
Building a motor habitus: Physical education in the Portuguese *Estado Novo*

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Abstract

The physical education model implemented by the Portuguese *Estado Novo* regime (1933–74), a specific adaptation of European models of physical education, aimed to train the ‘body’ and oversee the movements of athletes and students. This model intended to impose, through the action of state institutions, a practice that led to the creation of what is referred to in this article as an official motor habitus. Founded on an ideological basis, this state-controlled ideal type of bodily performance aspired ultimately to regulate all social phenomena that influence the production of sporting movements. Based on the works of the most relevant theoreticians of the Portuguese physical education model in this period, this article will analyse the ideological conception of an orthodox model of physical education that was a particular product of ‘state reasoning’.

Keywords

body, fascism, habitus, physical education, Portugal

Introduction

This article draws on Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to look at the notion of physical education designed by the *Estado Novo*, the regime led by António Oliveira Salazar which, founded in 1933 on an authoritarian and corporative conception of the state that was closely shaped from the mould of Italian fascism, ruled Portugal for more than four decades. The official model of physical education developed from the 1930s by the *Estado Novo* experts in accordance with the main ideological principles of the regime was based on the advances of the science of physical education. Science was the means that supported the controlled embodiment of an ideological vision of the world. Basic cell of a totalitarian project of society, the body produced socially meaningful movements that had to be carefully predetermined.

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This article will look at the way this process of embodiment was idealized by the specialists who during the 1930s developed a Portuguese model of physical practices. These men not only left their thoughts in several publications, but also deeply influenced the legislation that framed the practice of sports and physical education. Moreover, they took up leading positions within the institutional network created by the *Estado Novo* to apply this model of physical education. These institutions, responsible for implementing the government's official physical education policies, were part of a broader complex of state organizations which worked to achieve the project of creating a 'fascist new man' under Salazar's rule (Rosas, 2001: 1031). The effectiveness of this broader model of domination, and the ways in which physical education was or not an active agent in pursuing it, will not be dealt with here.

Physical education was an important dimension of the educational system promoted by the *Estado Novo*.¹ The regime adapted and developed, in its own way, the concepts that, from the mid-19th century on, gave physical education a primary role in 'the regeneration of the race'. The institutionalization of physical education in Europe, along with the growth of the nation-state, brought about several models of practice prompted by pedagogic, pre-military and hygienic concerns. Some of these models became dominant, as was the case of Germany's Turnen and Swedish gymnastics or Ling's method (Gutmann, 1994; Pfister, 2003; Weber, 1971). The science of physical education created a corpus of modern methods that aimed to rationalize body movements. This specific line of rationalization, which created its own formal language, as Max Weber has exemplified for the case of modern music (1995), reflected major social changes and developed distinct models that engaged differently with society.

In Portugal, the institutionalization of physical education was a slow and convoluted process (Crespo, 1977). The intentions behind government policies were blocked by the lack of infrastructural power of the state, to use Michael Mann's term (Mann, 1993). This was rather evident in the weaknesses shown by the education system.

During the 1930s, the regime devised a model of physical exercises designed to fight state inefficiency in this specific area that was to be put in place by several complementary institutions. Ling's method, the most commonly used in Portuguese physical education (Hasse, 1999), was adapted to the regime's ideological basis. Created by the *Estado Novo* in 1935, the *Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho* (FNAT, National Foundation for Joy in Work), was the first institution which, among its wider objectives, dealt with the Portuguese's physical practices. Inspired by its German and Italian counterparts, the Italian Opera Nazionale Doppolavoro (1925) and the German Kraft Durch Freude (1933), it was the official body responsible for dealing with the leisure time and organizing physical exercises for the Portuguese workers. The Italian Fascist and German National Socialist experiences also influenced the establishment of the *Mocidade Portuguesa* (Portuguese Youth) in 1936, a pre-military organization compulsory for all children in school. Its training methods were linked to the logic behind the official school curricula, especially after the 1936 educational reform imposed an ultra-nationalistic pattern of education.

Founded in 1940, the *Instituto Nacional de Educação Física* (INEF, National Institute of Physical Education) became a training centre, similar to the civil and military specialized schools founded in several European countries, such as Joinville Le-Point, Gand's University Higher Institute of Physical Education and Stockholm's Royal Central

Gymnastic Institute. The men who established the theoretical and practical bases of the Portuguese model of physical education were trained in these foreign schools. Among this group, mostly composed by militaries, lieutenant Celestino Marques Pereira and captain António Leal de Oliveira stand out as the great theorists of the Portuguese model of physical practices.²

This institutional framework was completed with the creation of an official structure that coordinated and supervised all sports activities organized outside state control. The *Direcção Geral de Educação Física Saúde e Desporto Escolar* (DGEFSDE, General Office of Physical Education, Health and School Sports) became responsible for the control of sports associations and regulation of public sports competitions, such as football tournaments. Control over sports associations was one dimension of a wider plan that sought to regulate the associative movement in Portugal (Melo, 2001). During the *Estado Novo*, football matches were among the few mass manifestation events taking place in Portugal. The national football league was created in 1934 and definitively institutionalized in 1938. When it came to the body's physical education, football was seen as an inadequate exercise, as stated in legislation, in several sports books and in the work of physical education theorists close to the regime. In 1932, the decree³ that created, within the *Ministério da Instrução* (Ministry of Instruction), the *Direcção dos Serviços de Educação Física* (Direction of Physical Education Services) considered sports games as the 'antithesis of all education' and a means to 'physical deformation' and 'moral perversion'. The high-school physical education regulation, approved in 1932,⁴ forbade 'Anglo-Saxon sports and athletic games, and all competitions in general, namely football matches, as their educational role were null and their dangers obvious'. Furthermore, football's professionalizing tendency, which stimulated processes of social mobility, challenged an official corporative framework that was based in the principle that class relations should remain stable.⁵

The official model of physical practices under the *Estado Novo* and the creation of an official motor habitus

The expression 'motor habitus' can be briefly defined as the result of a social and historical process of embodiment that delineates the existence of corporeal dispositions. In this article, the expression refers to the body dispositions that support sports' performances,⁶ a direct adaption of Pierre Bourdieu's definition of habitus. In the chapter 'Bodily Knowledge' of his *Pascalian Meditations* (2000: 129–63), Bourdieu summed up the role of the body in his theory and defined the concept of habitus in the following manner:

... social agents are endowed with *habitus*, inscribed in their bodies by past experiences. These systems of schemes of perception, appreciation and action enable them to perform acts of practical knowledge, based on the identification and recognition of conditional conventional stimuli to which they are predisposed to react; and, without any explicit definition of ends or rational calculation of means, to generate appropriate and endlessly renewed strategies, but within the limits of the structural constraints of which they are the product and which define them. (2000: 138)

By 'motor habitus' we mean employing the individual habitus in devices and motor schemes that become explicit during a sports performance. The individual's behaviour under this pattern expresses a habitus (a motor habitus) that arises out of the internalization of intrinsic conventions which are developed and modified through movements. Each motor habitus, depending on the context of performance, manages a set of available movements, which we can term as 'motor repertoire'. The motor habitus, following Bourdieu's definition of habitus, and against deterministic visions of the concept, is a producer of strategies that take place within a space of social and historical possibilities.

The concept of motor habitus follows Bourdieu's more general definition of 'body *hexis*', described in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* as 'political mythology realized, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of feeling and thinking' (1977: 93–4). In *Distinction*, his major work on taste, he described body *hexis* as 'a basic dimension of the sense of social orientation, (. . .) a practical way of experiencing and expressing one's own sense of social value' (1998: 474). Bourdieu's work inspired other authors in the development of concepts with a deep resemblance to 'motor habitus'. Such is the case of Michael Jackson's 'body praxis' (1983: 328), as well as Loic Wacquant's 'practical schemata' (2004: 104). Brazilian anthropologist Sérgio Leite Lopes used the expression 'bodily habitus' in the context of a research on the origins of the 'Brazilian game style' (1997: 74). Paul Connerton's (1989) analysis of the mechanisms of social memory, in turn, led him to use the concept 'bodily practices', usually within institutional and ceremonial contexts.

Because the concept of motor habitus is a situated expression, in contexts of sports performances, of a more general body *hexis*, it is different from concepts such as those mentioned above. This concreteness partly derives from a central debate in the science of physical education field: how to understand the relation between body movements and the human will. These discussions were mainly focused on the anatomic and physiological potential of the body and therefore in its locomotive expression. The expression 'motor habitus' is adapted to the specific realm of the historical inquiry developed in this article. However, using this expression in the study of social and historically situated sports performances, within more or less institutionalized contexts, demands the prosecution of objectives that go well beyond the ones proclaimed here. Such objectives would require methodological tools that would enable us to approach the actual practices. This study of the Portuguese model of physical practices as it was conceived during the *Estado Novo* aims only to acknowledge the logic that was behind an attempt to impose the norm of a political system upon bodies, through an idealized scheme of socialization. In this article we will thus not explore the actual physical practices of the Portuguese during that period.

The term 'official motor habitus' will be used to characterize the final aim of the process of bodily education proclaimed by the *Estado Novo*'s institutionalized physical education model. The official model of physical practices of this regime aspired to create a motor habitus that expressed a fascist Utopia. Through education, physical movements would become a particular manifestation of society. This educated body would in turn become a body capable of educating others, a transmitter of meanings, norms and values. But this orthodoxy of movement, a metaphor for an idealized life, also drew the line between correct and incorrect gestures: through the classification of sporting practices,

heterodox elements, considered scientifically and ideologically impure, would be set apart from orthodox elements.

The reflections in the next sections will be based on the works of the leading theoreticians and promoters of this official model of physical practices. We will try to show how the translation of an ideological vision of society to a bodily practice through the scientific principles of the blooming science of physical education was conceptualized, under the influence of foreign models, such as the Ling method.

Physical practices as ideological instruments

In 1934, at the *União Nacional* congress, the regime's party, Leal de Oliveira explained that social evolution had taken Man out of his 'natural milieu', where he produced 'natural movements', and thrown him into the insalubrious city, dominated by machine and industrial labour, repetitive and bureaucratic (Leal de Oliveira, 1935: 297). In his view, in the framework of a new labour organization and new class relations, the city produced unilateral movements, wrong and degenerative postures, incorrect gestures. Returning to the utopian universe that reflected a pastoral image of the country was, however, not possible. Modern techniques were therefore deemed necessary to eliminate the problems of 'modern life'. Physical education, a scientific and rational discipline, contributed to the return of 'corporeal naturalness' and regulated the individual's adjustment to his new social milieu (Leal de Oliveira, 1935: 299). On the basis of the conjectures of Ling's Swedish model, these principles were adapted to fit the educational practice of Salazar's regime. As an educational tool, physical education was not, in this sense, a pure technique, meant for pleasure or recreation. Carneiro Pacheco, the National Education minister responsible for the 1936 Reform, denounced the 'reason' that 'denies the existence of any transcendent being not totally subjected to it, so that this reason could analyse him completely and categorize him scientifically' (Pacheco, 1941: 257–8). This materialism of technique would destroy, in the minister's words, 'the vital interdependence and intimate bonds that force us to live in a social community' (pp. 257–8). To endow modern life with will and feeling meant to subject technique to the values espoused by the regime. This political conception shaped the work of the main physical education theorists associated with the *Estado Novo*.

According to the latter, physical education science measured and systematized movement on the basis of knowledge about mechanical and physiological principles. Science had proven that movement was initiated in a nervous impulse that triggered the motor gesture. The political and ideological concern of these theorists was how to convey the values that would stimulate the brain's will to act. Psychology, a science dealing with motivational issues, would offer the technical basis that could confer a moral structure to the teaching of movement. The emotions that inspire movement, according to Leal de Oliveira, should be the result of the 'existence of morality, religion, education and civilization' (1940: 131). As technique at the service of a social project, physical exercises should be:

executed according to the established norms and intentions, so that, in agreement with the other means of moral and intellectual education, they could contribute to its improvement and for it to be, as much as possible, able to fulfil its purposes. (Leal de Oliveira, 1940: 132)

For Celestino Marques Pereira, an ideological education was also materialized 'through corporeal manifestations'. Such an education, reflecting the regime's ethics, should 'impose itself upon the individual's personality as a sum of sacred duties' (1944: 136). This Portuguese model of physical exercise was sustained by moral principles that synthesized Christian thought, Latin historical heritage and the modern corporative ideas. In fact, both António Leal de Oliveira and Celestino Marques Pereira studied in Catholic universities in Belgium, and their worldview was influenced by the Catholic sports movement based mostly in Spain, Italy, France and Belgium.⁷

Priest Manuel Rocha, director of the *Serviços de Acção Moral da Mocidade Portuguesa* (Portuguese Youth's Moral Action Services), summed up the role of a scientific coalition that worked for the fulfilment of the state's ambitions. INEF, the institution where the specialized knowledge promoted by the regime's theorists was to be developed, should instruct anatomy, which 'teaches on the structure of the human body', physiology, which 'reveals the work of the different organs', 'biometrics, biotipology, hygiene, but, above all, the moral function that all these scientific areas have within the practice of physical education'. Applied psychology and pedagogy, as well as general psychology, the science that studies motivational mechanisms, should deal with the physiological study of life guided by a 'Christian national thought' and the 'corporative formation' (1941: 263).

However, this particular model still lacked a theoretical development to sustain its application. Leal de Oliveira pondered this problem. Except for moments when it was triggered by an external power, movement depended on an inner impulse, on 'a given cellular activity that creates energy, perceptible in the form of heat, electricity and the so-called active movements' (1941a: 275–6). State-sponsored physical education aimed to control this impulse. The scientific explanation acknowledged the stimulating effect of emotions such as 'joy, enthusiasm, patriotism, self-esteem, feelings of honour, hope and faith'. Religious feelings, for instance, brought about a 'glandular superactivity', namely a greater secretion of adrenalin and production of glucose, which then raised the muscular masses' energy potential' (Leal de Oliveira, 1941a: 281). The origin of inner impulses behind most of the movements produced by individuals in their daily lives was a result of responses to their lives' contingencies. In a pre-modern context, this physical activity, although instinctive, was part of a natural order. In the artificial environment of an industrialized city, the socializing framework sustaining these impulses was artificial. Modern physical education, in its social regulating role at the service of the state, needed to control such 'impure' movements. According to Leal de Oliveira, the latter were 'inherited and involuntary motor techniques', 'innate reflex movements', which had to be adapted to the moral principles of a political, ideological and religious order (1941a: 282).

For this rationalization process to be effective, body movements would have to be predetermined, in view of the 'intellectual and eventually moral meaning of a conscious goal in the actions undertaken that can be learned' (Leal de Oliveira, 1941a: 284). For this author, the concept of 'ideo-motor' stood for predetermined movements: 'Movements derived directly out of an idea are called ideo-motor movements, an idea that is integrated in an instinctive tendency that, in turn, mobilizes and articulates reflex actions' (1941a: 284). Every deliberate movement was ideo-motor. Its execution was 'conditioned by a power or personal will, which provides reflexive conscience along with the faculty to execute the movement or not, and in a specific way' (1941a: 285). The principles of body

movement, according to this concept, had an ideal nature. Through a socialization process, state-regulated education would be responsible for the generalization of this 'idea'. Bodies whose movements did not correspond to a predetermined impulse, especially the ones influenced by life in the modern city, were considered potentially harmful. The Utopia behind this total model would be achieved through the elimination of the social and cultural basis behind 'non-educated impulses', responsible for heterodox and impure gestures (1941a: 283). Once this goal was reached, bodies would accomplish, without any pedagogic interference, the naturalization of a new order.

Creating a motor habitus

In this educational model, movement would be used to transform corporeal action into an automated routine (Leal de Oliveira, 1941a). The project of creating a motor habitus depended on the incorporation of 'conditioned or acquired reflexes', ideo-motor and voluntary movements that became automatic, like 'instinctive motor techniques' (1941a: 287). In spite of this mechanical routine, one would still be conscious of an action's moral principles. Indeed, rather than a robot, the goal of this technique was to create a Man aware of the connection between his movements and the moral and pedagogic structure behind them. The movements considered adequate to teach this motor habitus were those of the Swedish gymnastics method (Leal de Oliveira, 1941b: 382). Segmented movements were fundamental (suspension, support, balancing, walking, running, rising and transporting movements, as well as throwing and jumping). Cadenced movements, quite common in gymnastics, 'facilitated collective work because rhythm represented an order, a natural discipline conducive to the harmony and concordance of partial efforts and to their union' (1941b: 382). The idea of cadenced rhythm, of ordering, was common to numerous educational practices during the *Estado Novo*, namely those that involved the use of music, such as the many physical exercises promoted by the *Mocidade Portuguesa* performed to the sound of marches (Deniz, 2005). Choral chanting, on the other hand, as a metaphor of society, was considered an instrument of socialization.

A gesture's correctness, according to these modern perspectives, was evaluated by its usefulness, in turn defined by an effective relation between effort and result. Useful movements were in harmony with Man and the human community, whereas other movements were violent and harmful to both (Leal de Oliveira, 1941b). Natural exercises such as 'walking, running, climbing, balancing, throwing, rising, carrying, swimming' were, by definition, useful and correct, 'when executed in a manner that preceded any changes brought about by civilization' (1941b: 395).

Symmetry was the basic feature of the exercises prescribed by this gymnastics method. A synonym of order and discipline, symmetry allowed all sorts of political and social metaphors. It was also a basic condition towards the creation of a motor habitus. On the contrary, according to Leal de Oliveira asymmetrical exercises could hardly become a habit because they 'require the dissociation of symmetrical coordinations fixed by habit. Human attention has to divide itself between the two homologous parts of the body, through which corresponding impulses and ideas immediately follow in the mind' (1941b: 398). In his view, the dissociation of attention, the possibility of choice and the confusion between ideas were perverse qualities and led to an ill-defined motor habitus.

This technical conception of asymmetrical exercises must be understood as one of the features of a pedagogical model that strove to create a politically minded educated body. Leal de Oliveira pointed out that a movement's aesthetics rested upon its usefulness, adding that 'rectilinear movements', typical of gymnastics, 'expressed calm and determination' whereas 'curvilinear movements', present, for instance, in sports such as football, reflected 'indecisiveness' (1941b: 400).

During the *Estado Novo*, the organization of sports exercises in the *Mocidade Portuguesa*, school syllabuses as well as in guidelines regulating sports competitions therefore reflected an attempt to impose an orthodoxy of movement sustained by gymnastics' moralizing regime. Once a motor *habitus* had been created, the body would be prepared to deal with more heterodox physical practices. Gymnastics' symmetrical and ordained gestures, and the carrying out of coordinated collective rituals, contributed towards the incorporation of an idealized social behaviour.

The laboratories of orthodox movements

A specific training space was necessary for the proper teaching of this orthodoxy of movement. The modern gymnasium, which since the late nineteenth-century had gradually become more common in Europe, represented the space where relations between teacher and student could be regulated through a set of norms and hierarchies. It was a closed domain, measured and organized according to the intersection of straight lines. By taking individuals out of their social environment, this domain became a laboratory of bodies and ways of being and acting, argued Leal de Oliveira (1942). The socializing function of this kind of total institution (Goffman, 1968), inspired by the Greek gymnasium, was adapted to modern times. Furthermore, the gymnasium also had normative functions. According to the first commissioner of the *Mocidade Portuguesa*, Francisco Nobre Guedes, inspired by Pierre de Coubertin's ideas, 'You must protect the gymnasium from the twin-danger represented by the proximity of school and sports society. Both, should they be able to enter it, will lead it astray from its objective and neutralize its main action' (1947: 17–18).

Disciplinary control over the training space where bodies experience different regimes of movement was one of the concerns of the regime's physical education theorists. Movements produced in non-regulated spatial contexts, such as sports associations, football grounds and school playgrounds, had a negative impact on the teaching of symmetry. In gymnastics classes, the physical education teacher oversaw order by positioning himself so as to be able to 'control all the class and watch every individual student' (Leal de Oliveira, 1940: 176–7). School teachers were also to take part in this control of space by monitoring breaks between classes, namely the playground, to 'avoid excesses and deviations in children's spontaneous activity', especially in the course of 'very dynamic games' (1940: 180). More debatable from an educational viewpoint were the movements executed in spaces such as football fields, where players competed, in a more or less institutionalized way, before an audience. The football field had proven to be an unregulated space, not easily controlled by the state. Moreover, the sport's federations, despite DGEFDSE's efforts, could not impose respect for hierarchy, namely during the occurrence of the games. In the specific context of the British public school system, the use of sports

games as an educational instrument led to the isolation of the game's practice areas from surrounding society. According to John Hargreaves (1986), the public school became a modern social technology that socialized and normalized upper-class children. In this normative environment, elitist individualism stood side by side with fairness and impartiality. Fair-play was promoted through an amateur ethos that rose above the 'ordinary' and was far removed from the 'common' world.

Besides praising the gymnasium's closed space, Portuguese theorists encouraged outdoor exercise. Walks in the countryside, quite common among events promoted by the *Mocidade Portuguesa*, were seen as character-building. The countryside, a natural element uncorrupted by modernity, allowed students to reach their idealized origins. It also promoted the teaching of solidarity, in a context evoking the scouting spirit, within the hierarchic relations that defined a pre-military institution.

The teaching of movements in these controlled domains of socialization established a set of classifications that contributed to the method's efficiency. The careful tailoring of each movement in terms of age and sex was one of the basic principles of the Ling method. Educative games, collected from the Portuguese tradition and turned into an instrument of nationalization, were taught to the younger ages when gymnastics exercises were being introduced. The sexual division of physical exercises became, in itself, an expression of the regime's conception of the role women would play in society. The creation of the *Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina* (Feminine Portuguese Youth), in 1937, institutionalized a sexual separation and distinction between the types of exercises adequate for each sex (Brasão, 1999; Pimentel, 2001). The same categorizations were present in school syllabuses. Both in gymnasiums and outdoors, classes for men and women were separated. In his proposition to organize physical education instruction, presented at the *União Nacional* congress in 1934, Leal de Oliveira argued that this activity prepared 'man for every social need and especially that of national defence', providing him with 'opportunities to assert a virile personality in displays of disciplined energy, loyal competition and the sublimation of fighting instincts' (1935: 312). Conversely, physical discipline led women 'to a fertile family life' (1935: 312). According to the legislative proposal that led to INEF's creation, women needed to be:

protected from the great muscular and masculinising efforts of athletics, a feminine aberration that went against this sex's sensitiveness and her natural function as a future mother and educator. On account of this very sacred mission, each woman should take care of her physical improvement, as a condition leading to health and joy, through gymnastics exercises with an adequate technique. In terms of feminine grace, no disguise or beauty product can be a substitute for this.⁸

School syllabuses marked this distinction between the woman, seen both as mother and educator, whose physical activities expressed control over the domestic realm, and the athletic man, ready to defend the nation.

Under this orthodoxy of movements, students were also to be classified through biotypological techniques. Thanks to the ability to categorize students according to a specific biotype, the kinds of movements more appropriate for each individual would be determined, thereby improving physical performances, correcting the bodies, preventing illnesses, and guiding youths in their professional life (Guimarães, 1941). Furthermore,

the development of psychology enabled the use of psychotechnics to evaluate the nature of one's character, as well as one's degree of intelligence, emotional and moral balance. The aim of this method was to define training regimes, to plan the student's physical movements according to his professional aspirations, and to understand his moral and emotional needs.

All in all, these selection and classification techniques would make the pedagogical work done in the gymnasium and outdoors easier. The body sciences' scientific development contributed towards a more specific control of the educational method and the achievement of an advanced degree of regulation.

Sports activities beyond the state: regulating heterodox movements

To simply imagine an orthodox model of physical practices was, however, not enough for the *Estado Novo*. The practical implementation of this model did not depend solely on the actions of state institutions vis-à-vis state-sponsored activities, but also on their ability to regulate sports activities promoted by private associations, to adapt the premises where the latter took place, and to convert them into 'good education' procedures. Physical education theorists close to the regime and to institutions representing state interests opposed popular sports practices organized by private associations. This assertion was based on a generic analysis of modern society according to which the movements produced within the scope of these sports competitions lacked a scientific basis, unlike the Swedish method, and were not practised under any kind of pedagogical or moral control. The moral principles once prevalent in amateur sports matches had been corrupted by their growing popularity. This chaotic city, where football prospered, was described in 1928 by Faria de Vasconcelos, a psychologist and educator, in a text where the purifying properties of the Ling method were praised:

We only need to look at our own life, a zig-zagging life, with agitated curves, very irregular rhythms, a senseless fire of the will and of work, sometimes ablaze, sometimes slumberous, with sudden enthusiasms or despondency, a life, in short, with no vigour, unbalanced, lacking control and discipline. (1928: 7)

For the Portuguese physical education theorists, body movements associated with popular games such as football reflected an urban space that was ill, unpredictable, prone to conflict, hesitant, filled with disordered actions: daily movements executed by individuals who left the cadence of country life for the uncertain city rhythm; individuals who lived in promiscuous houses and attended subversive associations and inns where politics were discussed. A product of a school of vices, outside the scope of state pedagogy, this alternative motor habitus did not fit the project of a respectable citizen, educated by a nationalist school, the Catholic Church and the corporative system. The 'movement praxis' associated with the orthodox model of physical practices contributed towards the creation of a respectable, ordered and not too socially ambitious working class. The motor habitus promoted by the regime should express a respectable working-class way of life. Sports gestures, counterparts of social gestures, possessed a political

and ideological meaning. The normalization of movements by individuals which took part in competitive sports became a crucial stage in this integration project.

Correcting inappropriate movements

The state-driven rationalization of competitive sports gestures also aimed at their compliance with the principles sustaining an orthodoxy of movement. Celestino Marques Pereira (1947) developed several studies where he strove to adapt sports practice to the orthodoxy of Swedish gymnastics, and even though his analysis became increasingly technical, it remained a motor representation of an ideological conception of the world. The structural problem of sports games, according to Marques Pereira, rested in the acknowledgment that the movements they generate have a 'utilitarian purpose', an 'ill-defined' trajectory and are unsymmetrical (1947: 16–17). This utilitarian purpose was connected with its competitive nature. Individual movements, syncretic (and synthetic), were driven by the intent to beat the opponent. Because sports games were interactive, specific gestures could not be predetermined, nor could they become the rational outcome of an ideomotor principle, as defined by Leal de Oliveira. The game's structure relied on immediate experience and empirical knowledge, which meant that its technical progression arose out of an 'experimental basis' (Marques Pereira, 1947: 18). As such, this conception of movement was not driven by pedagogical, hygienist and moral concerns.

These shortcomings could be overcome, in Marques Pereira's opinion, through physical education's harmonious and progressive action on the locomotive system. Minors under the age of 19, barred from competitions, would be subjected to the educational action of a preliminary technical-sporting preparation based on gymnastics, through which they would achieve 'a harmonious corporeal development' (1947: 17). Additionally, an attempt should be made at re-educating the bodies that, up until then, had been subjected to sports practice. This would be done through a resocializing effort promoted by the state within the clubs. Gymnastics practice was therapy applied to sports games. The next step would be to undertake a study to determine the morphology of movements associated with sport, so that gymnastics could intervene in its foundation, impose symmetry upon games and determine the athletes' trajectories (1947). This specific and rationalized training would be offered by a practice named 'sporting gymnastics':

sports technique's preparatory exercises are movements that try to oversee the various positions used in sports and, also, those whose goal is to prepare the actual movements of sports technique. They normally represent the breakdown of movements from each specific sport. (1947: 22–3)

The imposition of a formal rationalization on competitive sports, based on the breakdown of their movements according to gymnastics procedures, created a conception of body movement that was located outside of human interaction. Physical education theorists seemed to ignore the specialization of sports movements produced within competitive fields, as in the notable case of football. The rationalization of football, whose dynamics and degree of complexity varied according to the context and conditions of its practice, rested upon an attempt to control, as much as possible, its elementary features: interaction, intentionality and unpredictability. These elements encompassed the

existence of a particular and relatively autonomous social field (Bourdieu, 2000) which was an expression of a particular line of rationalization of body movements, widely neglected by the science of physical education.

In the field of Portuguese physical education science, the few analyses focused on football applied gymnastics doctrine to the game, namely the notion that every individual movement needed to be predetermined. This was clear in one of the first articles on football published by the INEF Bulletin, in 1951 (Duarte, 1951). The article focused on the kick, a gesture that was analysed as if it were a gymnastics movement, outside the interaction that defines a football game.

Once regulated by an orthodoxy of movement, competitive sports could be converted into educational vehicles. Celestino Marques Pereira's goal was to achieve a prior control of sports movements, as well as to regulate the entire psycho-physiological process preceding the gesture. To achieve this, he argued that psycho-physiology techniques should be employed, namely the principles of conditioned reflexes, when applying the orthodox gymnastics model to competitive sports (1950). Marques Pereira wanted to regulate the game's 'competitive excitement' and the 'human propensity' to fight. The strict moral conduct, which would justify the competition's social function, would be stimulated by a system of material and spiritual rewards and penalties (1950). This competitive socialization, akin to the psychological conditioning mechanism presented in Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange*, would create an inner need, a permanent conscience acting upon will and regulating the central nervous system (1950). The psychological suggestion instilled by this technique achieved the pedagogy of 'good movement' (1950: 99), thereby contributing to the formation of a new 'competitive habitus': 'an organic memory and a second conscience that organized individual behaviour according to a hierarchical scale of moral values presiding to our civilization' (1950: 101). In this pedagogical context, the teacher's role had a psychosomatic nature. His function had been rationalized: it was no longer necessary to have a morally exemplary individual, a transmitter of good deeds and knowledge; the modern pedagogue should dominate modern motivational techniques and psychological conditioning.

This laboratory of bodily education had reached a high degree of complexity. Control over every mental and physical stage associated with a gesture's execution had an obvious totalizing intent, which express a desire to eliminate all traces of disordered movements from the body. Celestino Marques Pereira aspired to control the 'spatial and temporal sum', the gesture's spatial-temporal production conditions, in order to define the functional use of the motor reflex (1954: 41). And yet, the author wanted to go further. If all human movements became determined by science, it would be possible to build a machine capable of simulating human beings:

The pedagogue, the educator and technician, who are directly interested in the problems inherent to the movement's analysis, should not admit that such machines would be able to think, choose and decide. They should only wish that they would turn into a valuable element of cooperation with men, able to take conclusions through facts given to them by men. (1954: 50)

Hence, a scheme of complete control over movement was devised.

Conclusion

The strength that football achieved in Portugal during the rule of the *Estado Novo* gives a fairly good indication about the practical effectiveness of this model. When Benfica won two European Cups in the early 1960s and Portugal reached the semi-finals of the 1966 World Cup, the regime had already realized that the regulation of sports was not only a matter of educating the body through pre-determined physical practices. If turned into a great urban spectacle, football could become a space for propaganda actions and social control, as it would become evident in Portugal during the 1960s.

The project of creating what we termed for the purpose of this article as an 'official motor habitus' had a weak institutional basis of application. As conceived by the physical education theorists of the *Estado Novo*, gestures and movements that could not be pre-determined, either through the natural order of the world (expression of a pastoral idealization) or through physical education science (applied to a political and social Utopia), were not useful. The unpredictability of athletes' trajectories during a football match, with their inconstant movements, reflected a disordered society. The match's events, its rhythm, exposed life's irregularities. Within this mirror effect, the prevailing vision in this physical model of practices reflected a conception of society.

The physical practices that, expressing diverse motor habitus, reflected particular social and historical experiences, from informal football groups in popular neighbourhoods to the progressively specialized practice that reflected what Norbert Elias called the 'sportization process' (Elias, 1971: 92), challenged through their particular motor repertory, through their heterodox gestures and movements, a totalitarian vision of the body.

Notes

1. For more on the educational project of the *Estado Novo* see, among others, Nóvoa (1992), Ramos do Ó (2003) and Resende (2003).
2. António Leal de Oliveira obtained his PhD from the University of Gand. He was INEF's director and president of the Fédération Internationale d'Education Physique (1958–70).
3. Decree n.º21.034, 18/3/32.
4. Decree n.º 21:110, 16/4/32.
5. Unlike in the cases of Franco's Spain (Aja, 1998) or fascist Italy (Martin, 2004; Teja, 1998), an in-depth study of football's role in the *Estado Novo*, especially as a mechanism for social regulation, has yet to be made. It is however known that football's pedagogic, medical and scientific usefulness was always rejected by the group of specialists responsible for the implementation of the official physical education model of practices in Portugal.
6. In the context of my PhD dissertation I used the term 'motor habitus' to contrast the official model of physical practices, exported to colonial settings, with the logic behind the performances of African football players in the suburbs of Lourenço Marques, the capital of colonial Mozambique (today's Maputo) (Domingos, 2009).
7. On the Belgian Catholic gymnastics movement, see Tolleneer (1998).
8. Diários da Assembleia Nacional (National Assembly Reports), session n.º 39, of the *Assembleia Nacional*, dated 1939/25/2.

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