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**THE INDEPENDENCE OF BRAZILIAN ANTIDOPING AS TO THE TIES BETWEEN THE STATE AND SPORTS FEDERATIONS****A INDEPENDÊNCIA DA ANTIDOPAGEM BRASILEIRA: NO CONVÍVIO DO ESTADO E DAS FEDERAÇÕES ESPORTIVAS****Daniel Giordani Vasques<sup>1</sup>, Flávio Py Mariante Neto<sup>2</sup>, Nicole Marcelli Nunes Cardoso<sup>1</sup> e Marco Paulo Stigger<sup>1</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre-RS, Brazil.<sup>2</sup>Lutheran University of Brazil, Canoas-RS, Brazil.**RESUMO**

Os processos de mundialização e de harmonização da antidopagem, liderados principalmente pela Agência Mundial Antidopagem (WADA), produziram uma série de instituições interessadas, que, segundo os atores, devem atuar de forma independente, especialmente dos Estados nacionais e das federações esportivas. No Brasil, porém, a Autoridade Brasileira de Controle de Dopagem (ABCD) foi criada em 2009 como uma secretaria do Ministério do Esporte. O objetivo deste trabalho foi analisar de que formas os atores se associam e sustentam um discurso de independência na luta antidopagem brasileira. A partir de uma inserção etnográfica, que incluiu entrevistas e análise documental, este estudo descreve, nos caminhos da sociologia pragmática e no uso do conceito Eliasiano de interdependência, as aproximações da agência nacional antidopagem, em especial, com atores do governo bem como com a federação brasileira de futebol. Nesse sentido, utilizamos os conceitos de interdependência e de harmonização para analisar as associações e, desse modo, refletimos sobre o discurso de independência ao apresentar os interesses nas associações entre os atores.

**Palavras-chave:** Doping nos Esportes. Governo. Unesco. Política Pública. Ética.

**ABSTRACT**

The anti-doping globalization and harmonization processes, led mainly by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), produced a series of interested institutions, which, according to the actors, must act independently, especially from national states and sports federations. In Brazil, however, the Brazilian Doping Control Authority (ABCD) was created in 2009 as a secretariat of the Ministry of Sports. The objective of this paper was to analyze how the actors associate and sustain a discourse of independence in the Brazilian anti-doping fight. Based on an ethnographic insertion, which included interviews and documentary analysis, this study describes, in the ways of pragmatic sociology and with the use of the Eliasian concept of interdependence, the approximations of the national anti-doping agency, especially with government actors as well as with Brazilian football federation. In this sense, we use the concepts of interdependence and harmonization to analyze associations and, thus, we reflect on the discourse of independence when presenting interests in associations between actors.

**Keywords:** Doping in sports. Government. Unesco. Public Policy. Ethics.

**Introduction**

In one of the stages of the 1998 Tour de France, a high visibility sporting event, the car of one of the teams (Team Festina) was found full of drugs that would be allegedly used by athletes to boost their sport performance. The French civil legislation already prohibited doping in sports, but not all countries complied with this. This event generated the need to create an international agency that would set standards for anti-doping and thus coordinate the efforts of sports federations and public authorities. Some studies and biographies<sup>1-3</sup> present the “Festina case” to justify the creation of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), because there, according to them, a need to have greater control over the use of prohibited substances in sports was legitimized.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), the main party responsible for anti-doping at the time, took the initiative and convened the first World Conference on Doping in Sport, systematizing it in its own way so as to create an anti-doping entity under its tutelage. However, there were some attacks by the British and US sport ministers on the IOC’s fragile policies and

legitimacy. With that, they caused the creation of the international anti-doping agency to change its course. From there, WADA was split among its member countries and sports institutions and emerged, with some resistance from the IOC<sup>1</sup>, as a more autonomous institution in relation to sports federations – as 50% of the members and 50% of WADA's funding is the responsibility of nation states.

WADA was interested in the national anti-doping organizations (NADOs) having autonomy before sports federations, but this placed them sometimes closer to State bodies, relating them to the public policies of each nation. These movements can lead to unwanted approaches by the anti-doping world, just as what happened in the case of institutionalized doping in Russia. The hypotheses of the news story that denounced this case<sup>4</sup> were ratified by investigations<sup>5</sup> that confirmed that the Russian State intentionally hid cases of doping through the RUSADA (Russian Anti-Doping Agency), which resulted in punishments by WADA for several Russian athletes, but also for federations, laboratories and anti-doping agencies.

In Brazil, the National Doping Control Authority (ABCD), the country's NADO, was built in 2009 as a secretariat for the Ministry of Sports of the Brazilian State; until 2019, it was a secretariat for the Ministry of Sports and, after that, became a directorate of the Secretariat of Sports. The officials present at the time of its creation stated that the initial idea was to place it "outside", just as what happens in other regulatory agencies of the Brazilian State (such as ANVISA and ANATEL, for instance, which are regulatory agencies of the Brazilian State and have certain autonomy in relation to the government). However, these interlocutors stated that, due to pressure from WADA for the agency to operate in the Olympic Games, there would be no plausible time, since the time to create an agency in this format would be longer than that available until the Games. In this way, a government action aimed at bringing NADO closer to the State was made present.

The ABCD had two administration groups in the period analyzed: one from 2009 to 2016, composed of civil servants coming mainly from the Ministry of Sports; and another from 2016 to 2018, with employees who were previously closer to sports federations. This is related to the political scenario at the time. Shortly after President Dilma's impeachment, in 2016, the ABCD's administration was completely changed; the positions of the second administration were filled by people who were already working with anti-doping before the ABCD, when anti-doping was organized mainly by sports confederations and private companies. This administration was closer to the federations and was made up of managers involved in sports, such as former athletes and Physical Education teachers (there were actors from the second ABCD administration who came from handball and judo).

The two administrations formed distinct and conflicting groups, both in terms of interests and approaches, as well as accusations of mismanagement and criticism from one side to the other, which generated a series of controversies<sup>6</sup> that showed the interests and actions employed there by the actors. The use of the term "controversy"<sup>7</sup> intends to describe the existence of opposing arguments with sufficient relevance to question the actions taken. For Latour<sup>6</sup>, "black boxes" open from the action of moving in time and space for us to find the controversies in their construction and the solutions that made it possible to close the "black box" – in other words, this represents closing the controversy, or at least making it irrelevant enough for the system to work.

Given the importance of the discourse produced by anti-doping institutions and, to some extent, by the sports world, about the independence (used in this research as a native expression) of national agencies in relation to both the States and the sports federations, and to WADA's policy regarding the creation and action of the NADOs, the research question we sought to answer was: How can accusations and criticisms in the Brazilian anti-doping struggle be read as a translation of a classic discourse of the world anti-doping community, that of

independence? Based on this, the objective of this study was to analyze in what ways actors associate and sustain a discourse of independence in the Brazilian anti-doping struggle.

## Methodological Procedures

This study is characterized as a multi-sited ethnography<sup>8</sup>. In this way, the researcher inserted himself in the universe of sports anti-doping to interact, observe and participate in the actions along with the actors. Thus, data were produced on-site during anti-doping collections, training courses, sporting events, laboratories, informal conversations, country conferences, and in other spaces of ethnographic insertion, as well as by means of 16 semi-structured interviews with control officers, sports and anti-doping managers, government members, business owners and laboratory directors, in addition to the analysis of public documents. The action of following<sup>6</sup> the ABCD was carried out for two years, from 2016 to 2018. The protocols of this research were submitted to the Ethics Committee and approved under opinion No. 2,081,732; thus, the participants' consent was obtained.

The categories we built to reflect on the notion of independence come from the field. The first describes and analyzes the attachments and detachments between the ABCD and the Brazilian State, while the second explores the connection between the national agency and the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF). In this sense, we propose a reflection on the "independence" of the ABCD from the State and from sports federations from two empirical-analytical categories. To this end, the notion of interdependence by Elias<sup>9</sup> and the concept of harmonization proposed by Demeslay<sup>10,11</sup> will help read the "independence" of the national anti-doping institution.

### *The ABCD's connections with the State: ruptures and rearrangements in anti-doping The institutional rupture shows the ABCD as a government policy*

The articulations that deposed President Dilma, the accusations about the first ABCD administration, and the resignation of João Pedro Wurtz – who worked at the ABCD from 2009 to 2016 – took place over a two-month period: from May to July 2016. These three actions end up inter-relating, as they resulted in the change of all ABCD employees during this period. The impeachment, thus, is not related to the ABCD, but has repercussions on its constitution. The then vice president, upon taking office, appointed actors from parties belonging to his governing base, which proved to be allied with the presidential deposition — that is, parties that were for the withdrawal of the president and that, with these appointments, proved to be allies during the final voting against her in the Senate. Some interviewees stated that this "allotment of positions" that happened when the vice president took office was intended to gather votes for the president's definitive deposition.

The PMDB party, currently MDB, took over the Ministry of Sports, and Leonardo Picciani was appointed minister in May 2016. At that time, there had been an accusation against the agency's first administration involving the use of a company hired by the Ministry for ceremonies. Wurtz was deposed in early July, and two versions of this resignation were reported: one associated with the change of government, and the other related to accusations about the use of this company. Rogério Sampaio, from the same party, is appointed to lead the ABCD the day after this deposition.

The change of this official, together with the change of all ABCD employees – which took until October 2016 –, was certainly a moment of rupture in the institution. According to interviewees, there was no space for the transmission of knowledge from one administration to the other. The policies changed: people close to sports federations were appointed, controls were carried out with more intelligence and knowledge, the formation of new DCOs – Doping Control Officers, who must have specialized training and comply with the rules of the World

Anti-Doping Code<sup>12</sup>, stopped. But it was also more difficult complying with WADA's demands, since the former administration had closer ties with the Civil House and the Planning department, which did not happen with this second administration. The rearrangements, that is, the new ways of associating oneself with the actors for the actions to stabilize, were performed from July with other actors, such as the sports confederations and the Brazilian Olympic Committee (COB). However, there were few associations with government actors from other ministries.

The declaration of conformity is a WADA grant to national agencies and depends upon the achievement of goals set by the world agency. Nonconforming agencies cannot carry out anti-doping controls. Because in November 2016 the ABCD was declared 'non-conforming', it is possible to state that this stabilization space was small, as it lasted only a few months. With this sanction, there was a rearrangement with other alliances to reach 'conformity', and the spaces of stabilization enlarged with the 'conformity' in April 2017.

Moments of rupture, readjustment or rearrangement are unstable and temporary spaces that end up accommodating and generating a stabilization of actors. The idea here is to show how these processes generated stabilizations, changing the Brazilian agency's policies prior to the conflict. At the same time, these associations show how the ABCD's policies were directly associated with government policies, since, when the government was changed, the ABCD's people and policies changed as well. This process makes us think that, contrarily to an "independence" of the ABCD in relation to State policies, there is a visible interdependent relationship between the Brazilian NADO and the government, between anti-doping and public policy.

The concept of interdependence built by Elias<sup>8</sup> describes that what matters most in the theoretical treatment of the configurations is to understand that the ties between individuals form a web of interdependence in which not only the "medium" interferes with the subject's attitudes, but that said subject is also an agent in the relationships. For this reason, the author suggests that the individuals are fundamental when it comes to dealing with these issues of social connections if we want to resolve the problem as to which relationships link people to each other, constituting the foundations of their interdependence.

From this theoretical perspective, and relating it to the data on this constitution, it can be concluded that the idea of "independence" of the ABCD can be relativized, as its relationship with the government and with federal institutions is latent. That said, the reflection that seems most obvious is that the agency is constituted as one of the elements of a configuration in which the foundations (agency, government and institutions) are related to each other. This interdependence is constituted as a configurational relationship in which the elements, in order to sustain themselves, depend on each other, so that, quoting Elias<sup>8</sup> once again, they can maintain a stable balance of tensions. However, these elements are not yet complete if we do not describe the agency's relationship with private companies, and these companies as a constitutive element of this configuration – formed also by the State and, as we will see, by sports federations. Based on these ideas, the next topic will focus on this relationship.

#### *Connections with private companies lead to falls*

The ABCD's second administration was also the target of accusations; the one that had the greatest effect was against its operations director, Mauricio de Almeida, who was publicly accused of owning an anti-doping collection company and, at the same time, of acting controlling the ABCD. Another accusation against him was associated with Ronaldo Deschamps – a doctor close to the COB, a reference in anti-doping in the country, who coordinated this field in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016. According to the news stories, the ABA (...) would have forged a document to favor a private company that would be linked to Mauricio. All these accusations would have led, according to interviewees, to the

resignation of the ABCD's operations director in November 2017, despite him claiming that he had left due to other job opportunities.

The accusations that resulted in the fall of director Mauricio triggered adjustments in the ABCD with the rise of employees who were already in the secretariat. The operations director was the only ABCD employee with experience in anti-doping. When his resignation happened, there was already a knowledge accumulated by the other employees of the agency; however, no one had worked in this field before. Other adjustments were made: in this 2017-2018 period, two secretaries of the national agency were promoted to secretaries of the SNEAR (National High Performance Sports Secretariat), and the ABCD had appointments of people close to sports federations.

The ties of national anti-doping agencies with private companies are allowed by international norms, since, according to the latter, the agency is responsible for organizing the system and planning the controls. Carrying out controls can thus be a task performed by private contractors. Mauricio's defense arguments were in that direction. However, it is not considered ethical for a public entity to hire and pay with public funds for services provided by a company owned by their own family. In this sense, the ties of the ABCD with this private company resulted in the fall of an official and the distancing of the national agency from private institutions. This isolated case of connection ended up encouraging anti-doping controls to be carried out by officers from the ABCD itself (or from the CBF, as we will see later), keeping ties of interdependence with the State and, to a certain extent, being more autonomous in relation to private companies.

#### *The ABCD's connections with the federations: ABCD-CBF rearrangement*

The Brazilian anti-doping configuration is also formed by sports entities, especially represented by federations of specific modalities. As stated, the world anti-doping system claims the "independence" of national government agencies and sports institutions. In this topic, however, we present the links and ties built between the ABCD and the CBF to, in a process of harmonization, carry out controls in football.

Journalist Juca Kfourri, in his column in Folha de São Paulo<sup>13</sup> — entitled "Doping, in Brazil, is allowed. What is not allowed is finding out about doping" —, when addressing the documentary by the German network ARD<sup>14</sup> about doping in Brazil, stated that the "ABCD never had an easy life among national sports club managers, averse to surprise tests, an international practice". He bases his argument on three actors: the complaints of the COB, whose director said that the Brazilian agency tested too much; the CBF, which did not conduct out-of-competition controls; and the presence of sports managers linked to the federations, within anti-doping. Next, the connections with this conflict between the ABCD and the CBF are reported, and it is shown how it was more or less stabilized through an agreement signed between them.

A news story in the newspaper O Globo<sup>15</sup>, of February 2016, also published on the website of the national authority, stated that "the ABCD and the CBF are in an arm wrestling match". The national agency started testing in 2015; however, the CBF had already consolidated, a long time ago, its National Doping Control Committee, which had exclusive right over the tests performed in football athletes in national competitions and did not accept that the ABCD carried out the tests in this modality, as it wanted to keep these controls for itself. The ABCD's secretary stated in the news that the Brazilian agency will be the only "testing authority in the country", and that this complied with WADA's standards. He also criticized that, with the CBF, only basic substances could be detected, that there were no surprise tests, that most state championships did not carry out tests, and that the tests accumulated to be sent to the laboratory, which violated WADA's rules, since WADA's regulations establish that the samples must be sent to an accredited laboratory as soon as

possible after collection and, thus, not accumulate.

Ronaldo Deschamps, who was already opposed to the first ABCD administration, argued in the news that the football federation did not receive public money and, for this reason, would not need to submit itself to the federal agency. This argument that football does not receive public money is much debated because, despite the fact that there is no direct transfer of money apparently, there are indirect transfers in the form of sponsorship by state companies, tax exemptions, easier financing conditions, among others. Furthermore, he stated that control over testing is an important aspect for the CBF's autonomy. The actor of the CBF's Doping Control Committee, Roberto Sorento, argued that he was the authority appointed by FIFA (International Football Federation), and that only it could take this authority away from him.

Provisional Measure 718/2016 and Decree 8.692/2016, enacted on April 16, 2016, consolidated the ABCD as the only testing institution for the country. Twelve days later, an Anti-Doping Control Symposium was held at the CBF headquarters, and the news published on the same day on the entity's website said "ABCD, CBF and FIFA together in anti-doping control". At the time, the ABCD's secretary had the role of Minister of Sports — since the minister at that time had resigned from the position. Laws that legitimated the Brazilian authority had been enacted. The CBF's and the ABCD's discourses described a "fair sport", an "athlete who plays fair" and "who does not seek tricks", "fair play". Roberto Sorento claimed that that was a very important day and highlighted the fact that the 50 doctors who worked as DCOs for the CBF had received a training course from the ABCD and could continue working in anti-doping control, but now under the coordination of the national agency.

The ABCD announced<sup>17</sup> on its website, on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, that the 2016 Brazilian Football Championship would have out-of-competition anti-doping control — a measure of the agreement to transfer the professional football doping control testing authority from the CBF to the ABCD. In-competition controls, however, would continue to be carried out by the football federation — an exception within Brazilian sports agreed upon between the institutions. The ABCD has since been the testing authority in football, both in-competition and out-of-competition tests; however, in in-competition tests, the collection and payment of controls are assigned by the ABCD to the CBF. A CBF official explains who carries out in-competition controls in Brazilian football.

I'm no longer part of this doping control company, which today [July 2017] is the doping control company hired by the CBF. It solely and exclusively performs the collection. So we have an [anti] doping system that has a contractor, named Antidoping Brasil, and the company simply and exclusively puts doctors and DCOs in football matches. [...] The company has 400 DCOs. [...] The state championships are handled by the same company. [...] We have a single doping administration in football, which is my administration. The contractor is Antidoping Brasil because it showed me all FIFA-certified, ABCD-certified DCOs, therefore, to WADA. So it has double certification. (Interview with Roberto Sorento)

A cooperation agreement between the ABCD and the CBF began to be applied. Therefore, as of May 2017, the national agency was given testing authority for all controls in football. In exchange, the control officers who would carry out the tests would be the same as those of the CBF's Committee, since they would have taken an ABCD-certified refresher course, and thus would work through the NADO. Some out-of-competition tests thus began to be applied to Brazilian football athletes. Wurtz explains in detail how this agreement was built between the two institutions.

I built the agreement with the CBF. [...] I signed an agreement with President Marco Polo in late March 2016 or so. [...] The boss, Jorge Pagura [...] and Marco Polo, I worked for him, I was his director at São Paulo Federation. So, I built it over months

with Pagura, then with Marco Polo and with the CBF's legal department. [...] WADA said to me: "It's rare in world football what you've achieved here". [...] And we had a deal: a construction that we studied a lot [...] Doping control in football has enormous weaknesses when it comes to the international standard, but it is within the FIFA model in a way. And the government has enormous weaknesses and didn't even have the strength to carry out a doping control as it should be in football, for the magnitude of football, which is huge in Brazil. Moneywise, peoplewise, everything. So we had to look at it like this: I have the A series, B series, C series, D series, Brazil Cup, [...] women's football, and then I spread across 27 units, the state federations, where I have the big ones like São Paulo, where there are four divisions, under-19, under, under, under, I have the medium and the small ones. [...] We signed it like this: from that moment on, the CBF passed on to the ABCD the testing authority. It was irregular by law, the law established that the only testing authority in the country was NADO, the ABCD. [...] The ABCD assigned the collection authority to the CBF in in-competition tests. So, the CBF could hire Sorento's or anyone else's company, anyone to perform the collections, in accordance with the determinations of the international rule, which would be that of the ABCD. But the collection authority in the matches would be the CBF's. Being the testing authority, the ABCD would be the one to decide on what the analyses would be. Lab analysis results would come to the ABCD, which would be the only party authorized to receive it because it's the testing authority. Then, the laboratory should communicate with ADAMS [Anti-Doping Administration and Management System] and communicate with the ABCD. The notification management for sample B, etc., would be conducted by the ABCD. What the ABCD also conceded to the CBF for usage, customs and tradition [...] The CBF would be notified by the ABCD and it would notify the club instead of the ABCD. I agreed to keep the ways and customs of the football world for as long as this existed. The ABCD would communicate with the CBF, and the CBF would communicate with the club. I agreed that it would be like that, I was in. And we established that in the cases of out-of-competition controls, which would become normal, the ABCD would be responsible for testing and collecting. And it would pay too. We built it like this because the test in the competition goes to the club's account, the out-of-competition test is an autonomous decision by the ABCD and it would have an impact on the club's budget, if I decided to do it all the time, it would triple the club's expenses and I couldn't do that. If I want to have this control, I put it in my budget. This is the signed agreement in force [...]. Marco Polo trusts me a lot, and I trust him. Pagura was cool about it too. So he agreed, instead of fighting you do something together. We built a really nice model, in which you keep your independence, but put it under the umbrella of the WADA world. ADAMS, before this agreement, everything was corroborated, they never used ADAMS. They would now be in ADAMS [...] this agreement was very well received by WADA. (Interview with João Pedro Wurtz)

The agreement built between the two institutions led to the appearance of previous associations between this character and CBF officials, which was not visible up until then. And it made it possible for the national agency to be the testing authority in all controls in Brazilian football, which was stated in the law but not enforced. For this to happen, the agreement did not change almost anything in what the CBF's anti-doping committee did: it continued to carry out in-competition controls with its DCOs and playing the role of communicating adverse results to the club and the athlete, instead of NADO doing it.

TUE is the Therapeutic Use Exemption that NADO may grant in case of medical necessity for an athlete to take a medication that contains a prohibited substance. The ABCD has a medical committee that analyzes TUE requests made by athletes. The TUE analyses conducted by the Brazilian agency, in their turn, caused some instability, as the ABCD and the CBF had different interpretations about when to notify the athlete with an adverse result. Finally, the CBF's actions remained virtually stable, and the agreement enabled changes for the ABCD, which proposed itself to carry out (and pay for) and manage out-of-competition controls.

A CBF official explained how the first out-of-competition controls in Brazilian football

worked. According to him, logistical issues were important, and the CBF acted together on these controls — despite the ABCD having, through the agreement, autonomy to carry out them alone. The idea of controls to be planned in conjunction with the sports federation was a policy created by the second ABCD administration. A less careful analysis of this partnership between the institutions for out-of-competition controls could eliminate the surprise effect of controls, since the connection between federation and club can cause sensitive information to be used by clubs and athletes. Here is the statement by the CBF's official.

The club, if it's A series. [...] The ABCD calls me and then we have a deal: "Look, this week we're going to work on the State of São Paulo. So we are thinking about going to Corinthians, Palmeiras, Santos... this week". Intelligence is important, but logistics is something that we have to think about. For example, two weeks ago there was a break in the CBF championships, as it was the week of the South American championships. So, by chance, Palmeiras was in São Paulo, São Paulo was in the capital too, Corinthians and Santos. So [...] the DCOs of this company representing the CBF and the ABCD's DCOs come up with a task force and approach the club, it's a surprise really. [...] The ABCD is aligned with us now. They do it in a professional way. It's a good moment for the ABCD. (Interview with Roberto Sorento)

Football has anti-doping control specificities that make it different from other sports — so much so that the regulation that the CBF claims to follow is FIFA's regulation, not WADA's. The national agency sought with this agreement and, with the training of the CBF's control officers, a way to harmonize procedures. CBF managers, in their turn, claim that they report to their international federation, not to the world agency. A football manager, when pointing out differences between FIFA's and WADA's anti-doping regulations, stated that, for instance, "FIFA does not allow you to perform a doping test during a player's vacation. (...) Eventually, we'll have to understand that football is different from other sports."

The notion of harmonization is a native term in sports anti-doping that is used by various WADA documents to refer to the process of globalization of norms, standards and rules. Studying the world anti-doping institution, Demeslay<sup>9</sup> considered that harmonization goes back to the idea of two moments, an initial state of regulations prior to a political interest in putting an end to a diversity of texts and practices. Making the ball roll from one to another is about considering harmonization within a broader process that comprehends the various calls for harmonization, the progressive development of different regulations, the events at the origin of a focus on this mission, the decision-making processes that induce its action, the evolution of regulations, the difficulties posed to its application, etc. In these cases, this process is marked by a plurality of stages that confront games of actors in opposition and/or cooperation over time and in which the analysis constitutes the interest.

Harmonization processes rarely take place without dispute; on the contrary, they are affected through discussions, negotiations and agreements, coordination, controversies, and closure of debates. Thus, it can be seen that the need for the ABCD to act as the only national authority, including in football, led to a collaborative relationship built between the ABCD and the CBF. In short, anti-doping harmonization processes in Brazil showed that the ABCD's discourse of independence in relation to sports federations is not empirically sustained. On the contrary, the data and analyses point to an interdependent relationship that gives each entity a relative autonomy concerning anti-doping norms, standards and rules.

Certainly, one of the factors that made the CBF to participate in the controls and, thus, stay in this relationship of mutual interest, was its financial capacity. In 2016, the CBF carried out around five thousand controls a year in the country, which costed more than five million reais — and it is the clubs that pay for them. The ABCD would not be able to afford these extra controls.

The stability of the CBF's actions was disrupted by the evaluation of the use of TUEs,

under the responsibility of the ABCD in 2017, and which generated criticism from football managers, who understood that the results management conducted by the ABCD should consider what the substance found was, see the athlete's medical history, in short, perform "a sort of medical expertise". The CBF criticized the actions of the ABCD, which sent adverse results without TUE directly to the prosecution and the Court for trial and punishment.

This criticism by the CBF seems to be associated with the accusations of the documentary produced by the German network ARD<sup>18</sup>, which questioned the number of adverse results in football athletes for corticosteroids and judged that the Court's sentences for these cases were low, because the arguments of contamination were being considered. For the football federation, results management should take into account the use of corticosteroids and diuretics based on a medical expertise conducted by the CBF itself. The associations that the CBF showed in this case suggest a relativization of the adverse result due to corticosteroids. The documentary, in its turn, denounced manipulation in pharmacies, the contamination argument, and the reduction of the sentence in the Court when this argument is used. Furthermore, it showed some estrangement that seems to confront the idea of medical expertise without prior TUE proposed by the CBF. All these associations revealed by the ABCD-CBF agreement thus made it possible to question doping control in Brazilian football.

The ABCD's associations with the CBF allowed harmonizing anti-doping actions in the country. This arrangement kept certain specificities for football related to financial issues – "in accordance with usage, customs and tradition", as Wurtz stated – and to the magnitude of football, which maintained the stability of socio-technical arrangements. The instabilities occurred as a result of the CBF's criticisms of results management, which changed the associations and allowed for the visualization of the football federation's interests.

## **Conclusions**

We started this article asking: How can the accusations and criticisms in the Brazilian anti-doping struggle be read as a translation of a classic discourse of the world anti-doping community, that of independence? More succinctly, what we want to know is whether the oftentimes uttered discourse of the independence of sports agencies, in the case of this study, the ABCD, "makes sense".

With these doubts, we presented on the pages that followed substantial empirical material that would, in our perception, be able to show how the configurational agents (agency, government, private companies, and sports federations) have, among them, a relationship of simultaneity or, from the Eliasian theoretical viewpoint, a relationship of interdependence. The elements are constituted from and in relation to the others. One would not exist without the other.

From this perspective, we are drawn to the conclusion that the term "independence" is a superficial discourse that cannot be sustained from the point of view of a theoretical and empirical-analytical discussion. Thus, what is perceived is that the existence of the agency is linked to an unstable configuration that is done and undone in order to maintain the balance of tensions.

The harmonization processes used by WADA for the globalization of anti-doping, but employed in this study as a way of understanding the ties between the national agency and the CBF, ended up ratifying the interdependence between the agents of the configuration.

Finally, it is important to stress that a reflection is needed with a view to providing an understanding of the field of sports institutions, to reflecting on these constructions of discourses that distance themselves from empirical analysis and in which the intentions are ethically questionable. There is no independence of elements. From the empirical perspective of this text and from the theoretical construction arising from these reflections, what is said to

be independent is, in fact, surrounded by other elements that not only give it meaning to exist, but also have influencing it a series of interests and power relations.

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