

## Physical Education at BNCC: many tensions, some advances and possible prospects

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**ABSTRACT – Physical Education at BNCC: many tensions, some advances and possible prospects<sup>1</sup>.** The present study aims to discuss the situation of Physical Education in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC - 2017 version). Based on the critical and transformative assumptions presented for the field of Brazilian Physical Education in the last four decades, through documentary research, we analyze the impact of this educational reform on the legitimacy of Physical Education as a mandatory curricular component of basic education. In this way, we point out the advances, contributions and critical possibilities from BNCC-Physical Education, which in our understanding, highlight the tension between certain political-pedagogical and epistemological achievements in the area of Physical Education, expressed in culturalist perspectives, with restricted objectives and rationalizing the skills and abilities model presented in the document.

**Keywords: School Physical Education. BNCC. Bodily Practices. Educational Politics.**

**RESUMO – Educação Física na BNCC: muitas tensões, alguns avanços e perspectivas possíveis.** O presente estudo visa discutir a situação da Educação Física na Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC – versão 2017). A partir dos pressupostos críticos e transformadores apresentados para o campo da Educação Física brasileira nas últimas quatro décadas, pela via da pesquisa documental, analisamos o impacto desta reforma educacional na legitimidade da Educação Física na qualidade de componente curricular obrigatório da educação básica. Desse modo, apontamos os avanços, contribuições e possibilidades críticas a partir da BNCC – Educação Física, que em nosso entendimento, evidenciam a tensão entre certas conquistas político-pedagógicas e epistemológicas da área da Educação Física, expressas nas perspectivas culturalistas, com os objetivos restritos e racionalizantes do modelo de competências e habilidades apresentado no documento.

**Palavras-chave: Educação Física Escolar. BNCC. Práticas Corporais. Política Educacional.**

## Introduction

This study aims to discuss the situation of Physical Education in the current National Common Curricular Base [*Base Nacional Comum Curricular*] (BNCC – version 2017) (Brazil, 2017a), which is already implemented, at least from the viewpoint of the official curricula of the education networks and systems in Brazil. Based on the critical and transformative assumptions presented for the Brazilian Physical Education field in the last four decades, initially triggered by the Renewal Movement, we will analyze the impact of this educational reform on the legitimacy of Physical Education as a mandatory curricular component of basic education. Furthermore, we will seek to bring together reflections around the implications of this curriculum policy on the education of the body within the scope of schooling, of which Physical Education is a fundamental part.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in the same way that it is important to consider the body for the construction of a critical education of the present (Crisório, 2016; Vaz, 2018), we judge necessary to analyze, from a contemporary perspective and with support from certain historical elements, the way in which school Physical Education has built its discourses and practices of legitimacy in Brazilian schools and educational policies. That is, dealing with the conception of Physical Education in a given educational policy means understanding the relationship between this area of knowledge and the political-economic groups that dispute hegemony in society, with this being an element that makes up the complex legitimacy of school Physical Education (Furtado, 2022).

Regarding the BNCC, the intention of this study is to understand how this current policy, which is also manifested in legal frameworks, conceives the Physical Education discipline. In other words, we intend to analyze the conception and meaning of Physical Education present in this recent educational policy, with a view to reflecting on its possible repercussions for the legitimacy of this curricular component in schools. Therefore, in order to compose our scope of analysis, we will use the official 2017 BNCC document, produced for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, in addition to a set of previous and complementary devices produced by State bodies, and specialized literature that helps us think about the general conception of this policy and the situation of Physical Education within it.<sup>3</sup>

For now, it is a matter of understanding the policy in its historical dynamics, as a social practice, given that work with educational policy documents must consider them not only as political-pedagogical guidelines for teaching intervention in a given educational sphere, but also as an expression of a historical consciousness, produced in the fervor of disputes and tensions between social groups and antagonistic historical projects (Evangelista, 2012). From this perspective, beyond a more restricted analysis of the official texts addressing this policy, we will seek to understand some aspects of the historical context surrounding its production.

Due to this dialectical conception of working with documents and documentary research, we chose to present the analysis documents while discussing the situation of Physical Education in the BNCC. We will do so because each document is connected to a specific context. However, we emphasize that we will work with the central legal provisions of this curriculum policy. It is also worth noting that we will not explore all dimensions of the BNCC in this study, but rather general elements of its conception of education and the situation of the Physical Education curricular component in the document. Thus, we can state that this study presents theoretical-documentary characteristics, since the documents support the analysis and the epistemological and political stance of the authors of this manuscript regarding the BNCC-Physical Education.

Because the BNCC has already been implemented in Brazil, we chose not to focus solely on criticizing the document itself, even though this is central to this research. Instead, we will seek to carry out a reflective analysis capable of pointing out the theoretical and practical tensions, the advances and the perspectives of this curriculum policy, taking into account day-to-day schooling actions within the scope of bodily practices.

To cover the proposed research itinerary, we will use a theoretical framework that brings together a group of authors from the fields of Physical Education and Education, as well as some specific approaches with formulations on the perspectives of social and educational criticism by authors from the critical tradition. We mention the collaborations of Betti (2018) and Neira (2018) in the Physical Education field, and of Bernstein (2003), Tarlau and Moeller (2020) in the educational discussion, as important theoretical contributions for the construction of the explanatory framework of this text. To continue this work, in the next topic we will discuss some more general aspects about the social production of the BNCC and the concept of formation present in the document.

## **Considerations on the Common National Curriculum Base**

It is important to start from the understanding that the BNCC expresses a global movement articulated to increase the influence of the business sectors of civil society and privatist groups in Brazilian education (Hypolito, 2019). However, for now, we emphasize that, although schools are part of this global movement of neoliberal reforms in the education field, which always derive from external demands, they are produced by subjects, groups, entities and organizations other than those linked to education. Thus, it is important to think about the production of the BNCC as an educational policy and about its effects on schools from the perspective of a clash of interests, which, from its constraints, also encounter resistance and challenges, whether in the production of knowledge, in teacher training processes, or in the daily routine of basic education.

If, in the current High School reform, the elements of Physical Education devaluation are more direct and expressed, such as workload reduction in the basic general education of students, in the BNCC we have some nuances that attest to a process of greater recognition of the formative potential of the discipline and adherence to the critical discussion of the area established with the MREF, this being a contradictory factor of this curriculum policy that deserves greater attention. It is worth highlighting that these are documents with different orientations, since the High School reform was implemented in the form of law, so it changed elements of the LDB; whereas the BNCC is configured as a normative document for Brazilian education, which meets a demand presented in the 1988 Federal Constitution (Art. 210), in the 1996 LDB (Art. 26) and in goal No. 7 of the 2014 National Education Plan [*Plano Nacional de Educação*] (PNE) (Tarlau; Moeller, 2020). This differentiation is important because, as a document intended to guide the construction of curricula, the BNCC certainly had no choice but to discuss the Physical Education discipline and other curricular components in more depth.<sup>4</sup>

According to Tarlau and Moeller (2020), the process of constructing the BNCC is complex, as it involved institutional crises and disputes for hegemony by different political groups. In any case, the researchers confirm that the neoliberal bases had greater agenda power throughout the process of construction and implementation of this policy and, one of the initial signs of this, is that, in July 2014, a first draft of national curriculum standards emerged, which was prepared by the Basic Education Secretariat of the MEC, directed by Professor Beatriz Luce, from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul [*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul*] (UFRGS). This document did not contain definitions of content for each education stage, but rather a set of principles and theoretical foundations that could guide curricular discussions in schools.

However, the content of the document mentioned above was disapproved by private sectors, such as the Lemann Foundation and the Movement for the Base [*Movimento pela Base*], which were fundamental in building *consensus* on the need to implement the BNCC. The explanation given for the disapproval revolved around the extremely theoretical and impractical content of the document. This version was never published and, after the presidential election of the same year, there was a change at several levels in the government team of then President Dilma Rousseff, from the Workers' Party [*Partido dos Trabalhadores*] (PT) (2011-2016), with the Brazilian Ministry of Education [*Ministério da Educação*] (MEC) being one of the most affected sectors, as it began to be coordinated by a new, essentially neoliberal and technocratic team (Tarlau; Moeller, 2020).

With the new team and the new Basic Education Secretary, Manuel Palácios (professor at the Department of Education of the Federal University of Juiz de Fora), the work of constructing a national curriculum guideline began from scratch. In 2015, a broad committee was formed to prepare the initial BNCC document. The commission

was made up of 29 work teams, 116 specialist professors from Brazilian universities, as well as members of state secretariats and municipal leaders in the Education field. The result of the work of a team composed of such diverse subjects and groups was the publishing of the first version of the BNCC, in September 2015 (Tarlau; Moeller, 2020).

It is important to mention that the study by Tarlau and Moeller (2020) notes the decisive role of the Lemann Foundation in the entire process of constructing the BNCC, with the aim of building what the authors call a consensus by philanthropy, in the sense of a discourse of appeal and persuasion for the need to develop a national curriculum. Still according to the authors, the foundation acted strategically in building consensus among different political groups, ranging from the right wing to progressive sectors, being able to influence the concrete direction of the BNCC through the following aspects: material resources (funding of activities and events related to the base); knowledge production (research, consultancy and writing of the base text); media power (dialogue with different sectors of the media and dissemination of news stories showing the relevance of approving the BNCC) and; formal and informal networks (establishment of connections with politicians and intellectuals from all ideological fields who were supporting the base and the foundation's actions).

Regarding the first version of the document, at the same time that criticism was being received from conservative sectors – which believed that the text contained too many nods to progressive discussions on diversity (gender, ethnicity, sexuality and religion) and social justice – and from the left – which denounced the neoliberal intentions of the document, due to the search for standardization of the curriculum –, the MEC opened a virtual channel for feedback and comments on the base text, which received around 12 million contributions of the most diverse sorts (Tarlau; Moeller, 2020). The attempt was to make the process democratic, although it is considered that few structural changes were made from the external contributions to the BNCC drafting committee.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, in an ultraconservative political scenario, the second version of the BNCC was published in May 2016, still under Dilma Rousseff's administration, preserving the idea of discussions on diversity and social justice. However, a *coup d'état* was carried out on August 31, 2016, greatly affecting a whole set of discussions that had been taking place in the construction of the BNCC (Tarlau; Moeller, 2020).<sup>6</sup>

During the administration of Michel Temer, from the Brazilian Democratic Movement [*Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*] (MDB), the process of civil society participation in the construction of the BNCC was smaller, and the team of specialists was also reduced. Thus, in December 2017, the final version of the base was published, with a clearly pragmatic text based on the conception of competences and skills, expressions which, up until then, were absent from the two previous versions, which spoke of learning objectives. Furthermore, the

final version sought to establish the objects of knowledge of each curricular component for all years of Elementary Education, unlike the proposal of previous versions, which still preserved the idea that more specific definitions of content should be the responsibility of schools and their respective education networks.

Neira, Júnior and Almeida (2016) state that, in the first two versions, the BNCC was a starting point for discussion and curriculum development in schools, which included a series of progressive discussions, such as the ideas of democracy, social justice, diversity and inclusion. However, with the change of government and the advance of the conservative wave in Brazilian society and in the world, we can say that the final version of the BNCC, in fact, presents itself as a setback, from the point of view of the longing for an education aimed at diversity and social transformation.

Approved on December 20, 2017, by the MEC, under the CNE opinion No. 15/2017, the BNCC can be defined as a normative document whose purpose, based on the definition of an organic and progressive set of essential-learning types that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of basic education, is to guide the construction and reconstruction of curricula in the different education networks and systems in Brazil (Brazil, 2017a). In the same direction as Law No. 13.415, of February 16, 2017, the BNCC reiterates the perspective of comprehensive human formation and ratifies its commitment to building a fair, democratic and inclusive society. It is based on these arguments and conception of society that the BNCC uses the statement that guaranteeing essential learning for all students is a fundamental point for the construction of a democratic society founded on the idea of social justice (Brazil, 2017a).<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the National Curricular Parameters [*Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*] (PCNs)<sup>8</sup>, which were not known as normative documents describing essential learning for all years of basic education, the BNCC, in addition to being a national reference for the development of curricula for Brazilian public and private schools, also aims to guide the alignment of other policies and actions at the national level, “[...] referring to teacher training, evaluation, the development of educational content and to the criteria for providing adequate infrastructure for the full development of education” (Brazil, 2017a, p. 6)<sup>9</sup>. In the sense of the BNCC text itself, the intention is to overcome the fragmentation of educational policies in Brazil. Thus, the document understands that, concomitantly with the challenge of guaranteeing students’ access to and permanence at school, it is essential that education systems and networks “[...] guarantee a common level of learning for all students, a task for which the BNCC is a fundamental instrument” (Brazil, 2017a, p. 6).

As a purpose of guaranteeing essential learning, the BNCC indicates that the latter should serve to develop ten general competences in students, which would be, in the pedagogical field, the materialization of the rights to learning and development<sup>10</sup>. In the intellectual

field, this issue of teaching based on the development of competences has been propagated in the sense of bringing education closer to practical elements of life. Which means to say that what is learned at school cannot be dissociated from everyday experience, nor be so abstract that it cannot be used in a practical context.

In this sense, Perrenoud (1999) thinks of competence as the ability to act effectively in a given situation, supported by knowledge, but without being limited to it. Thus, given the complexity of various situations, which is linked to knowledge (which, at school, we call knowledge content/objects), it is necessary to mobilize complementary cognitive resources, including knowledge itself. In Perrenoud's view, knowledge and competences are complementary and, from the point of view of school education, they need to be taught as practical experience. In a perspective similar to that of the Swiss educator:

In the BNCC, competence is defined as the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures), skills (practical, cognitive and socio-emotional), attitudes and values to resolve complex demands of everyday life, of the full exercise of citizenship and of the world of work (Brazil, 2017, p. 6).

From a general point of view, the problem would not lie in wanting to form competent subjects in school education or for teachers to be technically competent to teach. The problem would lie in the unfolding of issues regarding the alleged competences. For instance, in Freire (2016), we find a broad dialogue about the political dimension and its interconnection with technical-scientific competence in progressive educational practice. In the same way, we could think that emancipatory education also intends to form competent subjects. However, we mention Adorno's (2020) central question, that is, education/training for what? In the terms of our debate, developing competences for what world? For what kind of intervention in the world?

In the sense of the BNCC, competence, understood as the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, must be used to resolve complex demands of everyday life, but such demands are limited exclusively to the scope of passive citizenship and the labor market. Certainly, in times of advancement of a neoliberal rationality that greatly undermines labor relations (Laval, 2019), criticism regarding the pedagogies of competences and their connection and theoretical backdrop for technicist and neo-technicist education projects is strengthened (Saviani, 2008).

In Bernstein (2003), there is an expansion of the discussion on competence models that operate in social reality and in education. According to the author, beyond the most common idea of competence as something operational that is effected in the mobilization of cognitive skills, it would be possible for us to think about the existence of broad competences that relate human actions to their political and cultural contexts. From this perspective, the author argues about three modes of competence, namely: liberal/progressive, populist and radical. On the latter mode, Bernstein (2003, p. 89) suggests that "[...]



The pedagogic practice and contexts created by this mode presuppose an emancipatory potential common to all members of this group”.

Back to the BNCC, our provisional synthesis is that the project for forming competent subjects expressed in the document concerns the development of competences for work relations currently established by neoliberal rationality, in the sense of an education for adaptation to the world, as proposed by Durkheim (2014). To this end, the knowledge mobilized for neoliberal formation, which is comparable to cultural semi-formation (Adorno, 1996a; 1996b; 2020) and training (Freire, 1996; 2019), should not be a sort of knowledge capable of developing critical and reflective competences regarding the world and unequal social relations (Bernstein, 2003). This is because, in Adornian thinking, semi-formation is deteriorated formation, which maintains the *status quo* of domination and leads to social barbarism; this is widely corroborated in Freirean thinking when denouncing that the technical training operated by the dominant class in the formative processes aims at the development of capital, guaranteeing the *status quo* of domination. Based on this understanding, in the next topic we will specifically analyze the situation and conception of Physical Education expressed in the BNCC.

### **Physical Education in the National Common Curricular Base: Tensions, Advances and Possible perspectives**

With regard to Physical Education in the BNCC, a first interesting aspect to think about refers to the limits and possibilities of the competences and skills model – which focuses on cognitive and quantifiable learning processes – being transposed to a curricular component that is characterized by bodily expression and the impossibility of predicting certain behaviors and expressions that occur in the body. In the sense of Betti (2018, p. 168), this would already be a reason that points to the incompatibility of Physical Education with this national curriculum proposal, since “[...] it is crucial then to consider that objective, measurable and observable cognitive skills do not account for the singularities of Physical Education (and probably the Arts)”.

In fact, it is necessary, from the outset, to emphasize that the presence of Physical Education in the area of languages in the BNCC must be understood as a positive element of the document, which, in a certain way, follows the critical discussions in the field undertaken in the last four decades (Betti, 2018). That is because, in pedagogical terms, the Physical Education field addresses a set of knowledge that is expressed through body language, entering a level of communication and expression that, in many cases, becomes unspeakable through concepts and words themselves (Bracht, 2023).

Neira (2018) warns that Physical Education skills are dominated by the technical rationality present in the BNCC. Thus, the skills in the area end up privileging cognitive processes (explain, plan, identify, describe, discuss, collaborate in the proposition, differentiate and



formulate), whereas only the verbs “to experience” and “to enjoy” point to processes that are not just cognitive.

It is worth highlighting that, in the Physical Education field, there are pedagogical proposals that speak of competences from the point of view of education for emancipation. In this sense, we mention the research work of Kunz (1994), which deals with objective, social and communicative competences in the teaching of sports and other Physical Education themes. Therefore, beyond the mere training of skills and functional tasks for the job market, as suggested by the educational policy discussed here, objective competence, in Kunz’s (1994) view, would be linked to technical and operational knowledge that would make conscious individual and collective action possible in the scope of sports and other bodily practices in all dimensions of life. Still according to the same author, social competence is related to the sociocultural knowledge necessary to broaden reflection and improve the actions of subjects in their life context. Communicative competence, in its turn, is fundamental in the process of education for emancipation, given that knowing how to communicate through different languages and understanding the communication of others are fundamental attributes for the development of critical thinking.

That is, if we consider arguments such as those brought by the aforementioned author, talking about the development of competences in Physical Education becomes incongruent and problematic when the theoretical framework used restricts the formative possibilities of the area. Therefore, this is just one element that we understand as controversial in the national normative document, that is, Physical Education, in the BNCC, ends up entering the circuit of cognitivist pedagogies in the definition of its competences and skills. Perhaps, this attempt is in line with the concept of Physical Education expressed in the document, which, despite using terms and expressions that point to the influence of the culturalist approach to Physical Education (Betti, 2018)<sup>11</sup>, works with a more static perspective on the productions of the bodily culture of movement. Let us see the concept:

Physical Education is the curricular component that addresses bodily practices in their various forms of social codification and signification, which are understood as manifestations of the expressive possibilities of subjects, produced by different social groups throughout history. In this conception, human movement is always inserted within the scope of culture and is not limited to a space-time displacement of a body segment or an entire body (Brazil, 2017a, p. 209).

Firstly, we reinforce the positive dimension of the BNCC when thinking about Physical Education and bodily practices within the dynamics of culture. This is certainly a step forward and, in a way, contrasts with the rationalizing and measurable objectives of the competence approach adopted by the document itself. It is possible to say that, as well as in the PCNs, we perceive the legacy of the MREF in delimiting the object of study of Physical Education in this national cur-

riculum policy. It is worth stating that, within the broad epistemological and political disputes historically present in the Physical Education area, expressed above all in the definition of its object of study, the presence of the concept of bodily practices, linked to the references of the humanities, certainly contributes to consolidating a perspective of Physical Education that addresses a field of knowledge that is not restricted to the organic dimension of subjects' bodies.

Therefore, we consider that this advancement, from the point of view of defining the object of knowledge of Physical Education, also acts as a possible alternative for the construction of pedagogical practices based on the idea of movement as an expression of culture and not just as a result of the mechanical action of the body. That is, due to the neoliberal and somewhat rationalizing contours of the BNCC in the field of Physical Education, it would not be surprising if the curricular orientation proposal presented were hegemonically based on the perspectives of physical fitness, high-performance sports, and training. Without abandoning the critical lens, we cannot fail to recognize that the incorporation of the terms bodily culture of movement and bodily practices by the BNCC is more consistent with the contemporary critical discourse of the area. This is therefore a strength.

Another aspect that corroborates the understanding about the expansion of the theoretical horizon of the Physical Education field of knowledge present in the BNCC refers to the incorporation of adventure bodily practices as a thematic unit of the Physical Education discipline that expresses a set of objects of knowledge that have been treated in the academic field of the area in contemporary times (França et al., 2023).

This movement of incorporating critical proposals by curricular documents can signal different paths of analysis (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive). One of them is that, in fact, the critical movement of Brazilian Physical Education managed to project itself to the point of gaining space in curricular formulations of national circulation, even if within the scope of neoliberalism. Another possible reading is that, for the agents of educational neoliberalism, this contradiction is acceptable and may even function as a kind of mediation between their real intentions and a way of granting certain theoretical advances recognized by progressive sectors. In our understanding, the contradiction exists, and so does the tension between the neoliberal logic of these policies with some critical discourses and statements present within the documents<sup>12</sup>. In any case, we ratify that we consider the presence of the term bodily practices to be fundamental in defining the object of Physical Education in a nationally circulated curricular guidance document.

Therefore, as the conception and purposes of Physical Education are found within a document produced along the lines of neoliberal rationality, some tensions become more evident. One of them refers to the fact that the concept of Physical Education presented above states that the curricular component works with bodily practices in

their various forms of social codification and signification already produced by different social groups throughout history. By the way, it is worth mentioning that the BNCC reinforces this understanding when describing the objects of knowledge of Physical Education, which are ready and finished to be shared with students in the form of invasion sports, electronic games, urban and nature adventure bodily practices, popular games from Brazil and the world, etc. (Brazil, 2017a).

Now, from the perspective we have been showing, what happens to the protagonism of the subjects who continue to produce and resignify bodily practices on a daily basis? How will we account for the mediation between the historical and contemporary aspects of knowledge of bodily practices in the terms of Soares et al. (1992)? We corroborate Bracht (2014), for whom the bodily practices that integrate the bodily culture of movement are, in fact, texts with historically produced significations, but which also diversify at all times, due to the uninterrupted human intervention in the cultural sphere. In this regard, it will be necessary to transgress the document's conception of bodily practices, treating them dynamically and never as finished social products. From this point of view, an interesting path opens up for teachers to act as reflective intellectuals of educational policies, since the reinterpretation of concepts and normative devices is a central characteristic identified in the action of teachers who work as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1997).

However, in the same way that we stressed the historical importance of the notion of bodily practices being conceived as the object of study of Physical Education, we cannot fail to mention the relevance of more specific objects of knowledge such as dances, games, sports, gymnastics, fights and adventure bodily practices being recognized as sociocultural manifestations that require a pedagogical approach throughout the basic schooling of students.

Still within the scope of the conception of Physical Education expressed in the BNCC, at another moment, in an attempt to differentiate itself from the cognitivist logic that traditionally dominates the modern school, the document signals the specificity of the type of experience that Physical Education and bodily practices can provide. As it reads, "[...] this universe comprises bodily knowledge, aesthetic, emotional, ludic and agonistic experiences, which are part of, but not restricted to, the typical rationality of scientific knowledge that commonly guides pedagogical practices in schools" (Brazil, 2017a, p. 209).

It is important to highlight that, from the point of view of affirming the specificity of Physical Education, it is essential to affirm the ludic nature and the aesthetic, emotional and agonistic dimensions of bodily practices. However, such an aspect is at odds with the framing of the discipline in the model of competences and skills adopted by the BNCC, which, as we have shown previously, focuses on terms and expressions that indicate the primacy of cognition to the detriment of bodily experience. Moreover, we must be careful in thinking of Physi-

cal Education as experience alone. As Betti (2018) highlights, the term experience and experimentation, when present in the BNCC, is disconnected from learning. That is, a certain bodily practice is experienced and experimented with, but there is no indication as to what learning will occur in this relationship.

Let us take as an example competence 10<sup>13</sup> of Physical Education in the BNCC, which determines that students need to “[...] experiment, enjoy, appreciate and create different games, dances, gymnastics, sports, fights and adventure bodily practices, valuing collective work and protagonism” (Brazil, 2017a, p. 219). In the same sense of skills, competence 8, which speaks of enjoying, as well as competence 10, are the only ones that refer to processes of bodily experience, but, even so, without great relations with learning practices through the body. All other Physical Education competences listed in the BNCC use terms such as: understand, plan and employ strategies, reflect, identify, interpret and recognize.

Let it be clear: we are in no way defending the absence of reflection and analysis on the senses and meanings of bodily practices. However, from the point of view of discussing training and formative experience as objectives of critical education (Adorno, 1996a; 1996b; 2020), and of the conscious body as a way of being and existing in the world (Freire, 2016; 2017; 2019)<sup>14</sup>, we believe that not only Physical Education, but all fields of knowledge that make up the school curriculum can think of ways of dealing with their contents, recognizing the bodily and practical dimension of each and every concept. In this sense, the formative experience that we advocate for Physical Education involves, at the same time, experience and reflection, given that there is no part of us programmed for doing and another only to think about doing it.

Another point to highlight regarding the conception and purpose of Physical Education in the BNCC refers to the link between teaching bodily practices and the spheres of leisure and health. About that, it can be observed that the document defines bodily practices as human production characterized by the presence of bodily movement as an essential element, which has an internal organization delimiting the specific logic of each manifestation and which constitutes a cultural product connected to leisure/entertainment and/or care for the body and health. Furthermore, as for this last aspect, the document points out that “[...] these bodily practices are those carried out outside of work, domestic, hygienic and religious obligations, in which subjects engage for specific purposes, without an instrumental character” (Brazil, 2017a, p. 209).

With the visible connection between Physical Education and bodily practices linked only to leisure and health, we could ask ourselves whether students would be denied experience with the field of bodily practices in the dimensions of work, high performance, tradition and religion. What would we do, then, with the sports object of knowledge, since the BNCC itself recognizes that this bodily practice

refers to patterns of institutionalization and regulated competition? Is it possible to talk about comprehensive formation, as the document advocates, restricting students' formative experience within the universe of bodily practices?

Would the BNCC be concerned with linking the knowledge of bodily practices only to the fields in which they are most consumed, that is, leisure/entertainment and body and health care? This is a fundamental question, as the document constantly emphasizes that students must be integrated into the universe of body movement culture and be protagonists in leisure and health promotion actions. However, about which student and leisure pattern is the BNCC talking?

In this regard, it will be necessary to invert the logic of the discussion on leisure and health present in the BNCC, broadening the debate on these themes that are so relevant and connected to the universe of bodily practices. Therefore, we believe that we have space for our interpretations and practices based on the BNCC. Herein lies another tension in the document, which can be interpreted as a possibility for progressive educators, that is: thinking about the development of educational practices that, by relating the universe of bodily practices to the dimensions of leisure and health, choose perspectives that break with the circuit of neoliberalism and of the cultural industry that aim to connect leisure and health to consumption and entertainment only.

Continuing our reflection on this point of the debate, we mention the study by Martins and Nogueira (2021), which aimed to materialize a pedagogy of the conscious body in school Physical Education from the proposition of thematic units for the stages of Elementary Education and High School. According to the authors, the conscious body can be addressed as an object of knowledge in Physical Education classes, intertwining with the universe of bodily practices, health and leisure. In the proposal presented, which was also materialized in remote High School classes in 2021, from an approximation with the organization of the knowledge of bodily practices in the BNCC (Brazil, 2017a), it is proposed that the conscious body be addressed through two major axes, namely: internal organization of the conscious body (matters of body care, anatomy, diversity, body image, disorders and physical capacities) and social dimension of the conscious body (matters of media, social networks, body and local and global reality, conscious body of African and indigenous matrices).

Continuing the discussion, when the BNCC lists the dimensions of knowledge of bodily practices to be considered in schools – namely: experimentation, use and appropriation, enjoyment, reflection on action, construction of values, analysis, understanding and community protagonism (Brazil, 2017a) –, at no point is it indicated that students should be trained to claim access to bodily practices as a right, or that they need to problematize the social and economic contradictions and inequalities present in this universe. Thus, the objective is to uncritically integrate students into this universe, training them for the

consumption, use and appropriation of the bodily practices commercialized and disseminated by the cultural industry.

In our view, it is precisely in this acritical link between Physical Education and the fields of leisure and health, as well as in the adherence to the model of functional competences and skills, that the BNCC contradicts the legacy of the theoretical productions that criticize the MREF and the culturalist approach to Physical Education. However, just as any curricular project, the criticism produced in the daily life of schools by Physical Education teachers can certainly be even denser (Neira, 2018), or even many of the precepts and ideals of the BNCC can be disregarded in favor of a merely instrumental and pragmatic intervention with the objects of knowledge presented (Betti, 2018).

In the logic of expanding and transgressing the meanings of the official document, the study by Bagnara and Fensterseifer (2019) highlights the contributions of the BNCC from the point of view of curricular recognition and organization of knowledge of bodily practices in schools. However, both in the conceptual discussion and in the propositional discussion of the work, the authors signaled the need for an interweaving of theory and practice in Physical Education classes. Thus, the authors point out that, as an educational discipline in schools, Physical Education must address the so-called bodily and conceptual knowledge. Regarding bodily knowledge, it can be treated both from the perspective of *learning to practice*, and from the perspective of *practicing to learn*. As for conceptual knowledge, it must be understood as technical and critical.

To ratify the debate, we can say that, in general terms, it is undeniable that the BNCC represents a forceful advance in the neoliberal-corporate field at a speed never before seen in Brazilian education. As we have observed, in the BNCC, its regulatory nature, that is, virtually mandatory for all education networks and systems, shows a different content from that brought by the PCNs in the late 1990s. In this sense, we must consider that this policy dared to influence the structure of Brazilian education, restricting, but not making impossible, the field of critical and transformative action of the subjects of education.

From the point of view of the analysis of the BNCC, it is possible to infer that Physical Education, thought of as a mandatory and imperative curricular component in the education of children, young people, adults and the elderly in basic education, is still a project under construction. This is because it fluctuates and lacks greater security in the legislative field, since this discipline still suffers from a lack of recognition in the field of educational policies. It is worth remembering that Provisional Measure (PM) No. 746, of September 22, 2016<sup>15</sup>, removed Physical Education from the High School curriculum, and Law No. 13.415/2017 (Brazil, 2017b) places the field of bodily practices, arts and human sciences at the level of studies and practices, and



not of knowledge to be taught in the three years of High School, as it does with Portuguese Language and Mathematics.

Added to this is the fact that, in the BNCC, the objectives and purposes of Physical Education are basically those produced by neoliberal rationality and the corporate field of education. It is no coincidence that, as we have shown, Physical Education is directly connected to the formation project for the consumption of bodily practices in the dimensions of leisure and health in the BNCC.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that, in terms of effects on the structure and pedagogical practice developed in schools, in the case of the BNCC, as a curriculum policy, its codes, terms and languages are undergoing and will continue to undergo different translations in the field of curricular developments and practices build in federal, state and municipal schools, as well as in private education networks and schools. For this reason, its real effects on school culture are a fertile field for study.

## Further Considerations

Based on the notes provided in this study, we state that educational policies such as the BNCC, in the climate of neoliberalism, present themselves as a set of mechanisms of semi-formation and restriction of the formative experience within the scope of the legal provisions that direct professional intervention in Physical Education in contemporary times.

It is worth mentioning that we sought to analyze a legal framework that conditions professional intervention in school Physical Education. Thus, we started from contemporary expressions of Physical Education, such as its conception in the BNCC, with insertions in the discussion about the body. As the main results of this research, we point out that:

1) In the current context of neoliberal rationality, Physical Education begins to be influenced by this trend within the scope of educational policies. We can therefore say that the aspect of the legitimacy of the conservative political-economic field in contemporary times assigns multiple meanings to the Physical Education curricular component that, in general, orient the component towards formation, consumption and entertainment and, at times, towards its own denial as a field of knowledge that is of interest to the school.

2) In the BNCC, due to the model of competences and skills chosen by this normative document of Brazilian education, Physical Education and Arts come into tension with this curriculum policy. Although the document presents certain advances and incorporations of the MREF, already achieved since the 1997 PCNs, the logic of competences and skills that is extremely functional for the productive sector empties the bodily practices universe of meaning, which tends to be increasingly reduced to practices that can be measurable in terms of learning. Furthermore, in the climate of neoliberalism and semi-



formation, the document guides the teaching of bodily practices for the spheres of leisure/entertainment and health/body care.

3) We cannot fail to recognize the specific advances (although no less important) of the BNCC for the school Physical Education area, which concern the consolidation of the sociocultural perspective in the organization and definition of the objects of knowledge of the discipline from its understanding as a specific form of language.

However, in this study, we also sought to point out the advances, contributions and possibilities from the BNCC-Physical Education, which, in our view, expresses the tension between certain political-pedagogical achievements of the MREF, with the restricted and instrumental objectives of the model of competences and skills presented in the document. It is considering this tension that we propose the possibility of a critical and transgressive reading of the BNCC, in the sense of a broad formation and understanding of the universe of bodily practices as a dynamic and disputed field.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This research work is the result of the doctoral thesis entitled *School Physical Education, Knowledge and Legitimacy: Research Based on Legal Provisions* (Furtado, 2022). In this publication, we present a revised and expanded version of one of the topics of the aforementioned thesis, which had the collaboration of the other author of this study.

<sup>2</sup> The Physical Education Renewal Movement (MREF) is understood as the period between the 1980s and 1990s, in which a production of knowledge and political-pedagogical movements emerged and challenged the medical, military and sporting traditions that form the basis of Physical Education in modern times. A fundamental and consensual agenda among all subjects involved in the movement concerns the fight for the legal consideration of Physical Education as a mandatory curricular component of the school (Machado; Bracht, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> We inform the reader that, at this time, we will work with the BNCC text from December 2017, which presents the essential learning for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. This choice is due to the greater theoretical discussion about Physical Education in this version than in the 2018 document, which deals with High School. It is worth stating that, with regard to High School, the logic of the BNCC in its final version complements and embodies the notes of law No. 13.415, which establishes the bases for the curriculum of four areas of knowledge and formative itineraries (Silva, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> In strategy 7.1 of the PNE, it is stated that, in order to foster and guarantee the quality of basic education in all stages and teaching modalities of Brazilian education, among several aspects, it is necessary to “[...] establish and implement, through inter-federal agreement, pedagogical guidelines for basic education and the common national curricular base, with rights, as well as with learning and development objectives for students attending each year of elementary and secondary education, respecting regional, state and local diversity” (Brazil, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> At that exact historical moment, conservative agendas were advancing in Brazilian society, with the Non-Party School [*Escola Sem Partido*] Movement being an expression of this phenomenon in the education field. In the study by Della Fonte and

Lemos (2020), the reader will find a sophisticated analysis guided by Hannah Arendt's concepts of politics, tradition, authority, responsibility, and public and private space, about the connection between the conservative ideology of a pretended destruction of the public dimension of Brazilian education present in the Non-Party School Movement and the latest version of the BNCC.

- <sup>6</sup> After a process started on December 02, 2015, through the acceptance of a complaint for a crime of responsibility, the impeachment of then President Dilma Rousseff was carried out on August 31, 2016. The process was developed in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Constitution; however, due to the motivating factors, there are several publications attesting to the characteristics of a *coup d'état*, among which we highlight the research by Alves (2020) and the various studies gathered in the work organized by Falcão, Arguelhes and Pereira (2017).
- <sup>7</sup> This is the Law that establishes the Policy to Foster the Implementation of Full-Time Secondary Schools. Available at: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2015-2018/2017/lei/l13415.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2017/lei/l13415.htm). Accessed on: May 12, 2023.
- <sup>8</sup> According to Galian (2014, p. 651), The PCNs are normative documents drawn up "[...] in the second half of the 1990s, they constitute one of the forms of expression of the State's role in the search for cohesion and order, acting towards achieving the standardization of the national curriculum by defining a minimum content to be transmitted in basic education, which has been a recurring search in the history of public education policies in Brazil".
- <sup>9</sup> Furtado and Costa (2020), based on a field study conducted in an initial training course for Physical Education teachers in the state of Pará, found that the institution's professors recognize the BNCC's greater intention to interfere in initial training courses. However, the professors interviewed indicated that, from a theoretical point of view, the BNCC falls short of the epistemological and pedagogical accumulation built in recent decades in the Physical Education field and, for this reason, it should not be the only reference for teacher training courses.
- <sup>10</sup> We note that the debate on education based on the competences and skills model in Brazil, in a document of national proportions aimed at basic education, appeared for the first time in a more structured way in the PCNs for Secondary Education, published in 2000.
- <sup>11</sup> According to Betti (2007), the culturalist turn, which led to the construction of the so-called culturalist approach to Brazilian Physical Education, concerns a set of theoretical productions and discourses that, dating back to the 1980s, began to challenge the hegemonic narratives of the area originating from the Natural Sciences field. Thus, guided by discussions in the Human Sciences, by the political-pedagogical dimension of the MREF and by the strong appeal of the concept of culture, the result of this inflection can be identified in the emergence, within the academic field of Physical Education, of concepts such as physical culture, bodily culture, movement culture and bodily culture of movement. The movement is so strong that, for instance, the PCNs and the BNCC talk about bodily culture of movement.
- <sup>12</sup> By the way, according to Tarlau and Moeller (2020), the search for mediation and the building of consensus between different theoretical perspectives and political groups was a notable element in the construction of the BNCC.
- <sup>13</sup> In Brazil (2017, p. 223), 10 specific Physical Education competences for Elementary Education are presented. The reader will be able to identify on the list the factors that corroborate the criticisms we are now making, and which find considerable

echo in the literature, as was possible to see, for instance, in the studies by Furtado, Paes Neto and Espírito Santo (2021).

<sup>14</sup> Furtado, Gomes and Borges (2022) had an excellent approach regarding the similarities and specificities between Adorno and Paulo Freire, when the reader will be able to access the discussions on critical education and conscious body and verify the assumptions for formation and formative experience.

<sup>15</sup> PM No. 746/2016 was the legal instrument to begin the implementation of the Policy to Foster the Implementation of Full-Time Secondary Schools. As a provisional regulation, it needed to be effected in the form of a law, which was done through Law No. 13.415/2017. Although they deal with the same matter, as we have seen, there are differences in content between the two texts.

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