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**SPORTS AS PRESCRIBED IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES: OVERVIEW AND CHARACTERISTICS OF LAWS****O ESPORTE PRESCRITO NOS PAÍSES DA AMÉRICA LATINA: PANORAMA E CARACTERÍSTICAS DAS LEIS**

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**RESUMO**

Este artigo objetiva mapear e analisar as principais leis esportivas e órgãos governamentais oficiais que regulamentam e gerem o esporte na América Latina, compreendendo a natureza dos documentos e seus elementos centrais constitutivos, a saber: título, ano de criação e objetivos gerais. Trata-se de um estudo do tipo exploratório e documental, utiliza a crítica-documental, o método comparativo e o paradigma indiciário como abordagem teórico-metodológica. As fontes são compostas pelas Leis esportivas oficiais de 19 países da América Latina. As análises nos permitiram estabelecer as seguintes categorias: a) países cujas leis esportivas são específicas e que contém apenas o termo esporte em seu nome; b) países cujas leis esportivas são identificadas com números; c) países cujas leis esportivas possuem nomenclatura mista. Doze países conceituam o esporte na íntegra em seus documentos. Percebemos que a maneira como o esporte é apresentado nas leis demonstra os sinais e rastros de como ele é pensado, visto e materializado. Entendemos que as leis se configuram como um importante marco para o desenvolvimento do esporte latino. Além delas, apontamos que é fundamental que seja pensada uma política esportiva a médio e longo prazo em cada contexto específico.

**Palavras-chave:** Esporte. Políticas. América Latina. Leis. Formação.

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**ABSTRACT**

This article aims to map and analyze the main sports laws and official government bodies that regulate and manage sports in Latin America, comprising the nature of the documents and their central constitutive elements, namely: title, year of creation, and general objectives. This is an exploratory and documentary study using critical-documentary analysis, the comparative method and the evidential paradigm as a theoretical-methodological approach. The sources are composed of the official sports laws of 19 countries in Latin America. The analyses allowed us to establish the following categories: a) countries whose sports laws are specific and contain only the term sports in their name; b) countries whose sports laws are identified with numbers; c) countries whose sports laws have mixed nomenclature. Twelve countries conceptualize sports in full in their documents. We perceive that the way sports are presented in the laws shows the signs and traces of how they are thought, seen and materialized. We understand that the laws are an important milestone for the development of Latin sports. Beyond the laws, we point out that it is of paramount importance that a medium- and long-term sports policy be thought out in each specific context.

**Keywords:** Sports. Policies. Latin America. Laws. Training.

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**Introduction**

The development of public policies aimed at the sports phenomenon is a movement that has been growing in recent years. Discussions in the fields of Physical Education<sup>1,2</sup>, administrative and sports law<sup>3,4</sup>, and in management and marketing<sup>5</sup> show the plurality of works that have been conducted in this sphere.

When talking about South American countries, Costa<sup>6</sup> highlights that this combination of different cultural values and interpretations confers pluralism to practices and to what is related to sports in this region. Also in the Mercosur bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), we identify initiatives by nations to develop public policies aimed at sports, whose purpose is to obtain symbolic and financial support, evidencing the practices that consolidate and drive high-performance sports modalities in its countries.

In this context, Oliveira and Leiro<sup>7</sup> state that the strengthening of international relations among countries, with a view to democratizing sports and leisure, must be treated with a multidisciplinary public policy, conceiving sports in their regulatory documents as a right for all and in an intersectoral manner.

It becomes necessary to consider [...] the importance of socializing the experiences developed in each country as a strategic challenge to strengthen cultural, scientific and technological ties<sup>7:551</sup>. Thus, it seems reasonable to ask: Through what laws are sports prescribed and regulated in the countries of Latin America (LA)? What are the main constitutive/prescriptive characteristics of such documents? What bodies are responsible for managing and actually applying these laws?

For Arbena and LaFrance<sup>1</sup>, the contemporary development of sports in LA and the Caribbean is part of the constitution of these peoples; therefore, three main sources should be considered: recreation and indigenous games, activities introduced by colonizers, and modern practices widespread in the Atlantic north, mainly influenced by the British and Americans.

Likewise, Bravo, D'Amico and Parrish<sup>8</sup>, when addressing the theme of how sports are organized in LA, also stress their correlation with politics, management and diversified cultural contexts, showing that: “[...] over the past several decades scholars have utilized diverse disciplinary approaches (anthropology, cultural studies, history, comparative sport policy, management, sociology, etc.) to analyse sport in Latin America”<sup>8:4</sup>.

Costa<sup>6</sup> states that, given the broad scenario and cultural diversification, it becomes important to carry out research in the scope of professional training and of the sociocultural view of sports. “*Para Muchos, la carencia de explicaciones históricas estimuló el carácter arbitrario de las interpretaciones sobre el deporte en América del Sur*”<sup>6:206</sup>.

For the author, both professional development and the job market of those who work with sports are correlated with social changes, national integration, means of communication, the very cultural identity of countries and of the continent, altered mainly in the globalization process.

On the same note, we corroborate the ideas of Gama, Ferreira Neto and Santos<sup>9</sup>, understanding that LA constitutes an important field that lacks comparative studies on training for roles in sports and on the sports policies of its countries. Based on the understanding that it is not possible to separate a formative view for sports from a political view and its legal bases, we judge that it is imperative to study the prescriptive characteristics of sports laws that found policies, and how the latter establish sports in the countries.

Thus, in this article, we aim to map and analyze the main sports laws and official government bodies that regulate and manage sports in LA, comprising the nature of the documents and their central constitutive elements, namely: title, year of creation, and general objectives.

This movement provides us with the fundamental clues to establish the legislative configuration and its outcomes in the professional field and in the formative actions of Latin American sports.

## Methodology

This is a qualitative, exploratory and documentary study<sup>10</sup>. It uses critical-documentary analysis, the comparative method<sup>11,12</sup> and the evidential paradigm<sup>13</sup> as a theoretical-methodological approach. For Bloch<sup>11:123</sup>, the comparison process,

[...] thus understood, is common to all aspects of the method, but, depending on the field of study considered, it is susceptible to two applications completely different in terms of their principles and results. First case: we choose societies separated in time and space by distances so great that the analogies observed on one side and another, between this or that phenomenon, cannot, with all evidence, be explained by mutual influences or by some community of origins. [Second case] [...] Studying, in parallel, neighboring and contemporary societies, constantly influenced by one another, subject, in their development – due to their proximity

and synchronization –, to the action of the same great causes, and going back, at least partially, to a common origin.

It is our interest to employ the comparative method to contexts that are diverse but share a common phenomenon, that is, the legal regulation of sports that is provided for and in force in Latin American countries.

Our sources are composed of the main official laws and legal documents on sports regulation and its manifestations of 19 Latin American countries. In the dialogue with Bloch<sup>12</sup>, we evidenced the importance of not producing statements without them having conditions to be verified first. For the work with primary sources, we resorted to a framework of official government documents, available online, which constitute direct legislation that specifically deals with sports in that respective country.

The timeframe of the search was established *a posteriori*, between the years 1961 (oldest law in force) to 2020 (most recent law). We carried out the survey on official government platforms and on Google, using the following descriptors: *Ley deportiva*; *Ley de Deporte* and *Lei Esportiva*. In addition to *Política Deportiva* and *Política Esportiva*. After identifying the documents on the websites and checking their availability and up-to-dateness, we downloaded their latest version.

We understand, from the dialogue established with Gama, Santos and Schneider<sup>14</sup>, that sources of a documentary nature allow social understanding in a given dimension of time and are characterized as a form of written recollection of events.

We proposed ourselves to question our sources and make them speak, seeking to understand them and not judge them. To this end, we prepared a script of questions that served as a common thread when analyzing the documents. Thus, when faced with the laws, we sought to understand: a) What is the main and most recent legal device that regulates sports? In what year was it established in the country? b) What is the main body in charge of sports in the country? d) Which countries present the concept of sports in full?

For Sá-Silva, Guindani and Almeida<sup>15</sup>, the use of documents in research involving the Human and Social Sciences should be valued, as they are fundamental to the understanding of objects in which there is a need for a sociocultural and historical contextualization.

In this way, understanding the sources as culturally constructed artifacts full of intentionalities, we were not interested in judging them, but in interrogating them<sup>12</sup>; we analyzed the traces and indications left in the clues and signs<sup>13</sup> brought by the different contexts that address the legislation on sports in each Latin American country.

## Results and discussions

Understanding how the field of sports legislation is constituted in LA denotes a broad movement that requires the surveying of laws in the 19 countries of our sample. Thus, our first analysis movement materializes in the construction of Tables 1, 2 and 3. With them, we captured the first indications about the main sports laws in each investigated context.

We stress that each table identifies the laws considered as the main devices of general regulation for sports in their respective country; however, we point out that there are other Laws to deal with certain sports specificities in each context, such as, for instance, the *Lei de Incentivo ao Esporte* in Brazil. We also highlight that the managing bodies were identified from the reading of the official nomenclature established in the analyzed document.

A first analysis movement consisted of performing a division and classification through the nomenclature of the laws; with this, we established the following criteria/categories to prepare the tables: a) countries whose sports laws are specific and contain only the term sports in their name; b) countries whose sports laws are identified with numbers; c) countries whose sports laws have mixed nomenclature.

Our first category of analysis, Chart 1, comprises the Latin countries where sports laws have a specific nomenclature using the term sports as main element. It has the largest number of nations, with five from South America (Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina), and two from Central America (Dominican Republic and El Salvador).

Country	Law	Year	Managing body
Chile	<i>Ley del Deporte 19.712</i>	2001	<i>Ministerio del deporte</i>
Peru	<i>Ley de Promoción y Desarrollo del Deporte 28.036</i>	2003	<i>Instituto Peruano del Deporte</i>
Bolivia	<i>Ley del Deporte 2.770</i>	2004	<i>Ministerio de la salud y deporte</i>
Dominican Republic	<i>Ley general de deportes 10.329</i>	2005	<i>Secretaría de Estado de Deportes y Recreación (Sederec)</i>
Paraguay	<i>Ley del Deporte 2.874</i>	2006	<i>Secretaria Nacional de Deportes</i>
Argentina	<i>Ley de Deporte 27202</i>	2015	<i>Ministerio de turismo y deportes</i>
El Salvador	<i>Ley General de Deportes (decreto 491)</i>	2020	<i>Instituto Nacional de los Deportes de El Salvador (Indes)</i>

**Chart 1.** Latin countries with sports laws identified with the term sports in their official nomenclature

Source: Survey data

Observing this set of laws, we notice that sports are the central and main element in the documents. Moreover, we see that all were published after the 2000s, that is, they point to traces of a recent movement of transformations and reformulations of Latin sports legislation.

El Salvador's law (identified as most recent), for instance, is an update of Decree No. 469 of November 15, 2007. Argentina's law, in its turn, established in 2015, set a "Plan Estratégico del Deporte 2016 – 2020", which aimed, in general, to consolidate the bases of sports, PE and recreation, seeking to establish integration, advances and projection among the different components of the sports system<sup>16</sup>.

The oldest law in this category, *Ley del Deporte 19.712*, 2001, by Chile, also has a Sports Policy that is configured as a supplementary document to update and guarantee compliance with the law. It is the "*Política Nacional de Actividad Física y Deporte*" (PNAFD), a complementary legal device that guarantees the execution of Law 19.712, constituting a fundamental and guiding element of Chilean sports.

One central characteristic of the PNAFD is its long-term planning, as it was established in 2002, and the first cycle of actions developed until 2015. The current cycle began in 2016 and is expected to end in 2025<sup>17</sup>.

It is necessary to understand that the nomenclature of the law does not always evidence the treatment of sports in the countries; the managing body and the sports policies themselves are important clues for understanding the context. In this sense, the only country in this category to have an exclusive ministry for sports is Chile, which also has a clear sports policy.

Two other countries in this category also have ministries as bodies that take care of sports, but, in these cases, it is not a specific ministry. In Bolivia, the idea of promoting health by means of sports is one core element of its sports law, so the *Ministerio de la salud y deporte* is responsible for sports in the country. In Argentina, tourism shares the portfolio with sports, forming the ministry in charge.

Peru and El Salvador have Institutes as sports management bodies. In the Dominican Republic and in Paraguay, the departments are responsible for this attribution. In El Salvador, we observe that the law is governed by principles such as accessibility, social welfare, culture, sports ethics, gender equity, equality, legality, prevention, public probity, and universality.

Sports must be an element that supports an individual's integral formation and full development. In this sense, it is up to the State to promote practices, encourage athletes, give the population access to facilities for different sporting practices and to develop the “*Formación y capacitación del recurso humano em las ciências y técnicas relacionadas com el deporte*”<sup>18:5</sup>.

In Paraguay, sports take on a central educational character, since the *Secretaria Nacional de Deportes* is linked to the *Ministerio de Educación y Cultura* (MEYC). The law sets forth a policy that recognizes sports as a right for all, based on the promotion of physical education programs with the MEYC. However, unlike some countries, article 5 shows that the sports policy “[...] *se inspira en los principios de descentralización y de participación prioritária de los sectores privados* [...]”<sup>19:2</sup>.

Another example is Peru, which does not have a ministry, but the *Instituto Peruano del Deporte*. The main objective of the Peruvian law is to regulate, promote and develop sports in their different configurations, in a decentralized manner. The internal division of areas is also evident when it is determined that sporting development must be conducted through what Peruvians consider to be its basic components: physical education, sports and recreation, at regional and national levels.

The fundamental principles establish that sports must be accessed by all and, together with physical education and recreation, be a national interest. Furthermore, Peru counts on a *Plan Nacional del Deporte*, which projects the development of sports in the country in the short, medium and long terms, with a horizon of 20 years, as the law highlights in its article 7420. Understanding what governmental bodies promote and manage sports in each country also shows us important clues about the place sports occupy. Brazilian studies on sports policies and public management, such as those by Mezzadri et al<sup>2</sup> and Zardo, Souza and Starepravo<sup>21</sup>, reveal that the development of research dealing with the history and configuration of this subfield is still scarce, pointing to a need to turn sports policies into State Policies.

Chart 2 shows the second category, in which we allocated the sports laws of Latin American countries whose nomenclature is identified by numbers only. In this case, we obtained a group of six countries – three from South America (Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay), and three from Central America (Panama, Costa Rica and Cuba).

Country	Law	Year	Managing body
Cuba	<i>Ley 936</i>	1961	<i>Instituto Nacional de Deportes, Educación Física y Recreación (Inder)</i>
Colombia	<i>Ley 181</i>	1995	<i>Ministerio del Deporte</i>
Brazil	“Lei Pelé” 9.615	1998	Secretaria Especial dos Esportes (SEE)
Costa Rica	<i>Ley 7.800</i>	1998	<i>Instituto Costarricense del Deporte y la Recreación (Icoder)</i>
Panama	<i>Ley 50</i>	2007	<i>Instituto Panameño de Deportes (Pandeportes)</i>
Uruguay	<i>Ley 19.828</i>	2019	<i>Secretaría Nacional del Deporte</i>

**Chart 2.** Latin countries with sports laws identified by numbers only

Source: Survey data

A first observation to be made is that the oldest legislation still in force found by us is in this category. It is Law 936 of 1961, which regulates sports in Cuba and created the country's sports management body, the *Instituto Nacional de Deportes, Educación Física y Recreación* (Inder). In this case, we see that sports, physical education and recreation are of primary interest in the country<sup>22</sup>.

The year of publication of the laws is a peculiarity of this category, as we observe that most of them (4) are dated before the 2000s – three in the 1990s (Brazil and Costa Rica in 1998), and the Cuban one in 1961.

This is not just a coincidence, as the dates point to a broad context loaded with political

traces. Thus, it is essential to understand that the 1980s bring the end of some military regimes, and later, in the 1990s, we have the reestablishment of democracy and political reconstruction in many Latin American countries<sup>23</sup>. In this sense, sports were not left out and also underwent changes with the conception and publishing of new legislations. Moreover, such legislations have been reorganized over the years, as in the cases of Panama and Uruguay.

Another factor analyzed is that some characteristics of the laws herein evidenced are close to the first category. For instance, the nature of the managing bodies is similar, with three countries managed through institutes (Cuba, Costa Rica and Panama), two through secretariats (Brazil and Uruguay), and Colombia with the *Ministério del Deporte*. In addition, two more countries in this table have a document on sports policies: Colombia, with the *Política Pública Nacional Para el Desarrollo del Deporte, La Recreación, La Actividad Física y El Aprovechamiento del Tiempo Libre Hacia un Territorio de paz* (PPNDDRAF), created to be carried out in the course of 10 years, from 2018 to 2028<sup>24</sup>; and Costa Rica, with the *Política Nacional del Deporte, La Recreación y la Actividad Física, 2020 – 2030* (Ponadraf), also thought out for the long run, between 2020 and 2030<sup>25</sup>.

Having a long-term perspective for sports, politically speaking, is important so that the actions that encompass them and that are encompassed by them can materialize as State Policies, be institutionalized and well delimited with regard to the legal prescription present in the official documents. “This, government involvement in sport can be seen in terms of the development of policies, implementation of programs and the passage of legislation sponsored by given a nation state”<sup>8:6</sup>.

The promotion of sports in their correlation with education and social integration, having social rights, universality, community participation, citizen participation, functional integration between entities, democratization and sports ethics as fundamental principles, is the central axis in the Colombian context<sup>24</sup>.

The analysis of the documents also makes us realize that Costa Rica’s sports policy has a hybrid character, both in terms of conceptual constitution and scope. The Ponadraf document itself is signed by four ministers representing different ministries (health, education, sports, and national planning and economic policy); it also dialogues with different devices, such as the *Carta Internacional de la Educación Física, la Actividad Física y el Deporte* (published in 1978 and revised in 2015 by UNESCO), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the *Consenso de Montevideo sobre Población y Desarrollo*<sup>25</sup>.

These international documents are present in the Chilean, Colombian and Argentinean policies as well, which points to evidence about the impact of international organizations related to sports, Physical Education, and to human and economic development in Latin countries.

Corroborating the ideas of Cuevas Galicia<sup>26</sup>, we argue that sports policies must be increasingly consolidated in the field of public policies, driving mechanisms of collaboration and training, attentive to a shared and decentralized management, developing through dialogue with the market and populations’ needs, aiming at social and human development, and taking into account sports as an encompassing and broad concept.

We also dialogue with Castellani Filho<sup>27</sup>, when exposing that the recent extinction of the Ministry of Sports in Brazil, the largest country in LA, and the failure to create a clear sports policy for it, weaken the development of public sports policies and their implementation in practice. This also has an impact on the perspectives and the way in which professionals in the field are trained and educate themselves, since we cannot separate training for sports from sports policies, even if the latter still do not address the issue clearly, bearing in mind that, in many contexts, it is up to the education field to play such a role.

It is not by chance that two of the three countries with a long-term and detailed national public sports policy have an exclusive ministry for sports (Colombia and Chile) and are in categories 1 and 2 (Tables 1 and 2, respectively). It is necessary to problematize not only the

nomenclature of the laws, but their history of constitution, their contents and developments, whether in sports policies or in strategic initiatives for the development of sports in the context in which they are inserted.

The way sports are conceived in the countries has its singularities and, at the same time, approximations. Thus, it is important to capture the details of the documents and understand that, due to the established concept of sports, a law, in many cases, may have broader characteristics and establish a division between areas, as shown in Chart 3, below, in our next category of analysis.

Country	Law	Year	Managing body
Guatemala	<i>Ley Nacional para el desarrollo de la Cultura Física y del deporte (decreto 76)</i>	1997	<i>Sistema Nacional de Cultura Física</i>
Nicaragua	<i>Ley General del Deporte, Educación Física y Recreación Física 522</i>	2005	<i>Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte</i>
Ecuador	<i>Ley del Deporte, Educación Física y Recreación 255</i>	2010	<i>Secretaria del Deporte</i>
Venezuela	<i>Ley Orgánica de Deporte, Actividad Física y Educación Física</i>	2011	<i>Ministerio del Poder Popular</i>
Honduras	<i>Ley General de Cultura Física y Deporte</i>	2016	<i>Instituto Nacional del Deporte</i>
Mexico	<i>Ley General de Cultura Física y Deporte</i>	2019	<i>Comisión Nacional de Cultura Física y Deporte (Conade)</i>

**Chart 3.** Latin countries with mixed-nomenclature sports laws

Source: Survey data

Our last category of analysis brings the Latin countries that have sports laws with mixed nomenclature, that is, whose title is composed of other terms beyond sports. We obtained a total of five countries – three from Central America (Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala), two from South America (Ecuador and Venezuela), and one from North America (Mexico).

Table 3 presents the most unique characteristics in relation to the others. Here it should be noted that the names of the laws establish a clear division, in which sports are not treated in isolation and are part of a set of areas that establish what must be addressed and developed with regard to body practices in that country. Thus, we analyze that, at times, sports are linked only to Physical Culture (Honduras, Mexico and Guatemala), at times together with *Educación Física y Recreación* (Ecuador and Nicaragua), and at times with a division between *Deporte* and *Actividad Física* (Venezuela).

These divisions end up showing initial clues about the country's sports organization. In this way, we perceive that this group of nations makes it clear that there are at least three fields of application for which the laws were made – sports, PE (referred to as Physical Culture in some cases) and leisure (referred to as recreation).

Analyzing the general objective proposed by the Ecuadorian law, for instance, we observe that it establishes the guarantee of engagement in sports, physical education and recreation freely and voluntarily, as part of an individual's integral formation and a fundamental right for Ecuadorians<sup>28</sup>.

In Nicaragua, we see that the law has the principles of integrality, universality, mandatoriness (on the part of the government, to promote sports) and solidarity as elementary axes. Thus, it aims, in general, to encourage, promote and enable engagement in physical education, sports and physical recreation in a free and voluntary manner, as a duty of the State,a

across the Nicaraguan territory<sup>29</sup>.

Another example that we highlight is Mexico, the only country located in North America and the most populous Spanish-speaking nation. The most recent Mexican legal basis was set out in 2013 and underwent reformulations in 2017 and 2019. The law establishes, as central objectives, the general bases for the distribution of competences, promotion and coordination of physical culture and sports on Mexican soil. In this way, it is established, as principles (article 3), that engagement in sports and physical culture is a fundamental right of all, an essential element of education that must be managed, taught and developed by trained professionals and that has research, information and documentation as indispensable elements<sup>30</sup>.

Reynaga-Estrada<sup>31</sup>, evidence, in Mexico, the existence of a debate in the area, which unfolds in the configuration of the training field. Analyzing 58 professional training programs, the authors identified a range of diversities, where PE presented different configurations, including in the nomenclature itself. At times *Cultura Física* (most frequent name found), at times *Educación Física*, at times *deporte*, at times Movement Sciences, at times *Ciencias del ejercicio*, among others, all of this having as a guideline the correlation between school Physical Education and sports.

Bravo, D'Amico and Parrish<sup>8</sup> show that this is a widely discussed topic, but one that is particular to developed countries. We agree with the authors, who, when approaching politics, organization and sports management in LA in their work, understand that this is a broad theme that involves several fields and needs to be further discussed.

Understanding the amplitude set in the laws implies perceiving a movement of transformation of sports themselves in recent years, especially in their open, heterogeneous and socially constituted conception in different realities<sup>32</sup>. In this way, the laws end up materializing conceptions that see sports as a universal right and an important element for the integral formation of the individual.

The changes and constant updates of the documents are a reflection of this process; we just need to look at the years of publication of the laws in Table 3. Only Guatemala has a 1997 law. The other countries went through this reformulation process, and in most cases, their official documents can be considered recent. We just need to see that the laws of Ecuador, Venezuela, Honduras and Mexico were published after 2011.

We understand that these actions to reformulate and update the laws, as well as the creation of sports policies thought out for the long run and that take into account the needs and specificities of each country, are extremely relevant, not only for sporting development, but also educational, health and social development. "*La vinculación creciente del deporte con las políticas de salud, de educación o de seguridad nos obliga a abordar al deporte y la cultura física desde las ciencias políticas y sociales*"<sup>26:29</sup>.

Another point analyzed is that all countries allocated in this last category do not have sports policies, but this is not a unique characteristic of this group, since we identified only three countries that have and make this material available. In this sense, we dialogue with the Chilean reference and with Elias, Dunning and Jiménez<sup>33</sup>, authors who serve as a theoretical basis for the construction of the PNAFD, arguing that: "*La conceptualización e institucionalización del deporte es un proceso de configuración histórica, mediante el cual se relacionan las estructuras de poder y los pasatiempos tradicionales*"<sup>17:16</sup>.

Cuevas Galicia<sup>26</sup> also helps us understand that sports must be seen as a public responsibility and matter. Thus, the making of a sports law and policy must dialogue with the political sciences and respond to the public problems that the established context presents, since, in the first place, it is necessary to consider the scope of the sources, captured in 19 countries analyzed. In this sense, each document has a specific logic of formulation, presenting similarities and differences in its content.

We must also understand that the nomenclature of the law does not always define with

what it actually deals. Peripheral signs need to be observed, such as year of creation, managing body, and the objectives set out in the contents. Furthermore, the reforms, reformulations and supplementary documents evidence the legislative situation of the countries and of LA itself as a whole.

Another element identified by us is that twelve countries conceptualize sports in their documents (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay). We perceive that the way sports are presented in the laws probably shows the signs and traces of how they are thought and seen in each country, and this is also a factor that needs to be taken into account. Chile is the only one that brings a theoretical framework when conceptualizing sports, since, in the sports policy document of this country, the work *Deporte y ocio: en el proceso de la civilización*, by the authors Nobert Elias, Eric Dunning and Purificación Jimenez, is cited.

Dialoguing with Mandel<sup>34</sup>, it is necessary to understand that sports in modernity are strongly linked to and permeated by political-ideological aspects; therefore, conceptualizing them implies presenting a stance that is not only theoretical, but that politically guides their insertion and their developments before society, as well as in professional training.

Thus, we also corroborate the ideas of Cuevas Galicia<sup>26:33</sup> and stress that: “*Desde el enfoque de política pública, se considera necesario y urgente su acercamiento con las ciencias del deporte para consolidar el término de política deportiva*”.

## Conclusions

When questioning the legal configuration of the sports phenomenon in LA, we intended to delve into a polysemic, multicultural and essentially broad universe. Thus, the sources present us with a continent of possibilities, differences, similarities and singularities.

We understand that the laws are an important milestone for the development of sports in the countries. In addition to the laws, we point out that it is essential that a medium- and long-term sports policy be thought out in each context. Thus, it becomes possible to boost the sports phenomenon and its various possibilities by building, above all, a political-sporting identity for LA, a region that is built through its diversity, but also on the equalities that allow for the establishment of dialogues.

We point out the limitations of researching a large number of countries, considering the cultural diversity, the different normative perspectives of lawmaking and the varied characteristics of the political systems in 19 countries that make up a large geopolitical continent, located in three different geographic regions (South America, Central America and North America). Thus, it becomes imperative to understand the micro in relation to the macro, aware that the clues and signs that constitute our study provide indications of a Latin identity as to sports.

We suggest a continuity in the object herein evidenced, especially due to the scope of the sources, with studies that address the textual content of each Law and the interface established with management, public policies and training for sports, as well as their operationalization in practice. Studies in a Latin context and employing the comparative method.

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