

**Physical Education professional practice and teacher education in Brazil: historical analysis of public policies and recommendations for advancing professional practice and teacher education**

**Formação de professores de Educação Física e prática profissional no Brasil: análise histórica das políticas públicas e recomendações para o avanço da prática profissional e da formação docente**

**Formación de maestros de Educación Física y práctica profesional en Brasil: análisis histórico de políticas públicas y recomendaciones para avanzar la práctica profesional y la formación de maestros**

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**Luiz Gustavo Bonatto Rufino**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2567-9104>

Centro Universitário de Jaguariúna, Brasil

Prefeitura Municipal de Paulínia – SP, Brasil

Prefeitura Municipal de Campinas – SP, Brasil

E-mail: [gustavo\\_rufino\\_6@hotmail.com](mailto:gustavo_rufino_6@hotmail.com)

**Larissa Cerignoni Benites**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6144-5298x>

Universidade Estadual de Santa Catarina, Brasil

E-mail: [lari.benites@gmail.com](mailto:lari.benites@gmail.com)

**Samuel de Souza Neto**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8991-7039>

Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brasil

E-mail: [samuel.souza.neto@gmail.com](mailto:samuel.souza.neto@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the process by which public policy relating to Physical Education Teacher Education in Brazil is developed, highlighting both the most important advances and the issues that still need to be better understood and evolved. To that end, from an interpretative research approach, we analyzed documents related to several laws and guidelines of Brazilian public policy. The results focus on the relation between Physical

Education in Brazil and the field of public policies in a historical analysis and its intersection with a sociological perspective. This article concludes that although the field of Physical Education has achieved greater social importance in public policies, there are still several challenges that it must overcome to achieve social legitimacy. Further studies in this approach are therefore necessary to shed light on what is not apparent but is nevertheless part of "how the game is played".

**Keywords:** Physical Education Teacher Education; Physical Education Professionalization; Public Policy; Field theory; Professional field; Pierre Bourdieu.

### **Resumo**

Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar o processo de desenvolvimento das políticas públicas relativas à Formação de Professores de Educação Física no Brasil, destacando tanto os avanços mais importantes quanto as questões que ainda precisam ser melhor compreendidas e desenvolvidas. Para tanto, a partir de uma abordagem de pesquisa interpretativa, analisamos documentos relacionados a diversas legislações e diretrizes das políticas públicas brasileiras. Os resultados enfocam a relação entre a Educação Física no Brasil e o campo das políticas públicas em uma análise histórica e sua intersecção com uma perspectiva sociológica. Este artigo conclui que embora o campo da Educação Física tenha alcançado maior importância social nas políticas públicas, ainda existem vários desafios que deve ser superados para se alcançar a legitimidade social. Mais estudos sobre essa abordagem são, portanto, necessários para lançar luz sobre o que não é aparente, mas que faz parte de "como o jogo é jogado".

**Palavras-chave:** Formação de Professores de Educação Física; Profissionalização da Educação Física; Políticas Públicas; Teoria dos campos; Campo profissional; Pierre Bourdieu.

### **Resumen**

Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el proceso mediante el cual se desarrolla la política pública relacionada con la Formación de Profesores de Educación Física en Brasil, destacando tanto los avances más importantes como los temas que aún deben ser mejor entendidos y evolucionados. Para ello, desde un enfoque de investigación interpretativa, analizamos documentos relacionados con diversas leyes y lineamientos de la política pública brasileña. Los resultados se centran en la relación entre la Educación Física en Brasil y el campo de las políticas públicas en un análisis histórico y su intersección con una perspectiva

sociológica. Este artículo concluye que, si bien el campo de la Educación Física ha alcanzado una mayor relevancia social en las políticas públicas, aún existen varios desafíos que debe superar para lograr la legitimidad social. Por lo tanto, es necesario realizar más estudios en este enfoque para arrojar luz sobre lo que no es aparente, pero, sin embargo, es parte de "cómo se juega el juego".

**Palabras clave:** Formación docente en la Educación Física; Profesionalización de la Educación Física; Política pública; Teoría de campo; Campo profesional; Pierre Bourdieu.

## 1. Introduction

This study focuses on the relation between public policies in the field of education and the professional training of Physical Education teachers in Brazil. We seek to analyse the historical trajectory of national documents and publications in the field of public policy that interfere directly in the development of both professional training and teachers' practice. In summary, we explore what we "have" in terms of established policies, "how" they are situated, and "which" discussions and gains have been most important up to the present.

More specifically, public policies can be understood as a set of programmes, actions, and activities undertaken by the state with the participation of public and/or private organizations. Their main aim is to ensure citizens' rights and that can provide focus for government institutions, organizations and actions (Souza, 2006).

These policies operate relations that are situated within a particular social context and whose *modus operandi* is intrinsically related to the characteristics and history of the place where it is inserted (Bourdieu, 1997).

Thus, to analyse the development of public policies in the field of Physical Education, we need at least a general understanding of how the political system and administrative structure of this country operate.

Recent data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics shows that Brazil has a population of approximately 207 million and is composed of 26 states and a Federal District, with 5,564 municipalities. The government is a Presidential Federal Republic in which the head of state is periodically elected.

Within this context, studies that seek to understand and analyse the public policies that guide the organisation and process for training teachers delve into this administrative context, given that it is where the Brazilian educational system is rooted.

This system is a broad expression of how Brazilian education is organised in an intentional, coherent and operative manner (Brazil, 1988). It consists of the stages of early childhood education, elementary school (primary and upper grades), middle school, and higher education.

Because educational field is a complex system, the relation established with the political field also occurs in a complex way, involving a lot of interactions, as well as symbolic productions, such as expert opinions, ideological constructions, etc., in addition to interventions such as laws, guidelines, regulations, budgetary decisions and allocation of resources, etc. (Dubois, 2015). These interactions end up influencing both teacher training and professional practice interventions in school environment.

In this way, it is crucial that there are mechanisms that facilitate its operation, such as public policies that regulate, standardise, and guide a concept of education and training. The present study belongs in this context.

Thus, we chose to analyse some of the established policies which are considered great references both for teachers training as well as professional practice of physical education teachers in schools. These are the *Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LGB)* and the *National Common Curriculum Basis (NCCB)*.

These two documents are very important in the consolidation of educational public policies in the Brazilian national scenario. The LGB began to be idealized in the earliest of 1930s and underwent several moments of reconfiguration and discussions. This document presents different versions throughout the time, being the last one published for the first time in 1996. However, there are many changes in the official document, especially in the last few years. It means that diverse parts of the text were revised. As a clarification, the LGB of 1996 presents in its currently version some contents that are from 2017.

The NCCB, in turn, is the implementation of a public policy called National Education Plan (NEP), which lasts 10 years. In the current NEP (2014-2024) it was expected the organization of a national policy that contemplates the proposition of a common curriculum (national standards) for Brazilian education, related to the teachers training process. This is a new document that began to be discussed in 2015 and is currently in its final stage of writing and official approval (third version).

Thus, this study aims to analyse and to review the history of Brazilian education policy development and its relation to professional practice in physical education and its professional preparation programming. We highlight both the most important advances and the issues that still need to be better understood and developed.

## 2. Method

We took a qualitative approach to our study. More specifically, we chose an interpretive design type of research, which includes the dynamics of a certain kind of phenomenon, based on the researcher interpretation and representations. The main goal of this perspective is to dissect, to unveil and to reveal some interpretation possibilities based on researcher subjectivities and his or her theoretical framework (Savoie-Zajc & Karsenti, 2004). To support these purposes, we chose the document analysis, which considers documents as sources that allow us to comprehend historical facts and its relations, as well as verify their purposes (Souza, Kantorski & Villar Luis, 2011).

The primary purpose of document analysis is to understand the content of documents to make inferences about the information that they contain (Iglesias & Gómez, 2004). This analysis also entails a reading based on criteria such as those listed by Moreira (2005): characterisation, description, identification of recurring topics, coding, interpretation, and inference. In scientific approach, it also provides the reading based on specific criteria. Once we focus on the field of public policies, we chose to base our analytical process on the political cycle highlighted by Ball (1994), Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992), and Ball and Bowe (1992).

This process involves the following stages: *the context of influence* (the social purposes, the relationship with the legislature in which policies are produced and with the speeches that compose the political justification); *the context of the text's production* (the actual documents as well as findings, commentary, etc., and the language used as a product of discussions and agreements); *the context of practice* (in which the policy is subject to different interpretations and reformulations); *the context of results* (which involves the notion of social justice and the general and specific impacts as it interacts with policy); and *the context of political strategies* (which addresses social actors and politicians as well as social problems created by the policy).

According to Mainardes and Marcondes (2009), the policy cycle can be considered as a method. It is a form of conducting research on policies, thinking about them based on concepts such as acting and representation.

After we read the documents selected, we identify them in each one of the public policies cycle proposed. Thus, at first, we verified that the *context of influence* in both documents selected concerns to the fact that they are a proposition of federal government and are historically and socially important in terms of teacher education aspects. This allegation is supported once these documents provide background and guidance to teacher education curricula in colleges and universities. In the *context of the text's production*, it was possible to perceive the changes in the documents writing, the insertions and deletions of contents made over the years and the paradigms evidenced, for example, changes of government, exchanges of ministers of education and agreements that make the documents change their directions and intentions, among others. These changes affect the *context of practice*, which highlighted how these documents end up approaching and influencing Physical Education Teacher Education in many aspects, such as curriculum contents, teaching approaches, career plans, funding, among others. In the *context of results* and in the *context of political strategies*, we emphasized some items that allowed us to analyse the discussions, struggles and advances, that is, aspects related to our research aim.

In this way, the results and discussion presented below are the result of the articulation of the analysis of these contexts and their possibilities of interpretations, as for example, our analysis of the concept of “field” advocated by Pierre Bourdieu.

### **3. Results**

Studies of public policies in Brazil are recent, as are studies of the legal foundations for Physical Education, particularly with regard to professional training (Amaral & Pereira, 2009). According to Farah (2016), analyses of political processes in the country date to the 1930s. However, it was only in the 1990s that research gained prominence on the Brazilian political agenda.

We begin from the understanding that the concept of public policy in education intends to resolve problems and the demand for the need to compose an agenda and intentional actions. These are typically long-term plans in line with government aims, but they also provide for involvement by civil society. It was inside this paradigm that the LGB emerged in Brazilian educational scenario.

The LGB was first conceived in the 1930s, based on the Manifest of the Pioneers of the New School interested in reforming Brazilian public education, introducing the principles

of free and secular education, given that Brazilian education had historically been private (elitist).

The year 1961 saw passage of the first version of the law (Law 4024), which had a more philosophical bent, emphasising humanistic education for the Brazilian citizen, reflecting the influence of Catholic and non-governmental elitist private schools rather than achieving the ideals for public schools. Another version with a more psychological and technical profile emerged in 1971 (Law 5692) and was harshly criticised for having been written during the military dictatorship. The discussion over the development of a new LGB was taken up again, and Law 9394 was passed in 1996; it had a more sociological profile, containing a broad reform of national education and taking into account the importance of teacher preparation. This was a law that established the guidelines and bases for national education, regulating the Brazilian educational system. It has since been amended several times.

According to Brzezinski (2010), the discussion of the current LGB lasted eight years and was marked by two competing world views: the "experienced world," depicting the interests of teachers and those primarily interested in consolidating a public education system, and the "official world," represented by religious and private schools and those interested in the neoliberal benefits to be derived from the business aspects of education.

This is one of the great milestones of the policy cycle, representing the context of influence and the social purposes of this law as well as the context in which its text was produced, having undergone several versions and revisions, culminating with the contexts of the results and its interaction within the Brazilian educational system and Physical Education itself (Rufino, 2018).

With regard to teacher preparation, Title IV indicates who is considered an educational professional and mandates that teacher preparation occur through a university programme of teacher credentialing; however, it makes an exception for teaching very young children and the first years of primary education, for which a high-school diploma suffices. Teacher preparation for Physical Education follows the same guidelines but is currently only available through university-level programmes, as mandated by law.

In accordance with the LGB (Brazil, 1996), teacher preparation programmes shall provide scientific and social knowledge, paying attention to the relationship between theory and practice through supervised teaching internships and, for example, establishing "bridges" between schools and universities. In early 2017, it was determined that teacher preparation

programmes must be aligned with the National Common Curriculum Base (the other document chosen for our analysis).

The LGB also addresses the activity of teachers, making the educational systems responsible for promoting and valuing educational professionals, ensuring their ongoing professional development, salary scale, career advancement track, promotion, time allocated to study, planning and assessment, and appropriate working conditions (Brazil, 1996).

With regard to Physical Education, the law's 1961 version believed that PE was just a “practice” that should be compulsory until the age of 18 (Brazil, 1961). The 1971 version considered Physical Education only as an “activity”, in spite of the belief of its crucial importance to students’ health and hygiene. It was only in 2001, following the 1996 version, that Physical Education became a required element of the primary education curriculum. Further changes were made in 2003 to specify when the subject is optional (for example, for students who have children or who work more than six hours per day, among other reasons) (Brazil, 2003, 2001).

However, in late 2016 and early 2017, new adjustments were made to the law that cast doubt on whether Physical Education is compulsory in secondary school, and a period of dispute regarding this issue followed. It was called “Brazilian High School Reform” and is a process that is still going on. Although the article mandating Physical Education as an obligatory component of the secondary school curriculum remains unchanged, secondary schools argue that the discipline is subject to the National Common Curriculum, in which the current terminology is “studies and practices”, generating a heated discussion in the media and in the field about a possible loss of status and legitimacy (Brazil, 2017).

These modifications and adaptations in this important law is related to the context of practice, in which proposals are bound to different interpretations. The discussion announced above presented different points of view with regard to the condition of the current Physical Education within the schools. On the one hand, this perspective is supported to the view of the area as a mere practical activity, without much importance to the teaching and learning process as a whole. On the other hand, there are some aspects that looking for their potentialities, with practices that appreciate teachers and their pedagogical practices in a more professional approach linked to a larger view related to human development of more physically active, as well as critical and reflective citizens.

With all these changes, this combination of modifications and adjustments shows a context of political strategies that occasionally tend to grant a higher status to Physical



Education and occasionally tend to devalue the discipline compared to other subjects of the curriculum at school.

Thus, the LGB represents one of the most important documents at the national level, given that it covers instruction at all levels and forms, guiding its implementation throughout the country and the manner in which monitoring occurs at the federal, state and municipal levels, in addition to the role of civil society.

Its historic creation reflects the contradictions and disputes among different fields of knowledge and between the public and private sectors (Brzezinski, 2010). Despite these dilemmas, however, it has garnered great political support nationally, providing guidelines for the articulation of teacher training and performance and provoking ongoing relation between the currently historical moment and what can be expected for the future.

One of the intentions to the future was that the LGB provided the creation of a National Education Plan (NEP) with guidelines and goals for each 10-year period, endorsing the country's federal constitution of 1988, which already expressed concern for this issue (Brazil, 1988). One of the PNE goals is to propose our second policy analysed in this study: the NCCB. Thus, we can say that the NCCB is directly related to the LGB and articulates with Brazilian national education system. Its main goal is to guide the curriculum and education systems and its networks in all the levels: federal, states and municipalities policies, as well as all pedagogical proposals of both public and private schools from infant education, elementary schools until the end of secondary education, all over Brazil.

The NCCB is the most recent Brazilian public policy in the field of education. As a document in progress, it is still in the process of being drafted, reviewed, and analysed, which is why it has undergone changes. For the present analysis, we are considering the second version (Brazil, 2016).

This document, supported by the guarantees of the LGB, aims to establish the rights and learning goals for each stage of instruction in the basic education system. Therefore, the NCCB (Brazil, 2016) seeks to guide the development of the curricula for each school subject. It does not set out to establish a "minimum curriculum" but, rather, to ensure that instruction in all regions of Brazil fits similar parameters.

Thus, its influence consists of the broad nature of its discretion to give an intentional purpose to the Brazilian school curriculum, presenting a complex dispute among different participants (lawmakers, teachers, experts, etc.) as the context in which the text is produced.

Because Brazil is a very large country with many different contexts and social differences rooted deep in its history, it has always been a challenge for public policies in the

area of education to understand what Brazilian students must actually learn over the 12 years of the country's basic education (which comprehends kindergarten, elementary school and high school. Undergraduate and graduate courses are not part of Brazilian "basic" education system).

Regarding the context of text production, the NCCB (Brazil, 2016) was announced and started to be designed as a trial proposal in June 2015. As a first move, Brazilian government invited experts (usually researchers from universities in all the subject matters) who prepared a preliminary version that was available to public consultation. In May 2016, it was announced by the Ministry of Education the second version of this document. The government promoted a series of seminars to discuss the document.

More recently, in April 2017, the third (and last) version of the document was released. As a negative highlight, it was verified the absence of the part related to secondary education, which is still under construction. This process reassessed the discussion about the importance of high school and about what is in fact the interested related to the Brazilian high school Reform. The document is currently approved and the proposal is to be implemented by the year of 2020. Once the NBCC does not present the part of the secondary education, there are doubts about the organization of this stage of education and the contents that should compose the curricula, among them, Physical Education.

This path of approval of this document reflects the complex context of political strategies and of decision-making in which this kind of proposal was submitted.

In this manner, the NCCB (Brazil, 2016) in the second version (the one that was analysed) considers Physical Education to be one of the basic elements of the curriculum at all grade levels of basic education, granting it status, recognition, and social legitimacy. As in previous documents, the NCCB considers Physical Education to be a component of the area of "Languages," understood in a broad sense as the manner in which personal and institutional relations and participation in social life are developed. Although this conception has been criticised, it has also been recognised as consistent with previous proposals, such as the National Curriculum Parameters.

According to the NCCB (Brazil, 2016), Physical Education is a curricular component of paramount importance that enables younger generations to preserve and critically recreate a cultural legacy accumulated by mankind throughout history in the form of systematised knowledge. It seeks to align the educational assumptions of this subject with the democratic intentions that govern Brazilian primary education. Thus, Physical Education is associated with a sociocultural approach, relating it to corporal practices known as the "Body Culture of

Movement," exemplified by the following activities: play and games, dances, sport, gymnastics, martial arts, and physical adventures. The learning goals are organised according to these practices.

With regard to the main objective of the document, which is the organisation of knowledge in the curriculum, the NCCB (Brazil, 2016) proposes almost 250 learning goals for Physical Education, covering the content, cycles, and physical activities. The remarkable complexity of teaching some of these goals may create challenges that are difficult to overcome under the current difficult conditions of teacher training. In this regard, the prospects for the development of teacher training strengthen the chance that the document may be effective in what it proposes.

In other words, in order to NCCB acquires social legitimacy, its context of results needs to reduce the gap between teachers training process and the articulation between universities and schools.

Finally, it should be noted that with the NCCB (Brazil, 2016), Physical Education can present a diversity of physical activities, with the intention of achieving concrete learning goals, valuing regional differences and issues related to people with handicaps. The document stresses that the practices chosen within each context should be mastered with a higher level of proficiency. On the other hand, the experimental activities incorporated favour a diversity of content and experience by broadening opportunities for practice. Therefore, they permit a certain amount of flexibility and potential for diversifying some content and deepening others.

As in previous documents, experts from different fields (researchers and university professors) were invited to contribute to the conceptual component of each curricular subject, such as Physical Education (Rufino, 2017). Thus, an interaction among the fields through the confluence of politics and science can be observed. It should be emphasised that even more important than their cultural capital, the "experts" are expected to have symbolic capital that helps them validate and prescribe the proposal.

The NCCB even proposed to open the discussion to the public through the Internet, which can be considered an innovation in the Brazilian context, generating a context of practical possibilities and resulting in greater interaction between proposals and expectations for the document.

Despite its potential and the impact that this document could have, given that it seeks to cover all regions of Brazil, the fact that this document is still in the development stage makes it difficult to measure its impact on both professional practice and the professional preparation of physical educators. New analysis should be developed by the time this

document is legitimised within this field. Besides that, it is necessary to encourage the number of researches in the field, such as analysis of what is happening in professional practice and teacher preparation programs and how that aligns with or deviates from the stated national policies. In addition, studies in sport pedagogy (including research on physical education teacher preparation), as pointed by Rufino, Benites & Souza Neto (2020) is critical to inform efforts to effectively influence policy.

#### **4. Discussion**

Our starting point is based on the view that public policies constitute symbolic systems within a social reality (Bourdieu, 1984). They can therefore be considered products that organise the conscious and/or subconscious perceptions of individuals (primary school teachers, university professors, specialists, the academic and educational community, students, lawmakers, etc.) regarding aspects of knowledge, practice, reproduction, and domination.

This social reality is constituted by what Bourdieu called a "field", a space of confrontation where the dominant and the dominated jockey for position and occupy distinct roles. A field is a relatively dynamic and autonomous domain of social activity with rules of operation and specific institutions that define the relations among the players.

It is a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents of institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97).

There are different fields in the social structure, such as the scientific, religious, artistic, economic, political, legal, and educational fields, among others. Each field has specific features such as rules and relative autonomy, although according to Hilgers and Mangez (2015, p. 5), "it is possible to bring to light the invariants that shape and structure them".

Thus, there exist relations and interrelations among the various fields. This occurs in the social space, comprising multiple fields characterized as spatial configurations in which the agents are inserted, competing, interacting, and relating (Bourdieu, 1984). We can cite, for example, the points of impact between the field of policy, the field of education, and the

subfields contained within each. According to Lisahunter, Smith, and Emerald (2015), this concept allows us to identify the various social spaces as well as the practices and the positions of power.

We can therefore understand public policies as products of relations among fields. It is through them that actions generated in the political field resonate and influence other fields. As Dubois (2015, p. 210) noted: "like every social object, public policy has to be analysed as the product of social relations. In this case, the multiplicity of these relations and the diversity of the positions of the agents engaged in them are such that they cannot easily be circumscribed to a single field".

Our analysis of the formation of Physical Education in Brazil and its interaction with public policy takes into account Kirk's idea (2010, p. 1) that "each country, each region, each state and each city can demonstrate differences in terms of key events and moments, outstanding leaders, local forces and particular circumstances." Thus, we consider that the social construction of what has been called Physical Education has undergone very diverse ideas and practices guided by a variety of approaches (Rufino, 2018).

In Brazil, Physical Education was introduced in schools in 1884 as "gymnastics", under the influence of Europe and associated with biological sciences, militarism, and racial eugenics, being offered only to men. In the 20th century, Physical Education maintained its biological, military, and eugenics legacy, being considered a "practice" in the 1960s, an "activity" in the 1970s, and a "curricular element" starting in the 1990s. As we analysed before, it was only in the middle of 1990s that it was considered a curricular component, precisely because of LGB proposition.

Souza Neto (1999) stated that until the 1960s, Physical Education focused more on the technical aspects of training, more closely resembling vocational apprenticeship through practice and repetition. With the proposition of 1969, the teacher preparation programme began to include historical, social, and pedagogical aspects. However, in the late 1980s, Physical Education was reorganised into two distinct tracks: the teaching credential, designed to prepare teachers to work in schools, and the bachelor's degree, which prepares the professional for additional fields (Brazil, 1987). This reorganisation gave the subject an academic character and established a professional field, strengthening graduate study.

Beginning in the 1960s, Physical Education in schools was closely associated with sports, concentrating on physical performance and a few team sports. This model was driven by, among other factors, the success and prominence of Brazilian football, due to the historical and cultural factors that made the country acquire great projection in this modality.

The perspective began to be questioned in the 1980s, when a number of different approaches not linked only with high performance perspective and that tried to enlarge the number of body practices to be teach in school besides sports (such as dance, physical adventure, martial arts, popular games, gymnastics, among others) contributed to giving Physical Education new status and legitimacy.

This perspective collaborated with changes achieved by higher education, given that it was a time when graduate study was being consolidated nationally and graduate programmes were being restructured. It was assumed that teachers in schools would follow this trend.

We can thus observe that from its earliest development in Brazil, the field of Physical Education was organised through the school system. That is, university courses were created specifically to meet the demand for intervention in Physical Education in schools, initially known as "gymnastics." This logic was inverted, however, particularly beginning in the 1980s, with the expansion of this field's activities at a moment when higher education began to take the lead in changing the field's structure.

With regard to the academic (scientific) field, especially in the context of university and professional training and the professionalization, Physical Education was introduced into higher education with the foundation of the Army School of Physical Education in Rio de Janeiro in 1933 (Azevedo & Malina, 2004), almost at the same time of the first LGB. The first civilian curriculum for this field was designed in 1939 with a two-year programme to prepare teachers. The pedagogical structure for training teachers was included starting in 1969, with a curriculum requiring at least three years and 1800 hours of training, including pedagogical subjects for school such as a supervised teaching internship (Brazil, 1971).

In general, there were at least two models of training and curricula structure. The former was based on the traditional practice of sports and lasted until 1987. The second was considered a scientific-technical degree, grounded in a body of knowledge with a scientific structure and discipline (Betti & Betti, 1996). The teacher's role (license's degree) was limited to teaching in schools, whereas the professional (bachelor's degree) worked in different areas, marking the epistemological identity of the field.

The most recent curriculum revision occurred in 2004, filling some gaps left by the 1987 law. The number of supervised teaching internship hours was increased, teaching practice was made a part of the curriculum, and other elements were added with a view to developing a skill-based academic and cultural programme for teacher preparation, such as the practices as a curricular component linked to subject matters and the increase in the course's workload, especially in teachers training programs. Benites, Souza Neto, and Hunger

(2008) argue that this new curriculum included significant improvements and sparked vigorous discussion about the utilitarian nature of the fledgling new design, which assumes that the more skills covered, the better prepared the new teacher will be.

These curricular changes went hand in hand with a series of historical changes. For example, we highlight the changes occurring in the field of politics, particularly as the country underwent a process of re-democratisation in the mid-1980s following a military dictatorship. Another significant change occurred in the academic field, particularly with the emergence of postgraduate courses in this area and incentives for professionals to study abroad, culminating with the intensification of the discussion within the field of Physical Education (Bracht, 1999). This reorganization in Brazilian physical education field occurred in the rise of the development of exercise sciences and, in some ways, mirrors what happened in many other countries around the world.

Another significant factor was the regulation of the profession through law 9696 (Brazil, 1998). From that moment on, all areas of physical exercise and sporting activities were to be undertaken by professionals holding university degrees in Physical Education and professional licenses. This change provoked controversy and questions such as whether former athletes and coaches could practice the profession, a subject of ongoing discussion.

This analysis covers the course of Physical Education in Brazil beginning with its integration into higher education (as a bachelor's degree programme). It is also important to understand how Physical Education came to be incorporated as a subject into the school curriculum.

This brief timeline shows that the contexts of influence and production of texts (Ball, 1994) were tied to the field's engagement with higher education and primary education, with the aim of developing regulations for the training and professional practice of Physical Education teachers. It means that different expectations are created for the most varied agents who occupy positions in the different fields or subfields and fight for recognition (professors at university, teachers at school, politicians, etc.).

Because Physical Education is a relatively recent social field, the context of practice and results presents different possible interpretations and generates numerous disputes and controversies (Rufino & Benites & Souza Neto, 2020). We can cite the discussions between those who advocate maintaining the regulation of Physical Education as a profession and those who argue that the law should be amended (the context of political strategies). Another dispute centres on whether the field should have a single degree programme or whether the teaching credential and the bachelor's degree should be offered as distinct programmes. It is

within this system of disputes and struggles, whether it be to maintain or to change the structure (Bourdieu, 1998), that Physical Education has been constituted as a field (Rufino, 2018).

One example is the conceptual change that emerged between the second LGB (Brazil, 1971), which characterised Physical Education as a school "activity," and the law of 1996 (Brazil, 1996), which established it as a "mandatory component of the curriculum." More than a mere change in terminology, it represented a change in the discipline's social status, recognition, and legitimacy (Rufino, 2017).

However, changes in the field do not necessarily occur in a linear fashion, and they are subject to numerous complex processes shaped by the underlying power relations. For example, the same law that classifies Physical Education as a mandatory component of the curriculum contains loopholes that excuse a number of students from having to participate in it. Particularly in some contexts, such as night classes in secondary school and adult literacy classes, there are still a number of deeply entrenched dilemmas (students who don't need to do PE classes), as well as the dispensation of students who work concurrently with the studies, who are engaged in military services, who have some types of diseases and, more recently, who are in the final year of high school and therefore should be focus on college exams or in the entrance to the labour market.

In this sense, according to Rufino (2018) an analysis of public policies in the area of Physical Education shows that Brazil has advanced in the contexts of influence and the production of texts in a more organised manner compared to in the production of policies. However, the contexts of the practice and the results have received little attention, given that there are no clear ways in which the policies are actually implemented, particularly because Brazil is a country with great regional diversity. The political strategies are weakened in that we have few instruments by which to assess their practical impact, which may contribute to the creation of inequalities (Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992; Ball & Bowe, 1992). Besides that, there are several others reasons why is difficult to implement public policies in Brazil. We highlight, among others, at least three possible: 1) a lack of funding to support the policies' implementation; 2) absence of any oversight and reporting requirement; and 3) a lack of consequence for not abiding to the stated policy. Taken together, these reasons refer to the manner in which the policies are written and they end up being what we typically refer to as "weak" policies.

Therefore, the unequal distribution of the means of production in society makes the political struggles and disputes between those who have and those who lack the monopoly of



power very complex. In this sense, Max Weber (1946) has made a notable contribution. Although he takes a very broad view of politics, understanding it as any type of independent leadership in action, Weber (1946, p. 78) notes that the process is typically exercised by the state. In this author's words, "the state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory".

According to Bourdieu (2000), although the quest for a monopoly of power is undertaken by a small group within the field of politics composed of agents endowed with cultural and symbolic capital to exercise it, so-called "politicians," there are numerous interrelations between this field and others. The reason is that the proposals drawn up in this field directly affect social relations. In democratic societies, politicians are chosen by agents in other fields, establishing relationships that vary among dependence, privilege, and subordination. According to this author, the political field must maintain a close relationship with individuals external to the field because political agents derive their legitimacy from the representation of citizens (Bourdieu, 2000).

Also, according to Bourdieu (1989), the positions and relations of force in the field of politics are similar to those in the field of religion. Although there is a certain tendency towards insularity, both fields are subject to the decisions of lay people, in this case, "non-politicians." This relationship gives rise to a series of interdependencies among the agents, influencing and transforming the field.

In the case of Physical Education, even with interaction among fields such as the invitation to experts to contribute to the formulation of public policy, it should be noted that despite the importance accorded to these professionals in the field of politics, the agent who retains the monopoly of power, the politician, tends to have the last word. In the course of negotiations, many of the experts' contributions may lose out to the needs of the political game. This has been shown, for example, in the approval of the NCCB, still in progress, in which various proposals have been tabled.

Although Physical Education's quest for legitimacy, particularly in the field of politics, is important from the perspective of social valuation, it has stood in the way of addressing other issues that equally warrant discussion. Thus, a number of important issues such as the discussion about how Physical Education relates to teacher training and the practice of teaching in regard to professionalisation and the development of a professional culture, for example, have been relegated to the side-lines.

Without claiming to exclude other possible contexts and interactions, we consider that the development of Brazilian Physical Education as a professional practice presupposes at

least three specific and closely interrelated conditions: 1) modifications to current public policy; 2) changes in the curricula and structures of university teacher training programmes; and 3) closer coordination between research and problems encountered in professional practice.

It is first necessary to open a broad analysis between the field of politics and sectors of civil society concerning the roles and responsibilities of Physical Education in Brazilian society. Doing so would entail changes in many of the public policies established up to the present, which should be understood in a manner more closely related to the circumstances and needs of professional practice in this field.

Another important element in this scenario lies in the need for changes in the content of teacher training courses in Physical Education, which follows from the previous question, because the political and educational fields are closely interconnected. It is still a challenge to understand that teacher training should go hand in hand with teaching practice, particularly in a country with so many public and private institutions that train teachers in the field of Physical Education. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to rethink the relationship between the teaching credential and bachelor's degree programmes and to promote more interdisciplinary ways to connect knowledge and professional teaching practices, which continue to expand. Moreover, once teacher education is also a political matter, we suggest that part of physical education teacher preparation programs (both in the teacher certification programs as well as in doctoral programs) should be constructed to build the skills to advocate for policy development and change. In this way, we can ask: what is the space intended for reflection about public policies in Brazilian Physical Education Teacher Education curricula?

Finally, it is essential that academia contribute to the development of research into effective ways of overcoming the challenges found in the areas of professional practice in Physical Education. More collaborative processes are crucial to understanding the practical problems as well as the difficulties and challenges that arise in everyday work. More transparent interaction among agents from different fields, such as teachers, policymakers, and others, is a prerequisite to ensuring significant changes. As Kirk and Haerens (2014) indicate, the engagement of scientific research with Physical Education to overcome the practical problems that afflict teachers requires more effective and appropriate collaboration.

Although they belong to different fields, politics, education and science are all part of social reality. Therefore, they must work together, which requires dialogue and willingness among the agents in each of these fields. Although these fields are spaces of struggles and

disputes, they may also allow the implementation of critical dialogue and cooperation with a view to more appropriate forms of social interaction. The relationship between Physical Education and public policy, in this context, still lacks better understandings.

## **5. Final Considerations**

In democratic societies, the legal domain, composed of both the laws and the decision-makers in this field, becomes both well-known and important, particularly in some areas, such as the field of education. In this project, we sought to analyse the process by which public policy relating to the training of Physical Education teachers in Brazil is developed, highlighting both the most important advances and the issues that still need to be better understood and elaborated.

To that end, we take a perspective that allows us to relate that we "have" a set of practices and legal guidelines, followed by "how" they interrelate in the scenario of training and practice of Physical Education teachers, showing "which" discussions are necessary, such as those faced by various individuals in the field of education and their relation to the field of politics.

These analyses show that Physical Education has made some advances in terms of public policy in that it has been included continuously in the key national policy documents since 1961. Although it is still striving to gain space and legitimacy in both the area of teacher training and professional practice, the fact that this discipline appears in many Brazilian laws and regulations indicates that its proponents have in some sense strengthened its identity through their struggles and discussions.

As with the other fields, politics, understood as the field of forces and struggles in which agents attempt to alter the balance of power at the moment, ends up being a tangle of symbolic productions. The fields and subfields relate to each other based on what they consider priorities in their attempts to raise a symbolic good, namely, their recognition and legitimacy.

The public policies discussed end up becoming an advance to the extent that they bring Physical Education into the educational field and enable it to make its way through both innovations and social reproduction.

However, policy changes do not happen overnight and are the product of a series of struggles and disputes within the social fields. Their impact, however, is crucial to social transformations. As Weber noted (1946, p. 128), "politics is a strong and slow boring of hard

boards. It takes both passion and perspective”. We also consider that, in addition to passion and perspective, another feature in efforts to bring about change in public policy is persistence.

In this sense, it is fitting to recall that Brazilian Physical Education suffers from what Bourdieu (1984) calls *hysteresis*, that is, the interval of time between the incidence of a social force and the development of its effects, as mediated by its true incorporation. Physical Education may rise to a higher level, but it may be returning constantly to its prior condition.

Therefore, studies are needed to follow this perspective and to continue to observe the situation of public policy and Physical Education for the purpose of perceiving that which is not always obvious but which is part of “how the game is played”. A research agenda should focus on the interaction between the different social fields, the roles and dynamics of the agents inside the fields, and the importance of public policies process to promote possible changes in education in developing countries, considering the multiple factors existing in the social reality in which we live.

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**Porcentagem de contribuição de cada autor no manuscrito**

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Larissa Cerignoni Benites – 25%

Samuel de Souza Neto – 15%