The Brazilian sport through the athletes’ lenses

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The athlete is the greatest legacy of the Olympic Games and her/his personal history is a way to understand the sport dynamics in their social group (regional, national and international levels).
Overview of a Olympic Brazil

- 1st participation - 1920
- 1st medal - 1920
- 1st woman participation - 1932
- 1st female medal - 1996
- 1st individual female medal - 2008
- 108 medals
- 421 medalists
  - 129 women
  - 292 men
Research outlines

• 15 years researching
• 1,816 – Olympic athletes
• 987 – interviewed
• 302 – died
• 527 – “wanted”
Methodology

• Life Histories

  • Narratives that construct an individual/subjective memory, and a collective memory of Brazilian Olympic Athletes and Brazilian Sports.
The theme "sport" first entered the structure of the Brazilian government in 1943.

Since then it has been 32 institutional changes: Secretary; Secretaries Extraordinary; Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport; Ministry of Tourism and Sports; Ministry of Sport Extraordinary until we reach the current Ministry of Sport founded in 2003.
About Brazilian sports structure

- In Brazil the political issues are closely linked to sport.
- Different governments at various historical moments, have done that. This is not a new issue.
- The consequence of this condition is the lack of a state policy, regardless of which party is in power.
A discourse, multiple policies

• Sports are important to the country
Life stories illustrating policies

• Adhemar Ferreira da Silva – triple jump
  - Bi-Olympic champion (1952, 1956)
  - He was fired from his job because he was missing for several days to compete ... he was a public employee!
  - He did not reach the Olympic final in 1960 despite his best effort. His performance was weak.
  - Returning to Brazil he discovered that he had tuberculosis.
A discourse, multiple policies

• Sport is a showcase for the country
Life stories illustrating policies

• The Military dictatorship decided to send only the 8 athletes to Mexico City Olympic Games that were considered medal candidates.
• The military in power were about to enact a law restricting individual freedoms.
• Two weeks before the OG the Brazilian delegation was expanded to 81 athletes (even without the resources to do so).
• Two weeks after the end of the Olympics AI-5 was inacted.
A discourse, multiple policies

• The economics of high performance sport in Brazil is nationalized, but the management is private.
Volleyball: a “success” story

- 1975-1995 – Nuzman CBV President
- 1984 – Silver medal (male)
- 1992 – Gold medal (male)
- Beginning of the process of professionalization of the sport in Brazil
- 1995 – Nuzman became COB president until the present
Life stories illustrating policies

• Jackie Silva
  - Refused to wear the shirt Brazilian team sponsored because she got nothing for it.
  - She was forced to move to another country.
  - She helped develop beach volleyball in the USA and worldwide.
  - To compete in Atlanta OG she must return to Brazil, definitively, and leave everything she had built in the USA.
  - She was the first woman in Brazil to win an Olympic medal and gold medal in 1996.
A discourse, multiple exclusions

• “Never before in the history of the country” did sport have as much money. The policies don’t change the athletes trajectory. In fact, they don’t exist!
Life stories illustrating policies

• Chana Masson
• Handball player
• First woman handball athlete to leave Brazil to play abroad.
• Considered the best goalkeeper in Brazil, Europe, and the world.
• Participated in four Olympic Games.
• Can not play in Brazil because even with money, there is no competence in managing the Brazilian Handball Confederation. There is no a national championship. The best players in the country have to play abroad to have any chance of survival.
What is missing in Brazilian sports then?
A State policy for sports, not a party policy or government policy
• Sport in Brazil always depended on public money.

• The Brazilian Confederation of Sports has, since 1914, the state agency administratively responsible for public funds to be used in the development of sport.

• Over the past 20 years there has been an increase in the number of medals and medalists depending on the achievements of sports team. Individual efforts are above policies.
• In these sports there is the support of state-owned companies.
• In the last Olympic cycle the federal government invested R$ 6 billion (US$ 3 billion)
• The politics of federations and confederations interfere in the organization of clubs and teams in different sports.

• This interferes with, and sometimes ends, the careers of several athletes.

• This results in no transparency in the championships, difficulty for athletes to renew their contracts and, consequently, there’s no alternation of power in these institutions.
• The consequence of this process can be summarized in:

  – Corrupted structure
  – Monopoly of power
  – No access for studies and research
MEMÓRIAS OLÍMPICAS POR ATLETAS OLÍMPICOS BRASILEIROS

MEMÓRIAS OLÍMPICAS
FUTEBOL MASCULINO
MEN'S FOOTBALL
J-Z

FUTEBOL FEMININO
GIRLS' FOOTBALL

MANDEBOL
(HANDBALL)

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