



Education through sports in São Paulo city (1920-1936) ¹

Educação pelo esporte na cidade de São Paulo (1920-1936)

Educación a través del deporte en la ciudad de São Paulo (1920-1936)

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Abstract

Two different processes constituted the education through sport in the city of São Paulo, between 1920 and 1936. There was the consolidation of sporting clubs, and, in parallel, the creation of “*Departamento de Educação Física do Estado de São Paulo*” (DEF-SP) in 1931, to manage actions in the sporting area. This article analyzes the debate between these institutions and investigate the disputes around the legitimacy of São Paulo’s sport, especially in youth education. Methodologically, this is a documental research with magazines, journals, congress annals, and set of legislation as sources. This article shows that both of them intended to legitimize in their directives the educational dimension of sports; although, there was not a meaningful dialogue between private and public institutions towards this common goals.

Keywords: Education through Sport. Physical Culture. History of Education.

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Resumo

A educação pelo esporte na cidade de São Paulo, entre 1920 e 1936, foi constituída a partir de dois processos distintos. Houve a consolidação de clubes esportivos e, paralelamente, o Departamento de Educação Física do Estado de São Paulo (DEF-SP) foi criado, em 1931, para gerir ações no âmbito esportivo. Esse artigo analisa o debate entre essas instituições e investiga as disputas engendradas em torno da legitimidade do esporte em São Paulo, especialmente na educação da juventude. Metodologicamente, trata-se de uma pesquisa documental que utilizou como fontes revistas, jornais, anais de congresso e conjunto de leis. O artigo demonstra que ambos desejaram legitimar a dimensão educativa do esporte em suas diretrizes; entretanto, não houve um diálogo profícuo entre as instituições privadas e públicas frente tal objetivo comum.

Palavras-chave: Educação pelo Esporte. Cultura Física. História da Educação.

Resumen

La educación a través del deporte en la ciudad de São Paulo, entre 1920 y 1936, fue constituida a partir de dos procesos distintos. Hube la consolidación de los clubes deportivos y, paralelamente, el “*Departamento de Educação Física do Estado de São Paulo*” (DEF-SP) fue creado, en 1931, para administrar acciones en el ámbito deportivo. Este artículo toma el debate entre esas instituciones e investiga las disputas engendradas alrededor de la legitimidad del deporte en São Paulo, especialmente en la educación de la juventud. Metodológicamente, se trata de una pesquisa documental que utilizó como fuentes revistas, periódicos, anales de congresos y un conjunto de leyes. El artículo demostró que ambos desearon legitimar la dimensión educativa del deporte en sus directrices; sin embargo, no hubo un diálogo proficuo entre las instituciones privadas y públicas frente a tal objetivo común.

Palabras clave: Educación a través del Deporte. Cultura Física. Historia de la Educación.

Introduction

The first two decades of the 20th century were a period of great transformations in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. Gradually, the conditions were created to establish what would become, at the end of the 1910s, the second largest city in the country, only behind the federal capital (QUEIROZ, 2004). The rapid urbanization process deeply altered the ways of living and it was possible to notice the emergence of entertainment activities that engaged a new physical culture² in the city, a concept that involves practices, social, economic, educational, political, moral, and ethic relations connected to entertainment, recreation, and sports. Sports clubs established along the banks of rivers Pinheiros and Tietê, in the first two decades of the 20th century, broadly disseminated this concept.

The establishment of clubs, the first one *Clube Esperia* (1899), followed by *Clube de Regatas Tietê* (1907), *Esporte Clube Germânia* (1921), and *Associação Atlética São Paulo* (1914), was important to consolidate the new forms of entertainment underway, among which sports were central. There is an agreement among the historians of sports that these clubs were highly relevant to institutionalize sporting practices (ARNAUD, 1986; VIGARELLO, 2006; DA SILVA, MAZO, 2015). São Paulo's rivers and their banks confirm this statement and countless new clubs were opened in the first decades of the 20th century, stimulating the development of competitions, regattas, and water activities (NICOLINI, 2001).

In the 1920s, sports gained visibility and importance in São Paulo and started to be taken as a trace of modernization and urbanity (SEVCENKO, 2000; RAGO, 2004). In the city, it is a moment of expansion and acceptance of more autonomous sporting manifestations, as well as more utilitarian representation established by physicians and educators, which intended to associate to this practice an education dimension focused on the regeneration and preservation of health (DALBEN, GOIS JÚNIOR, 2018; DALBEN et. al., 2019; GOIS JÚNIOR, 2013; FRANZINI, 2010).

At this moment the clubs assumed the responsibility of promoting a physical culture and, more specifically, sport-related. The daily press and the club magazines published athletic feats and competition results, besides a debate on the educational objectives and ways to keep healthy aimed by sporting practices in São Paulo. These institutions tried to establish guidelines, advice, and prescriptions towards this practice, highlighting those held in the rivers of the city, intended to educate the body and shape youth's character. These educational characteristics were also often connected to the practice of rowing and swimming, sports considered healthy and associated, at the time, with hygiene and moral values (TERRET, 1994; MELO, 1999; 2015).

At the same time, physicians, educators, and columnists took part in the ongoing debate and claimed the intervention and support of the public powers in the regulation and promotion of sports (DALBEN, GÓIS JÚNIOR, 2018; GÓIS JÚNIOR, 2013). It emerged the need of a public commitment with the administration of sports in the state of São Paulo. Practicing sports was seen as a way to educate the population towards the development of physical vigor and moral, especially among the youth (DALBEN et al, 2019). We have here some elements that led to the creation in 1931 of the *Departamento de Educação Física de São Paulo* (DEF-SP) (Department of Physical Education of São Paulo), an institution that tried to established new guidelines for sports in the city.

When analyzing the education through sport proposed by the clubs established on the banks of rivers Pinheiros and Tietê in the city of São Paulo and by the DEF-SP, we are referring

² The concept of physical culture was first developed by Kirk (1999; 2010) and was largely used by Scharagrodsky and collaborators (2014). In Brazil, this concept is currently been used by some authors to analyze the history of sports and physical education, such as Moraes and Silva (2011, 2015), Moraes and Silva, Quitzau and Soares (2018), Moraes and Silva and Quitzau (2018), and Montenegro and Soares (2019).

to an education that goes beyond school education. We understand that the educational processes happen within a framework that must consider the social relations that take place not only in the school environment (KUHLMANN JÚNIOR, LEONARDI, 2017). From this perspective, we question: what were the guidelines created by the clubs for the sport practice in the 1920s? Did they consider the educational dimension of sport, mainly towards youth, beyond the school walls? Were there similarities and differences between their proposals and those created by the DEF-SP since 1931? How did club managers welcome the creation of a public body specialized in sports? What was similar or different between the discourses produced on sports by the clubs and by the DEF-SP?

The aim of this article is to examine the disputes between the regattas clubs and the DEF-SP on the legitimacy of the *paulistano*³ sport between 1920 and 1936, mainly on its educational dimension. We choose this period because in the 1920s emerged in the club scenario some advice and prescriptions on the physical culture mainly; the year 1936, our temporal limit, analyzes possible effects on the reach of DEF-SP around the debate of ideas and ideals on *paulistano* sport.

The documental corpus of this article is composed by different publications of *paulistano* sports clubs, such as magazines and reports; annals of the *VII Congresso Nacional de Educação*; articles and clippings of the newspapers *A Gazeta*, *Correio Paulistano*, *Correio de São Paulo*, *Diário Nacional*, *Folha da Manhã*, *Folha da Noite*; articles of the magazine *Educação Física*, as well as state decrees related to the DEF-SP. The survey of sources was done in the archives of the clubs *Tietê*, *Associação Atlética São Paulo*, *Esperia*, and *Esporte Clube Pinheiros*⁴, in the digital archive of *Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo*, the digital newspaper library of *Biblioteca Nacional*, and the online archive of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*.

The DEF-SP, currently the *Secretaria de Esportes do Estado de São Paulo* (Secretary of Sports of the State of São Paulo), has endured during its history a flood and a fire, as well as several changes of place, compromising the safekeeping of its archive and library (MASTROROSA, 2003). However, part of its actions was narrated by the daily and the specialized press, furthermore, its structural changes were registered by the legislation, both sources were used in this article.

On the clubs, we used press sources and archival documents. The use of documents produced and kept by the clubs demands certain care from the researcher. On one hand, these archives can be seen as “metaphors of power” (JOHNES, 2015), that is, places that keep elements that corroborate with a certain vision of the history of the clubs. As stated by Le Goff (1992, p. 548), it is clear the effort to “impose to the future – voluntarily or involuntarily- a certain image of themselves”. On the other hand, there is, generally, a lack of care with the materials related to sport. According to Johnes (2015), the sports historian often finds challenges with the archives of the clubs, as many discard their documents due to space limitation, or close and do not keep their material. This was the case, for example, of *Clube de Regatas Tietê*, analyzed in this article⁵. Summing up, we agree with Le Goff (1992, p. 535) and his statement that “documents are a choice made either by the forces that operate in the temporal development of the world or humankind, or by those that devote themselves to the science of the past and the time that flies”. The documents, as constructions built by time, are subject to their caprices, therefore, to

³ Translator’s note: the terms *paulistano* and *paulista* refer to those from the city of São Paulo.

⁴ *Esporte Clube Germânia*, one of the clubs analyzed in this article, changed its name to *Esporte Clube Pinheiros* in the 1940s, motivated by the obligation of nationalization of foreign clubs in Brazil, proposed by the government.

⁵ The documents from the old library of the club, closed in 2013, are now under the care of former librarian André Navarenho.

destruction, forgetfulness and/or preservation by individuals and institutions, intentionally and accidentally.

“Are you a true sportsman?” Guidelines of the regatta clubs in São Paulo

The clubs *Esperia*, *Associação Atlética São Paulo*, *Tietê*, and *Germânia* establish themselves along the *paulistano* rivers, most of them by the initiative of immigrants⁶, to practice rowing and other sports. In the first two decades of the 20th century, the scenario on the region of Ponte Grande started to change: men and women, in sports clothes, would go down river on skiffs and boats; crowds would gather along the banks to see the swimmers competing on the *Travessia de São Paulo à Nado*⁷; coaches and teachers showed off their knowledge on swimming strokes in improvised swimming pools on the riverbeds (NICOLINI, 2001; SEVCENKO, 2000; JORGE, 2006).

The quick dissemination of these practices and sporting spaces in the city was not insignificant; a physical culture related to the characteristics needed and, more than that, desired for the urban life, a life São Paulo designed to itself. The clubs mentioned here were quickly willing to symbolically conquer the *paulistana* youth, aiming to mobilize, occupy, and, certainly, educate its members. Therefore, how these practices would be enacted in these spaces needed to be defined.

The sporting practice, as well as the philosophy around it, was recurrent in the city. Its educational dimensions as well as its moral bases were not yet totally solidified. Kirk (2008) analyzes that, during the 20th century, there was a very sensitive change of paradigms connected to physical culture. This change deeply affected beliefs and values on the body, and took decades to be completely produced, disseminated, and incorporated. Soon, the attempt of clubs to promote sports practices according to its philosophy was translated into countless “instruction manuals”, whose content aimed to demonstrate and clarify the fears and expectations around the practice of sports.

To Vigarello (2002), physical culture, which includes sports practices, is not an uninterested phenomenon; on the contrary, sport starts with an educational project, guided towards the mobilization of youth. Bourdieu (2003, p. 141) highlights that sports educated “the energy, courage, and virtue of the leaders [...]”. Considering such dimensions that modern sport assembles, it is possible to infer that the ideas presented accentuated the moral and educational aspects of the activities developed.

Thus, the clubs promoted a physical culture guided towards the development of their young members, whose core indicated some of their mottos, as is the case of Sport Club *Germânia* (25 ANOS..., 1924) when stating that: “The power of youth guarantees the future of peoples”⁸. For the clubs, the strengthening of the body and, consequently, the character of young people was one of the pillars of their existences.

In the publication of the club *Germânia*, there is also a reflection on what would be considered “fearful” dangers of the modern world and how they could influence a youth fragilized by the lack of a systematic work on the body. Therefore, it was a physical culture

⁶ Club *Esperia* was found in 1899, promoted by a group of Italian immigrants that aimed to foment the practice of rowing in the city of São Paulo. In the same year, a group of Germans assembled to create the Sport Club *Germania*, to practice soccer but, after its foundation in the banks of river Pinheiros, focused on rowing. Other relevant clubs also established in the first years of the 20th century were *Clube de Regatas São Paulo* (closed in 1913), *Clube de Regatas Tietê*, and *Associação Atlética São Paulo*, found in the same region, respectively in 1907 and 1914 (ZOCOLI, 1934, p. 48; GALLOTTA, PORTA, 2004).

⁷ The *Travessia de São Paulo à Nado* was a swimming race created in 1924 on the waters of river Tietê, between the Bridge Vila Maria and the Bridge Grande until its end in 1944, due to the pollution of the river.

⁸ See, among others, Quitzau and Soares (2010).

that, by educating the body, could strengthen the character and forge a youth able to stand the torments of modern life:

In constant growth due to the demands imposed to men, the mechanism of modern life ruthlessly drags us in its whirlwind current. Cruelly, the waves roar in a terrible game and the weak on that cannot control his boat with strong nerves and a firm hand, will undoubtedly sink. The waves storm up and down and the spoiled one, whose body is weak, cannot resist the crashing of the ever-changing waves of life. In the first shock, he loses his helm and aimless he drifts towards the reef, and desperate due to the dangers, with no support in his affliction even before being lost – the brave one tastes death only once! (À JUVENTUDE, 1924, p. 14)

It is on this framework that the clubs called themselves educational spaces to promote a new physical formation of the young members, be it in the classes held in their spaces (CLUB..., 1920), or in sports competitions. This action was not simply limited to the practice of exercises within the clubs; it was, on the contrary, an action to instill the moral and hygienic opportunities of sports and, above all, its ability to positively educate youth character. For the clubs, the educational discourses on physical culture were as or even more important than the practice itself; it was necessary to delimit and guide what should and could be part of the scope of these associations (ARNAUD, 1986).

In an issue of the magazine of *Clube de Regatas Tietê*, we could see the moralizing and ethical characteristics of the sport from a questionnaire to be answered by the members. According to the questionnaire, a sportsman who did not fit the prescriptions published could not take part in the competitions promoted by the club:

ARE YOU A SPORTSMAN?

As a player

- Do you play for the love of sport?
- Do you play for your team and not for yourself? [...]
- Can you win without array and loose without fuss?

So you are in the good pathway to become a sportsman

As a spectator

- Do you refuse to applaud a good game of your competitor?
- Do you wish that yours to win, though undeservingly?

[...]

If so, you are no sportsman. Try to be one. (O QUE É..., 1936, p. 7)

In the publications of club *Esperia*, there were similar indications, trying to point out which would be the characteristics of the “True sportsman” (O VERDADEIRO..., 1932, p.6). The members that perceived the competitions as the highest point of the sport did not correctly follow the sporting guidelines of the club. On the contrary, the victories and participation in certain sports should be the result of effort and dedication to training:

There are sportsmen who practice the exercises with satisfaction, frequent the training session, and really wish to compete. [...]. Others, however, always miss training, show a lack of will, but during the competitions make all the effort to win. In general, these

last ones, are easily discouraged, as they cannot win the competitions they take part (O VERDADEIRO..., 1932, p.6).

Thus, the advices and prescriptions presented in the publications of the clubs were very objective: the individuals that did not properly train the selected sports, though talented, should not take the place in the competition of those who persevered in training. The educational dimension of clubs clearly expressed a sporting moral, as mentioned by Vigarello (2002), which selected those closer to those evoked and disseminated.

To disseminate this sporting moral, clubs frequently published articles or notes on the need to transform the behavior of their players and supporters. In an article published in the magazine of *Clube Tietê* (A TORCIDA...,1934, p.46), the writer was empathic to differentiate the supporters of the club and those “in general”, that “go to the sporting spaces to disorderly shout and aiming to ‘knock around’ if needed”, that is, to physically confront the opponents to defend the team colors. Tietê supporters, on the contrary, were described a group of “distinguished young men that go to the sports arenas to incentivize – in a gentleman-like fashion and with the highest enthusiasm and joy – the “*vermelhinho*”⁹ who compete for Tietê” (A TORCIDA...,1934, p.46).

However, the magazine *Cho-cho*, discontinuously published by the same club during the 1930s, whose opinions did not reflect the official guidelines of the club and its directors, differently evoked the behavior of the supporters. In an article published in 1931, the editors criticized supporters’ role in a rowing championship. According to the article, the supporters incisively complained about the referees, which ended up committing mistakes on the arrival of the boats. Far from the “ideas of pacific supporters”, the authors considered the role they should play during the competitions:

we have to report the blunders of some individuals that do not understand the spirit of cohesion needed and open their mouths only to say gibberish, mostly out of time and compromise the whole group of supporters. These individuals should understand that the supporters need a communion of ideas, so there are no blunders, to not give space for criticisms and for greater efficiency of the supporters. (CHO-CHO, 1931, p 3.)

The actions of the clubs against the sportsmen and supporters who did not follow the adequate rules and behaviors went beyond warnings: some were even expelled from the social group for their lack of adequacy to the rules in the statutes. It was the case of a swimmer from club *Esperia*, who violated the rules of the club and was banished through the vote of the direction board. A warning to all members followed the news:

A sporting association should highlight, above all, the discipline, the good behavior, and the education of its members. The sporting value should not be an obstacle to it. All members of the club are the same according to the statutes. No matter the individual’s sporting value, all have the same duties (A ELIMINAÇÃO...1929, p.9).

The “education of its members”, as emphasized in the note above, expresses a moral of these clubs that largely offered rowing and swimming, two sports strongly associated with hygienic and moral aspects. In the magazine of club *Esperia*, they highlighted that “the discipline of swimming form the character” (NETTO, 1928). For the

⁹ “The reds” was the nickname given to the sportsmen of *Clube de Regatas Tietê*, due to the color of their uniforms.

writer, swimming educated intrepid, excited, unshakeable, independent, and energetic young people. These characteristics, pointed out as been inherent to the sport, expressed the effort of the clubs to educate their members, connected to the moral guidelines disseminated by these practices.

The analysis of our sources clearly indicates the attempt of the clubs to legitimize the practices of physical culture, mainly sports, held in their spaces, emphasizing especially its educational dimension and its positive and moralizing character. More than promoting sports together with other activities, clubs wished to be responsible for the ideas that circulated about these practices and their representations, that is, they wished to be protagonists in the discourses related to physical culture and affirm the educational character of the activities they developed. Thus, they sometimes wished to maintain the practices they considered to be adequate, and other times reprehended and regulated the behavior of their members. The ascension and relative incorporation of a physical culture in the city of São Paulo, was certainly influenced by the ideas and ideals advertised and promoted by the clubs aiming to legitimize it. Now, we try to understand how these ideas and ideals were put into test with the creation of the *Departamento de Educação Física* (Department of Physical Education) in the state of São Paulo.

“Can the Department of Physical Education be useful for sporting associations?”: clash of ideas between *paulista* sporting clubs and the DEF-SP

The clubs were fully aware of the educational dimension of their actions. Thus, they were based in ideals on the moral and hygienic benefits of sports to guide what they promoted to their members, and what they considered to be essential to the sportsmen. By disseminating these ideals, clubs considered themselves great promoters of physical culture, mainly sports, and able to educate the youth they attended.

To do so, they produced a series of diverse means to communicate their ideas, highlighting their own way of perceiving things and how they wanted to be perceived. We can say that such associations were grounded on current discourses on the benefits of sports, the practice of exercises, and school physical education, thus promoting their own definitions of physical culture.

The rivalry seen during the competitions held by the regatta clubs was only superficial. In fact, the groups were closely united, as they shared a feeling of abandonment by the government. Therefore, it was up to them to continue with the sporting practices in the city:

The nautical associations, through many difficulties and counting only with the modest contributions of their members, have built lanes, swimming pools, boat-schools, fencing rooms, tennis courts, and many other truly notable achievements. (CLUBS, 1935, p.4)

While praising their own feats in this field, clubs also criticized the lack of public action to manage and disseminate sporting practices. In an article that heroically narrates its feats during its 33 years, club Tietê criticized the lack of public investments and incentives:

Today, Tietê is a great club. Not as big as it could be. However, this is due not to its founders nor the continuators of this work, but because of past governments that neglected the beneficial effects of physical culture to people, relegating it to the background, and also heavily taxing the clubs. (33° ANIVERSÁRIO..., 1940, p.2)

In the 1930s, the analyzed clubs were already well established and had a great number of members. This was the moment of “progress of sports” (STEMPNIEWSKI, 1935, p.1), as, according to the author, the sporting areas of the clubs, which were previously “real cemeteries”, were then crowded with young people who enjoyed the educational and moral benefits of sports. According to the same author, the “intelligent and efficient propaganda done by the boards of clubs, the press, and the sportsmen themselves” was key for this development, what, certainly, excluded an incentive from the public administration.

When *Esperia* inaugurated its pool, in 1933, there were other criticisms towards the public authorities that, according to the club, did not properly promote the physical education of Brazilians. Therefore, it was up for the private initiative to promote advancements in the field, as was the case of the swimming pool:

Closed on their ignorance on such an important problem, that is the physical education of Brazilian; our government has done nothing in favor of the sport. However, it is satisfying to see how the private initiative, in contrast with the official work, take shape and make it a reality in the clubs of São Paulo. In all of them, there is a feverish activity of progress, a pure, patriotic, and good ideal. (A PISCINA..., 1933, p.8)

Regarding the public administration, the DEF-SP was created in January 1931 aiming to guide, manage, and supervise the sporting practice in the state of São Paulo (SÃO PAULO, 1931a). Its creation was related with a series of debates, held in the *paulista* press during the 1920s, on the importance of sport to educate Brazilian youth (DALBEN, GÓIS JÚNIOR, 2018). Though the news of its creation was followed by notes of congratulation, including by *Clube Esperia* (DEPARTAMENTO..., 1931), there were also protests and demonstrations of apprehension as to the possible mismanagement that the new division could cause in the clubs (SILVEIRA, 1931; O PROBLEMA..., 1931, AMARAL, 1931). The biggest demonstrations came from *Associação Paulista de Esportes Athleticos* (APEA) (NÃO SE DEVE..., 1931, FABBRI, 1931a, 1931b, 1931c), which also sent letters asking the DEF-SP to mediate with the public authorities, a decrease in the tax values on sporting competitions, leading to a strong debate in the *paulista* press (O DR. ANTONIO..., 1931; PLEITEANDO..., 1931, A ENTREVISTA..., 1931).

After meetings with the sporting federations, the DEF-SP drew a proposal to create a special tax regime for clubs, to exempt them from the municipal tax on public entertainment. Sent to the *Secretário de Educação e Saúde Pública* (Secretary of Education and Public Health), the proposal listed a series of reasons, mainly moral ones, to distinguish sporting competitions from other leisure activities, including plays, concerts, balls, movie sessions, circus presentations, and others. The main argument used was that “physical education competitions always have an educational characteristic, what can rarely be said about public entertainment, which can even be miseducating” (A QUESTÃO..., 1931, p.6). The strategy used the educational dimension of sports, highly praised by the clubs for years, to distinguish them from other types of entertainment and be exempted from taxation. However, this was not successful and the divergences with the sporting federations, together with its small budget and the reduced number of employees, end up precluding the DEF-SP to act in the regulation and supervision of the sporting practices in the clubs (O ANIVERSÁRIO..., 1932).

DEF-SP was created as an autonomous department within the structure of the *Secretaria do Interior* (Interior Secretary) that soon became the *Secretaria da Educação e da Saúde Pública* (Secretary of Education and Public Health) (SÃO PAULO, 1931b). In

February 1933, during the educational reform promoted by Fernando de Azevedo, it was extinct and the *Serviço de Educação Física* (Service of Physical Education) was created in its place. This Service was subordinated to the *Departamento de Educação* (Department of Education). According to Mastroso (2003, p.39), when the old DEF-SP became part of the Department of Education, “the previous project that aimed the autonomy of the Physical Education field was substituted by another that sees Physical Education as part of Education”. The new division, though maintaining the former personnel, had a completely different organizational structure and prioritized school physical education and no longer the regulation of sports practices in the clubs. According to Soares (2017, p.81), “Fernando de Azevedo tried to implement a similar reform to the one established in Rio de Janeiro”. His proposal tried to connect school hygiene to the field of education and not to health”. For instance, the *Serviço de Educação Física* should be responsible to “organize and guide physical education to the special classes of the physically weak” (SÃO PAULO, 1933a), which was not a responsibility of the former DEF-SP.

Though clubs were relevant in the creation of new meanings attributed to physical culture (KIRK; TWIGG, 1994), especially the dissemination of sporting practices among the inhabitants of the cities, school was also an important field of policies towards the education of the body (SOARES, 2011; SOARES, 2014; ROCHA, 2003). In 1933, when the position of gymnastic teacher was created in an official Gymnasium in the countryside of São Paulo, what led to the first public exam for this position, the magazine of *Clube Esperia* promoted a debate on the work of the state public administration regarding the physical culture (A INICIATIVA..., 1933, p.8). Though this article complimented the attitude of the government, the club also lists some problems with the work of DEF-SP. The first question was that, in its first years of existence, the Department had created several projects, but few of them were enacted. The second criticism was the incorporation of the body to the Department of Education. According to the article, this action would confirm that public authorities were only concerned with the organization of physical culture within a school context. Far from stating that the incentive to physical education in schools was negative, the article complained about the lack of proposals to support clubs:

Now that this Department was joined to the Directory of Teaching [Department of Education], we have the impression that, officially, only the physical culture in teaching establishments will be considered. Therefore, the clubs – which are many in S.Paulo and have a great number of members – will continue to be ignored by the public authorities. We are not referring to material aid, but simply moral support, on one hand technical and on the other organizational, that is, the rationalization of sporting practices. (A INICIATIVA...1933, p.8)

It is important to say that the alterations established by the reform enacted by Fernando de Azevedo displeased not only the representatives of club *Esperia*, but also the personnel of the former DEF-SP. According to the article published in the magazine *Educação Física*:

This reform did not consult the higher interests of physioculture, the director of the Department of Education Dr. Fernando de Azevedo, changed the bases of the Service of Physical Education, by the initiative and proposal of his directors, workers in the former Department [of Physical Education], but even so did not succeed to give it the necessary efficiency. Therefore, for more than a year, the

official organization of physical education in São Paulo continued to be practically inactive (HISTÓRICO..., 1936, p.40).

The changes in the bases of the Service of Physical Education were enacted in April 1933, with the publication of the Code of Education, the main document in the reform of Fernando de Azevedo (SÃO PAULO, 1933b). Despite the alterations promoted, the Service of Physical Education continued inactive, there were no references in the *paulista* press on its actions in this period. Soon after a year, when Azevedo was no longer the director of the Department of Education, a new change was promoted and the old DEF-SP was reestablished. The legislation that decreed its reestablishment critically highlighted that its extinction “restricted the action of the government, [...] which should be as broad as possible” (SÃO PAULO, 1934a). Three months later, a new regulation was promulgated, and the DEF-SP started to be responsible for the regulation of sporting practices and school physical education (SÃO PAULO, 1934b).

Though Azevedo’s project had lost support, the DEF-SP started to pay more attention to school physical education as of 1934, when compared to 1931. In 1935, for instance, due to the *VII Congresso Nacional de Educação*, Arne Enge, a Department worker, presented the designed actions and proposals for higher education of specialized teachers in physical education to work in *paulista* early childhood education (ENGE, 1935). Between 1934 and 1936, DEF-SP focused on creating and running the *Escola Superior de Educação Física de São Paulo*¹⁰, responsible to train professionals that would work in schools and clubs. At the same time, DEF-SP also worked to enact the sport-medical control¹¹, on the demand of an annual registry of all *paulista* clubs, and inspecting fee-charging sporting competitions.

The reestablishment of DEF-SP and the publication of the new regulation in 1934 did not go incognito, being criticized by clubs and federations. Carlos de Campos Sobrinho (swimming coach of *Clube de Regatas Tietê*) highlighted, in an interview for the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Diário da Noite*, that the new regulation had alarmed the representatives of the clubs who feared the establishment of barriers for their actions, mainly the creation of new taxes and expenses (ROSA, 1934a). Clubs were no longer concerned that the DEF-SP would focus on school physical education, but the possibility of “increasing their expenses with new taxes, hindering the financial situation of the clubs with demands” (A FINALIDADE..., 1934, p.5).

Faced by the concerns of *paulista* sporting clubs, the DEF-SP invited them for a meeting. On that occasion, the director Antonio Bayma affirmed that the Department “would not be a body that interfered in the lives of the clubs, but would centralize the private initiative, recognizing all their efforts in favor of sport. He affirmed the need to coordinate disperse efforts” (A FINALIDADE..., 1934, p.5). That is, the director of DEF-SP reiterated the discourse, which stated that clubs were the main supporters of sports in São Paulo, but opposed the idea of the Department as an agent contrary to the development of its actions. Its intention was to discursively reposition DEF-SP, affirming that the department was a centralizing agent and supported the efforts done by the clubs, instead of being an obstacle.

In the meeting, Bayma clarified that the new regulation did not impose new taxes to the clubs and stated that he considered high the taxes over sports (A FINALIDADE..., 1934). He presented a proposal to reduce taxes, created in 1931, and asked clubs and federations to send reports with numbers and suggestions, so that the DEF-SP could

¹⁰ On the creation of *Escola Superior de Educação Física*, currently the *Escola de Educação Física e Esporte of Universidade de São Paulo*, see Góis Júnior (2017), Gnecco (2005), and Mastroso (2003).

¹¹ The sport-medical control established by DEF-SP in 1934 was anthropometric measurements of *paulista* sportsmen’s bodies and their registry in individual files. On that, see Vimeiro-Gomes and Dalben (2011).

present them to the state government (COGITANDO..., 1934). At this moment, Bayma also explained that DEF-SP would treat differently “sports and sporting exhibitions with commercial purposes” (A FINALIDADE..., 1934, p.5), i.e., sports considered educational and those “exclusively practiced aiming individual or company profits” (ROSA, 1934b, p.4). Among those classified as commercial, there was soccer, a modality that brought greater financial resources to the clubs and was professionalized the year before, and boxing, a type of fight morally condemned by different social sectors. According to Rosa (1934b, p.4), “most [...] sports could be considered educational modalities”, except professionalized ones. All evidence point out that the new proposal would exempt from taxes only the sport modalities categorized by DEF-SP as educational.

In the issue after the meeting, magazine *Esperia* published an article proposing a collaboration with the Department, if there was the possibility of mutual aid among clubs. We can read in the article that “if S.Paulo has progressed in the sporting field, this is due to the enthusiasm of dedicated sportsmen that, working on innumerable associations, could awaken the public’s interest on sports” (DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.5). Thus, if the Department was interested to articulate partnerships with the regatta clubs, it “would find the good-will to best develop its mandate” (DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.5).

Other meetings were held between the representatives of DEF-SP, the clubs, and sporting associations. However, on the third one, the *Paulista* Swimming Association was no longer present, neither was the APEA. On the occasion, the director of DEF-SP presented a proposal, to be taken to the state government, reducing from 22% to 8% the taxes on sporting competitions, the full value would be reverted to pay for the medical-sport control that would be implemented by the Department (VAE SER..., 1934). The lack of financial resources to enable the actions foreseen by the DEF-SP was, in fact, a problem since its creation in 1931 (DALBEN et al, 2019). The proposal presented in the meeting aimed to solve it, at least regarding the implementation of the medical-sport control, simultaneously reducing a part of the taxes on clubs.

In an article published in the newspaper *Correio de São Paulo*, journalist Mário Miranda Rosa criticized the lack of engagement from the clubs in the debates, thus showing the lack of sporting groups’ interest on the meetings organized by the DEF-SP (ROSA, 1934c). It seems that the difficulty found by DEF- SP to affirm itself as a representative of the clubs and federations was because it was part of the public administration. Aiming to stress the little involvement of the clubs in the meetings and establish his version for the future, Rosa (1934c, p.4) predicted that:

Our sportsmen have forgotten that in the future – and this is inevitable – sports will be shouting about the lack of government support, and that the sport benefits little, with only the organization of medical control. They will demand sporting squares, demand swimming pools, ask for funding to participate in big world tournaments, they will ask for many other things, which they now forget, ingrained with the perspective that all will be missed. Certainly not without their own efforts, we will say.

In the following issue of the magazine *Esperia*, in October 1934, a new article was published on the DEF- SP. It starts with a question posed by the form to be filled for the annual registry of clubs: “Can the Department of Physical Education be useful for sporting associations?”. To answer the question, the authors argue that it was not possible to perceive how the Department could transform the practices held in the club, as both had, from the start, the aim to develop physical culture:

Regarding the guideline that the Department might establish on the practice of sports as physical education, we see little use for the clubs. These, as much as possible and according to their own possibilities and needs, have already done for the practice of sporting exercise all they could to turn those exercises into factors of physical education (O DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.7).

We can see that, according to the perspective of the clubs, they were the ones responsible to disseminate sport in the city and transform it into an educational practice; thus, the work of DEF-SP would never be complete without a joint action of these institutions. Though assuming that the idea of a sporting practice guided towards the education of youth was a priority to both, the clubs wanted more than the recognition for the services they offered. To these institutions, the ideal collaboration between the clubs and DEF-SP would not be the creation of a common program to disseminate sporting practices to young people, but the decrease of taxes paid to the State. On DEF-SP guiding the practice of sports in the clubs, the article is assertive: “[...] we need to consider that a unique guidance, generalized to all clubs, cannot be efficient, as the clubs have various categories, and not all have the same physical and health conditions (O DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.7)”.

The article was also pessimistic regarding the relation of DEF-SP actions, as it could not “go against the material interests of public administration in favor of clubs” (O DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.7), when referring to taxes. It concludes that the DEF-SP “emanates the government, it will be restrained to take measures against the interest of public administration. Thus, the Department cannot be useful to clubs” (O DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.7). According to the authors, if the Department did not seek ways to help financially the clubs with tax exemptions, it would fail, as it depended on them to enact the actions established by its regulation:

The Department will never centralize sporting activities. It will make use of the organization of clubs; it will always need their existence to do its task. [...] the clubs, certainly, will not want to submit themselves to the control and impositions of the Department (O DEPARTAMENTO..., 1934, p.7).

The Department represented the materialization of governmental actions that aimed to meet the medical, educational, and press demands, which strongly required an action from the state regarding the practice of physical culture and mainly sports in the city of São Paulo (DALBEN, GÓIS JÚNIOR, 2018). Though the actions of the Department were in agreement with those of the clubs, regarding the moral, hygienic, and educational demands of sport, there was not, at first, an approximation between the clubs and the DEF-SP. The clubs considered that the action of DEF-SP should not hinder their protagonism and the educational dimension of sports dissemination in the city. DEF-SP would be more efficient if reducing the taxes or promoting financial and material support. According to the sources analyzed, we could perceive a first approximation moment between DEF-SP and school physical culture, seen by clubs as a barrier for the development of sports. This finding is secondary to the financial issue, later seen as the main challenge between these institutions and their ideals on the dissemination of sport.

After a restrained start, with no great feats, during the 1920s and 1930s the clubs lived their splendor and, in fact, promoted a great renovation on the practices of physical exercises and

sports in the city of São Paulo, mainly on its rivers and banks. The criticisms against DEF-SP were less on its program to establish and disseminate the physical culture and more on the lack of financial incentives for the clubs. At the same time, it is possible to see that these criticisms also aimed to reaffirm that the promotion of sports in the city of São Paulo was under the responsibility of the clubs, mainly the regatta ones.

Final remarks

In this study, it was possible to see that the sporting clubs tried to clearly express the educational dimension of their various activities. A pedagogy of the body and health was developed there, indicating what was the “correct” way to practice sports and, more generally, physical exercises. There was a great dispute of meanings connected to a physical culture rooting in the city of São Paulo at that time, and the clubs tried to establish the moral bases of what they believed to be the “real sportsman”. A brand new physical culture, different from the previous model, emerged in the city. Deep changes on the meanings and senses attributed to sports, emphasizing its educational and moralizing characters, were promoted in these spaces.

However, clubs were not limited to determine the sporting practice of their own members, but, according to the set of documents produced and analyzed here, they called themselves the real spokespersons of an education for sport in the city. This self-perception was used as proof to create the DEF-SP, in 1931, an official body founded to guide, manage, and supervise sporting practices in São Paulo.

DEF-SP wished to establish a possible dialogue with the clubs aiming to build together the educational and moral bases through sporting practices in the city. There was an agreement among them on the moral, hygiene, and educational demands of sport; however, there was no unity between the clubs and DEF-SP as they feared that the Department would take away the protagonism and pioneer status of clubs in disseminating and promoting sports in the city. For the clubs, this approximation had a practical aim and was restricted to the demand to increase their revenue, reached by the decrease of taxes paid to the city and the financial and material contributions.

The education through sport in the city of São Paulo between 1920 and 1936 has left well-defined traces in the diversified and plentiful set of documents produced by the public and private institutions we analyzed. When handling these pages, we get closer to understand the education of these city dwellers, forged beyond school and, in this sense, the role played by clubs to promote and disseminate a physical culture in the city of São Paulo. Similarly, we could also capture the ideas of education through part of the actions of DEF-SP that, as a public body, also started to act as a specific type of education of the body that was starting to establish itself in Brazil, the physical education in the school environment. In agreement, both aimed to establish educational projects: be it a physical education with children in the schools, or an education through sport focused on the youth in the clubs.

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