

ARTICLE

ANALYSIS OF THE BODY IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BRAZILIAN CONGRESS OF SPORT SCIENCES (CONBRACE)¹

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ABSTRACT: The discussion surrounding the body has been a persistent topic across various fields of knowledge, particularly in Physical Education. In Brazil, this debate gained momentum in the 1980s when the field of Physical Education began systematically integrating with the humanities. Within this context, the Brazilian College of Sport Sciences (Colégio Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte - CBCE) and its main event, the Brazilian Congress of Sport Sciences (Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte - CONBRACE), have showcased the research of their participants through Thematic Working Groups (GTTs) since 1997. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyze the conceptions of the body present in the CONBRACE proceedings from 1997 to 2017. This research employs a quantitative-qualitative approach through document analysis with bibliometric characteristics. To compose the data analysis, the search and selection of texts were based on the presence of the word “body” in the title, abstract, or keywords of the oral communications. The results show that the main conceptions of the body are related to cultural body; existential body; body as machine/organism; body as subject through corporeity; and identity/symbolic body, with a strong alignment of this debate with perspectives from the humanities, social sciences, philosophy, and the arts throughout the investigated period. In conclusion, this study analyzed and presented various trends, which only reality and history, as criteria of truth, will be able to confirm.

Key Words: conference proceedings, body, Physical Education.

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ANÁLISE SOBRE O CORPO NOS ANAIS DO CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO DE CIÊNCIAS DO ESPORTE (CONBRACE)

RESUMO: O debate sobre o corpo tem sido constante em uma série de campos do conhecimento, principalmente na Educação Física. No Brasil, esse debate foi intensificado a partir dos anos de 1980, momento em que o campo da Educação Física começa a se aproximar de modo sistemático das ciências humanas. Nesse âmbito, o Colégio Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte (CBCE) e o seu principal evento, o Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte (CONBRACE), apresentaram as pesquisas dos seus participantes por meio dos Grupos de Trabalhos Temáticos (GTTs) a partir de 1997. Portanto, o objetivo desta pesquisa é analisar as concepções de corpo presentes nos anais do CONBRACE, no período de 1997 a 2017. Esta pesquisa é quanti-qualitativa por meio de análise documental, com características bibliométricas. Para compor a análise dos dados, a busca e a seleção dos textos se deram a partir da presença da palavra “corpo” no título do texto, no resumo ou nas palavras-chave das comunicações orais. Os resultados demonstram que as principais concepções de corpo estão relacionadas às de corpo cultural; corpo existencial; corpo máquina/organismo; corpo sujeito pela corporeidade; e corpo identidade/simbólico, com uma forte aproximação deste debate com as perspectivas das ciências humanas, sociais, da filosofia e das artes em todo o período investigado. Em conclusão, este estudo analisou e apresentou variadas tendências, as quais apenas a realidade e a história como critérios de verdade poderão confirmar.

Palavras-chave: anais, corpo, Educação Física.

ANÁLISIS SOBRE EL CUERPO EN LOS ANALES DEL CONGRESO BRASILEÑO DE CIENCIAS DEL DEPORTE (CONBRACE)

RESUMEN: El debate sobre el cuerpo ha sido una constante en una serie de campos del conocimiento, principalmente en la Educación Física. En Brasil, este debate se intensificó a partir de la década de 1980, cuando el campo de la Educación Física comenzó a acercarse sistemáticamente a las ciencias humanas. En este contexto, el Colegio Brasileño de Ciencias del Deporte (CBCE) y su principal evento, el Congreso Brasileño de Ciencias del Deporte (CONBRACE), presentaron las investigaciones de sus participantes a través de Grupos de Trabajo Temáticos (GTT) desde 1997 en adelante. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar las concepciones de cuerpo presentes en los anales del CONBRACE, de 1997 a 2017. Esta investigación es cuantitativa y cualitativa a través del análisis documental, con características bibliométricas. Para componer el análisis de los datos, la búsqueda y selección de textos se realizó a partir de la presencia de la palabra “cuerpo” en el título del texto, en el resumen o en las palabras clave de las comunicaciones orales. Los resultados demuestran que las principales concepciones del cuerpo están relacionadas con las del cuerpo cultural; cuerpo existencial; cuerpo de máquina/organismo; cuerpo sujeto a la corporalidad; e identidad/cuerpo simbólico, con un fuerte acercamiento a este debate con las perspectivas de las ciencias humanas, sociales, la filosofía y las artes a lo largo del período investigado. En conclusión, este estudio analizó y presentó diversas tendencias, que sólo la realidad y la historia como criterios de verdad pueden confirmar.

Palabras clave: anales, cuerpo, Educación Física.

INTRODUCTION

The debate about the body has been a constant theme across various fields of knowledge, especially in Physical Education. In Brazil, this discussion gained momentum starting in the 1980s, a period when the field of Physical Education began to systematically engage with the humanities, as demonstrated by the works of scholars such as Medina (2009, 2010) and Santin (2003), to name a few. According to Daolio (2005), the body embodies all the rules, norms, and values of a specific society

because it is the primary means through which an individual interacts with their surrounding environment.

Given this context, the topic has significant scientific and social relevance. Understanding how the body is perceived by researchers, teachers, and students in various social settings involves several aspects, such as the relationship between humans and nature and the methodological organization of Physical Education as a curricular component in schools. It also involves understanding the objectives of classes in non-school environments, such as gyms, sports practices, and leisure activities in parks, clubs, and condominiums, as well as their influence on the formation of self-image and self-esteem across all age groups. This, in turn, shapes each person's relationship with their own body, with others, and with society (Castellani Filho et al., 2012; Fernandes & Altmann, 2020; Gama & Baptista, 2020; Moreira, 2003; Silva, 2014; Silva, 2017).

On the other hand, an individual's relationship with their body, depending on their psychological and/or social conditions, can also contribute to the development of body image distortion problems, such as anorexia, bulimia, bigorexia, among others (Gama & Baptista, 2020; Moehlecke et al., 2020; Moraes & Guizzetti, 2016; Moral-Agúndez & Carrillo-Dúran, 2020).

According to Vigarello (2006), the body has become our most beautiful object of consumption, noting that many transformations related to the body and beauty have occurred due to political, social, and cultural changes over time. The body is the locus of fashion, education (especially Physical Education), philosophy, arts, and sciences, which necessitates an understanding of the characteristics, capacities, and skills desired and established for each historical period and across different centuries. Scientifically, this topic is studied, evaluated, understood, explained, and questioned by both individual researchers and research groups (Corbin et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Wolf, 2021).

Regarding the different researchers and research groups, it is common to find connections with scientific entities of various stripes and analyses, examining the body in its natural aspects such as anatomy, physiology, and sports training concerning health and athletic performance, as well as its philosophical and epistemological conceptions, its social connections in sociology and anthropology, and its aesthetic aspects in the arts (Gama, 2019).

One of the scientific entities in the field of Brazilian Physical Education is the Brazilian College of Sports Science (Colégio Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte – CBCE). This entity was established in September 1978 and is structured with a national directorate with a biennial mandate, state secretariats, and Thematic Working Groups (Grupos de Trabalho Temático – GTTs), which aim to bring together researchers from different regions of Brazil and abroad around a single theme. The CBCE also includes the General Assembly — the highest decision-making body — and the members, who include undergraduate and graduate professors, graduate students, undergraduate students, and institutional members (CBCE, 2018).

The CBCE was established in a Brazil hardened and deeply affected by the military dictatorship of the 1970s, a period marked by the emergence and proliferation of discourse on the advantages and importance of spaces for workers' rest and recreation. During this time, there was a heightened concern with the use of leisure time and its connection to the practice of physical and sports activities. This period also promoted a sports culture, a sporty way of being, and the cultivation of a certain type of relaxation and body—one that is healthy and productive (Soares, 2007, p. 128).

Within the CBCE, the Thematic Working Groups (GTTs) were created in 1995 during the entity's main event, the 9th edition of the Brazilian Congress of Sports Science (Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte – CONBRACE), which was held in Vitória, in the state of Espírito Santo. The GTTs officially debuted at the 10th CONBRACE, held in Goiânia, in the state of Goiás, in 1997. Since then, changes have occurred in these groups; some have been discontinued, while others were created and/or modified according to the needs of the academic community associated with the CBCE. At the 1997 Congress, the debate on the body was a cross-cutting theme across all GTTs, with no group specifically dedicated to researchers on the topic. However, relevant research on the body was present in several GTTs, including those focused on School and Epistemology, among others (Grando et al., 2007).

According to Grando et al. (2007), it was in 1999, at the CONBRACE in Florianópolis, in the state of Santa Catarina, that the GTT *Memória, Cultura e Corpo – GTTMCC* (Memory, Culture and Body) was introduced to discuss topics related to the history of Physical Education and the body. By 2004, the need for a specific space within the CBCE for debate on the body and culture became apparent. As a result, among the 14 current GTTs, the GTT *Corpo e Cultura – GTTCC* (Body and Culture) exists today, with its first participation at the 14th CONBRACE in 2005. This year also marked the first edition of the International Congress of Sports Sciences (Congresso Internacional de Ciências do Esporte – CONICE), which has since been held concurrently with CONBRACE.

The GTTCC has always been a focal point for reflection, producing a range of research and publications. Among these are the works of Baptista et al. (2015) and a special issue of the journal **Arquivos em Movimento** (Moving Files) from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro – UFRJ), coordinated by Baptista and Lüdorf (2014). This issue presented overviews on the topic across Brazil, with analyses divided by the country's geographic regions: Center-West (Vilarinho Neto et al., 2014); Northeast (Viana & Farias, 2014); North (Alencar, 2014); Southeast (Lüdorf et al., 2014); and South (Wenetz et al., 2014).

As Soares (2007) asserts, perhaps the CBCE will serve as a conceivable place of memory in a future of deliberate forgetting, allowing for reflection on the short span of its existence — 45 years in 2023 — and the emergence and visibility of many histories of Physical Education and Sports Sciences through the configuration of new problems, approaches, and objects.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze the conceptions of the body present at CONBRACE from 1997 to 2017. As central references, the search was conducted in the proceedings of CONBRACE from 1997 across its different GTTs, between 1999 and 2003 in the GTTMCC, and from 2005 to 2017 in the GTTCC.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a quanti-qualitative study utilizing documentary analysis, with bibliometric characteristics (Coimbra et al., 2019; Okubo, 1997; Santos Filho & Gamboa, 1997; Severino, 2013). To conduct this analysis, the proceedings of the CONBRACE from 1997 to 2017 were examined to assess the production on the body within this significant event.

It is important to emphasize that in 1997, during the 10th CONBRACE held in the city of Goiânia, for the first time in the history of the CBCE, the works were divided by GTT. However, as indicated earlier, no GTT specifically focused on the body was created that year; this occurred two years later at the 11th CONBRACE in Florianópolis in 1999, with the creation of the GTT GTTMCC. Subsequently, in 2004, the GTTMCC was divided into two GTTs during a meeting held in Cuiabá, in the state of Mato Grosso, by the CBCE at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (Sociedade Brasileira para o progresso da ciência – SBPC): the first being GTT *Memory of Physical Education and Sports (Memória da Educação Física e do Esporte – GTTMEFE)* and the second GTTCC (Grando et al., 2007).

Since at least 1997, CONBRACE has published the proceedings of the event, with the works organized by each GTT. Generally, oral presentations appear as more detailed texts, while posters are presented as abstracts.

Consequently, in this study, to compose the data analysis, the search and selection of texts were conducted based on the presence of the word “body” in the title, abstract, or keywords of the oral presentations. However, considering the information about the origins of the GTTs, and specifically focusing on the theme of “body” with the aim of analyzing the first 20 years since the creation of this structure within the CBCE and the 25 years of GTT action in 2022, this research adopted the division suggested by Brito et al. (2021), as it helps to understand the different moments of the GTTs' creation related to the body. Thus, the periods were distributed according to the following expressions: i) Period of Generalization (1997) – since there was no specific GTT, the search was conducted across all GTTs in the 1997 proceedings; ii) Period of Recognition (1999–2003) – named as such because the College created a specific GTT for this debate (MCC), directing the investigation specifically towards this GTT;

and iii) Period of Consolidation (2005–2017) – the last period corresponding to the division of the GTTMCC into GTTMEFE and GTTCC, with this research being limited to the latter.

The fact that this research is restricted to the oral presentations published in the proceedings from 1997 to 2017 is due to the need for a complete reading of the texts to discuss the conceptions of the body present in CONBRACE. Thus, the first step was to identify the number of oral presentations each year, and then select the texts by searching for the word “body” (Table 1).

Table 1 – Texts Found in the Proceedings (1997–2017)

Texts	Generalization	Recognition	Consolidation	Total
Presented	241	81	216	538
Analyzed	26	38	143	207
Percentage Analyzed	10,8%	46,9%	66,2%	38,5%

Source: The authors.

Based on Table 1, a total of 538 oral communications were presented during the analysis period. Initially, 207 (38.5%) texts were selected for full reading as they met the inclusion criteria. However, after reading, some texts were identified as not presenting explicit conceptions of the body (Table 2).

Table 2 – Texts analyzed that do not present conceptions of the body (1997–2017)

Texts	Generalization	Recognition	Consolidation	Total
Evaluated	26	38	143	207
Texts without Conceptions	10	23	42	75
Percentage without Conceptions	38,5%	60,5%	29,4%	36,2%

Source: The authors.

Thus, of the total of 207 works that were analyzed, 75 (36.2%) of them did not present conceptions of the body, thus specified, observing each period: 10 (38.5%) in the Generalization phase; 23 (60.5%) in the Recognition period; and 42 (29.4%) in the Consolidation stage. Therefore, there are 132 (63.8%) works that have a conception of the body and are suitable for evaluation. The texts were submitted to a quantitative-qualitative analysis, as stated by Santos Filho and Gamboa (1997, p. 105):

Regarding the quantity-quality categories, research with a dialectical approach, in terms of techniques, generally uses historiographical [sources], treating the quantitative and qualitative dimensions within the principle of movement. These categories modify, complement and transform one into the other and vice versa, when applied to the same phenomenon. In fact, the two dimensions are not opposed, but rather interrelated as two phases of reality in a cumulative and transformative movement, in such a way that we cannot conceive of one without the other, nor one separate from the other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, it is important to introduce two elements that can help us understand the process of knowledge production about the body during the years of the event. The first concerns the distribution of works according to regions, institutions and researchers. This analysis is justified, since the distribution of regions of institutions and researchers can help us understand the concentration of knowledge

production on a given topic, as well as the exponents of knowledge production in each period. There is also the interest in linking the distribution of knowledge production about the body with the *Stricto Sensu* Postgraduate courses (Masters and Doctorates in Physical Education in Brazil), since, theoretically, the main researchers and research groups have – for the most part – connections with Postgraduate Programs (PPGs). The second point, and the most relevant of this study, is to identify the main conceptions of the body at each moment. To this end, certain categories were identified that express the central conceptions, and an attempt was made to present quotes in each period that indicate the reflections that led to the development of certain understandings. Therefore, these results and discussions are subdivided as follows: i) profile of knowledge production – regions, institutions and main researchers; and ii) the categories of body conceptions expressed in each delimited period.

Profile of knowledge production about the body in the proceedings of CONBRACE: regions, institutions and main researchers

According to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES), the body responsible for evaluating PPGs (Master's and Doctorate degrees in Brazil), there are 60 Postgraduate Programs in Physical Education (PPGEFs) – considering Academic and Professional Master's courses, as well as Academic and Professional Doctorates –, of which 6 (10.0%) are in the Central-West; 8 (13.3%) in the Northeast; 1 (1.7%) in the North; 28 (46.7%) in the Southeast; and 17 (28.3%) in the South (Brazil, 2021).

Table 3 presents the works analyzed by region and period of analysis regarding the production on body conceptions in CONBRACE.

Table 3 – Distribution of analyzed texts by region* (1997–2017)

Region	Generalization	Recognition	Consolidation	Total
Midwest	1	0	38	39
North East	2	0	32	34
North	0	0	3	3
Southeast	12	11	80	103
South	4	10	33	47
International**	0	2	1	3
Total	19	23	187	229

Source: The authors.

*There was the possibility of more than one mention, as some works have authors from different regions.

**Of the texts analyzed, three studies carried out by researchers from two other countries were identified in this analysis, one work from Argentina and another from Portugal, in 1999, and one from Portugal in 2007.

By comparing the information related to the number of PPGEFs and the number of papers on the body, according to the information found by region, it is possible to identify that there is no direct correspondence between the number of PPGEFs and the total number of papers published as oral communications at CONBRACE. This information suggests some possibilities. The first of these would be that the researchers with publications in the annals of the event in question do not have – or did not have – a specific relationship with the PPGEFs. On the other hand, some themes – such as body concepts – may interest specific researchers, and for this reason no such relationship was found.

When looking more closely, one notices a number of courses distributed in each region, with the Southeast having the most PPGEFs, the South in second, the Northeast in third, the Central-West in fourth and, lastly, the North. When assessing the distribution of papers in the periods, a certain similarity is observed in the Generalization period – Southeast with more papers, South, Northeast, Central-West and North, respectively –, while in the Recognition period the papers came only from the Southeast and South; and, in the Consolidation Period, the sequence was Southeast, Central-West, South, Northeast and North, not specifically demonstrating a correlation. This analysis shows that there was an increase in the production of the theme in some regions, mainly in the Central-West. There are countless possibilities for this, one of them being the location of the events, because, although CONBRACE is always held in different places, the changes brought about by the coordinated public policies, mainly during the government of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT), such as the Support Program for Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities (Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais - REUNI)², have increased the number of university courses and professors in federal public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) throughout Brazil. Thus, several professors left their regions of origin (birth and training), especially from the PPGEFs in the Southeast and South regions, and migrated to several states in the Northeast, Central-West and North, although this is an analysis that needs to be further investigated in future studies.

Another aspect to be highlighted is the authors who presented the most papers, in which it is possible to identify who has consistently published on the subject over time in CONBRACE. As a way of establishing criteria for this selection, it was decided to present up to three authors who presented the most papers in each period. Thus, during the Generalization period, the researcher who presented the most papers discussing the body and its conceptions was Professor Terezinha Petrúcia da Nóbrega, with two papers, and she was also the participant who presented the most papers in the entire 1997 CONBRACE.

In the other periods, which had more events, it was possible to identify researchers Andréa Moreno, Carlos José Martins and Ivan Marcelo Gomes, each with two papers in the Recognition period. In the Consolidation period of the theme, the researchers with the most papers were: Karenine de Oliveira Porpino, with seven papers; Juliana Gomes Saneto and Silvia Maria Agatti Lüdorf, with four papers each.

It should also be noted that, in the sum of periods, the following remain with the most papers presented: Karenine de Oliveira Porpino (7); Ivan Marcelo Gomes (5); Juliana Gomes Saneto (4); Silvia Maria Agatti Lüdorf (4); Terezinha Petrúcia da Nóbrega (3); and Carlos José Martins (3).

Of these researchers, Karenine de Oliveira Porpino and Terezinha Petrúcia da Nóbrega are from the Northeast and are affiliated with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). The others are affiliated with institutions in the Southeast: Ivan Marcelo Gomes and Juliana Gomes Saneto, from the Federal University of Espírito Santo (Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo – UFES); Silvia Maria Agatti Lüdorf, from UFRJ; and Carlos José Martins, from the São Paulo State University (Universidade do Estado De São Paulo – UNESP). In this regard, it is possible to demonstrate some of the institutions and regions that produce the most work on the body in Brazil. As for the main researchers from the North, South and Central-West, future studies will be necessary.

Finally, in relation to the researchers who presented the most work, Terezinha Petrúcia da Nóbrega, Carlos José Martins and Ivan Marcelo Gomes were the ones who maintained production in more than one period, with the latter demonstrating an increase in their production.

² The Support Program for Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities is a program established by the Federal Government of Brazil through Decree No. 6,096/2007, during the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. This program helped in the creation and expansion of federal universities throughout the country, increasing the number of places for students, new courses and expanding the teaching staff.

The categories of body conceptions expressed in the CONBRACE proceedings

Table 4 presents the main categories identified when discussing the conception of body in the CONBRACE proceedings.

Table 4 – Categories analyzed based on body conceptions (1997–2017)

Body Categories	Generalization	Recognition	Consolidation	Total
Cultural	0	1	22	23
Existential	0	2	18	20
Machine/Organism	1	1	18	20
Subject by Corporeity	7	1	11	19
Identity/Symbolic	1	0	16	17
Others	8	20	86	114
Total	17	23	171	213

Source: The authors.

The most prevalent and categorized conceptions of the body identified were: cultural body; existential body; machine/organism body; body subjected by corporeity; identity/symbolic body; among others. Given all the predominant categories identified, it is possible to present how the authors expressed their understandings in each period. However, some were selected to demonstrate how they are evidenced considering the limits of an article. Thus, this study will discuss the conceptions of cultural body; existential body; machine/organism body; body subjected by corporeality; and identity/symbolic body, precisely because they are the most frequent.

It was very common in the texts to highlight the body as a cultural construction, this being the category with the most works. Some examples are shown below.³:

The body, considered in its cultural and social diversity, has been a central point in anthropological reflections [...]. The body, full of symbols, as Mauss reminds us, is man's first instrument and most natural technical object, where the traditions of society are inscribed. In this way, a small action or gesture can clearly translate certain cultural elements learned by the individual within his or her community (Fassheber, 2001, p. 2).

And if it, the body, 'speaks', it does so through a series of codes, smells, behaviors and gestures that can only be 'read', that is, given meanings in the context of a given culture. However, this does not mean that bodies are 'read' or understood in the same way at any time and place, nor that similar value or importance is attributed to bodily characteristics in different cultures (Kowalski & Ferreira, 2005, p. 951-952).

In general, researchers who discuss the idea of the body from the perspective of a cultural elaboration, as explained above, tend to deny or at least question this idea as a biological construction. This movement can be seen in some texts considered classics in the field of Physical Education, such as those by Daolio (2004, 2005).

Correia and Almeida (2020, p. 4) say that, when

³ To differentiate the passages of the texts analyzed in the research carried out in the CONBRACE annals from the citations of authors that are used to provide theoretical support to the text, this study adopts italics for the excerpts from the proceedings examined.

[...] They sought to think about the actions of the body itself in the face of the power relations that permeate it; they were not only interested in the effects of culture on the body, but also in the way in which the body's own action occurs in social relations, that is, in a determination that does not only come from outside and is inscribed in it, but is internal to the body itself.

It is also possible to identify an approximation with a classic author of anthropology: Marcel Mauss. This author brings important analyses in his work *Sociology and Anthropology* in relation to the debate on the body as a cultural construction, with one of his central concepts being the analysis of body techniques, in which the body is a fundamental element. For him:

The body is man's first and most natural instrument. Or, more precisely, without speaking of instrument: man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body. Immediately, the entire immense category of what, in descriptive sociology, I classified as 'diverse' disappears from this rubric and gains form and body: we know where to place it (Mauss, 2013, p. 407).

Thus, it is apparently possible to recognize a strong influence of anthropology in the analyses of the authors above. Understanding the body as an instrument is to identify it as a category that presents a dialogue between the human being and nature, as well as the means by which a given culture is developed and begins to relate to the body itself.

In another category of the data evaluated, it is possible to identify the body as an existential expression of the human being, since it is through the body that one exists. This analysis can be seen in the following excerpts:

The world of life is the place where the coexistence of the lives of bodies-subjects is systematized and made explicit [...]. This body has the capacity for expression and speech, represented by constituent elements of subjectivity. It is worth noting that singularity is not a uniform globality, nor a totality, but rather a missing body, constituted by a historical network demanded by the other (Schwengler, 1997, p. 226).

Now, what at the time was new to me – conceiving the Being as being the body itself, as an indivisible totality (Medeiros, 1999, p. 1317).

The use of the term seems redundant, because if we take Merleau-Ponty's definition, the being is a corporeal being, so beyond the definition of the term, its implication is important. The author invites us to think that the body is the central dimension of existence (Correa, 2009, p. 3).

In these passages, it is possible to identify terms such as “coexistence”, “indivisible totality” and, also, “existence”. These analyses are predominantly similar to the thinking of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. For this philosopher, the perspective of the body as the central locus of existence is the essence of his theory. Merleau-Ponty (2011, p. 118), in turn, clarifies that attention to life is the awareness that one takes of “nascent movements” in one's own body – so much so that, for this author, one does not have a body, one is a body.

Other research in Physical Education that has a common conception are those in which the body is compared to a machine. This analysis is present in authors who discuss the body from the perspective of biodynamics. According to Manoel and Carvalho (2011), there are three major lines of research in Brazilian Physical Education, namely: a) biodynamics; b) sociocultural; and c) pedagogical. According to these researchers:

The lines of research in biodynamics are guided by the natural sciences (ABERNETHY, 1996; AMADIO; BARBANTI, 2000). The sociocultural sub-area deals with topics such as sports, body practices and physical activity from the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, history and philosophy. The pedagogical sub-area investigates issues related to teacher training, curriculum development, teaching methods and sports pedagogy, in addition to dealing with methodological, social, political and philosophical aspects of education. The sociocultural and pedagogical sub-areas define their lines of research guided by the social and human sciences. In this sense, Physical Education investigates in close proximity to the area of education (BAIN, 1995; BRACHT, 2006), sociology (BETTI, 2009), philosophy (FENSTERSEIFER, 1996; KRETCHMAR, 1994) and history (SOARES, 1998) (Manoel & Carvalho, 2011, p. 392).

In this study, we seek proximity to the sociocultural field, understanding that the philosophical and social assumptions of Physical Education can even influence pedagogical understanding and intervention, as previously mentioned, bringing impacts to human development in general. Below, some excerpts from the proceedings analyzed on the understanding of body machine/organism:

'The body is considered a machine that works according to the principles of 'physical laws', therefore, its movements occur through the mechanics of its own functioning, and 'governability' is related to it and/or to the exercise of a will established by an a priori reason' (DESCARTES, 1974, p. 234) (Rodrigues, 1997, p. 1586).

According to Foucault, from the 17th century onwards, a type of political power developed in our societies whose task was to manage the life of the social body. This power unfolded into two main forms, two poles (sic) of development interconnected by a set of intermediate relations. The first of these poles (sic) focused on the body as a machine: its training, expansion of its abilities, expansion of its strengths, parallel growth of its usefulness and docility, and its integration into effective and economic systems. This set of procedures would characterize disciplinary power, which configures an anatomical-political analysis of the human body. The second was formed around the middle of the 18th century, focused on the body-species, a body permeated by the mechanics of the living being and supporting biological processes: proliferation, births and mortality, health level, life expectancy, longevity, with all the conditions that can make them vary. These processes are assumed through a whole series of interventions and regulatory controls that configure a bio-politics (sic) of the population. The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constitute the two poles (sic) around which the organization of power over life in our societies has developed. For Foucault, the body does not have fixed structures and needs, as the naturalist perspective would have it, but can be modified, improved, and its needs are produced and organized in different ways. It is malleable, flexible, formed by diverse habits, values and practices, and is therefore inscribed in history. It is because it is not a natural given that the techniques of power invest in its materiality and forces (Altmann & Martins, 2001, p. 1).

This body is normally placed as an alter ego consecrated in society, a self-admiration. Thus, there is a fragmentation of the body in such a way that the organism loses its totality, and it can be said that the parts of this perfect machine are replaceable (Siqueira & Mendes, 2009, p. 2-3).

In these excerpts, it is possible to identify some important aspects. The first is to understand that, in some of the studies, the understanding of the body as a machine or the body as an organism appears more as a denunciation than as an announcement. Based on Medeiros (1999), when discussing the body in research, two central forms of analysis can be identified. One is called denunciation, and the other as announcement. In the denunciation, the intention is not to confirm a certain conception of the body, but, on the contrary, to present this analysis as a problem. On the other hand, in the announcements, the body as a machine/organism is asserted as being something appropriate and/or positive.

In the analyses presented, it is inferred that both conditions are manifested. In the case of the studies by Rodrigues (1997) and Siqueira and Mendes (2009), a certain announcement is identified, since it is understood from the passages analyzed that there is a defense of the body as a machine/organism. On the other hand, the study by Altmann and Martins (2001) demonstrates, in their dialogue with the French philosopher Michel Foucault, the denunciation that the body is seen in its condition as a machine at first, and as an organism at a later moment, as a way of establishing a biopolitics on the body and, consequently, on the human being itself.

When looking at the body as an announcement of a machine, we observe the mention of Descartes, a French philosopher and mathematician of the 17th century, who was cited by Rodrigues (1997), being an important author in this discussion both for his work *Metaphysical Meditations* and for his work *Discourse on the Method* (Descartes, 2005, 2006).

There is a defense of the body as a machine when Descartes (2006, p. 44) says:

I considered myself, first of all, as having a face, hands, arms, and all that sort of machine composed of bones and flesh, such as it appears in a corpse, which I called the body [...]. As for the body, I did not doubt at all its nature; for I thought I knew it very distinctly.

In this passage, Descartes (2006) demonstrates his understanding of the body, pointing out the fact that, even though he understands the existence of the face, hands, arms, among others, he understands it as a kind of machine. Another prominent point is the fact that he sees a body as he sees a corpse. Regarding this prominent fact, it deserves due critical reflection based on the thinking of Adorno and Horkheimer (1985, p. 218), who, centuries later, came to say, in the text “Interest in the Body”, present in the work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that “[...] one can no longer convert the physical body (Körper) into the living body (Leib)”. Another author who speaks of the human being and the body as a machine is La Mettrie (1865, p. 37-38, our translation), who expresses himself thus:

The human body is a machine that sets its own springs; a living image of perpetual motion. Let food maintain what fever excites. Without it, the soul weakens, becomes furious and dies dejected. It is a candle whose light comes back to life when it dies. But feed the body, pour into its pipes of vigorous juices, strong liquors: then the soul, generous as they are, arms itself with proud courage, and the soldier who would have been driven to flight by water becomes fierce, runs joyfully to death to the sound of drums. This is because hot water agitates the blood that cold water had calmed.

This perspective of La Mettrie is also presented in other authors, such as Bittencourt and Bassalo (2021, p. 12), who identified, in their empirical investigation, the following verbalization of the participants:

[...] ‘depending on the specific subject [...] it can be in a certain way a machine, it can be an instrument, it can be several things. [...] and, reflecting on the complexity of the question about how he understands the body, it takes about four seconds to then begin his answer and state that the definition of body is subject to a ‘specific subject’, but that, in a certain way, it is a ‘machine’ and can ‘be several things’, which denotes the notion of a useful, functional and disciplined body to be used as an instrument of work, surveillance and examination.

In addition to understanding the body as a machine in this aspect, one cannot fail to mention the conception of the body as an organism, which was presented in the study by Siqueira and Mendes (2009), with these conceptions being very close to the biological sciences. Among the classic authors of philosophy, the positivist Auguste Comte clearly presents this understanding of an organism. According to Comte (1978, p. 434): “Living beings are necessarily bodies, which, despite their greater complication, always follow the most general laws of the material order, whose immutable preponderance dominates all their own phenomena, without, however, ever nullifying their spontaneity”. In addition to Comte, in his work *Writings on Medicine*, Georges Canguilhem, a 20th-century French physician and philosopher, demonstrates that the body can be understood as an organism, which “[...] is the anatomical-physiological structure of the human being”, and adds that the “[...] living human body is the set of powers of an existing being with the capacity to evaluate and represent these powers, their exercises and their limits to itself” (Canguilhem, 2005, p. 41).

As a way of bringing a point of interruption to this consideration about the body as an organism, it is still possible to dialogue with this French physician when he says that the body is simultaneously a given and a product. For Canguilhem (2005, p. 42), the body is a given “[...] since it is a genotype, an effect that is at once necessary and singular of the components of a genetic heritage”. However, the body can also be a product in which “[...] its activity of insertion in a characteristic environment, its chosen or imposed way of life, sport or work, contributes to shaping its phenotype, that is, to modifying its structure and, consequently, to singularizing its capabilities” (Canguilhem, 2005, p. 42).

Another category found, based on the conceptions of the body analyzed, was that of the body subjected by corporeity. This category was identified in some passages such as the following:

‘Corporeity is the basic reference of man as a being in the world, in view of social, political, ideological, religious, ethical, educational and other aspects’ (Merleau-Ponty) (Alencar & Cavalcanti, 1997, p. 1311).

With the advent of the Republic, there was a need in Brazil to establish a new social order inspired by the modernization project of European countries [...]. According to the republicans’ view, the population of Minas

Gerais at that time was mostly poor, illiterate, sick, weak, and therefore did not meet the expectations of the new model of citizenship that was intended to be formed. It was necessary to establish, as quickly as possible, new values and a new corporeity (Oliveira, 2003, p. 1).

Man is his corporeality, a creative movement that has unlimited possibilities for meaningful experiences. From this perspective, corporeality is a relationship of totality, and the human being, being his corporeity, always expresses himself in an original, creative and intentional way (Surdi et al., 2011, p. 7).

In these three passages mentioned, the constitution of a subject body, as predicted by Merleau-Ponty (2011), is made from the corporeity of each being. It is interesting to highlight in this conception how the construction of corporeity approaches the phenomenological perspective, this being the most explicit theoretical perspective in the works categorized as subject body by corporeity. According to the French philosopher:

Space and, in general, perception indicate within the subject the fact of his birth, the perpetual contribution of his corporeity, a communication with the world older than thought. This is why they obstruct consciousness and are opaque to reflection (Merleau-Ponty, 2011, p. 342, our emphasis).

Merleau-Ponty returns to the idea of corporeity in another passage when he states that:

The solution to all problems of transcendence is found in the depths of the pre-objective present, where we find our corporeity, our sociability, the pre-existence of the world, that is, the triggering point of 'explanations' in what they have of legitimate – and at the same time the foundation of our freedom (Merleau-Ponty, 2011, p. 580, emphasis added).

Finally, we present the conception that treats the body as an expression of identity/symbolic. Below are some excerpts to better understand this conception:

The body is the person himself. More than social identities, masks or adopted characters, but even more than fragile and manipulated ideas and convictions, the body is the person's own reality. Therefore, there is no longer any private life that does not presuppose the body (Grunenvaldt, 1997, p. 1402).

According to Sant'Anna (2001), the body is 'biocultural', since it is a biological and symbolic territory that can reveal and, at the same time, hide traces of its subjectivity and physiology. Therefore, when researching what is unknown in the body, it becomes impossible to separate it from both nature and its historical and cultural context. Because it is finite, since it accompanies the individual from birth to death, the body is subject to countless transformations, not always desirable or predictable (Vasconcelos, 2005, p. 1241).

There is a hope in the social imaginary that the body will embody an identity, without ambiguities and inconsistencies, that is, that the body will show biological 'marks' as a fixed and normal identity. However, the process is complex and this deduction can be mistaken because bodies are signified by culture and continually changed. According to Sau (1993, p.19) '(...) everything is natural, including 'culture', but in a broad sense everything is cultural, including 'nature' (...)' (Costa, 2013, p. 2).

It can be seen that, in the periods of Generalization and Consolidation, the conception of body as identity or symbolic is contemplated, however, in the period of Recognition, this does not occur, demonstrating that during this time the idea of body as an expression of identity or as a symbolic element is not theoretically established in CONBRACE. Regarding identity, Takaki and Bassani (2016, p. 91) state that:

The image that this body transmits is capable of expressing countless meanings, voluntary or not, which end up classifying, electing certain individuals to certain groups, selecting strangers, and gathering their peers to themselves. The body and identities go hand in hand when we think about the functions that they end up performing in our time.

This excerpt from Takaki and Bassani (2016) brings up the debate on identity that closely dialogues with Costa's study (2013). This point is important to analyze how, in some theoretical perspectives, the construction of identity is important. In relation to the construction of a symbolic body, the dialogue takes place through perspectives such as the following quote:

The symbolic body is formed by the incorporation of signifiers, from the first identifications. It is really an 'in-corporation', or the introduction, into the body, of signifiers directed and/or associated with the future subject – from birth or even before he or she is born – that create a symbolic field conducive to the development of a subject [...]. The symbolic instance, that is, the words coming from others, will animate the real body, in the original sense of *animare*, from Latin: to endow with life (*animus*: spirit, energy, courage, audacity, will, desire and passion). As it is a symbolic body, 'this spoken body does not escape the rules of semantics and syntax – it becomes the object of condensations and displacements' (Nacht, 2000, p. 208) – and is subject to associations and interpretation (Víciora, 2015, p. 46).

Based on Víciora's (2015) understanding, the symbolic body is constituted through personal languages and interactions that depend on interpretation. It is noted that the ideas of identity are similar to sociological theories, especially in debates on gender and sexuality, or from the perspective of phenomenology, as are the ideas of the symbolic.

More conceptions of the body were also found throughout the study, such as: object; social; fragmented/border; historical; appearance/aesthetic; sacred; subjectivity; totality; artificial/virtual; political; anthropological; performance; objectified; power/control; among others. These categories have gained consistency in the production on the body and deserve further studies that promote more in-depth analyses. Furthermore, each of the conceptions may demonstrate a distinct epistemological perspective, which were not discussed here, since in some situations there are divergences regarding the analysis of certain authors, since several groups of thinkers believe that, by not taking an epistemological position and not being linked to certain traditions of thought, they can debate the object, in this case the body, with authors they consider more interesting in an independent and diverse way.

However, we agree with the position presented by Gamboa (2017) when analyzing the production of knowledge. For the author, all production can be situated from the following point of view: theoretical, when classical or current theoretical references are used; epistemological, when knowledge is discussed based on epistemological paradigms; gnosiological, to indicate the relationship with more critical or traditional theories [instrumental or communicative rationality]; and ontological, because it is related to the understanding that one has of being human.

There is also a significant number of productions without a clear conception of the body. This point is interesting because the productions use the term body as common sense. However, as seen throughout this research, the conceptions, as soon as they occur, are multiple and point, as previously stated, to the need for further analyses.

CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the conceptions of body present in CONBRACE from 1997 to 2017. Based on the results gathered, it was possible to observe that the main conceptions of body are related to those of cultural body; existential body; machine/organism body; body subjected by corporeity; and identity/symbolic body, which demonstrate a strong approximation of this examination with the perspectives of the humanities, social sciences, philosophy and arts throughout the period investigated.

However, unfortunately there are still studies that present the body only as a machine/organism, that is, a disciplined and fragmented object, in which there is a debate close to the hard sciences, although the analyzed GTTs seek approximation with the soft sciences. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the theoretical presence of positivist authors such as Comte (1978), who is an important reference in philosophy and sociology and who considers the body an organism.

It is also worth noting that it was not possible to identify the concept of body in a significant number of studies – 75 in total –, demonstrating that people who discuss the topic already understand it as a commonplace or that there is no precision on the importance of the concept of body in relation to Physical Education, which suggests the need for new studies on this issue.

It is important to mention the main authors found in this analysis, since this makes it possible to locate the region of knowledge production. It should be noted that the findings of this research do not demonstrate a linear relationship between the number of studies on the body and the number of PPGs in Physical Education by region of Brazil. This data suggests some possibilities. The first, which

was not analyzed, is related to the lines of research of the PPGs. The second concerns the research groups on the body distributed throughout Brazil, which were not identified in this research, but are present in other studies (Alencar, 2014; Lüdorf et al., 2014; Viana & Farias, 2014; Vilarinho Neto et al., 2014; Wenez et al., 2014).

By locating the main authors of each period, this research demonstrated the geographic distribution of the studies and the important names of each period. If, on the one hand, these researchers confirm the prestige of the PPGs in the Southeast, on the other, they show the strong influence of the Northeast, especially of UFRN in this theme.

During the Consolidation period, there was a very significant number of oral communications coming from the Center-West. This is probably due to the fact that CONBRACE of 2017 – the last year of this analysis – took place in the Goiânia city; However, it is necessary to monitor the data to determine how such information is consolidated over time, given that previous editions of CONBRACE were held in other regions, and this was not a central factor in the increase in production on the subject. Furthermore, this increase in works from the Central-West region may be linked to the stabilization of some groups, such as the Center for Studies on the Body and Nature (Núcleo de Estudos do Corpo e Natureza – NECON), from the University of Brasília (UnB), coordinated by Professor Dulce Maria Filgueira de Almeida; and the Body, Education and Culture Group (COEDUC), from the Federal University of Mato Grosso (Universidade do Mato Grosso – UFMT), organized by Professor Beleni Salete Grandó, which have actively participated in the production of the GTTCC, especially since 2005.

In conclusion, this study analyzed and presented various trends, which only reality and history as criteria of truth can confirm.

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