealing with a wide cultural diversity and that we need to be aware that there is a difference between what is prescribed and what is actually practiced in the different contexts.

When we look into the laws, we evidence some clues that help us to establish a backbone on the Latin American sports configuration. In this sense, it is necessary to conceptualize, categorize and analyze the different ways in which the sports phenomenon can be developed in countries. Thus, our next category of analysis seeks to better understand the statements made about high-performance sport and how it is configured in countries, as shown below.

¹³ "Sports, recreation and physical activity are instruments of change, of union, of individual and collective transformation."

¹⁴ "However, in a large number of Latin American countries, this is not always the exemplary model to follow within sports policies, everything remains in theory, and when it is put into practice, there are extensive bureaucratic procedures that make the optimal development of sports policies impossible, truncating the possibilities of development due to the lack of public policies, and this is a palpable example in our country" (BOSSIO, 2006, p. 90).

2. **The performance axis** – understood as the category in which the manifestations are aimed at sports practices and initiatives at a high-performance level, with the involvement of specific professionals, entities, and prepared athletes.

Like the first category, the second is also present in most countries (with the exception of Venezuela and Argentina), and is conceptualized using different terms: a) *Deporte de Alto Rendimiento* (Mexico, Honduras, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Colombia); b) *Desporto de Rendimento* or *Deporte de Rendimiento* (Brazil, Paraguay, Honduras and Mexico); c) *Deporte Federado* and *Sistema de Deporte Federado* (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Guatemala); d) *Deporte de Competencia y Alto Rendimiento* (Panama); e) *Deporte de Alto Rendimiento y Proyección Internacional y Deporte de competición* (Chile); f) *Deporte Profesional* (Ecuador and Nicaragua); g) *Deporte Olímpico* (Nicaragua); h) *Deporte de Afiliados* (Peru); and i) *Deporte asociado de alto rendimiento, deporte asociado profesional, deporte asociado recreativo* (Bolivia).

Oliveira and Guimarães (2016), when analyzing sports policies in the countries that make up the Mercosur bloc, state that actions in public management still have high-performance sport as a priority and that this "[...] probably stems from the ordinary interest of attracting symbolic and financial support through brands and extraordinary visibility achieved in different media spaces" (OLIVEIRA; GUIMARÃES, 2016, p. 551).

In our case, besides being present in virtually all countries, the performance axis has the term with the most links between edges, therefore, it is the most shared in Figure 1. This is *Deporte de Alto Rendimiento*, present in seven different countries. In these cases, the scope of the manifestations is similar in the textual construction itself, as shown in the following examples:

Honduras – the sport practiced with high technical, physical and scientific demands of preparation and training propitiates the sportsman to participate in high-level selections and competitions (HONDURAS, 2016).

Colombia – it is the practice of sports with demands for the highest performance, seeking training and physical-technical improvement for better results by the practicing athletes; in the case of Colombia, it can be characterized as *deporte aficionado* (which has no remuneration for the practitioners/athletes), or *deporte profesional* (where athletes are paid for their performance) (COLÔMBIA, 2018).

We realize that conceiving the practice of high performance as a specific manifestation, which has certain requirements and is restricted to certain audiences, is at the core of what countries establish. Observing the Brazilian example, it is possible to notice such movement.

Brazil (performance sport) – it is the sport practiced at a high level of performance, with specific training and national and international regulations made by federations according to each

modality. It may be professional (with a formal work contract and remuneration) and non-professional (without a work contract and with freedom of practice) (BRASIL, 1998).

In a Latin American context, especially those located in the Mercosur bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay), we signal the countries' initiatives in developing public policies directed towards sports, whose purpose is to obtain symbolic and financial support, evidencing the practices that consolidate and boost high-performance sports in their countries.

In this scenario, Oliveira and Leiro (2015) also state that the strengthening of international relations between countries, aiming to democratize sport and leisure, must be treated with multidisciplinary public policies, which understand them as a right for all and developed in an intersectoral manner. Thus, understanding the specificities, they highlight “[...] a importância da socialização das experiências desenvolvidas em cada país, como desafio estratégico de fortalecimento dos vínculos culturais, científicos e tecnológicos”¹⁵ (OLIVEIRA; LEIRO, 2015, p. 551).

Despite the many approximations, similarly to the first category, here there are some cases in which the country is repeated, presenting more than one manifestation for the performance axis. Mexico and Honduras have *deporte de alto rendimiento* and also *deporte de rendimiento*. Ecuador, in addition to the first, has *deporte profesional*. Chile differentiates in *deporte de alto rendimiento y proyección Internacional y deporte de competición*. In Nicaragua and Bolivia, countries that show the most variations in this axis, the division occurs as follows:

Bolivia – *deporte asociado competitivo, deporte asociado profesional and deporte asociado de alto rendimiento*;

Nicaragua – *deporte federado, deporte profesional and deporte olímpico*.

Analyzing the sources and their layers, we realize that this information is loaded with intentionalities and that capturing such an organization already shows us signs of different visions and priorities given to performance sport in these countries.

In Mexico and Honduras, the distinction between *deporte de rendimiento* and *deporte de alto rendimiento* is in the nature of the individual who practices it, since the first is promoted to people who want and can improve their level of sporting quality as amateurs, and the second is practiced with high technical, physical and scientific requirements for preparation and training, allowing the athlete to participate in high-level selections and competitions (HONDURAS, 2016; MÉXICO, 2019).

In Ecuador, in addition to sport focused on performance at a high-performance level, the idea of professionalism is linked to the fact that the modalities have remuneration and work

¹⁵ “[...] the importance of socializing the experiences developed in each country, as a strategic challenge to strengthen cultural, scientific and technological links.”

contract, having legally specialized entities for its development, covering the search for talent for high performance, configuring the *deporte profesional* (EQUADOR, 2010).¹⁶

In Chile, we see that the idea of international projection is associated with high performance, which, in turn, is also linked to *deporte de competición*, which corresponds to all systematic and specialized sports practices, subject to norms, rules, with a pre-established calendar and schedule of events (CHILE, 2015).

In Nicaragua and Bolivia, we can see the previous ideas materialized together. In both cases, *deporte federado* and *profesional* resembles the Ecuadorian organization. The Bolivian idea of associated competitive sport has the same line of reasoning with what is established in Chile. In Nicaragua, Olympic sports are differentiated from other practices, constituting a manifestation and, similarly to Chile, it is related to competitions and projection of athletes (NICARÁGUA, 2005).

Understanding high-performance sport in different countries and contexts is to understand the scope of this manifestation in these visions. It also implies realizing the importance of developing well-defined public sports policies, which locate the space of each axis, which think organically about the country's sporting development, which respect local singularities, but which also seek to establish external dialogs.

El deporte y sus valores son auxiliares para encaminar a una sociedad hacia la gobernanza democrática, pues es un tema que necesita equilibradamente de: 1) la intervención, regulación y fomento de parte del gobierno; 2) el involucramiento e interés de la sociedad civil; y 3) del apoyo monetario del mercado para alcanzar distintas -pero todas válidas y beneficiosas- metas dentro de una sociedad (CUEVAS GALÌCIA, 2019, p. 32).¹⁷

It should be noted that high-performance sport is also an important pillar for thinking about sports, social and economic policies for the development of a nation. Thus, it is essential to think of it together with the other manifestations, not overlapping one another, and, above all, provide the necessary conditions for it to develop and evolve at a level of excellence and, as the nomenclature itself establishes, at a level of high performance.

In this case, not only the development of athletes and entities should be prioritized, but also the training of subjects who will work with sport, from practices to management. Thus, when analyzing the performance axis in sports events present in LA, we need to think and study the training not only of coaches but also of other subjects/agents of sport, as established by the general

¹⁶ Besides the countries mentioned, *deporte profesional* is also present in Brazil (as a subcategory of *desporto de rendimento*), Peru (as a subcategory of *deporte de afiliados*), and the Dominican Republic (without being conceptualized in the official document).

¹⁷ "Sport and its values are auxiliary to guide a society towards democratic governance, since it is an issue that, in a balanced way, needs: 1) intervention, regulation and promotion by the government; 2) the involvement and interest of civil society; and 3) the monetary support of the market to achieve different -but all valid and beneficial- goals within a society (CUEVAS GALÌCIA, 2019, p. 32)."

sports laws in Brazil (article 88), Argentina (Article 40), Cuba (Article 2), Honduras (Article 5) and Venezuela (Article 6).

We understand that it is important to have the manifestations established and, as analyzed in some countries, subdivided into specific categories. However, we need to ask about the necessary and required training for these subjects to act in each of these axes. First, we need to understand how this is present in the documents, whether they have an educational axis and whether in this axis, in addition to the prescriptions for basic education, issues related to training for sport are also discussed, as discussed below in the next category.

3. **The educational axis** – understood as the category in which the manifestations deal with sport in an educational level (practiced in schools in PE classes and in universities) and formative (both in sport initiation to prepare future athletes, and in the education and training of professionals), involving educational systems and also training entities.

In our third category analyzed we have: a) the *Deporte Universitario* (Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Colombia and Nicaragua); b) *Deporte Formativo* or *Desporto de Formação* (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Paraguay); c) *Desporto Educacional* or *Deporte Educacional* (Brazil and Paraguay); d) *Deporte Educativo* and *Subsistema Educativo* (Argentina and Venezuela); e) *Deporte Escolar* (Dominican Republic and Nicaragua); f) *Deporte Escolar y Universitario* (Cuba); g) *Deporte Estudiantil* (Peru); h) *Deporte Escolar o Colegial* (Costa Rica); and i) *Formación para el deporte* (Chile).

In this axis, we assume the manifestations that present the greatest diversity, since we allocate sport in different lines of action, having the educational element in common. In this way, we can subdivide the manifestations presented in four interconnected areas: 1 – the first one that deals with sport at the school level (in basic education); 2 – the second covering university sports; 3 – a third that covers the sport from a training perspective (citizens and athletes); 4 – and the fourth deals with sport in its correlation with training to act in it.

The first aspect we have evidenced, that of school sport, is present in many countries and is one of the central elements in the objectives of the laws. Perhaps, along with the performance axis, this is one of the most known and discussed aspects. The examples highlighted below give us an idea of how two different LA countries conceptualize this manifestation:

Brazil (*desporto escolar*) – this deals with sports practices in schools/education systems, avoids selectivity and hyper-competitiveness, and aims at the integral development of the individual (BRASIL, 1998).

Nicaragua (*deporte escolar*) – practiced at all levels of the basic education system, compulsory in the curricula and extracurricular activities, it aims to contribute to the integral development of the student (NICARÁGUA, 2005).

Tubino (2010) reinforces the idea that school sports should constitute a pillar for the sporting and educational development of a country. When talking about the Brazilian context, he emphasizes that what he calls sport-education has a fundamental social and educational role, which can be practiced within the school and also outside it as a transformative element, based on the principles of inclusion, participation, cooperation, of co-education and co-responsibility.

The author also helps us to better understand how this manifestation should be addressed in such a plural and unique space at the same time as the school, that is, how to respect the diversity of subjects and, in parallel, develop inclusive sporting practices and that may also reveal talents. In this sense, Tubino (2010) gives us an important contribution from a Brazilian point of view, pointing out that Sport-Education should be treated from two perspectives, that of school sports (which aims to compete and train new sports talents) and educational sport (which aims at the integral training of the individual, avoiding selectivity and hypercompetitiveness).

In the case of Brazilian law, everything is understood as a school sport, based mainly on the second perspective, which is also similar to what is established in Nicaragua. Dialoguing with Azevedo *et al.* (2017), we realize that school sports still lack actions that enhance it in Latin American countries, such as the correlation with sports training. When analyzing the American context, they emphasize that having sports training together with school training is an important strategy for sports development in the country, as in the USA, a world reference in this type of system.

Another elementary factor of this manifestation is that it is in constant dialog with educational laws. We understand that the challenge is to establish a dialog between the two areas and delimit, in a balanced way, the attributions and role of school sports, especially in the correlation with the training institutions of professionals, which also impacts the fields of professional activity and in the second aspect analyzed, that of university sports. In it, we observe manifestations that seek to specify an axis of action for sport, as the examples from the countries below demonstrate:

Dominican Republic (*deporte universitario*) – this is the systematic practice of sports activities by students representing the country's recognized university institutions in university games. Along with the law, the *Comisión Nacional de Deporte Universitario* was created, which coordinates this modality in the country (REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA, 2005).

Colombia (*deporte universitario*) – focused on higher education. In the case of Colombia, it serves as a complement to university education and has space in the academic curricula of the country's higher education institutions (COLÔMBIA, 2018).

University sport is an exclusive manifestation of only four countries,¹⁸ so we realized that

¹⁸ In the case of Cuba, it is not unique, as it shares space with school sports. In Peru, it is part of *Deporte Estudiantil*, sharing space with school and military sports.

in most contexts it is “diluted” in other manifestations. In all cases, the concept establishes that these are practices developed by students at the university level, whether at the health or competition level. In this regard, Xavier *et al.* (2019) and Malagutti, Rojo & Starepravo (2020) emphasize that university sport, in addition to contributing to professional performance sport, is also an important factor in sociocultural development.

Understanding how university and school sports are dealt with in countries is an important indication of its development in that context. By showing, for example, that few LA countries have a specific manifestation for university sports, we realize the weaknesses posed in these contexts since we agree with Tubino (2010) and we understand that this is an important action in the formulation of public and of the country's sports development.

If we compare the Latin American contexts with the USA and other countries considered references and world sporting powers, we realize that, in these places, university sports, together with school sports, are the basis of the high-performance axis, as they form the expressive majority of athletes. Xavier *et al.* (2019) make this movement and point out that, in the US, university sports show more results, both at a competitive level and at a market level, due to the good structuring and management of resources, which for the most part are of private origin.

It is important to realize that having university sport in the legislation as a manifestation and conceptualized, having a structured system for its development in practice and having actions that enhance it at national and continental level, directly impacts the training of qualified professionals to work in this niche, that is, it opens up a new market of possibilities. However, it is visible that in LA this is an area that needs to be further explored and better developed. “Thus, qualified and professional management must be required by the institutions that assume the role of managing it” (XAVIER *et al.*, 2019, p. 34).

In the third strand, we have evidenced the strong presence of the perspective of Sports Training, which is present in most of the laws analyzed; in some cases, it is also part of the main objectives of the country's sports policy. We can see this movement materialized with the presence of manifestations that deal solely with this perspective, such as the *Deporte Formativo* and the *Desporto de Formação*, present in five countries.

The following examples give us an idea of how countries conceive sports training.

Colombia – focused on the integral development of the individual. It can be developed both in and out of school and comprises the processes of initiation, improvement, and sports fundamentals (COLÔMBIA, 2018).

Ecuador – focused on sports initiation, talent selection, and training of future athletes (EQUADOR, 2010).

In general, we note that this is a vision that works with the training of athletes and perceives sport as a transformative element. Despite being characterized as a manifestation in few countries, the analyzes show that sports training is part of the constitution of documents and sports

policies in Latin America, showing itself as one of the elements that make up the central axis of many laws. In Panama, for example, the sports training of athletes stands out as a specific objective set out in the document (PANAMÁ, 2007).

Under Peruvian law, sports training is highlighted in Articles 55 and 56, which deal with sports schools and high-performance centers. Spaces aimed at the development of sports practice and specialized support in the training and maintenance/training of high-level competitive athletes. It is also up to universities, institutes of higher education, schools of the armed forces and the national police to promote and support sports and recreational activities in their curricula and facilities (PERU, 2003).

The prescription of sports training is the first step for its development, however, it is necessary to understand that this should be conceived as a broad and comprehensive training, i.e., while training the athlete we also educate and train the citizen, preparing him/her academically.

É fundamental a compreensão de órgãos governamentais, entidades esportivas, clubes e família de que o mercado esportivo não irá atender todo o contingente em formação, e que os postos de trabalho que rendem status e contratos milionários são escassos¹⁹ (AZEVEDO et al., 2017, p. 197).

In El Salvador and Nicaragua, we find unique examples, where the term Sports Training is proposed in the law and encompasses both the training of professionals (for sport) and of practitioners and athletes at different levels (for sport) (NICARÁGUA, 2005; EL SALVADOR, 2020).

In Paraguay, we identify the manifestation of *Deporte Formativo* and the concept of *Formación para el Deporte*. In this case, unlike Chile, which also brings the same concept, sports training is the central element of action and characterization of the topics (PARAGUAI, 2006).

In these countries, there seem to be hints of possible actions that aim to establish a correlation between training and sport. However, it is necessary to establish a better delimitation of objectives and also of the target subjects.

In the Dominican Republic, sports training is seen as an elementary part of the planned actions, so much so that the law provides for a direct interaction between high-performance sports and school sports. Thus, the *Consejo Nacional de Estrategia Deportiva* (Coned) is responsible for: “*Fomentar la especialización de los profesores de educación física, para que puedan desempeñarse como entrenadores en uno o varios deportes [...]*”²⁰ (REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA, 2005, p. 18).

We emphasize that the differentiation between sports training and training for sports is also important, especially in this stage that legislates on sports. These concepts are often confused when reading the legislations and are presented differently.

¹⁹ "It is essential that government agencies, sports entities, clubs and families understand that the sports market will not serve the entire contingent in training, and that jobs that yield status and million-dollar contracts are scarce".

²⁰ "Fostering the specialization of physical education teachers, so that they can act as coaches in one or several sports [...]."

It is necessary to understand that both views are related at all times (sports training and training for sports). However, the proposals for professional training must be thought of separately, since they are established as a training field. In this sense, the prescription in laws has a fundamental role because, in addition to delimiting the concepts, it leads to the direction of public policies for the development of sport and PE itself in the countries.

We also analyzed that the three axes are not isolated categories, but rather that they establish a correlation among themselves and, in most cases, they depend on each other for the good development of sports in the country and in LA. Thus, it is necessary to think of Latin American sports policies in an organic way and understand that the axes complement each other.

While conceiving sport and its laws in a specific way, respecting the characteristics of the context (micro), it is also necessary to think them in a broad, continental, and organic way (macro), establishing dialogs and equally weighing the axes of sport actions.

La política deportiva no sólo depende del Estado-nación, sino que nos encontramos con integraciones y organismos supraestatales, con un régimen internacional que opera con una gobernanza entre Estados y sus organizaciones internacionales, y con otro, de tipo transnacional, que necesariamente debe operar de forma paralela con sectores no estatales ni gubernamentales; tal es el caso de los comités olímpicos y las federaciones deportivas internacionales (CUEVAS GALÍCIA, 2019, p. 35).²¹

It is important to understand that the manifestations show the probable fields of work for working with sport. Thus, thinking about its objectives and directions together with the policies for training professionals in the countries is essential. This is a factor that needs to be worked on, as the legislations do not yet present a clear perspective that develops specific proposals for the training of professionals who work with sport, especially sports outside school.

We agree with Bloch (2001) when conceiving these documents as the materialization of human actions over time, as well as their interpretation, which constitutes a narrative elaborated in the present and which is constantly changing, which infers in capturing the continuities and discontinuities through the traces left. Thus, we realize that the discussion on sports policies and also training for sports still need to be addressed “[...] *con la relevancia que se merece en todos los ámbitos dentro de un Estado: por los gobiernos, las empresas, la ciudadanía, la academia y el sistema educativo*”²² (CUEVAS GALÍCIA, 2019, p. 41).

The diversity presented is a striking feature of the sources, in view of the continental coverage of LA, thus, it is normal that differences and divergences happen, as a result of what

²¹“Sports policy not only depends on the nation-state, but we find ourselves with integrations and supra-state organizations, with an international regime that operates with a governance between states and their international organizations, and with another, of a transnational type, that must necessarily operate in parallel with non-state or governmental sectors; such is the case of the Olympic committees and international sports federations (CUEVAS GALÍCIA, 2019, p. 35).”

²² “[...] with the relevance that is deserved in all spheres within a State: by governments, companies, the citizens, the academy and the educational system.”

Barabas (2015) characterizes as multiculturalism, cultural pluralism and Latin American interculturality. Doing this reading is a necessary movement, as it establishes the approximations and differences presented, in addition to allowing us to point out the possibilities of each law.

It is essential to understand sport as a broad phenomenon, so its unfoldings also have reach in other areas. Capturing such evidence in our sources made us realize that the issues related to training for sport are broad. Thus, anchored in Ginzburg (1989), we understand that it is necessary to examine the contexts taking into account what is peripheral and its correlation with our central object, as it is evident that the analyzes do not only permeate institutions, curricula and other initiatives designed for the field, but also through the political and legislative proposals established, which materialize the very treatment of the sporting phenomenon in LA and provide us, thread by thread, with the necessary elements to weave the fabric of training for sport.

Zardo, Souza and Starepravo (2018) help us to understand that sport should be seen as a responsibility and a public matter. Thus, the formulation of a law and a sports policy must establish a dialog with political science and respond to the public problems that the established context presents, since, in the first place, it is necessary to consider the range of sources, captured in 19 countries analyzed. In this sense, each document has a specific elaboration logic, presenting approximations and distances in its content.

Assuming the dialog with Mandel (1986), it is necessary to understand that sport in modernity is strongly linked to and permeated by political-ideological aspects; thus, to conceptualize it implies presenting a position that is not only theoretical, but that politically marks its insertion and its unfoldings in society, as well as in professional training.

With that, it is necessary to point out that: "*Desde el enfoque de política pública, se considera necesario y urgente su acercamiento con las ciencias del deporte para consolidar el término de política deportiva*"²³ (CUEVAS GALICIA, 2019, p.33).

We understand that sports policies are configured as one of the starting points and also as a support for the development of sport in the countries. In this sense, it is essential that they be thought of in the medium and long term in each context. Thus, it becomes possible to enhance the phenomenon of sport and its various possibilities, above all by building a political-sports identity for LA, a region that is built through its diversity, but also in the equalities that allow for the establishment of approximations.

4 Final Considerations

In this study, we aim to analyze the ways in which sport manifests itself in LA countries, as well as Brazil's place in this process, capturing the possible contributions that approximations and distances can offer to the sporting development of our country. To this end, we carried out a

²³ "From the public policy approach, its rapprochement with sport sciences is considered necessary and urgent to consolidate the term sport policy."

documental research, through an advanced online search in the government databases of each country. After locating and selecting the available sources, we raised a series of questions to them and reached the final number of 19 countries.

After analyzing the laws and applying the comparative method, we identified aspects that bring certain contexts closer and further apart. In addition, we note that: a) all countries in the sample have a specific law on sport; b) sport is conceptualized in 12 documents (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay); c) only Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica have a long-term and detailed sports policy available; d) only Chile and Colombia have a specific sports ministry; e) in all these documents, the sporting manifestations are also presented.

A noteworthy remark that needs to be considered when thinking about the policies in the countries, especially in Brazil, the biggest country in the bloc, was that sport is situated in three main axes that show themselves as possible fields of action, namely: 1 – the leisure and health axis; 2 – the performance axis; 3 – the educational axis.

Another factor that was evidenced is that these are traces of a geopolitical region that was constituted over the years through its singularities and, at the same time, its equalities, transforming them into identity, Latin American identity. Thus, sport, as a constituent phenomenon of the civilizing process itself (ELIAS, 1989), must be seen, treated and analyzed as one of the important shapers of this identity, since, in contemporary times, it is configured as an open, diversified system and it has an impact on daily life, being a component of the development of societies (PUIG; HEINEMAN, 1991).

We believe it is fundamental to understand and analyze the processes and context that involve the training that enables people to act in this area as professionals, whether as teachers, coaches, trainers, managers, referees, analysts, etc., intervening directly with this broad and diverse instrument and building this identity in the various fields of work.

Similarly to the athletes and other practitioners, we also consider them central actors and, therefore, their training must be of excellence and thought in a specific way. Thus, we indicate continuity in the object evidenced here, with studies that approach the Latin American context, especially investigating the institutions that offer training and qualify the professional to work with sport in a non-school context, using the comparative method.

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Article received in: 10/20/2021

Article accepted for publication in: 12/16/2021