

**Reflexões sobre a regulação e a heterotopia nas aulas de Educação Física**

*Considerations on regulation and heterotopia in Physical Education classes*

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**Abstract:** Every day, school faces many challenges when dealing with the way children and adolescents present themselves. Their indifference regarding the conduct regulation strategies promoted by the school system indicates the exhaustion of the school's goals and analyses related to disciplinary and moral control. Based on the definition of heterotopia elaborated by Michel Foucault, this article proposes different ways to refer to power relations that are present in the school routine, with a focus on Physical Education classes. It considers that, by promoting and presenting heteropic roles for resistance to school regulatory practices, children and adolescents reinforce this difference, the life, and favor new ways to consider school space-time.

**Keywords:** Physical Education, heterotopia, difference, resistance

**Resumo:** *A cada dia a escola se depara com maiores dificuldades para lidar com o modo como as crianças e os jovens se apresentam em seu interior. A indiferença deles em relação às estratégias de regulação da conduta promovidas pela maquinaria escolar indica o esgotamento das metas e das análises dela que visam ao controle disciplinar e moral. A partir da noção de heterotopia apresentada por Michel Foucault, este artigo, focalizando as aulas de Educação Física, propõe outras formas de narrar as relações de força que operam o cotidiano escolar considera que, por promoverem e ocuparem espaços heterotópicos como forma de resistência às práticas escolares de regulação, as crianças e os jovens potencializam a diferença, a vida e fomentam novas formas de pensar o espaço-tempo escolar.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Educação Física, heterotopia, diferença, resistência*

## School, government, heterotopia

Modern school can be considered the main device of modernity to discipline bodies, making them politically docile and economically useful, that is, making subjects governable (Varela & Alvarez-Uria, 1992). Based on Foucault (2012), school has become an institution of child abduction, which, through mechanisms of time and space control, disciplinary techniques such as the hierarchical vigilance, the examination, and the normalizing sanction, creates and applies systems of classification, selection, and hierarchization of subjects, evidencing their power games and a complex network of knowledge involved in their daily life. In this sense, school is viewed as a machine which, through techniques that govern the conduct of individuals, produces and reinforces both the modern subject and the modern society.

Whether through training or subjectivation, pedagogical devices help school subjects build relationships with themselves while becoming objects of knowledge and being problematized in relation to standardized parameters. In the schooling process, students learn how to express, narrate, judge, and see themselves, and they learn how to govern themselves and be governed (Larrosa, 1994). The mix of techniques that govern subjects and the techniques they use to govern themselves is called governmentality, as proposed by Foucault (2008).

In his writings, Foucault (2008) considers modernity as the moment of the emergence of governmentality, a governmental rationality. He states that State survival and functioning can be understood based on the general tactics of such rationality. Moreover, he refers to government as a specific way of governing the population, established in Western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Predominant in capitalist countries since the 18th century, this

power technique is more focused on the arrangement of things than on imposing laws on men. These are also tactical actions. The purpose of government, he explains, is the things it rules over. Good government is one that has the means to and puts into action strategies that make subjects achieve certain purposes. It is the set of institutional rituals and practices guided by some goals, founded on continuous processes of reflection and analysis that makes governmental procedures produce the expected effects on the population.

In summary, governmentality is considered a technique of management, a technique of social control that, as Foucault explains, targets the population, the individuals, the groups of individuals, and the multiplicity of individuals.

The visible softening of disciplinary techniques in schools in comparison to those that characterized these environments in the last two centuries have provided complaints from teachers, who attribute to this fact one of the possible causes of student indiscipline (Aquino, 2011). However, school is still seen as the main socializing institution capable of producing disciplined, autonomous and morally self-directed subjects (Popkewitz, 1999) and, therefore, it remains a system whose main function is to govern student conduct. School is decidedly an environment of governmentality.

Gallo (2013), in his analysis of the rigidity of the school regulation methods, of the government of the conduct promoted by school, states that everything is planned and controlled in schools. After all, the production of an autonomous subject includes the action of directing and controlling people to achieve this purpose. Even with new pedagogical methods and types of organization, schools have not abandoned old disciplinary techniques, but have incorporated others. The result, he explains, is that despite the variation, the current school model is still the platonic model that gave rise to it.

To change this condition, or at least undermine it, Gallo (2013) proposes a minor education which, in Deleuzian terms, would mean generating events, even small ones, that are not under control, or generating new space-times, even of reduced surface or volume. To create new developments, he suggests that schools should create heterotopias, a term coined by Michel Foucault at a conference for architects in 1967.

Foucault (2009a) proposes this concept to question the rigidity with which modern society has created its spaces. In opposition to the notion of utopia, which means *no space* or *that*

*which will never have a place*, he proposes the concept of heterotopia (hetero = other/another/different + topia = place) to create spaces that coexist with those that have been institutionalized. Spaces that exist in all cultures, contesting the places where we live. Thus, he argues that there should be another kind of space where all representations would be present. Spaces that undoubtedly would promote the fragmentation of the senses, making disputes and conflicts arise from the transgression of their symbolic limits. Foucault (2009b) also notes that a transgression is a gesture that concerns the limit. It crosses and is continuously crossing a line that, behind it, immediately closes again in a movement of fine memory, then retreating back to the horizon of the insuperable.

Foucault states that transgression does not refer to opposition, scandal, subversion, dialectics, or revolution. Transgression refers to the unlimited. It states that the established limits can be crossed and converted in new experiences, or limit-experiences. Those who, by transgressing, shake, provoke, destabilize, or denature any attempt of certainty will, consequently, not allow the definition of an identity. Transgression pulls down all barriers and indicates that any determination of a pure space should not be held.

For Foucault (2009a), heterotopias are spaces that can be *localizable*, but they may not be included in any definitive meaning. They are a type of space marked by an overlapping of spatiality and competitions that take place in time. Spaces that exist under counter-hegemonic conditions. According to him, heterotopias are places of passage. Places where one is and is not – like cemeteries. Places where it is possible to be oneself and, at the same time, be the other – as in Carnival parties. Therefore, heterotopias are spaces of transgression of the norms which insist on defining and locking identities.

The modern project is based on the search for the universal and the determination of an identity for the things of the world. That is why Western reason has purged the other, the

multiplicity, the difference<sup>1</sup> to the margins of society<sup>2</sup>. However, in the 17th and 18th centuries, efforts were made to train the body, the behavior, and the skills of those who ran from standardization.

General and constant vigilance was established so that everything and everyone could be observed. In this sense, a police force was developed and organized (with a state bureaucracy supported by a system of archives and registers, containing individual files), a body location mechanics (placing individuals in isolated or grouped spaces) for the maximum use of their forces, aiming to provide greater social control and improved production of income (Foucault, 2008, 2012, 2015).

The question presented by governmentality favored the emergence of a body of experts and the development of a system of expertise that produces and disseminates government techniques while delimiting its field of action, as is the case of psychological sciences. In this rationality, childhood, as part of a larger group (the population), is categorized, described, and organized through statistics and becomes the object of certain institutions. This way, knowledge is produced about it, followed by ways of directing its conducts, speeches, emotions, etc., which imply the constitution of infantile subjectivities (Rose, 1999).

It results in the production of speeches that convey regimes of truth that directly affect the relationship established with children (Bujes, 2002). Unsurprisingly, the way to see them, approach them, teach them, talk about their bodies, gestures and behaviors, and project their future is immersed in a rationality articulated with the State governmentalization. This favors

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<sup>1</sup> 'Difference' was adopted in its poststructuralist sense of open variation, which does not capture the signifier in one identity. Hall (2000) explains how identity is constructed through difference and not outside of it, and every identity, disciplined or undisciplined, for example, is constituted only in relation to an Other, "the constitutive exterior" (p. 106), to what is missing, among specific relations of power. For the author, identity is anchored and tries to establish itself at the moment of exclusion, which occurs in the process of signification. As a result of these relations, a hierarchy and a separation between poles occur, establishing an identity without differentiation, naturalizing it, and having difference as negation. The attempt to normalize difference is what constitutes social relations, that is, the struggle for the determination of the identity of a sign, its government, and the control for the definition of meanings, then of reality, subject, and the truth of the things of the world. In this sense, school imposes a speech to ensure the stability of the identity of signs, but it is constantly destabilized by difference. Hence its strength in trying to adjust it and in leaving any threat out of the limits of identity.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the self-criticism regarding the use of 'exclusion,' Foucault (2015) justifies it as a strategy to open up the ways in which modern society uses psychological and sociological notions to classify delinquents, as well as ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, among other groups out of the circuits of production or consumption, such as abnormal or deviant groups. This term is also used to classify procedures whose function is to analyze the power and danger of the materiality of speeches, among them the opposition between reason and madness (Foucault, 2006).

the exercise of political domination over the population and every individual to organize them efficiently and with low expenses. Because of this, one of the central goals of modern nation-states was to turn children into students governed by a myriad of disciplinary techniques following the liberal ideals of the modern citizen (Ramos do Ó, 2009).

Furthermore, for Foucault (2013), the psychological subject emerges in this scenario. This subject can be submitted to the learning and training processes and, therefore, can be corrected when presenting any sign of pathological deviation through normalizing interventions, such as those present in school devices. Thus, the objective is to increase the security of populations, that is, to minimize any risk of crisis or threat to the established order.

It should be noted that in Foucauldian analyses, the norm contains in itself both the normal and the abnormal. It does not represent a disruption, but it is established from it, from its reference. As Larrosa (1994) puts it, the norm, unlike the law, is intended to be a descriptive concept: statistical mean, regularity, habit. It wants objectivity: rational justification. But the normal is a description that becomes normative. Normal becomes a criterion that judges and values negatively or positively in a complex criterion of discernment: over the crazy, the sick, the criminal, the perverse, the schoolchild.

The efforts of modern society aimed to consolidate the space of the equal, hence its institutionalization. Foucault's purpose with heterotopia is to highlight other places which favor the silenced, the marginalized spaces, the spaces of the Other. He emphasizes that heterotopia produces disruptive effects on the current order, and discomfort for those who experience it. To this negative aspect, Foucault (2009a) adds that heterotopia also causes the satisfaction of some need and, for this reason, it plays an important role in social transformations.

Based on the concept of heterotopia, this study analyzes the relationships that occur in school, specifically in Physical Education (PE) classes. This study observes the way students resist the forms of government of conducts imposed by school on its subjects through knowledge-power relations. Among the several definitions of power proposed by Foucault (2010), this study considers the following:

I do not understand power as a general system of domination exercised by one element or one group over another, whose effects... traverse the entire social body. (...) It seems to me that first what needs to be understood is the multiplicity of relations of force that are immanent to the domain wherein they are exercised, and that are constitutive of its organization; the game that through incessant struggle and confrontation transforms them, reinforces them, inverts them; the supports these relations of force find in each other, so as to form a chain or system, or, on the other hand, the gaps, the contradictions that isolate them from each other; in the end, the strategies in which they take effect, and whose general pattern or institutional crystallization is embodied in the mechanisms of the state, in the formulation of the law, in social hegemonies. (pp. 102-103)

As explained by Foucault (2010), it is impossible to escape from power, since there is no society without relations of power. However, this does not mean it is not possible to resist power. For the author, “where there is power, there is resistance” (p. 105). There is not necessarily a place of great refusal, but there are resistances, which are unique, produced in the relations of power. They are irregular, mobile and transitory. Resistances produce ruptures, blockades, they cross everyone’s life, cut and remodel the subjects. Resisting power implies that there is a possibility of freedom. Freedom, for Foucault (1995), would mean refusing what we are, which is made clear when he declares that:

The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, and philosophical problem of our time does not consist in trying to free the individual from the State or from the institutions of the State, but to free ourselves from both the State and the type of individualization with which it is linked. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity by refusing this type of individuality that was imposed on us several centuries ago (p.239)

If Foucault’s notion of power refers to relations of force that produce affections and affect the subjects, resisting would be, for him, the ability of life to resist the power that wants to govern it. Resisting is creating other possibilities of living. The forms of resistance incessantly cause new correlations of force, new forms of government and techniques of capturing subjects, and therefore new strategies to run from them. In education this is clearly seen, as it implies conducting students for years. What changes are the tactics and motivations in operation.

These changes became stronger in the 19th century, when institutions that cared for children became popular in capitalist Europe. According to Narodowski (1999), the educating State emerged aiming to build a more just society. However, the crises generated with the urbanization process and labor relations did not allow it. At the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, Welfare State policies appear as a solution to rearrange the



relations between production, administration, and social issues. In the Welfare State, the State apparatus is responsible both for creating government technologies to socialize each individual, and for regulating the economic life towards collective security and tranquility. In this context, children become a responsibility shared by the family, society, and the State, ensuring them the exercise of their rights to well-being. In the provider State, policies for childhood have inclusive roles (Bujes, 2002)<sup>3</sup>. Terms related to child protection – such as early pregnancy, pedophilia, and child labor – emerged in this scenario, as well as citizenship, autonomy, and development which gained prominence along with terms that highlight school performance and goals. As a result, to achieve what is expected, there is an increase in the amount of control over what children can and should do.

However, children, as students, as differences, live transgressive experiences, limit-experiences, and escape. That is, they live the experiences that are not accepted by the school/society. Marginal experiences about which speeches are produced that disqualify the children and create knowledge that tries to tame their disruptive force, the radical force of their difference (Larrosa, 1998). Here, with the possibility of a transgressive experience that goes beyond the limit, education subjects can distance themselves from the norms that produce the field of possibilities and, at the same time, create gaps and questions about their own purposes, favoring resistance.

Through an ethnographic study<sup>4</sup> (André, 2005), the development of events in the school context was described and analyzed. Then, this *ethnographic experience*, especially for its unpredictable dimension (Magnani, 2009; 2012) allowed us to understand the forms of

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<sup>3</sup> In Brazil, the Welfare State policies did not consolidate. However, after the 1988 Constitution, efforts were made to make them effective, which involved the struggle for the consolidation of children's rights. Children are then seen as citizens but, on the other hand, have to learn about duties, understand and assume social responsibilities. The institutions have to educate them so that they become self-controlling and self-governing subjects. In view of this purpose, schooling became compulsory and, since the creation of LDB 9.394/96, curricular policies started to be based on neoliberal governmentality. These policies, in turn, are focused on enhancing the capabilities of children and are based on business management models that become popular in nurseries, schools, and other places where children are present (Bujes, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> According to André (2005), in cases when he observed that what had been done was an adaptation of ethnography to education, he proposes that what was conducted were ethnographic studies rather than ethnography in its real sense. Among the elements observed by André as related to ethnographic studies, we highlight those linked with what we did: participant observation; interaction between the researchers and their group; emphasis on the process; field work; description and analysis.



resistance to the knowledge-power relationships promoted by school-teachers present in PE classes.

The study group had 30 students from the 5th grade of Basic Education from a public school located in a middle-class neighborhood in the South Zone of a large city. This study was conducted in a sequence of classes over a period of eight weeks. Of note, this study did not follow the chronology of events. The class narratives were juxtaposed to favor the reading of the analyses. In order to preserve the confidentiality of study participants, their names in this study are not their real names.

In the analyses conducted in this study, the heterotopias described are based on, and go beyond, Michel Foucault's writings.

## **Physical Education (PE) classes: heterotopias**

The PE classes observed in this study took place in two sports courts: one located next to the school staff parking lot, and one in the back of the school. The latter has viewing stands at its entrance, through which the student have access to classes. There are trees behind and on one side of this court, in a non-paved area. On the other side, a fence closes the perimeter.

In the first class observed, the teacher welcomed the students and asked them to bring, for the following class, information about the place their parents were born and what games they played when they were children. This action had the intention of using, in class, the games and activities from the stories of the students' parents and relatives. On the way to the class, the PE teacher decided to go to the court next to the staff parking lot. To access it, there is a door that is usually closed, which is an aspect that reinforces body discipline by delimiting spaces. On one hand, a space for cognition, on the other hand, for movement. It should be noted that this type of flow control is present in most reports obtained from undergraduates who are in training programs in either public or private schools.

At the side of the parking lot there is a small wall, which divides the way to the court, which causes some boys not to walk in a queue, as required by the teacher. They choose to walk on it or jump this obstacle in different ways. The teacher does not say anything. She does not insist on forcing the students to walk in a queue, based on the norm, as it is usually observed in

schools. The reasons may be varied. It may be because she did not notice it, or she considered it as a typical action of boys, characteristic of their age, or even for her being contrary to institutional norms, among other possible reasons. Her silence favors indiscipline, reinforces masculinized processes of subjectivation, or promotes propelled autonomy. However, this type of analysis is not the focus of this study, which is the student. Here we observe the first heterotopia of resistance, of observed transgression.

As reported by Foucault (2009a), heterotopias assume different forms and juxtapose incompatible places. By performing maneuvers at this frontier, students show resistance to the established norms of the school. As heterotopia, the wall is converted into a space that challenges its architectural role of area delimitation. It becomes something else. It becomes a place of fleeting experience, of leisure and game, a rapid and ephemeral space that is not to be seen as a problem, which would imply its suppression, expansion, or even it being surrounded with some object that prevented its 'use' by the students. What happens in the minds and bodies of the adventurers? Who do they want to be? Heroes? Villains? Or do they just want to have experiences in other spaces and in different ways? It does not matter! What matters is the possibility that heterotopia provides as an experience of being a child, or rather the identity of *child* invented by adults (Foucault, 2009a).

On several days of observation, we waited for the students sitting on the stands. Every day of observation we heard, in the background, the 'invasion' shout. The sound of students arriving is well-known. Much talk, loud voices, rush, teasing, and bad words characterize the scene. Undoubtedly, it is an experience that cannot be put in written language (Wacquant, 2002). As they entered the court, especially the boys, certain rituals were repeated: they jumped the steps of the stands, hung on the goal crossbar, and went to the larger tree at the end of the court. Others took balls out of a bag next to the fence and started kicking them. While the order was not established, the court showed a heterotopia with aspects of the carnivalization of norms. Only with reprimands of the teacher, or, during the teacher's absence, reprimands of an education inspector, the court can become again (for whom?) what it had been formally designated to be.

The court, specially designed for sports practice and for the transmission of sports values of efficiency, respect, competition, merit, etc., is also a heterotopia when used for other purposes. If education is a powerful device of subject control and discipline, the arrival of

students to the court for PE classes turns it into something else, another space. In its infinite forms, it seems that, at that moment, it allows students to be away from the techniques of capture, stratification, classification, hierarchization, subjection, and it promotes, although extemporaneously, strategies for students to run from the identities that school imposes on them. The arrival of the students turns the court into a heterotopia of contestation of all school spaces, times and norms. Even when the court assumes the identity fixed for its utilitarian purpose, the heterotopia remains there virtually and returns materialized to occupy its place in another class, every day, in a different way.

One day, the PE teacher was absent and another teacher took over the class. The substitute teacher was clearly more focused on the girls, who occupied the playground – their favorite heterotopia, which is close to the court. She left the other students free, at a distance. Almost all boys organized themselves to play soccer. Others could not overcome the obstacles of the corporal practice of soccer and remained at the side of the court, without being noticed. They were there, but they did not want to be. A heterotopia of forgetfulness.

One of the students brought a small ball displaying the logo of an England soccer club. As consumers, their lives revolve around the desire to have things. Their interests are based on promoting tastes and forms of self-expression and encouraging fantasies (Bauman, 2008; Sarlo, 1997). The students assumed roles of soccer players from Real Madrid and Barcelona – Spanish soccer clubs. At the end of the game, the winners emphasized that Barcelona was better than Real Madrid both in Spain and there at the school<sup>5</sup>. On that day, no student climbed the tree. They did not have to. The class, the court as a heterotopia, allowed other possibilities. The court was the simulacrum of the stadiums where professional teams play. A simulacrum-heterotopia.

As observed by Jameson (1997), the social transformations resulting from the communication revolution and media evolution in people's lives promote new forms of cultural regulation that shape individuals, their social practices, and habits with the excitement caused by the produced and marketed cultural texts, as observed in soccer. In the interconnection between culture and economy, which produces spectacularization and the consumption of cultural artifacts, identifications are also produced (Hall, 1997). Authors like Bauman (1999), Harvey (2009), Lipovetsky (2012) and others use words such as liquidity, volatility, ephemerality,

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<sup>5</sup>That afternoon, a UEFA Champions League soccer game took place between Real Madrid and Barcelona, and it was broadcasted on TV.

disposability, instantaneity to describe the experiences people have every day as an eternal present, without past or future. The dream of being a soccer player is present in many aspects of the life of these boys. Their speeches somehow show desires of fame and recognition by changing the daily challenges of poor students from a public school into an Olympus of heroes, which is displayed in their way of walking, celebrating, teasing, and translating the styles of their idols. The simulacrum-heterotopia is a place of a life that is intense, but not very extensive. In a few minutes, because of the adult's imposing intervention, it disappeared.

Although the students organized themselves to practice and tried to ensure harmony among all of them to avoid game interruptions, discussions soon appeared. Doubts and complaints regarding the application of rules, bad words and negotiations were observed. Nothing new, after all school actions are always watched and conducted by experts and inspectors, who allow neither the dissent nor the learning from this dissent, a fact that was observed all the time.

As the students had already foreseen, at some point, the substitute teacher intervened. She entered the game space and reprimanded one of them: "*I wanted you out! You and Jonas*". By the reaction of the boy and the other students, the act seemed naturalized. He left the game, but remained out for few minutes and then came back to play as the goalkeeper, as if nothing had happened. Later, another situation happened and the teacher exclaimed: "*you and Daniel can't play ball in my class?*" A brief silence was observed, then the game restarted, with the boys' dreams and desires, and with the presence of the two undesirable boys. Here, the relationship between the teacher and these students had been impacted for some time. She considered them as disorderly, aggressive, insolent, belligerent boys, among other adjectives invented and categorized to name subjects that do not follow the (school) order.

Another moment: after more than half of the class time, the teacher asked the students to let Caio participate in the game. This boy belongs to another category. He is classified by the school as someone who has a physical impairment that limits the use of the body in some actions, such as the ones soccer games usually demand. However, as a subject of the consumer society, he also identifies himself with soccer practice and its followers. Despite being culturally marked by his physical condition, he also wants to be part of that society. He wants to be inserted in the game, in the simulacrum-heterotopia. The acceptance from other students was not forced. He participated in several moments of the game through passes received from his

colleagues. His presence was an important ally to others. The inclusion ensured the game would happen without interruption or repression. The students made believe that, because they let everyone play, this attitude would be recognized by the teacher and the game would follow without interruptions for reprimands.

As observed by Foucault (2009a), heterotopias do not have constant shapes. If, at a certain moment of the class, the game and the court are simulacrum-heterotopias, the antagonisms between the teacher and certain students fill in the space. As usually seen, the court is often the place where certain students are in the center of attention: they are the skilled ones. Many of these students are unruly, or rather, dangerous to school order. They make the court into what Foucault (2009a) called heterotopias of deviation: places that societies create for individuals whose behavior is outside the norm. No wonder many students go to the sports court when they want to skip classes, or they want to stay there because it is where they feel recognized. The opposite also happens when, at times, these school subjects are prohibited from accessing the court as a punitive or socio-educational measure, which are not rare situations. It all depends on the intentions of these subjects. In this heterotopia, one can feel both protected, as if in a secure castle, and unprotected, because it is an outdoor space. After all, the school inspectors, guardians of the school order, know where to find them. The court is also a heterotopia of passage (Foucault, 2009a).

In addition, there are heterotopias, according to Foucault, which assume an opening and closing system that makes them impenetrable. They may often appear as simple openings, but in general, they hide exclusions. Everyone can enter these heterotopic places. One believes to be inside and, exactly for this reason, one is excluded. It is well-known how the speech of inclusion combined with tolerance produces the Other to be tolerated. Education driven by a speech of tolerance produces and reinforces indifferences in the face of the strange. It tries to avoid at all costs the possibility of some malaise, materializes the death of dialogue, and neglects the values and forces that produce negative classifications (Duschatzky & Skliar, 2000). In general, education does not help students question how they have learned to talk about themselves and the other.

It is clear that teachers attempt to bring differences closer to the equal (Skliar, 2003), then place them at least close to a tolerable deviation of motor and cognitive efficiency or behavior. This is usually the way that contemporary schools deal with differences. Accepting

and placing the difference closer allows one to increase the control over it and thereby reduces both the risks of threats and what this difference represents. It can also be considered as an effort to reinforce a lifestyle that consumes corporal practices, even if such conditions of consumption are not the best. As Bauman (1999) and Foucault (2013) argue, a difference is accepted when one becomes aware of what was placed in the margin, and it leads to the creation of new classification strategies or ways of inserting this difference into an already existing category, which does not mean inclusion. According to Veiga-Neto and Lopes (2007), it is an exclusionary inclusion.

In Physical Education, this situation goes beyond that. Its modern curricula with sports, psychomotor, developmental, healthy, or critical skills emphasize equality, the universal, and do not perceive the difference. On the contrary, in such curricula, difference is regarded as an uncomfortable factor, the lack of something. This situation highlights the importance of school as an instrument of adjustment of subjects and its intervention to compensate for individual deficiencies. By wanting to gather everyone in the classroom and adapt its practice based on standards, the result is the affirmation of certain bodies and the denial of others, creating identities (the normal) and differences (the abnormal), or the students that have to be valued and the students that have to be corrected or tolerated in PE classes (Neira & Nunes, 2009).

In the heterotopia of deviation, the teacher regulated the behavior of the students only temporarily. Or did the students want to make her believe that she had regulated all of them? Everything is possible!

The classes included popular physical practices, such as dodgeball and jumping rope, and functional practices created by PE teachers, such as the human foosball game. It should be noted that popular physical practices had greater involvement of students than the functional practices, perhaps due to the lack of meaning of the latter, or, as pointed by Carvalho and Pontes (2003), because the vertical transmission of games (from adult to child) has less symbolic efficacy than its transmission between pairs. In general, all classes had much discussion and negotiation between the teacher and the students so that the activities were performed the way she wanted and in a given time. It always ended up with some students running away to the heterotopic areas.



One day, the teacher asked the education inspector to take the boys who were disturbing the class to the director's room, as they were not allowing other to have a smooth class. Before leaving the court, the inspector addresses one of the study observers and says: *"In another school the person who takes care of the library slapped some students. But they also test our limits. The parents don't instruct them and the teacher has to fulfill this task. You see this one [pointing to one student], his parents didn't give him home instruction"*. The boy did not like her comment and answered: *"Yes, my mother gave me instruction?"*

Foucault (1995) explains that the forms of resistance are not related to moral claims or to the claim of a right, but they are related to struggles. The purpose of these struggles is not to attack a certain group, class or institution of power – in this case, the teacher and the school. It is a struggle against a particular technique of power that classifies individuals, coercively giving them an identity. A technique that tries to make them certain subjects, imposing on them a law of truth, which frames individuals into a category (which here refers to the unruly ones). For this purpose, the subjects should recognize themselves in such category and the others should also recognize them in this classification. Only then the expected result will be achieved. In the relation of power established between the students and the teacher, resistance is evident, the struggle of the child-student against "what links the individual to him/herself and subjects him/her to others (struggles against subjection, against different forms of subjectivity and submission)" (Foucault, 1995, p. 235)

In one break between classes, the teacher highlighted that one of the challenges of working at that school in particular was that it was a "transient school." It is called this way because few students live near the school. Most of them live in distant neighborhoods and come with their parents who work nearby. For the teacher, it is easier to work in a school where students belong to the neighboring reality. Dealing with differences in a large scale seems to be, for this teacher, a herculean task

The comments of both the inspector and the teacher reinforce that the school agents organize and create expectations regarding pedagogical practices based on ideal models of family and student. In addition, the statements above show and reinforce speeches that constitute and construct negative representations of poor families and children and produce them as problems to be faced to guarantee social cohesion in modern society. It is another aspect that reinforces the fear of having the destabilizing presence of difference.



As reported by Dornelles (2005), in modernity, several speeches about children have produced truths and practices aiming to discipline and produce the apprentice-subject. The idea here is not to analyze such genealogy, nor the modern family's, but to locate it. What matters is to pay attention to speeches that impose a generalization of what the family and the child mean, speeches that prevent one from thinking that there are several childhoods and families, and from understanding the emergence and maintenance of a standard model and its governing technologies.

According to Foucault (2010), with the medical policies created in Europe in the 18th century, the modern family became the target of intensive surveillance. It started to play a central role in administrative structures, articulating the necessary care of its members with social policies, leading to medicalized and medicalizing families. Families became focused on child care, and that situation created medical, moral, economic, and political problems, because the children meant the future of the nation and could not succumb to diseases or vices of the urban and industrial society.

These were the conditions that allowed the constitution of children as objects of knowledge with a will to power, that is, the creation of both the specific knowledge that helped define what childhood is, and of the appropriate technologies to govern it. In addition, it is the knowledge about these two aspects that help describe, classify, compare and hierarchize them. That was when the difference was established between a rich family and a poor family, and between the children from these social classes. These were the conditions that supported the emergence of experts who say what children can and cannot do; in other words, those authorized to say how to govern children. The teacher's speech attributes to poor families the fault for a deviation from the established norm of what would be 'good' education.

When emphasizing that the school problem was because it was a transient place, near the parents' work, the teacher also highlighted the family's guilt issue, while also extending its spectrum of meaning. She attributes the problem to the phenomenon of poor children's transit between different places, very often between their home and the home of relatives, friends, or between child shelters and social places for the control of children (either those supported by the State or those organized by the third sector, such as parishes and NGOs, which take care of child training), or even the street (Motta-Maués, 2004). After all, where do they go after classes end while they wait for the end of their parents' workday? These speeches undoubtedly facilitate

the production of truth regimes that regard this phenomenon as an obstacle to 'good' education and reinforce the notion of a problematic childhood to be corrected, and, consequently, one of the possible causes of indiscipline and violence of today's youth.

Between governed life and self-government, students do not willingly accept these identities. No wonder, it is getting increasingly difficult for school and its experts to define who students are, in order to apply their government technologies. School becomes a space of resistance, another space, heterotopia. Heterotopias of denial of imposed identity.

On another day, a significant number of students were not willing to attend the class. After almost 20 minutes of activities, seven of them decide to stop and go sit on the viewing stands, where they started talking to each other about different themes. Some went several times to the drinking fountain. There, far from the panoptic eyes of the teacher and the school agents, some conflicts emerged. Some were negotiated, neutralized and some were postponed to be resolved in other territories. Heterotopias of flight, fights, and agreements.

Girls also produce their heterotopias. During the observed classes about soccer, they preferred to stay in the playground. In these classes, the playground is taken by them as a counter-space. They change its purposes and give it a unique time-related role. In classes where nothing interests them, they make this space into a heterotopia of time, not based on eternity or the party, as argued by Foucault (2009a). They create in this space the time of counter-conduct which, for Foucault (2008), are practices that occur within broader movements with which they do not seek to promote disruptions. They intend to conduct the population in different ways, without having to break with those who conduct. Therefore, there is no opposition to the conduct. These are struggles and strategies to be conducted in different ways. In this case, the girls are not subject to the situations in class that classify them as ineffective, nor give boys the opportunity to assert themselves as dominant because of their motor or physical skills required for that physical practice. Staying in the playground is their refusal to be submitted to the embarrassment that PE classes usually want to impose on differences (Nunes, 2006).

Of all heterotopias observed in PE classes, the trees next to and behind the court are undoubtedly the ones that promote life more intensely. This school has a large green area and a significant amount of trees. This aspect drives hegemonic speeches, such as quality of life and

environmental preservation, based on the school area. The students were often warned that they should not remain near the trees, as observed in the speech that highlighted environmental conservation and, of course, danger.

In these heterotopic retreats, trees temporarily assume different meanings. One day, one student said “I’ve already got a girl here;” in another moment, a student on a tree made gestures to all other students, mimicking sexual relations. The observers constantly saw actions of students climbing trees, sitting on tree branches to watch the games, and running to flee or hide from colleagues, the teacher, and the activities. Everything was always followed by the teacher’s reprimands and requests for students to get down from or not climb the trees.

Of note, the current speech that produces truths about today’s children is the one that emphasizes children no longer play or, even worse, no longer know how to play. These speeches are accompanied by nostalgic overtones about a pseudo glorious past, claiming today’s children no longer play or climb trees.

Besides the episodes by the trees, it was common to observe, in the classes, the presence of the dreaded *montinbo*, a common school prank in which a student is crushed under a group of boys, which shows aspects of gendered masculinity. In the context of this school, climbing trees and the *montinbo* are not proper games. The question is different here!

As reported by Lemos (2007), playing was captured by the logic of the productive society. It was encapsulated in a specific dimension in time and space. Playing is legitimized only within organized, targeted forms with specific goals. Any deviation causes protests and requests for the consultation of experts such as neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, PE teachers, and psycho-pedagogues to act and save children before any deviation from the norm, the threat of difference, takes place. Not all play is possible at all times, especially at school. Depending on its form and purpose, playing is either allowed or forbidden.

This researcher also argues that spontaneous playing is regulated in such a way that it should have a definite schedule and cannot be of any category or happen anywhere, since both its excess and its lack, depending on a moral or technical perspective, may adversely affect student development. In today’s world, playing has become a powerful tool for the calculated management of the most ordinary actions of children. However, this is not so easy as it looks.

In the case presented in this study, when the teacher managed to disperse the *montinho*, many of the boys just ran to the trees. It shows that, just like TV shows and youth literature that includes a 'tree house,' these places are unreachable, impenetrable heterotopias, where adults and the things of their universe cannot enter. By experiencing the infinite possibilities of playing, children can make it a device of resistance to social control and even a mechanism of self-production, which expands the creation of new worlds, new ways of thinking, feeling and acting (Lemos, 2007), even if, at school, this fills only a lapse of time.

As heterotopias, the court, the playground, the viewing stands, the water fountain, and the trees are places of contestation of all other spaces and times of Physical Education, and perhaps also of the school and its agents.

## **Final considerations**

Based on the observations here presented and the meanings resulting from them, we can pose that the heterotopias created by the students are spaces produced according to the context where the classes take place. They are the result of the immanence of power-knowledge relations that surround everyone. This other space, in spite of the conditions of the school culture, does not depend on any school-teacher or teacher-student mediation that is usually seen in school devices. Despite the expectation, the reinforced attention, and the strategies of anticipation produced by the agents of the school surveillance to guarantee control, the heterotopias are unpredictable. They are events. They are pure transformations.

We have noted how students in Physical Education classes enhance plural and chaotic heterotopias, distant from any moral or universal principle, and continuously change their meaning. These are heterotopias without centrality or dominant groups. The produced heterotopias suggest that they fulfill the subjects' needs to resist school impositions.

As forms of transgression, no content can enclose the heterotopias within its limits. They are spaces of the difference. Because they are in a school, a product of modernity created for its maintenance, they are regulated by teachers and staff through disciplinary practices. Their purposes do not matter. For the students, these heterotopias are spaces that cannot assume the forms proposed by the school. They cannot operate as borders of physical space, machines for

the production of sports talents, leisure or decorative artifacts, as live fences, etc. They are indeterminate heterotopias. They cannot be dissociated from the meanings and representations that have been developed in Physical Education classes and in the relations of power that emerge in concrete spaces.

They are heterotopias that promote self-experience, even if temporary and fragmented, either by exercising masculinity, femininity, sexuality, trickery, and a boisterous childhood among other forms of being, or even by exercising the possibility of transgressing the limits imposed by these identities and creating other ones. It allows one to live a limit-experience, a transgression. These are heterotopias of childhood, which as an invention of adults, shake, destabilize, and enhance life.

Being strategies of resistance, strategies that allow fights against the forms of domination, they are renewed and multiplied from the relations established between each subject. In these relations, several heterotopias may arise. They may be near one another, without, however, being the same, or they can allow inclusion, even if in a tolerated manner. What we have seen is that the difference is still marked, and that heterotopias do not integrate it with another difference, but, because of the concentration of different subjects and the conflicts this situation generates, they can cause contestations, fragmentations, and inversion of established rules, even if this does not happen in an orderly manner (Foucault, 2009a).

Therefore, children create and reinvent counter-conduct movements, producing new meanings for the same spaces by inciting different uses and types of appropriation. They promote other experiences for themselves and for the spaces they occupy. In the case of Physical Education classes, the pulsating force of life incited by the heterotopic spaces appears in unplanned actions in school areas. In these areas, children defy school norms and reshape the socio-spatial organization designed to govern their conducts. On the other hand, these movements are not and cannot be definitive, as there will always be a microanalytical work focused on the control of bodies in the spaces and the (temporary) links and identifications that are articulated between space, government, school culture and resistance. As a powerful element, heterotopia is also subject to the force of difference.

If, for Gallo (2013), school needs to create heterotopias, we realize that children have already anticipated this idea. For them, although school is an enclosed, compulsory place of

control, it is a heterotopic possibility. Living this heterotopia, occupying it, cutting and transforming the space-time of classes and school are forms of resistance and possibilities of life. In the case presented in this study, it is perhaps the favorite action of today's detached schoolchildren.

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