

Imaginary about school physical education in the countryside of Amazonas: records of perceptions and possibilities of transformation

Imaginários sobre a educação física escolar no interior do Amazonas: registros de percepções e possibilidades de transformação

Imaginarios sobre la educación física escolar en el interior Amazónico: registros de percepciones y posibilidades de transformación

Victor José Machado de Oliveira^I

João Luiz da Costa Barros^{II}

Jamillys Rocha da Rocha^{III}


ABSTRACT


We have tried to know the imaginary about School Physical Education (P.E.) in five towns in the countryside of Amazonas, Brazil. We conducted an exploratory field research. We interviewed 53 people, among teachers, managers, and pedagogical staff, followed by content analysis. The results point out that the imaginary encompasses: a sporting hegemony; dichotomies between body/mind and theory/practice centered in Cartesian rationality; a conception of health as the lack of disease that guides physical activity to combat a sedentary lifestyle and obesity; the idea of P.E. as an area of knowledge that develops competences and motor, social, psychological, and cognitive skills. Finally, we listed some implications for the processes of expansion to the countryside of School P.E. in the Amazon, considering that this subject needs to be valued to contribute to the regional development, in the areas of health, education, culture, and leisure.


Keywords: Social Imaginary. School Physical Education. Education in the Amazon.

RESUMO

Buscamos conhecer os imaginários acerca da Educação Física (EF) escolar em cinco municípios do interior do Amazonas. Foi conduzida uma pesquisa de campo exploratória, na qual entrevistamos 53 pessoas, entre professores, gestores e equipe pedagógica, e procedemos uma análise de conteúdo. Os resultados apontam que os imaginários compreendem: uma hegemonia esportiva; dicotomias entre corpo/mente e teoria/prática centradas na racionalidade cartesiana; uma concepção de saúde como ausência de doenças e que direciona a atividade física no combate ao sedentarismo e obesidade; a consideração da EF como uma área do conhecimento que desenvolve competências e

^IUniversidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus, AM, Brazil. E-mail: oliveiravjm@gmail.com  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7389-9457>

^{II}Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus, AM, Brazil. E-mail: jlbarros@ufam.edu.br  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5459-8691>

^{III}Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus, AM, Brazil. E-mail: jamiahfa@gmail.com  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0136-1364>

habilidades motoras, sociais, psicológicas e cognitivas. Por fim, elencamos algumas implicações para os processos de interiorização da EF escolar na Amazônia, visto que essa disciplina necessita de ser valorizada para que contribua no desenvolvimento regional nos âmbitos da saúde, da educação, da cultura e do lazer.

Palavras-chave: Imaginário Social. Educação Física Escolar. Educação na Amazônia.

RESUMEN

Buscamos conocer los imaginarios sobre la Educación Física (EF) en cinco municipios del interior Amazónico. Se realizó una investigación de campo exploratoria, en la que entrevistamos a 53 personas, entre docentes, directores y equipo pedagógico, y realizamos un análisis de contenido. Los resultados indican que los imaginarios comprenden: una hegemonía deportiva; dicotomías entre cuerpo/mente y teoría/práctica centradas en la racionalidad cartesiana; una concepción de la salud como ausencia de enfermedad y que direcciona la actividad física en la lucha contra el sedentarismo y la obesidad; la consideración de la EF como un área de conocimiento que desarrolla habilidades y destrezas motrices, sociales, psicológicas y cognitivas. Finalmente, enumeramos algunas implicaciones para los procesos de interiorización de la EF escolar en la Amazonía, una vez que esta disciplina necesita ser valorizada para contribuir al desarrollo regional en las áreas de salud, educación, cultura y ocio.

Palabras clave: Imaginario Social. Educación Física Escolar. Educación en el Amazonas.

INTRODUCTION

Physical Education (PE) has been considered a pedagogical intervention practice, with content and knowledge arising from the body culture of movement (Betti, 2005; Bracht, 2019). It is worth highlighting that PE is a mandatory curricular component of Basic Education (Brasil, 2010) and that it uses body practices historically constructed as mediators of the teaching-learning process: fights, matches, sports, games, gymnastics, etc. (Coletivo de Autores, 1992).

Bracht *et al.* (2011; 2012) produced a mapping study of production on school PE in journals in the area in Brazil¹. The authors identified little production (15%) between the years 1980 and 2010. They also recognized that, currently, production in the area has taken on a more plural and dynamic character (Bracht *et al.*, 2011; 2012). Despite the disparity in publications on the subject of school PE, it is considered a useful curricular component for human development and contributes to the promotion of healthier living conditions (Pnud, 2017; Brasil, 2021).

With the aim of producing an exploratory study, we dedicated ourselves to highlighting a little about school PE in the interior of Amazonas. The intention was to understand the imaginaries associated with this curricular component in the perceptions of teachers from other areas of knowledge as well as to reflect on the possibilities for transforming school PE from these perspectives. In this sense, the objective of this study was: to understand the imaginaries regarding the views on school PE in school communities in municipalities in the interior of Amazonas.

Theoretically, our study is based on the concept of social imaginary. In the field of PE, Maroun and Vieira (2007) believe in an approach in which the social imaginary is a possibility for understanding social phenomena that touch on their object of study and intervention, that is, human movement.

1 Brazilian Journal of Sports Sciences (RBCE), Movement, Journal of Physical Education UEM, Thinking about Practice, Motrivência, Motriz, Ciência e Movimento, Motus Corporis, Brazilian Journal of Physical Education and Sport (RBEFE)

According to the authors, it appears that in this context, culture stands out as enabling the existence of social imaginaries (Maroun and Vieira, 2007).

If culture is something tangible and subject to description, imaginary presents something imponderable. In the words of Maffesoli (2001, p. 75): “it is the state of mind that characterizes a people”, as it carries “a certain mystery of creation or transfiguration”. According to this author, the imaginary is never individual, as it permeates the collective or part of it, thus creating a *cement* for social relations. In this sense, one’s imaginary will correspond to that of a group of which they are a part (Maffesoli, 2001).

Based on the imaginary in Maffesoli, authors Silva, Guareschi and Wendt (2010) indicate that it is in bodily relations that the subject relates to the context, thus producing sense and sociocultural meanings. Even more so, since archetypes constitute the imaginary, they are a collective expression “equal in all human beings who live in the same historical period, and also moved by archetypes through the collective imaginary” (Silva, Guareschi and Wendt, 2010, p. 447).

This conception of social imaginary is of interest, since such collective processes create a kind of *social cement* for sharing sensorial and sentimental experiences (Maffesoli, 2001; Silva, Guareschi and Wendt, 2010). In addition, in our study context, knowing the imaginaries related to school PE allows us to observe how they are being cemented and the collective perceptions regarding this curricular component in the interior of Amazonas.

Education in the Amazon is differentiated regionally by its geography and culture and poses unique perspectives to the field of investigation. For example, “we have a vast composition of traditional peoples in the Amazon — Indians, rubber tappers, quilombolas, caboclos, and riverside dwellers. Our *streets* are made up of rivers and streams that not only provide food, but also the attribution of meanings to living in this region” (Brígida and Ramos, 2020).

It is worth noting that the interior consists of urban and rural areas. Municipalities have a rich regional culture with manifestations of body culture, such as *ciranda*² in Manacapuru and *boi-bumbá*³ in Parintins. However, *boi-bumbá* does not only occur in Parintins, but has been observed in other municipalities, e.g., Silves, Maués, Lábrea, Itacoatiara, and Autazes, among others⁴ (Tapajós *et al.*, 2021). Cultural manifestations in Amazonas, in addition to *boi-bumbá*, are based on parties and festivals with square dances and *cirandas* (Iphan, 2018).

These manifestations, among others, highlight local sociocultural knowledge shaped through the relationship between human beings, forests, and rivers. Tardif (2002) considers that this knowledge comes, in short, from life and work experiences, and is circumscribed in daily Amazonian life. Therefore, this knowledge should aid the emergence of teaching work and the identity of Amazonians. Therefore, social imaginaries, in some way, are articulated with the plural and heterogeneous knowledge constituted even before their entry into the teaching career (Tardif, 2002).

For Brígida and Ramos (2020), these local sociocultural contexts and knowledge create possibilities for rethinking the contents of school PE. Pereira (2019) reports that regional cultures must be valued for a consistent pedagogical proposal. In view of this, the current study is justified by bringing to light issues related to school PE in the interior of Amazonas, as well as the body movement culture itself in its broadest sense (of everyday experience) so that we can value regional cultures, especially those linked to matches, games and toys, legends, dances, etc. (Pinto, 2006; Pereira, 2019).

2 *Ciranda* is a type of popular Brazilian game that involves dancing and singing in a circle.

3 *Boi-bumbá* or *bumba meu boi* is a popular Brazilian folklore festival, with human characters and fantastic animals, which revolves around a legend about the death and resurrection of an ox.

4 In addition to the book published by Tapajós *et al.* (2021), there is a website where with information regarding *boi-bumbá* in municipalities of Amazonas: <https://hojetemfestadeboi.com.br/>. Accessed on Jun 27, 2022.

It is in this scenario of rivers and ripples that our investigative intention lies. It focuses on the imaginaries regarding school PE attributed by teachers, managers, and pedagogical staff belonging to some school communities in the interior of Amazonas (Autazes, Itacoatiara, Lábrea, Maués, Silves). Understanding the imaginaries attributed to school PE in municipalities in the interior of Amazonas will enable the process of reflection on the internalization of this curricular component in the face of the challenges and possibilities of its didactic-pedagogical approach. This will allow addressing PE for schools in the interior of Amazonas and not just PE in schools in general. This inspiration originates from the study by Caparroz (2005), which explains that school PE cannot be mechanized as if it were the same thing for all regions and schools.

However, it is clear that the hegemonic imaginary linked to school PE is still centered on sports, which can contribute to leaving aside content that represents local sociocultural knowledge. In other locations, there are studies that highlight imaginaries related to school PE. In Vitória, ES, it was seen that the imaginary of school PE is strongly linked to the sporting phenomenon, worked on by teachers and valued by students (Bracht *et al.*, 2003). A survey of managers, coordinators, and teachers in Buriti dos Lopes PI, identified imaginaries that gave importance to school PE for linking the “physical, moral, and social development of students, as well as improving the intellectual and disciplinary part”, despite there being contradictions in these perspectives (Souza, Val, Oliveira, 2016, p. 56, translated by the author).

Another survey with teachers of other subjects, students, and guardians in Funchal (Portugal) identifies some imaginaries. Firstly, students like PE, but do not recognize it as important for their training in view of other subjects. Secondly, although teachers and guardians identify school PE as important and equal to other subjects, it is observed that in practice scenarios there seem to be problems that devalue school PE, which can retard the importance mentioned by the people who make up the school community (Bárbara *et al.*, 2016).

Given the above, identifying imaginaries about school PE can highlight paths for reflecting on the presence and pedagogical performance of the curricular component in the interior of Amazonas. This consideration is based on Faria, Machado and Bracht (2012), when they identify that social imaginaries have a preponderant force in the processes of innovation or abandonment of teaching practice by PE teachers.

The imaginary in which PE stands out as having lesser value is a preponderant issue, which encourages a view of it as a *second-class* discipline. These relations that affect social recognition can affect PE teachers’ self-esteem and identity. In addition, these configurations can lead to processes of pedagogical abandonment (also known as “*rola-bola*”) or the struggle for recognition with investment actions in teaching (Faria, Machado and Bracht, 2012).

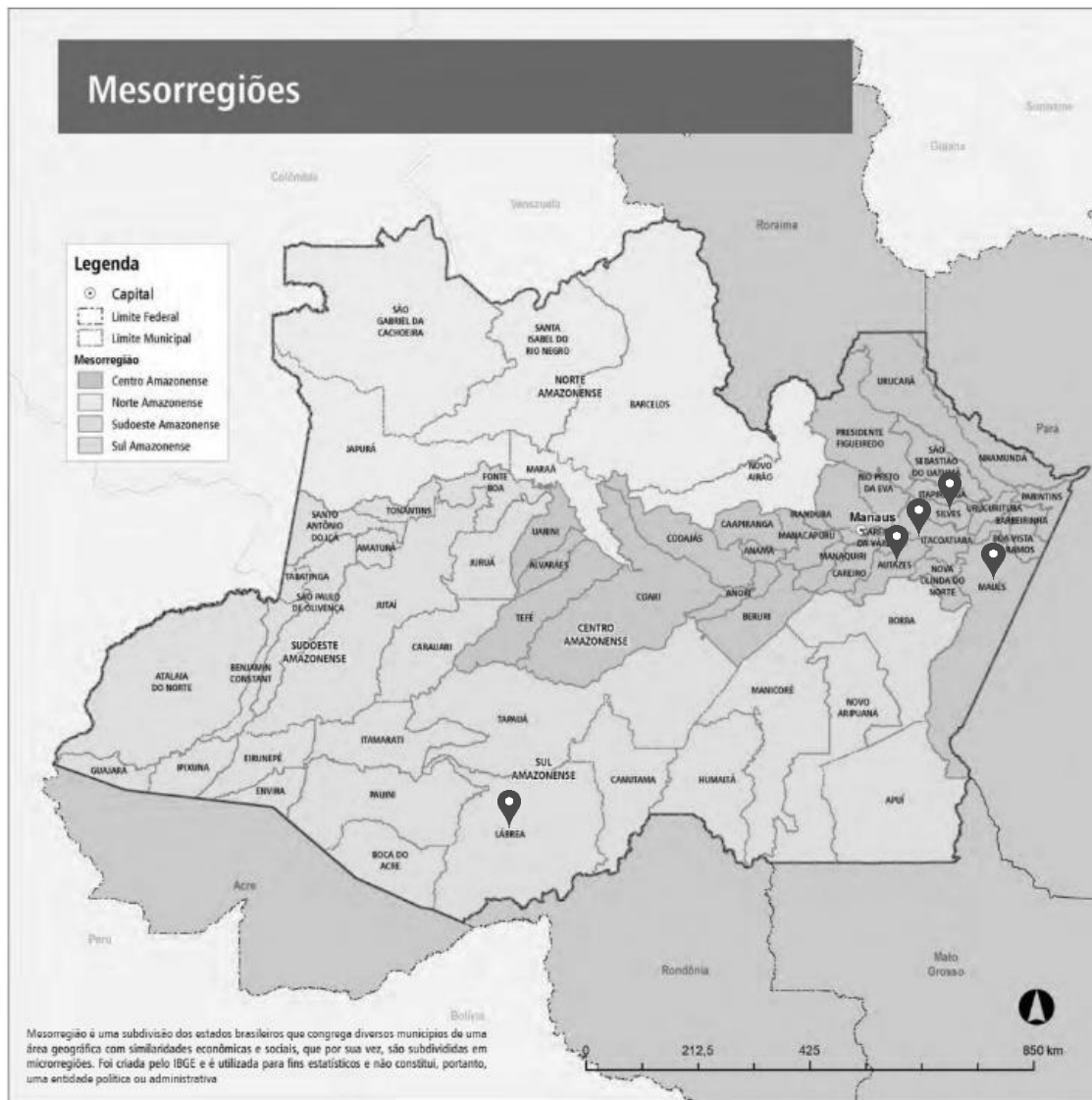
Given the problems presented in the current study, understanding the imaginaries plays a role in collecting elements that can contribute to educational policies to overcome cases in which the imaginary proposes the non-recognition of PE. Thus, this study was an effort to “expand the patterns of recognition in the social imaginary of school agents” (Faria, Machado and Bracht, 2012, p. 128).

METHODOLOGICAL PATHWAYS

This research is characterized by being qualitative in nature, with an exploratory character (Gil, 2008). It was a field study with teachers, managers, and pedagogical staff from school communities in municipalities in the interior of Amazonas: Autazes, Itacoatiara, Lábrea, Maués, and Silves. The eligibility of these municipalities is justified by their proximity to the centers of the Degree in Physical Education course offered by Universidade Federal do Amazonas, which favored the logistics of developing the investigation.

Autazes is located 110 km from Manaus, and is considered a municipality with agricultural potential and known for its milk production. Itacoatiara, whose name means *painted stone*, is located in the metropolitan region of Manaus and is the third most populous city in the state. Lábrea, also known as the *City of the Sun*, is located 865 km from Manaus, situated in the Purus river channel. Maués is 270 km from Manaus and is known as the *Land of Guaraná*. Silves is located 181 km from Manaus and is known for being a region of lakes, making it very attractive for fishing⁵ (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Map of Amazonas (highlighting the municipalities in the study).



Source: Amazonas in Maps (Government of the state of Amazonas, 2016).

In total, 53 teachers participated in the study, characterized in Chart 1. They were invited based on our access to school communities, using the snowball sampling technique (Vinuto, 2014) for contact and inclusion. With this technique, we had access to an unknown population. Initially, well-known teachers (seeds) were contacted and, based on their networks, we progressed in the field through the recommendation of other teachers, in a cyclical process, expanding the scope of access to new participants.

⁵ Information taken from: <https://hojetemfestadeboi.com.br/>. Accessed on Jun. 27, 2022.

Chart 1 – Characterization of the participants.

Municipality	Function	Educational background*	Age (years) [†]	Time of experience (years) [†]
Autazes (n=6)	Teacher (n=5)	Pedagogy, Biological Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Geography	36.4	8.2
	Manager (n=1)	High school	35	14
Itacoatiara (n=17)	Teacher (n=14)	Standard Higher Education, Political Science, Pedagogy, Theology, Portuguese Literature, Geography	44.7	12.6
	Manager (n=3)	Pedagogy	47	10.6
Lábrea (n=17)	Teacher (n=11)	Standard Higher Education, Pedagogy, Portuguese Literature, Computing, Administration, Environmental Management	35.9	8.2
	Manager (n=3)	Mathematics, Standard Higher Education	46.3	14.3
	Pedagogical team (n=3)	Pedagogy, Mathematics	47.3	11
Maués (n=1)	Teacher (n=1)	Standard Higher Education	46	5
Silves (n=12)	Teacher (n=11)	Standard Higher Education, Mathematics, Portuguese Literature, Pedagogy, History, Theology	47.2	11.7
	Pedagogical team (n=1)	Pedagogy	45	4

*Teachers/managers can present more than one training field; [†]Mean.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

For inclusion, we chose the criteria:

1. Working in a school space that has at least one PE teacher;
2. Being available to participate in the research within the specified period;
3. Being a school manager, teacher, or member of the pedagogical team (except PE teacher).

Data were produced through semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to talk about their imaginary related to school PE, with the following highlighted questions: What is PE? What does PE do? What makes PE the same and/or different from other subjects? What does PE provide for the school community? Does PE teachers participate in school meetings? The organization of these questions was guided by the perception of the imaginaries that could emerge from them, when stating what they are or do, when comparing them with other areas, and thinking about their contributions or the participation of PE teachers.

For biosecurity reasons, the interviews were conducted remotely via the *WhatsApp* application. A team of previously trained collaborators conducted the interviews as they were available in the municipalities. Research procedures were: reception; explanation of the research and setting (an explanatory text in PDF and a video from the responsible researcher were sent); sending the question in writing (one at a time); receiving response audios; completion of the interview.

The research followed ethical aspects for its completion and was approved by the Ethics Committee of Universidade Federal do Amazonas, opinion No.: 5.030.756. The rights of participants were guaranteed for any complications resulting from their participation in the study. Before starting data collect, participants were informed about the research and signed an Informed Consent. They were assured that their participation was optional and that they could request to leave the research at any time without prejudice to them. Pseudonyms were used to preserve identities. Regarding research in a remote environment, the audios were downloaded to a private repository and deleted from the application.

For data analysis, content analysis was applied based on Silva and Fossá (2015). We attended the three proposed stages of analysis. In the first stage, a general reading of the interviews was carried out. In the second stage, data were explored and grouped thematically into initial, intermediate, and final categories. In total, 41 initial categories were identified that had incidences in the interviews, which were grouped into 12 intermediate categories, and ultimately funneled into four final categories. In the third stage, we employed inference and interpretation of data with reference to the specialized literature mobilized herein.

As mentioned above, four final categories of analysis were constructed in this research:

1. Sport, body, and dichotomies present in PE;
2. Lifestyle, health, and illness in PE;
3. PE as an area of knowledge that develops skills and abilities; and
4. Ambiguities about the (de)valuation of PE. For this text, we will present and discuss the first three of the four categories listed.

This selection is justified, as the fourth category encompasses an already accumulated discussion about the processes of innovation and pedagogical disinvestment that will be addressed at another time/text.

SPORT, BODY, AND DICHOTOMIES PRESENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This first category is based on imaginaries that give PE, mainly, visions based on sporting hegemony and dichotomies that echo the split between body/mind and theory/practice. Initially, it is worth highlighting that, of the 53 participations, sport was mentioned in 42 as an element linked to PE; and 21 consider that it is the role/responsibility of PE to promote sporting championships/events or competitions.

These data caught our attention, as they were the most frequently mentioned in all the interviews carried out. This observation seems to create strong evidence that one of the prevalent imaginaries is that PE is permeated by the sporting phenomenon. This finding is in line with the study by Bracht *et al.* (2003), who visualized the crystallization of an imaginary in which school PE would be the stage for the development of the sporting phenomenon, whether through the mobilization of content by teachers or its appreciation by students. Data from the National School Health Survey (*Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde do Escolar — PeNSE 2019*), indicate that more than 97% of students in Brazil reported having indoor sports offered in PE classes. In the North region, the numbers exceed 92% of reports (IBGE, 2021).

The following narratives exemplify how this imaginary is constructed for the participants:

In PE classes, students learn various skills, socialization, exercising memory, team spirit, and sports practice, including the rules of games (Ricardo, Manager, High School, 35 years old, 14 years of experience, Autazes⁶).

⁶ The interview narratives will be referenced with the following information, in order: participant's pseudonym, position, training, age, length of experience, and municipality.

The work [in PE] consists of monitoring and guiding people during sports (Tânia, Manager, Pedagogy, 40 years old, 3 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

So, PE becomes a matter of moving around, of leaving [the classroom]. It is linked to the sporting, health, discipline (Verônica, Manager, Pedagogy, 48 years old, 20 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

[...] PE teaches and encourages the practice of sports, such as futsal and soccer. And teaches the correct rules, as they should be played. It can also prepare students to participate in school, interschool, and municipal tournaments (Marcela, Teacher, Computing, 23 years old, 3 years of experience, Lábrea).

PE is a subject that teaches students about sport. It also prepares the human being's physique for everyday life (Roberto, Professor, Standard Higher Education, 50 years old, 5 years of experience, Silves).

The statements exemplify and highlight the centrality of sport as part of the PE identity. Although the sporting paradigm has suffered harsh criticism since the 1980s, in view of the PE Renewal Movement, it is an expressive and socially legitimized phenomenon (Machado *et al.*, 2010; Machado and Bracht, 2016). Bracht (2019) infers that the sporting phenomenon becomes a nucleus that generates meaning for the legitimization of PE. In this context, sports *steal the spotlight*, as it stands out in society compared to other bodily practices, becoming almost synonymous with PE and even developing beyond it (Bracht, 2019). Probably, this could be one of the factors that leads us to the result of an expressive mention of sport in the interviews, since it occupies a privileged place in the larger social imagination (either through experience during the school phase, or through the media itself).

We agree with Machado *et al.* (2010, p. 143, translated by the author) “[...] that PE based on sport (or any other element of body movement culture), without this being treated pedagogically, remains in need of justification within the school environment”. Following these authors, it is not appropriate to eliminate sports from PE classes, but to give it a critical pedagogical treatment that goes beyond mere experience (playing for the sake of playing), which allows students to understand the world around them (Machado *et al.*, 2010). This understanding is corroborated by Caparroz (2005), when thinking about sports *at school* and not *of school*, that is, that the sporting phenomenon as a content is coated with a local pedagogical nature.

This connotation, given the perspective that the social imaginary constitutes a kind of *social cement* that guides collective actions (Maffesoli, 2001), makes us reflect on possible negative reverberations when there is an *overvaluation* of sports to the detriment of a *pseudo-valuation* of PE and, consequently, the devaluation of their pedagogical practice. In other words, it would be enough for teachers (or any other person) to pass on sports or enable students to experience it, thus potentially leading to an abandonment of pedagogical mediation (Machado *et al.*, 2010).

In the wake of teaching content in PE classes, there were narratives that highlighted views that support dichotomies, such as theory/practice and body/mind. It is worth highlighting that the theory/practice dichotomy had an impact on 40 interviews. Studies have observed movements in which teachers divide classes into theoretical (in the classroom) and practical (on the court) parts (Santos, 2014; Godoi and Borges, 2021).

The following narratives exemplify the dichotomy observed:

Students have two different classes. A practical one and a theoretical one. One to know the context of each sport that is being studied in that period and the other to practice, to know how that sport is played (Ítalo, Teacher, Pedagogy, 22 years old, 3 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

Firstly, they [PE teachers] work the classes from a theoretical point of view, explaining the history and rules of the sport and physical exercises to be worked on by students. Only then do they start the practical part of the PE classes with the students. Working first on theory, preparing the mind, and then moving on to body practice (Íris, Teacher, Portuguese Literature, 20 years old, 1 year of experience, Lábrea).

In PE classes, teachers work in the classroom. Afterwards, they move on to practice in a sports center, a multi-sports court, a football field, depending on the space the school offers (Eliezer, Teacher, Portuguese Literature, 48 years old, 27 years of experience, Silves).

The participants' statements indicate a *modus operandi* whose theory is learned first in the classroom and then experienced in practice on the court (or other sports practice spaces). Experiences of everyday life at the university and during internships have demonstrated that there is an orientation from municipal and state education departments that supports this dichotomy (but which seems to be mainly due to the lack of investment in structures — courts, fields, patios, swimming pools, etc. — for classes). On the other hand, with Boff and Bahia (2021) we understand that this dichotomous theory/practice spectrum is not exclusive to PE, being something inherent to teaching itself, since teacher training still carries a rationality based on Western thought that polarizes and hierarchizes theory and practice as two opposing dimensions.

In the field of PE, Frossard *et al.* (2018) highlight the need for a redefinition of the relationship between theory and practice, which calls for teacher training itself to be reoriented towards new formats in which this dichotomy is overcome. Caparroz and Bracht (2007, p. 26) contribute to a reflection on the theory/practice dichotomy by affirming the popular saying that *theory in practice is different (thankfully!)*. For the authors, this dichotomy supports a hierarchy that theory would be applied in practice (Caparroz and Bracht, 2007).

When standing side by side with the claim of the authors mentioned above, for a new meaning of the theory/practice dichotomy, one is not thinking of removing one or the other from the complex relationship in which they find themselves. The big issue observed is that a hierarchical and polarized relationship can no longer be sustained between them: *learn in the room (mind) and apply it on the court (body)*. From a redefined perspective, there would not be *theoretical classes* or *practical classes*; Rather there would be classroom classes, court classes, field classes, laboratory classes, patio classes, etc. Ultimately, there would be classes in which theory and practice are always present in a continuous dialectical relationship.

The same occurs with the body/mind dichotomy, which follows the logic of the theory/practice dichotomy. In this case, within a Cartesian perspective, the mind (reason) is considered superior to the body (nature). Ferreira, Oliveira and Sampaio (2013) observed that in PE this model is supported by the biomedical paradigm, in which the whole is understood from the parts, hierarchizing them within a teaching model that values motor gesture to the detriment of reflective capabilities. In this sense, other narratives indicate a view of PE as responsible for bodily knowledge and organic development:

PE is an educational practice that aims to improve the human body. It is an important discipline for improving athletes and students in their daily lives (Jaques, Professor, Mathematics, 38 years old, 14 years of experience, Autazes).

Well, PE is a subject of fundamental importance at school and in the physical development of each student, as it is good for health, and encourages sports practice and the well-being of each student (Daisy, Teacher, Geography, 50 years old, 21 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

It helps develop motor skills and reflexes. Furthermore, it also improves coordination and body posture, bringing health benefits (Gabriel, Professor, Pedagogy, 31 years old, 8 years of experience, Lábrea).

The statements help us understand a perspective centered on the biological body and on motor skills, including those related to health (this point will be reapproached in the next topic). This centrality of the biological body in PE can crystallize an imaginary in which theory becomes a “[...] prescriptive instance of procedures/actions (at least from the perspective that has been called technical-rational)” (Caparroz, Bracht and 2007, p. 27). In other words, the theory would only serve to predict and control bodily behaviors, materializing in an instrumental relationship that limits it from achieving a critical and reflective connotation.

The data and reflections on this topic take us to the idea of social imaginary. This is because, when the narratives reverberate traditional elements centered on sport and dichotomies, they indicate that there is still an imaginary about school PE as responsible for the biological body, centered on traditional sporting practice (or sportsmanship) and little provided with reflective moments, since the theory would not be a contribution for reflection, but for the prescription and control of body behaviors.

LIFESTYLE, HEALTH, AND ILLNESS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This category develops along three axes: promoting a healthy and active lifestyle, promoting health, and preventing disease. The incidences of registers are lower than those of the previous topic. 34 participants states that PE is linked to health and 23 to quality of life. In addition, 18 registers correspond to a vision of disease prevention (including obesity), physical activity emerges in 21 narratives, and physical exercise in other 16.

Within some data already highlighted in the previous category, one can see that registers about health and its connection with school PE can be configured by a hegemony of biomedical rationality and centered on a restricted paradigm of understanding biological/organic aspects (Ferreira, Oliveira and Sampaio, 2013). This configuration seems to highlight that understanding the (biological) body has a significant impact on conceptions of health (restricted) (Oliveira and Gomes, 2019).

Next, there are narratives that exemplify the data for this category:

PE is an extremely important subject when it comes to student development and physical exercise practices. Learners become aware of sports and their rules, in addition to improving the quality of life and health of those who practice them (Ranulfo, Teacher, Physics and Mathematics, 40 years old, 13 years of experience, Autazes).

[PE] is a discipline that aims to improve, control, and maintain the health of both body and mind. And when it is worked on in a planned way by professionals in the field, whether at school or in gyms, I believe that it contributes greatly to the physical conditions of children, young people, adults, and older adults. It also really provides conditions so that these people can have a healthier life (Aline, Teacher, Standard Higher Education, 54 years old, 30 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

PE professionals work to promote people’s health through the practice of physical activities (Jhonatan, Coordinator, Pedagogy, 51 years old, 25 years of experience, Lábrea).

I think PE can be defined as a process that uses movement as a means of helping people acquire certain skills and attitudes that contribute to well-being. And it can also help in the prevention of some health problems (Mateus, Professor, Standard Higher Education, 47 years old, 15 years of experience, Silves).

The statements exemplify and corroborate the perception that there seems to be an imaginary among participants that PE is almost a synonym for health. For Bracht (2019), health is a central theme in PE and has deep historical roots, especially linked to the biomedical field. In the author's words: "it is likely that in the social imaginary this is the most immediate connection made with Physical Education (or, perhaps, with physical activity) when thinking about its social function, its reason for being; a link guided by the equation: physical activity = health" (Bracht, 2019, p. 107, translated by the author).

Following Bracht (2019), if health has been used in the legitimizing discourse of PE, however, this health (even observed in the narratives of this research) is based on individual and behavioral aspects at the biological level. In a study in the municipality of Lábrea, Souza *et al.* (2022) observed an ambiguity in the conceptions of PE teachers regarding the topic of health, which is linked to behavioral and restricted conceptions. The authors also consider that this phenomenon can be based on the training and socialization of teachers that is influenced by a social, cultural, and historical situation (Souza *et al.*, 2022).

Juxtaposing these considerations with our data, we understand that a social imaginary based on biomedical conceptions may be supporting the narratives expressed by the research participants. A polarized understanding of health is maintained as being the opposite of disease, that is, by practicing physical activity people would be protected from diseases — including obesity (thus, they would be healthy). Commenting on the subject, Quennerstedt (2019) says that Western PE is dominated by a *mantra* that health is linked to aerobic capacity, physical fitness, body mass index, or body shapes (in this case, lean bodies).

In this vein, registers of combating a sedentary lifestyle and obesity exemplify that this *mantra* seems to be circulating in the social imaginaries of the research participants:

It is an area of human knowledge linked to bodily practices and works, in a broad sense aiming to prevent diseases and sedentary lifestyle (Hudson, Teacher, Biological Sciences, 31 years old, 7 years of experience, Autazes).

[...] aimed at training humans, how they are capable of carrying out their activities, in terms of disease prevention. What it does is promote health to people, through physical activities (Laís, Teacher, Pedagogy and Political Science, 42 years old, 20 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

Being carried out in the classroom, and even outside the classroom, with adults, it helps prevent diseases. I see PE as an essential subject (Manuela, Teacher, Pedagogy, 42 years old, 4 years of experience, Lábrea).

[...] I believe that it has always been aimed at preventing some diseases. On the pedagogical side, it consists of training human beings to be able to conduct themselves and their activities; to develop physical skills (Ester, Teacher, Standard Higher Education, 46 years old, 5 years of experience, Maués).

For me, it contributes to prevention in physical and mental health. It also aims to prevent certain diseases (Maísa, Teacher, Standard Higher Education, 54 years old, 25 years of experience, Silves).

The excerpts mentioned corroborate the example of an imaginary framework cemented in the pathogenic perspective (centered on the disease). Bracht (2019) corroborates this perception by commenting that there is an understanding (an imaginary) that PE, when exercising students, is contributing to the prevention of diseases. Between the lines, the narratives seem to highlight an imaginary expressed in the equation *physical activity = health* (and the key reading here is: by preventing diseases such as obesity or risk factors such as a sedentary lifestyle, health is being promoted). However, Brodtmann (2006) poses a reflection on whether this equation will always work, since health goes beyond the behavioral and biological dimensions.

From a salutogenic perspective (an approach that seeks to understand *the origin of health*), Quennerstedt (2019) considers that health is beyond the disease/health dichotomies and risk factors (pathogenic bias). In this sense, health is now considered a resource created by people throughout their lives. Therefore, health would be a continuum encompassing cultural and social aspects and linked to *learning health* (Quennerstedt, 2019).

In turn, Oliveira (2022) will focus on health education (*Gesundheitserziehung*), where health is pedagogically thematized, taking into account the social determinations of health. Therefore, the issue is not to remove health from PE nor to disregard that there are contributions to disease prevention. It is a matter of creating other possibilities for a didactic-pedagogical approach that allows us to see the various existing and possible health conditions (Quennerstedt, 2019).

Within these rotations, one may also observe the need to stress the imaginaries about physical activity and the promotion of an active lifestyle within it. Regarding physical activity, some narratives exemplify how some imaginaries may be constructed about it:

PE is a discipline that helps and encourages students to maintain physical activity and encourages the sporting side (Antônia, Teacher, Pedagogy, 43 years old, 5 years of experience, Autazes).

We have already seen students who lost weight through projects related to diet and physical activity. The students who lost weight, they saw that it is important to take care of the body, of their well-being, in order to develop better (Virginia, Teacher, Pedagogy, 41 years old, 18 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

In my understanding, PE provides the school with moments of pleasure, in which students are there to develop their physical activities (Caleb, Coordinator, Pedagogy, 47 years old, 2 years of experience, Lábrea).

[...] What I observe, as a pedagogue, is the importance of practicing PE so that students have better body posture. So that they don't perform physical activities in a way that harms them. The movements amde can often harm the students' spine or any other part of the body. This is avoided when being guided by a PE teacher (Letícia, Pedagogy, Pedagogy, 45 years old, 4 years of experience, Silves).

Excerpts from the interviews highlight at least two views of physical activity. The first, hegemonic, crystallized in the organic aspect of energy expenditure and musculoskeletal disorders. The second, understood in the pleasure and possibility of practice evidenced by social relations. Regarding the discussion about physical activity and health, the study by Piggin (2020) is a milestone toward a new concept. The author considers that the traditional concept of physical activity such as the energy expenditure promoted by body movement:

1. Depersonalizes the activity itself;
2. Limits the idea of movement as produced by muscles and not by people; and
3. Omits the potential creativity of the movement (Piggin, 2020).

Based on Piggin (2020), it is necessary to extend a *cement* that paves new imaginaries, considering physical activity within personal and collective capabilities, within people's creativity and intentionality. This is necessary for the concepts of health, movement, PE, and education. We agree with Fernandes *et al.* (2022) that this movement should be problematized in teacher training, thus encouraging reflections on the topic of health in the school environment.

In this topic, we were able to observe that there is an imaginary that establishes health as a theme linked to school PE, mainly in a dichotomous hegemonic perspective in relation to illness (*i.e.*, as its absence). The traces of a biomedical imaginary are tangible and reverberate in conceptions that it is the PE mandate to combat sedentary lifestyles and obesity in the intermediate school

environment and to promote more active lifestyles. In addition, it was found that expanding these imaginaries is a necessary undertaking and calls for the embrace of new ways of seeing PE.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS AN AREA OF KNOWLEDGE THAT DEVELOPS SKILLS AND ABILITIES

This category brings elements that allow us to verify that PE is considered an area of human knowledge (visualized in 17 interviews) and that it is linked to the body culture of intermediate movement, matches, dances, games, fights, and gymnastics (listed, in some way, by 29 participants). It was also observed that PE contributes to the development of motor (n=22), social (n=24), psychological, and cognitive skills and abilities (n=13).

Firstly, it draws attention to the narratives that understand PE as an area of human knowledge with specific objectives. Participants also mention that PE is a pedagogical practice linked to the area of languages, as it is included in the National Common Curricular Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular – BNCC*) (Brasil, 2018). According to BNCC, “human activities take place in social practices, mediated by different languages: verbal (oral or visual-motor, such as sign language and writing), bodily, visual, sound and, at the same time, digital” (Brasil, 2018, p. 63, translated by the author).

Here are some narratives that exemplify this idea:

[...] PE is an area of human knowledge linked to bodily practices historically produced by humanity (Silvan, Professor, Geography, 30 years old, 2 years of experience, Autazes).

PE is a component of the language area, linked to bodily practices, present in schools from early childhood education to high school (Ricardo, Manager, Secondary Education, 35 years old, 14 years of experience, Autazes).

It is an area of knowledge, which is mainly linked to bodily practices, and is also a pedagogical process aimed at the training and capacity of humans to conduct their activities (Flávia, Teacher, Standard Higher Education, 42 years old, 13 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

Even though BNCC has already made it clear that PE is an area of knowledge, it fits in with other areas, thus allowing student access to knowledge and feeling the meaning of the manifestations of body movement culture. PE does not work in isolation. According to BNCC, it falls within the area of languages, working alongside the Portuguese language, English language, and art (Laís, Professor, Pedagogy and Political Science, 42 years old, 20 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

It is an area of human knowledge linked to bodily practices historically produced by humanity (Felipe, Manager, Mathematics, 52 years old, 15 years of experience, Lábrea).

The first imaginary that catches our attention regards the establishment of PE in BNCC. However, Neira (2018, p. 216, translated by the author) considers that BNCC “[...] does not dialogue with the current state of knowledge about teaching the “PE” component.” According to the author, the document expresses a technocratic vision in defining competencies, which reflects the (in) tensions⁷ of the market, international organizations, and standardized assessments (Neira, 2018).

Deepening the discussion, Neira (2018) shows that the skills recommended for PE in BNCC end up, on the one hand, prioritizing cognitive processes and, on the other hand, encouraging only experimentation and the enjoyment of movements. In the author’s words:

⁷ Here, we play with the words seeking to reflect that market intentions appear more as tensioning elements in the view of international organizations.

It seems obvious that the type of expected learning and the instrumental vision that characterizes the component's teaching aim simply to fill jobs for the middle and lower sectors of an increasingly complex society, whose work occupations require adapted subjects capable of solving problems. Understanding the world and, mainly, critical reading were not even considered (Neira, 2018, p. 218).

It is worth highlighting, from Neira (2018), that despite observing an imaginary that seems to emerge in the narratives of teachers from the interior of Amazonas about PE being linked to the area of languages (certainly mediated by the BNCC knowledge that has been disseminated since its publication), it is difficult for us to consider that the curriculum expressed is permeated by contradictions and setbacks that could compromise the pedagogical work of this curricular component; mainly when we consider that PE should be one of the supports to lead students to knowledge and critical thinking about society.

Agreeing with Neira (2018), there is the study by Oliveira *et al.* (2021). The authors consider that BNCC does not provide a solid basis to justify PE belonging to the area of languages. Citing BNCC, the authors state that in addition to considering bodily practices as passive elements of reading and production, we need to overcome the proposition that confers languages only on writing and speaking processes (Oliveira *et al.*, 2021).

Corroborating the criticism from Neira (2018), the study by Oliveira *et al.* (2021) concludes that BNCC represents a limitation to the wealth of possibilities that PE can list within the area of languages. These results alert us to the fact that the propagation of PE imaginary linked to the language area via BNCC may limit the vision and perception of the potential of this curricular component. The emergence of narratives that express PE in languages were observed, although still anchored to a utilitarian perspective, as exemplified in the previous topic in Professor Hudson's speech linking bodily practices to the prevention of diseases and a sedentary lifestyle.

In addition to the perception of PE as an area of human knowledge, the mention of bodily practices that integrate the body culture of movement (matches, dances, games, fights and gymnastics) were observed. This perspective is not something new in the field of PE, since the renewal movement in the area has highlighted this characteristic since the 1980s (Coletivo de Autores, 1992; Betti, 2005; Bracht, 2019). Narratives that exemplify this imaginary that refers to PE as a mobilizer of content linked to bodily practices were observed as follows:

It is a component like the others, however, with different content. Among them knowledge about the body, games, dances, sports (Ricardo, Manager, High School, 35 years old, 14 years of experience, Autazes).

I see teachers showing sports practices, modalities, Olympic games, indigenous games (Mirian, Teacher, Pedagogy, 55 years old, 15 years of experience, Itacoatiara). [...] I believe that teachers work on subjects in theory, about body movements, music, dance (Mayara, Teacher, Pedagogy, 53 years old, 25 years of experience, Lábrea).

Because PE can promote health and physical capacity, body practices, gymnastics, games, art, dance, etc., and for that, we have to study to be able to apply it to our students (Arthur, Professor, Standard Higher Education, 49 years old, 21 years of experience, Silves).

Some of the interviews list the elements of body movement culture, although sport is still a hegemonic element, as seen in a previous topic. Here the opportunity opens up for an expansion of the possibilities of imaginary perceptions regarding PE beyond the sporting tradition. However, there is a *near absence* that caught our attention. Of the 53 interviews carried out, only one mentioned

local sociocultural knowledge, in this case related to indigenous games. Considering that bodily practices are historically constructed, they should express cultural and regional aspects.

The lack of mention of local sociocultural knowledge makes Tardif's (2002) elaboration extraneous, since the author states that the knowledge constructed in the life trajectory (primary and secondary socialization) has a preponderant weight in the knowledge mobilized in professional teaching practice. If life stories, beliefs, and values become *sine qua non* elements for teaching work (Tardif, 2002), then: why was knowledge related to the Amazonian body culture of movement not expressly mentioned by research participants? A possible answer to this question could be that the prevailing imaginary is still traditional, that is, PE based on sports and health, as already evidenced in the previous topics — which overrides local sociocultural knowledge.

In this sense, when considering the regionality of education in the Amazon and the cultures of its peoples, the fact that no mentions of local sociocultural knowledge were observed is concerning (Brígida and Ramos, 2020). This *near absence* may be guided by imaginaries that escape local cultures and traditions, making PE an exogenous component to the educational context in the Amazon. Therefore, a limitation is created to rethink the content and knowledge that PE can mobilize in the interior of Amazonas (Brígida and Ramos, 2020). In view of this observed fact, we advocate (along with other authors) for the valorization of regional cultures, specifically those that are linked to bodily practices built within the Amazon and that express the matches, games, toys, legends, dances, etc. experienced by their traditional peoples (Pinto, 2006; Pereira, 2019).

Finally, it is worth highlighting the narratives that considered PE as a component that contributes to the development of skills and abilities in the motor, social, psychological, and cognitive spheres. In a study similar to ours, carried out in Buriti dos Lopes, PI, a similar imaginary was observed (Souza, Val and Oliveira, 2016). Below, some narratives that exemplify the imaginaries formed around these perspectives are highlighted:

In addition to the physical benefits of practicing sports, PE can develop social, psychological, and motor skills and abilities (Hudson, Professor, Biological Sciences, 31 years old, 7 years of experience, Autazes).

In the community itself, it brings the community closer through various types of sporting activities, integrating the school and the community, thus encouraging this sporting practice for motor development (Aline, Teacher, Standard Higher Education, 54 years old, 30 years of experience, Itacoatiara).

Well, students learn various skills, such as reasoning, planning, exercising memory, and understanding situations and strategies that need to be developed. They develop social, psychological, motor and cognitive skills and abilities, through well-planned classes and well-developed activities (Manuela, Teacher, Pedagogy, 42 years old, 4 years of experience, Lábrea).

What do students do in PE classes? They develop various skills, such as: reasoning, planning, and exercising memory, as well as social, psychological, and cognitive skills (Micaela, Teacher, History and Theology, 47 years old, 15 years of experience, Silves).

Review studies that supported the writing of the *School Physical Education chapter of the Physical Activity Guide for the Brazilian Population* (Brasil, 2021), identified contributions of school PE in comprehensive training, that permeate motor, social, psychological, and cognitive aspects (Silva *et al.*, 2021; Bandeira *et al.*, 2022). Silva *et al.* (2021) identified consistent evidence that evaluated the impacts of school PE on improving motor aspects, as well as cardiorespiratory fitness and body mass index. In addition, positive points were observed for psychological health (Silva *et al.*, 2021). Regarding the evidence, an imaginary that perceives that PE can contribute to the development of these skills in the school environment may be observed.

However, the imaginaries observed are intertwined with others already mentioned in previous topics and may also be linked to the development of the utilitarian character, which aims at PE with the objective of improving students' abilities/competencies without affecting other socio-environmental and cultural issues. Silva *et al.* (2021) show that, in addition to the development of health in the motor, social, psychological, and cognitive aspects, approaches/strategies are also necessary to guarantee, for example, the thematization of content beyond sports practices (already seen as a hegemonic element in the imaginaries).

In view of the above, we reflect that this imaginary may end up being guided by the skills and abilities provided by BNCC, soaked up by the market and international institutions that put pressure on Brazilian education toward the formation of *competent* subjects to operate in work actions that require the resolution of problems (Neira, 2018). In other words, a (*neo*)*technocratic* education may be underway that aims at PE as a discipline that only prepares capable and competent bodies for work (so that they remain healthy to produce and consume).

To escape this logic, a critical reading of the imaginaries is necessary, since PE can indeed contribute to development in the aspects already mentioned. However, such development needs to be imbued with humanity and criticality, with class consciousness and in line with republican principles (Fensterseifer, 2020). A deep reflection on the principles of the republican school in the interior of Amazonas is necessary, so that the imaginaries do not pave the way for a Western rationality that is foreign to local cultures. We do not intend to close ourselves in a cocoon to the world, however, it is also not beneficial for us to passively accept the dictates of a rationality that decimates traditional local cultures.

As this topic comes to a conclusion, it is observed that there are signs of an imaginary that expands perspectives on PE beyond the hegemonic aspects *cemented* in sport and biophysiological development. Registers of bodily practices related to the body culture of movement are seen in such imaginaries. However, ambiguities begin to emerge in the analyses, as the narratives are crossed by views that may still resonate as utilitarian and which may reduce or limit an imaginary that expands the pedagogical possibilities of school PE in the interior of Amazonas.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This text is a reflection on the imaginaries about school PE in municipalities in the interior of Amazonas. In the three categories listed, it was possible to notice that there is still an orientation of the imaginary *cemented* in sporting hegemony and in dichotomies that highlight the Cartesian rationality, hierarchizing elements such as body/mind and theory/practice. It was also possible to observe a conception of health that is anchored in biomedicine (a pathogenic view as the absence of diseases), highlighting a restricted relationship with physical activity in school PE. Finally, there are emerging elements in the imagination that consider PE as an area of knowledge capable of contributing to the development of motor, social, psychological, and cognitive skills and abilities. However, these imaginaries are permeated by the ambiguity of (*neo*)*technocratic* rationality that can compromise a critical and republican pedagogical practice of PE in the interior of Amazonas.

The data produced and analyzed indicate some concrete implications and possibilities for thinking about the internalization processes of PE in Amazonia:

1. That teachers take ownership of school culture and, at the same time, expand the possibilities of creating and participating in collective dialogical and reflective moments, to learn about the work developed by colleagues from other curricular components, to build knowledge, and to implement interdisciplinary pedagogical actions.

2. That PE pedagogical practices in schools are not reduced to stereotypical sports, but that other bodily practices emerge. This will provide the opportunity for new imaginaries to be developed, beyond the restriction to sports content.
3. In line with the previous item, that the diverse local sociocultural knowledge is understood and valued as useful didactic content to be developed in school PE.
4. That the school curriculum and the prescriptions arising from guiding documents, such as BNCC and the Amazonense Curriculum Reference are not reduced to the mere orientation of skills and abilities that reproduce the order of capital. However, critical and reflective work must be oriented so that students understand the tensions and contradictions of the world that surrounds them and the possibilities of overcoming these unequally imposed circumstances.
5. That the dichotomies may be overcome, including those related to the body/mind and theory/practice perspectives. In this sense, the guidelines need other paths that do not reinforce a split in a theory (of the mind) worked on in the classroom, which would be applied in practice (with the body) on the court. That in the unfolding of new possibilities, it is possible to constitute a dialectical professional action in its human totality.
6. That an orientation on the topic of health is not restricted to the biological and lifestyle points of view, but is expanded to an understanding of the social determinations of health, including people's living conditions and what they can do to stress them or overcome them. In other words, there must be a pedagogical perspective of health education.
7. Bringing together the previous topics, we advocate for continued training that provides spaces and times for reflection on these imaginaries and how to overcome those that demarcate obstacles and limits for the advancement of a republican and critical education in the interior of Amazonas. Even more so, that this training leads to problematizing action-reflection-action for the development of PE *of* the Amazon (and not *in* the Amazon, as an exogenous, stereotyped, and decontextualized knowledge).

These listed topics are starting points for deeper reflections and require new studies, including those dedicated to collective-collaborative interventions and change/transformation of contexts. In this sense, there is a need for the university to move closer to schools in the interior of the state, respecting the processes of collaborative partnerships that celebrate the knowledge produced in daily school life. These partnerships can be materialized in the set of training practices at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (*lato* and *stricto sensu*), considering the curricularization of extension actions and research teaching practices. Therefore, it is worth highlighting that the university-school relationship cannot take place in a vertical and colonizing way, but the university must take a stance of epistemological humility in the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of knowledge.

The registers made indicate scenarios in which PE faces challenges in the interior of Amazonas, but also presents possibilities. Therefore, the development and implementation of public policies to value this component (as well as teaching itself) are necessary, as PE can contribute to regional development in the areas of health, education, culture, and leisure. That said, it is important to emphasize that public and educational policies for PE in its internalization process must, mainly, address local sociocultural knowledge, thus valuing the Amazonian context. More than westernized sports, gymnastics and fights, there are rich interpretative possibilities of movements reverberated in local cultural idiosyncrasies.

Reflecting on the process of internalization and placing its scope on the professional development of teachers in the region becomes a *sine qua non* element for regional human development and the democratization of access to good PE classes. This includes investment in structures for cultural movement practices expressed in matches, games, dances, fights, sports and

other bodily manifestations in Amazonia. Finally, these movements will provide opportunities for the people of the Amazon to strengthen their identities and the awareness of fighting for their rights, as well as better quality and conditions of life.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

VICTOR JOSÉ MACHADO DE OLIVEIRA has a doctorate in Physical Education from the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES). He is a professor at the Faculty of Physical Education and Dance at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG).

JOÃO LUIZ DA COSTA BARROS has a doctorate in Education from the Universidade Metodista de Piracicaba (UNIMEP). He is an Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy at the Universidade Federal do Amazonas (UFAM).

JAMILLYS ROCHA DA ROCHA has a degree in Physical Education from the Universidade Federal do Amazonas (UFAM).

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