

# SPORT AS A RIGHT: TRAITS AND PLOTS OF **FORMATION OF TRUTH**

O ESPORTE COMO UM DIREITO: TRAÇOS E TRAMAS DA CONSTITUIÇÃO DE **UMA VERDADE** 

DEPORTE COMO UN DERECHO: RASGOS Y GRÁFICOS DE FORMACIÓN DE LA VERDAD

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# Keywords

Sports. Constitution and bylaws. Philosophy.

Abstract: This article aims at debating the status of truth taken on by sport in Brazil, which produces it as a right that is guaranteed by the State to every citizen. Methodology included some tools of Foucaltian genealogy, which is absolutely imbricated with archeology. Laws and decrees implemented since the 1988 Constitution were adopted as a corpus of analysis. The work found many statements that make up a truth regime that seeks to produce sport as a naturally accepted right that is always present in the lives of all Brazilians.

## Palavras-chave

Esportes. Constituição e estatutos. Filosofia.

Resumo: Este artigo tem como objetivo problematizar o estatuto de verdade assumido pelo esporte no Brasil, que o produz como um direito, garantido pelo Estado a todo e qualquer cidadão. Em termos de investimento metodológico, foram acionadas algumas ferramentas da genealogia foucaultiana, absolutamente imbricada com a arqueologia, adotando-se, como corpus de análise, as leis e decretos que foram implementados a partir da Constituição de 1988. Ao finalizar este trabalho, evidenciaram-se enunciados diversos, compondo, assim, um regime de verdade que busca produzir o esporte enquanto um direito naturalmente aceito e sempre presente na vida de todo e qualquer brasileiro.

#### Palabras clave

Deportes. Constitución y estatutos. Filosofía.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo problematizar el estatuto de verdad asumido por el deporte en Brasil, que lo produce como un derecho, garantizado por el Estado a todo y cualquier ciudadano. En términos de inversión metodológica, fueron accionadas algunas herramientas de la genealogía foucaultiana, absolutamente imbricada con la arqueología, adoptando, como corpus de análisis, las leyes y decretos que fueron implementados a partir de la Constitución de 1988. Al finalizar este trabajo, se evidenciaron enunciados diversos, componiendo, así, un régimen de verdad que busca producir el deporte como un derecho naturalmente aceptado y siempre presente en la vida de todo y cualquier brasileño.

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Truth can stand indeed on one leg, but with two she will walk and complete her journey. Nietzsche (2007, p.53)

## 1 OPENING REMARKS

I recall Nietzsche's words to start this text, aimed at discussing sport's status of truth in Brazil as a right guaranteed by the State to each and every citizen.

Having said that, we open a shrine from which some relevant notions emerge. They need to be emphasized for this work and they are driven by curiosity to think about our daily actions. Firstly, I refer to the notion of discussing not in the sense of deconstructing something or even questioning whether an instance is true or false, right or wrong, valid or invalid. I rather assess<sup>1</sup> "the set of discursive or non-discursive practices that causes something to enter the true-and-false game and constitutes it as an object for thought" (Foucault, 1984, p. 242).

I also emphasize that I do not address an analytical truth, perceived as naturally conceived or as "the set of true things to be discovered or to be accepted," but, rather, as "[...] the set of rules under which true is distinguished from false and specific effects of power are ascribed to the former" (Foucault, 1979, p. 11). I refer to something that could be called a historical analysis of the present, that is, "[...] the endless questioning of what we have became historically, the 'truths' to which we submit ourselves and incorporate, and which have made us into what we are today" (ASSMANN, 2007, p. 3).

Specifically, in this work, I question how that truth placing sport under a discursive order that defines it as a right was gradually produced in the history of Brazilian society. Which truth regimes support and produce it into that condition of right? Which conditions and possibilities have been established and intersected to create a field of existence for sports as a right of every Brazilian citizen? These are some of the questions and concerns that this text intends to address, thus seeking to "[...] rediscover connections, encounters, supports, blockades, power games, strategies etc. which, at some point, formed what would later work as evidence, universality, necessity" (Foucault, 1980c, p. 339).

However, I do not refer to a particular notion of sport or want to know what it really means, and it is not in my interest to determine which view is being used: performance, participation or whatever its name or definition is. I am not driven by the search for a correct conceptualization or by a defense of a certain understanding of sport over others; my motivation is to understand everyday life, reality as it presents itself, as it is at the present. So what becomes productive for this investigation is to discuss the condition taken on by sport in Brazil as a right guaranteed by the State to every citizen.

To make such a venture feasible, I propose an analysis that is absolutely intertwined with and driven by Michel Foucault's legacy, since, as pointed out by Vilela (2006, p. 114), "[...] Michel Foucault's thought helps us to think the architecture and the script of this theater where the curtain never falls; it allows us to envisage how the relations between power and life are played out on the stage of history".

It is also in the trajectory of Foucault's studies that I find clues, or even some production

<sup>1</sup> Assessing is "establishing what constitutes our present, the events that we repeat [...]. That does not mean understanding the present based on the past (as a time in the world) or the future (as announcement or promise), but in its difference, based on itself" (CASTRO, 2009, p. 107).

tools in terms of methodology to be used in this text, but always with an eye on the words of Artierès (2006, p. 22) when he mentions that Foucault's interest "[...] was not in the marks showing how he had written his books, but how the users of its books had appropriated them, how they had worked with them".

It is under this background that a genealogical<sup>2</sup> attitude absolutely intertwined with archeology<sup>3</sup> becomes a methodological inspiration in this text, which is driven by curiosity to think about how sport, as a right of every citizen, entered the scene of Brazilian society's history. I refer to activating some tools of that attitude toward researching operated by Foucault, to understand which series of conditions, strategies, knowledge and powers intertwine and begin to act in Brazilian history, placing sport on a discursive order that considers it the right of every citizen.

# **2 ENTERING THE DOCUMENT MASS**

To allow for such analytical endeavor, is it necessary to define what material to look at? What outlines can be activated to compose the documents to be worked as an analytical corpus<sup>4</sup>? Which fragments should be collected to operate this research?

It is again in Foucault's legacy that I will find some clues with potential to be used, since it is in his Archaeology of Knowledge that he says that the "document is not the happy instrument of a story that would be *memory* in itself and in its own right" (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 8). It should not even be chosen to reconstruct what was meant, if the truth was being told, or even to "memorize' the monuments of the past" (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 8). Action should be directed toward demarcating certain practices, inscribed in the time of history, in a movement that allows going from documents to monuments (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 8).

Specifically in this paper, my corpus of analysis includes laws and decrees that were implemented after the 1988 Constitution, thus composing statements of a legislative discourse that seeks to produce - as truth - sport as a right of every Brazilian to be guaranteed by the State.

But using why these documents rather than others? What leads me to use them as anchor points to develop my research? What justifies listing those documents among many others operating in the production of truth that considers sport in Brazil as a right of everyone and a duty of the state?

In order to seek, if not answers, some subsidies to assist my path, I recall here some principles indicated by Foucault in a lecture delivered in December 1970, as required to undertake an analysis from a genealogical perspective, like that which brings us to the effective formation of discourse<sup>6</sup> (FOUCAULT, 1996, p. 70).

Initially, he points out the principle of inversion, where he indicates that there where tradition used to find a discourse's source or the origin, his genealogy starts recognizing it as

<sup>2</sup> The genealogy used by Foucault can be considered as "coupling learned knowledge and local memories, which allows the establishment of a historical knowledge of struggles and the use of that knowledge in current tactics. [...] It is the uprising of knowledge. Not so much against contents, methods or concepts of a science, but an insurrection above all against the centralizing effects of power that are linked to the introduction and operation of a scientific discourse" (Foucault, 2008a: 13-14).

<sup>3</sup> Williams (2013, p. 163) says that "archeology unearths and creates the material that allows us to build genealogies".

<sup>4</sup> I use Rosa Fischer's (2007, p. 43) notion of corpus of analysis as "a set of texts associated to numerous social practices".

<sup>5</sup> A monuments is the gathering of several distinct tensions as something that requires additional interpretation (WILLIAMS, 2013, p. 162).

<sup>6</sup> Discourse here is considered as the set of statements as they are based on one discursive formation (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 135).

a limit, a break or even an event. Next, Foucault points out the principle of discontinuity, where discourses should be treated as discontinuous practices that intersect and/or ignore each other, thus forming a series. Subsequently, there is the principle of specificity, indicating that discourses should not be treated with previous meanings, but as something we impose in all cases, that is, regularity. Finally, the author points out that the principle of externality, which states that discourses should be considered in their appearance and regularity or even in their conditions of possibility.

It is moved by these regulatory principles of their genealogical research that I assume the 1988 Constitution as a reference on which I will base my analyses, since it was Brazil's first official law to institutionalize sport as a right, and the State as responsible for providing it, as can be seen in Title VIII - Social Order, in Chapter III - Education, Culture and Sport in Art. 217 according to the following extract<sup>7</sup>:

Section III

Sports

It is the duty of the State to foster formal and informal sporting activities as each individual's right, observing:

I. autonomy, as to their organization and operation, of entities and associations controlling sports;

II. allocation of public funds for promotion, on a priority basis, of educational sports and, in specific cases, high return sports;

III. differentiated treatment for professional and non-professional sports;

IV. protection and encouragements to nationally created sports. (BRASIL, 1988)

It is important to emphasize that I am not taking such legislation as an indicator of truth, or even as its origin; its relevance lies on the function performed in the historical context in which it takes place, where it marks discontinuity in the makeup of a discursive field. I refer to the fact that, in Brazil, sport already used to occur in different ways and manifestations, composing scenarios and being produced by several discourses, such as the scientific, media or even the legislative discourse itself, consisting of statements that operated by legally legitimizing certain truths and which can be found in the country as early as 1938, with Decree 526, considered the regulation of sport in Brazil.

Establishing the National Council for Culture.

The President of the Republic, using the powers conferred to him by article. 180 of the Constitution,

# **DECLARES:**

Art. 1 The National culture [sic] Council is created under The Ministry of Education and Health, as one of its cooperation agencies.

Art. 2 The National Culture Council will be the coordinating body of all activities related to cultural development carried out by the Ministry of Education and Health or under its control or influence.

Sole paragraph. Cultural development covers the following activities:

- a) philosophical, scientific and literary production;
- b) cultivation of the arts;
- c) conservation of cultural heritage (historical, artistic, documentary, bibliographic heritage, etc.);
- d) intellectual exchange;

All excerpts highlighted from the corpus of analysis are shown in a text box, as shown below.

- e) dissemination of culture among the masses through different processes of spiritual penetration (book, radio, theater, film, etc.);
- f) advertising and campaigning for patriotic or humanitarian causes;
- g) civic education through all sorts of collective statements;
- h) physical education (gymnastics and sports); (BRASIL, 1938, emphasis add-

Next, legislation comes into force to carry out a preliminary study of the situation experienced by national sport and present the general plan for its implementation (LYRA FILHO, 1952, p. 119). That is Decree 1056, of January 19, 1939, as shown below.

Establishing the National Sports Commission.

THE PRESIDENT, using the powers conferred to him by article. 180 of the Constitution,

# **DECLARES**:

- Art. 1 A commission is hereby created, called the National Sports Commission, which shall consist of five members appointed by the President among people who are knowledgeable about or dedicated to Sports.
- Art. 2 The Commission mentioned in the previous article shall perform a careful study of the problem of sports in the country and submit the general plan for their regulation to the Federal Government, within sixty days.
- Art. 3 This law will take effect on the date of its publication, revoking contradictory provisions.

Rio de Janeiro, January 19, 1939, 118th year of Independence and 51st of the Republic.

GETÚLIO VARGAS. (BRASIL, 1939)

Subsequently, Decree 3199 was created and published in the Official Gazette on April 14, 1941, as follows:

It establishes the organization bases for sports across the country.

The President of the Republic, using the powers conferred to him by Article 180 of the Constitution,

**DECLARES:** 

CHAPTER I

ON THE NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL SPORTS COUN-CILS

- Art. 1 the National Sports Council is instituted under the Ministry of Education and Health to guide, monitor and encourage the practice of sports in the country.
- Art. 2 The National Sports Council shall be composed of five members to be appointed by the President among persons of high civic expression and who represent the national sports movement in its several aspects.

Sole paragraph. The appointment mentioned in this article will be valid for one year, and renewal will not be prohibited.

Art. 3 The National Sports Council shall:

- a) study and promote measures aimed to ensure proper and consistent discipline to the organization and management of sports associations and other sports entities in the country, as well as making sports into an increasingly efficient process of physical and spiritual education of youth and a high expression of national culture and energy;
- b) to encourage, by all means, the development of amateur sport as an educational sports practice par excellence, while exercising strict oversight on professionalism,

in order to keep it within principles of strict morality;

- c) to decide on the participation of delegations of national sports in international matches, after hearing the relevant high-level entities, as well as overseeing their constitution;
- d) to study the situation of existing sports entities in the country in order to advise on the grants they are to receive from the Federal Government, and also monitor the use of those grants. (BRASIL, 1941)

I also stress Art. 1 (BRASIL, 1941) mentioned above, which expresses the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Health, in the figure of the National Sports Council, for guiding, supervising and encouraging the practice of sports in the country. Tubino (2002, p. 26) points out that under this legislation, the State – more specifically, the government of the so-called New State – left the reflective position to take an active stance toward regulation and standardization of national sport.

Therefore, as early as the 1930s, we can see the implementation of a whole range of laws and decrees with a legislative discourse that operated in the production and workings of sport as a daily practice and, moreover, absolutely linked to lived context, just as the definition of the State as responsible for promoting such activities. For Soares (2011, p. 4), "[...] the 1930s were heavily marked by an incentive to body practices, by State policies that stimulated and fostered a culture of the body, of physical force, of athletic appearances".

During this period, Europe saw the expansion, in terms of political organization, of highly authoritarian, nationalist, statist and corporatist experiences, with Hitler in power in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, and Salazar in Portugal (PANDOLFI, 1999, p. 10). Brazil, in turn, underwent a historical period characterized as the New State (1937-1945), an authoritarian regime established after Getúlio Vargas's coup d'état in November 1937, the culmination of a series of movements and disputes experienced since the 1930 Revolution, when, through armed struggle, Vargas had already taken over the Presidency.

The country, which used to be basically oriented to agriculture and exports, faced significant changes in its way of life because it gradually became an urban, industrial nation. Vargas sought to strengthen a sense of national identity and thus faced a wave of very strong nationalism. The State invested in culture and education in order to build a new idea of nationality (PANDOLFI, 1999, p. 10). Cultural manifestations and sports practices, aimed at the general population, were heavily encouraged, and leisure areas for sports activities were built, and theater and film were encouraged.

Occupation of people's free time was gradually assumed by the State, whose role was strengthened (BUENO, 2008, p. 97), showing a shift in the way it operated, that is, a form of government action aimed at a higher number of people, understood as a multiple body, a major living body, or even as part of a population<sup>8</sup>.

In this form of State action there was no need for a costly series of individual interventions, but rather for those that took into account individuals as part of a group with specific characteristics, a population mass that needs to be known, administered, managed and treated based on their common needs (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 294).

We evoke the notion of population based on Foucault (2008a, p. 292). This is not the invention of a term, but the emphasis on new analytical dimension of the human being, here understood as a global mass comprised of a set of living beings; while it is not infinite, it is at least necessarily measurable and therefore susceptible of actions, control, thus ensuring better management of its productive force.

Therefore, a whole panorama emerges where the State plays a key role in the enhancement of the lives of individuals and populations. Specifically regarding the existence of sport, it takes on the responsibility to supervise, regulate, or even encourage sports practice in the country.

According to Carvalho (2013, p. 41-42), prior to the 1988 Constitution – also known as the Citizen Constitution - sports manifestations "were characterized by nationalistic values of discipline and appreciation of performance sport, by a corporatist regulatory and overseeing institutional arrangement, and by the action of a select group formulating policies for the sector".

However, after the enactment of that constitution, sport is placed under a discursive order that not only produces it as a practice that needs to be supervised, guided or regulated, but also as a right guaranteed by the State to every Brazilian citizen.

With the enactment of the Citizen Constitution, the role of the State is to ensure sport as a diverse and constant form of acting in people's daily lives, ensuring it as a right to every Brazilian citizen. Then, "the power of the Federal Constitution greatly influenced the 1990s, which can be considered a period of fundamental changes for Brazilian sport" (AZEVEDO, 2008, p. 20).

Therefore, I indicate that legislation as an event9 of a legislative discourse, which operates as one of the strategies to produce truth in a given time and seeks to make sport as it works today: the right of every Brazilian to be guaranteed by the State and that is discussed in this article.

In this context, I first highlight Law 8672 of July 6, 1993, implemented under President Itamar Franco, a period of great turmoil in Brazil – as the country came from impeachment proceedings of President Fernando Collor de Mello – caused by a prolonged recession, acute and chronic inflation, unemployment, etc. The implementation of the Real Plan is also important in this context, in order to control inflation. Also in April 1993, a plebiscite was held in which people chose Brazil's form and system of government.

It was in this political, social and economic environment that Law 8672/93 - popularly known as Zico Law – was implemented, evoking what is established in the 1988 Constitution, i. e. sport as an individual right, and instituting a number of fundamental principles to guarantee it. As can be seen in the section below:

#### CHAPTER II

#### ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Art. 2 Sport, **as an individual right**, is based on the following principles:

- I sovereignty, characterized by national supremacy in the organization of sport;
- II autonomy, defined by the faculty of individuals and corporations to organize for sports as subjects in decisions that affect them;
- III democratization, guaranteed in terms of access to sporting activities without distinction and any form of discrimination;
- IV freedom, expressed by the free practice of sports, according to each person's capacity and interest, associated or not to organizations of the sector;
- V social Law, characterized by the State's duty to promote formal and non-formal sporting practices;
- VI differentiation, embodied in the specific treatment of professional and non-pro-

In this work I am using the term event after the notion put forward by Castro (2009, p. 25), as a discursive event, i. e. that which archeology describes as statements, and that takes into account "the conditions of existence that determine the very materiality of the statement" (CASTRO, 2009, p. 25).

fessional sport;

VII – national identity, reflected in the protection and fostering of sports created in the country;

VIII - education, aimed at the comprehensive development of man as an autonomous and participant being, and fostered though the priority of educational sports in public resources;

IX – quality, assured by the appreciation of sports and educational results as well as those related to citizenship and to physical and moral development;

X – decentralization, embodied in the harmonic organization and operation of different and autonomous sports systems at federal, state and municipal levels;

XI - safety, provided to practitioners of any sport, in terms of physical, mental or sensory integrity;

XII – efficiency, obtained by encouraging sporting and administrative competence. (BRASIL, 1993)

I also point as relevant the chapter of that law that establishes the general rules on sport, as can be seen in the excerpt below:

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INITIAL PROVISIONS**

Art. 1 The Brazilian sport covers formal and non-formal practices and follows the general rules of this law, inspired by the constitutional foundations of the democratic rule of law.

- § 1 Formal sports practice is regulated by national standards and rules and international rules accepted in each mode.
- § 2 Non-formal sport practice is characterized by the playful freedom of its practitioners. (BRASIL, 1993)

When referring to formal and non-formal practices to designate the scope of sport, there is an increase of interference in its conception, since previous legislation mentioned sports only as those of physical characteristics and competitive nature, as seen in Law 6251 of October 8, 1975, in its Article 2:

> For the purposes of this Law, sport is the predominantly physical activity with competitive purpose exercised according to pre-established rules (BRASIL, 1975).

However, the enactment of the Zico Law increases the scope of the notion of sport that can also be seen in Chapter III:

# On SPORTS' CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PURPOSES

Art. 3 Sport as predominantly physical and intellectual activity can be recognized in any of the following events: (BRAZIL, 1993)

By characterizing sport as physical and intellectual activity comprising formal and non-formal practices, its involvement is broadened, i. e. the conception of sport is freed from the bonds of referring only to physical activities practiced with competitive character that reach a defined group of people, and starts to be seen as any physical and intellectual activity that can be characterized as formal and non-formal. Therefore, the scope of its concept is broadened, making it present and accessible to a larger number of people or even reaching a larger portion of the population with the practices seen as sports after this law.

In this same document, I also point as relevant the three subparagraphs where sports

are conceptualized and its objectives are defined:

# **CHAPTER III**

## ON THE CONCEPT AND PURPOSES OF SPORT

Art. 3 Sport as a predominantly physical and intellectual activity can be recognized in any of the following events:

I - educational sports practiced in the educational system and in unsystematic forms of education, thus avoiding selectivity, hypercompetitiveness of its practitioners, in order to achieve the full development of individuals and their education for citizenship and the practice of leisure;

II – participation sports, on a voluntary basis, comprising sports practiced in order to contribute to the integration of practitioners in the fullness of social life, to promote health and education, and preservation of the environment;

III - performance sport, practiced according to the general rules of this Law and the national and international rules of sports practice, in order to obtain results and integrate the country's people and communities among themselves, and integrate these with those of other nations. (BRASIL, 1993).

By classifying sport as educational, participatory and performance-based, also defining its purposes, a system of truths emerges that considers sport as one of the fundamental tools for the full development of individuals and to produce subjects who are socially integrated, healthy, educated, active in the preservation of the environment and in the exercise of their citizenship.

I also quote Law 9615 of March 24, 1998, which replaced the Zico Law and became known as Pelé Law (TUBINO, 2002, p. 37), whose Chapter III says:

# ON THE NATURE AND PURPOSES OF SPORTS

Art. 3 Sport can be recognized in any of the following events:

I - educational sports practiced in the educational system and in unsystematic forms of education, thus avoiding selectivity, hypercompetitiveness of its practitioners, in order to achieve the full development of individuals and their education for citizenship and the practice of leisure;

II – participation sports, on a voluntary basis, comprising sports practiced in order to contribute to the integration of practitioners in the fullness of social life, to promote health and education, and preservation of the environment;

III - performance sport, practiced according to the general rules of this Law and the national and international rules of sports practice, in order to obtain results and integrate the country's people and communities among themselves, and integrate these with those of other nations. (BRASIL, 1993). (BRASIL, 1998)

A change can be seen in the title of that chapter, which used to be called "Concept and purpose of sport" and is now named "Nature and purpose of sport". Thus, more than a simple change in terms, this way of referring to sport seeks to consolidate its existence in Brazilian society. According to the Zico Law, sport needed to be conceptualized, defined, but the Pelé Law treats it as an instance that has a constitutive nature, which no longer needs to be explained and that is spontaneously accepted by all.

I also point out the conception of sport, which Law 8672 limited to any physical and intellectual activity and that Law 9615 referred to as all manifestation that is conceived as educational, based on participation or performance, which further extends the concept to comprise a larger number of activities and subjects capable of being defined.

## 3 FINALLY...

This article was driven by curiosity to question the truths that make up our daily lives, but not in the sense of deconstructing something or even of questioning whether an instance is true or false, right or wrong, valid or invalid, but, rather, seeking to perceive "the set of discursive or non-discursive practices that causes something to enter the true-or-false game and constitutes it as an object for thought" (Foucault, 2006b, p. 242).

In this text, by using some tools of Foucauldian genealogy imbricated with archeology, it was possible to assess conditions and possibilities that started to operate in Brazil, constituting a truth that seeks to produce sport as a right guaranteed by the State to all citizens.

By observing the laws and decrees enacted in Brazil after the 1988 Constitution, a system of truths emerged that links sport practice as a right as one of the fundamental tools for the full development of individuals and the production of subjects who are socially integrated, healthy, educated, active in the preservation of the environment and in the exercise of their citizenship.

We also observed the recurrence of several statements that expand the conception of sport, producing it as a fact that invades people's lives, thus becoming naturally accepted by all.

I would like to end this text not in a peremptory manner, assuming a sense of terminality or even exhaustion of possibilities, but stressing the need to search for other images, to travel by other horizons, looking for other ways that allow us to understand the sport composition in its several manifestations in our daily lives.

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