

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

ARTICLE

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, FEMINITIES AND UNIFORMS. THE CASE OF THE DEPARTAMENTO DE CULTURA FÍSICA (1929-1946) OF THE UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LA PLATA (ARGENTINE)

PABLO ARIEL SCHARAGRODSKY¹

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6305-2017>
<pas@unq.edu.ar>

PABLO KOPELOVICH²

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3708-9881>
<kopelovichp@gmail.com>

¹ Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (UNQ) and Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP). Quilmes and La Plata, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE (Bs. As.), Argentina.

² Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) and Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP). La Plata, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE (Bs. As.), Argentina

ABSTRACT: We investigate the construction of femininities from the use of uniforms for Physical Education classes. For this, we base ourselves on the case of the Department of Physical Culture, an institution that existed between 1929 and 1946, of the National University of La Plata (Buenos Aires, Argentina). We wonder about how and why the Physical Education uniforms contributed to gendering and sexualizing the bodies of female students. We build three periods from the mandatory establishment of female uniforms for Gymnastics classes: 1929-1934, 1935-1939, and 1940-1946. This use was due to the decisions made by the authorities of the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas, which also implied different ways of understanding and teaching the subject. From a qualitative methodological strategy, we propose the interpretation of a case, approaching it from the tools coming from the critical perspective of gender and visual history. We use written and visual sources, as well as semi-structured interviews with former students.

We consider that the obligatory nature of uniforms, in relation to the construction of femininities, involves moral, aesthetic, sexual, material, erotic, and kinetic dimensions. In this sense, we conclude that what happened with the teaching of Physical Education in the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas, in terms of the transmission of femininities, accounts for a permanent tension in society between equality and inequality between women and men, without not be a linear path at all from inequality to equality or less inequality.

Keywords: Femininities, Physical Education, Uniforms, History, National University of La Plata.

¹ Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (UNQ) and Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP). Quilmes y La Plata, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE (Bs. As.), Argentina. <pas@unq.edu.ar>

² Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) y Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP). La Plata, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE (Bs. As.), Argentina <kopelovichp@gmail.com>

EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA, FEMINILIDADES E UNIFORMES: O CASO DO DEPARTAMENTO DE CULTURA FÍSICA (1929-1946) DA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LA PLATA (ARGENTINA)

RESUMO: Investigamos a construção das feminilidades a partir do uso de uniformes nas aulas de Educação Física. Para isso, nos baseamos no caso do Departamento de Cultura Física, instituição que existiu entre 1929 e 1946, da Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Buenos Aires, Argentina). Questionamos como e por que os uniformes de Educação Física contribuíram para generificar e sexualizar os corpos das alunas. Construímos três períodos a partir do estabelecimento obrigatório de uniformes femininos para as aulas de Ginástica: 1929-1934, 1935-1939 e 1940-1946. Esse uso deveu-se às decisões tomadas pelas autoridades do Colegio Secundario de Señoritas, que também implicavam diferentes formas de entender e ensinar o assunto. A partir de uma estratégia metodológica qualitativa, propomos a interpretação de um caso, abordando-o a partir das ferramentas advindas da perspectiva crítica de gênero e história visual. Utilizamos fontes escritas e visuais, além de entrevistas semiestruturadas com ex-alunos.

Consideramos que a obrigatoriedade dos uniformes, em relação à construção das feminilidades, envolve dimensões morais, estéticas, sexuais, materiais, eróticas e cinéticas. Nesse sentido, concluímos que o que aconteceu com o ensino da Educação Física no Colégio Secundario de Señoritas, em termos de transmissão de feminilidades, dá conta de uma tensão permanente na sociedade entre igualdade e desigualdade entre mulheres e homens, sem que não seja um caminho da desigualdade para a igualdade, ou menos desigualdade.

Palavras-chave: Feminilidades, Educação Física, Uniformes, História, Universidad Nacional de La Plata.

EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA, FEMINIDADES Y UNIFORMES. EL CASO DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE CULTURA FÍSICA (1929-1946) DE LA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LA PLATA (ARGENTINA)

RESUMEN: Indagamos en la construcción de feminidades a partir del uso de uniformes para las clases de Educación Física. Para ello, nos basamos en el caso del Departamento de Cultura Física, institución existente entre 1929 y 1946, de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Buenos Aires, Argentina). Nos preguntamos acerca de cómo y por qué los uniformes de Educación Física contribuyeron a generizar y sexualizar los cuerpos de las alumnas. Construimos tres períodos a partir del establecimiento obligatorio de uniformes femeninos para las clases de Gimnasia: 1929-1934, 1935-1939 y 1940-1946. Ese uso se debió a las decisiones tomadas por las autoridades del Colegio Secundario de Señoritas, que implicaron también distintos modos de entender y enseñar la asignatura. Desde una estrategia metodológica cualitativa, proponemos la interpretación de un caso, abordándolo desde las herramientas provenientes de la perspectiva crítica de género y de la historia visual. Utilizamos fuentes escritas y visuales, así como entrevistas semiestructuradas realizadas a ex alumnas.

Consideramos que la obligatoriedad de los uniformes, en relación a la construcción de feminidades, involucra dimensiones morales, estéticas, sexuales, materiales, eróticas y kinéticas. En este sentido, Concluimos que lo acontecido con la enseñanza de la Educación Física en el Colegio Secundario de Señoritas, en términos de transmisión de feminidades, da cuenta de una tensión permanente en la sociedad entre igualdad y desigualdad entre las mujeres y los hombres, sin tratarse en absoluto de un recorrido lineal que vaya de la desigualdad a la igualdad, o a menos desigualdad.

Palabras clave: Feminidades, Educación Física, Uniformes, Historia, Universidad Nacional de La Plata.

INTRODUCTION

In January 1929, within the framework of the debate on the modification of the curricula of the *Colegio Nacional*³ and the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*⁴ (secondary school institutions of the Universidad Nacional de La Plata -UNLP), which had been discussed since previous years, the president of this house of studies proposed the creation of a Department of Physical Education, not only for secondary school students but also for volunteers from the University. Thus, on March 7, he issued a resolution creating the Department of Physical Culture (DCF- *Departamento de Cultura Física*), which had been approved by the Council on March 5. There Ramón Loyarte, following the proposal of the rector of the *Colegio Nacional*, Rafael Arrieta, appointed the gymnastics teacher Benigno Rodríguez Jurado as director.⁵ This dependency was presented as the first organization of this nature belonging to a University of the *República Argentina*. He oversaw organizing the compulsory Physical Education of the “Joaquín V. González” graduate school and the two secondary schools while offering voluntary courses for students from the different universities of the UNLP. Its emergence occurred in the capital of the most populous and important province, within the UNLP policies that, with Loyarte at the helm, tended to restore order and discipline.

All of this occurred in a provincial and national context characterized by general policies framed in military governments, authoritarianism, conservatism, nationalism, the emergence of mass culture, and strong circulation of eugenic ideas (in line with an international context) (CATARUZZA, 2009; GAYOL AND PALERMO, 2018). Regarding educational policies, an increase in the access of the popular classes to secondary education (in its different modalities) and university education stands out, hand in hand with the University Reform and its effects since 1918. In addition, it is worth pointing out the application of the eugenic ideas, with their different chains, in education and Physical Education (MIRANDA Y VALLEJO, 2012; ROMANIUK, 2015; LINARES, 2018); as well as cracks in the secular tradition since the incorporation of religious (Catholic) education at the provincial (Buenos Aires in 1936 and Catamarca in 1941) and national (since 1943) levels. During this period, in the province of Buenos Aires, the General Directorate of Physical Education and Culture was created in 1936; in Nación, the National Council of Physical Education (*Consejo Nacional de Educación Física*) in 1937; and, also at the national level, the General Directorate of Physical Education (*Dirección General de Educación Física*) in 1938 (GALAK, KOPELO-VICH Y PEREYRA, 2021).

There was also a frank deportivization of the social world, hand in hand with the popularization, Argentineization, and professionalism of sports such as soccer (FRY-DENBERG, 2011; ACHETTI, 2016). At that time, the sport was a device for regulating the body, at the same time that it was used by parties and social movements such as socialism and anarchism as a way of fighting dominant meanings (BARRANCOS, 2011a; MARTÍNEZ MAZZOLA, 2014; BUONUOME, 2016). In this way, “Physical and sports culture entered, like never before, in the daily life, customs, habits, and experience of thousands of people in the process of global transnational modernization and, at the same time, unequal (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2020, p. 63).

The DCF consolidated and legitimized the medical discourse as central, to the detriment of the pedagogical one, which included the anatomical, physiological, and especially, the eugenic record. It took elements of the militarist discourse (which, in Argentina, at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th, was present in Physical Education from, initially, the School of Gymnastics and Fencing of the Army and, later, from the politics of Manuel Fresco in the province of Buenos Aires), at

³ Exclusive for men.

⁴ Exclusive for women.

⁵ Benigno Rodríguez Jurado (1894-1959). He was a former athletics, boxing, and rugby athlete, who worked in gyms such as Universitario de Buenos Aires and Club San Isidro. He entered the Colegio Nacional as a teacher in 1923, retiring in 1947, and was director of the Department between 1929 and 1946. At the same time, he was the director of the General Directorate of Culture and Physical Education of the province of Buenos Aires — created by Governor Manuel Fresco in 1936—between March 29, 1940, and July 26, 1952. In 1938, he was appointed as counselor, and in 1939 as deputy director (DE LUCA, 2008; CARBALLO, 2003). He was also key in the pre-foundation period of the Club Universitario de La Plata. He belonged to a family of politicians from San Luis, which had more than one governor of the province. He wrote in magazines such as *El Gráfico*, *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, *Revista Cultura Sexual y Física*, among other prominent publications in Argentina. To know more about him, see Kopelovich and Galak (2020).

the same time that he proposed generically differentiated body practices, linked to gymnastics, play and, early for the time, to sports. In October 1946, the UNLP Intervention, headed by Orestes Adorni, created the General Directorate of Physical Education (*Dirección General de Educación Física*), replacing the DCF.

In this context, the *Colegio Nacional* and the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas* specially prepared for admission to the University, receiving students from the middle and upper sectors of society (DI PIERO, 2017), with the mission of selecting a fragment of it worthy of becoming the leading sector or belonging to an elite (LEGARRALDE, 2000).

In this context, we investigate the construction, transmission, redefinition, and resistance of femininities from the use of uniforms for Physical Education classes, based on the case of the aforementioned DCF.

METHODOLOGY

From a qualitative methodological strategy, we propose the interpretation of a case, not because it represents others or because it illustrates some feature, but because it is interesting (STAKE, 2005). It is an explanatory study (HERNÁNDEZ SAM-PIERI, FERNÁNDEZ COLLADO, AND BAPTISTA LUCIO, 2003) that goes beyond the description of concepts or phenomena, or the establishment of relationships between concepts and it was intended to respond to the causes of social events. As its name indicates, this type of study focuses on explaining why a phenomenon occurs and under what conditions it occurs.

The information was obtained through a data collection technique: document analysis (SAUTU ET AL., 2005). We use various sources to carry out a complex reading: plans and programs of the *Colegio Nacional de La Plata* and the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*; annual reports, regulations, internal regulations, minutes of the educational institutions; photographs of gym classes, exhibitions and sports competitions, among other recorded instances; minutes of the Superior Council of the *Universidad Nacional de La Plata* between 1929 and 1946; files of teachers of the subject and of the directors of the schools during the period analyzed; newspaper articles on school institutions, exhibitions, sports competitions, incidents and summaries made to teachers, the change of authorities, among others; reports from the director of the Department of Physical Culture of the UNLP addressed to the president of that house of studies; reports written by the director of the Department of Physical Culture of the UNLP, included in bulletins of the *Colegio Nacional* and of the UNLP; autobiographies of former students of the two schools. In addition, two interviews were conducted with former students of the *Colegio de Señoritas* and testimonies from other former students (included in a commemorative book) were considered.

Also —and concerning the approach to the photographs—, references in the field such as David Kirk (2011), understand that it is possible to build a historical narrative around the visual representations of the mentioned subject. A photographic support is a historical document, considering that photographs cannot be thought of outside of the material and affective trajectories that mark their life as artifacts, inscribing photographs in particular archive policies (DUSSEL, 2019). This is by no means transparent unmediated historical evidence. In our country, the mobilization of photography in the state devices was simultaneous to the consolidation of the State, and its primary objective was to “document” “progress” or to build a testimony of that progress (LAGUARDA, 2010, cited in Torricella, 2014). Photography was also part of the medical and hygienist devices for observation and construction of observable features of pathologies, within a process in the scientific field of equating seeing and knowing (JENKS, 1995, cited in Torricella, 2014).

Finally, we opted to organize the central part of the text based on the construction of three periods, from how Physical Education for women was conceived from the DCF and the establishment of certain attire as mandatory. Thus, the first period, which goes from 1929 to 1934, was characterized by the fact that the Argentine Physical Education System was especially considered for “feminine” Physical Education;⁶ the second, which runs from 1935 to 1939, prioritized German and rhythmic gymnastics

⁶ It was a proposal created by the doctor Enrique Romero Brest, which was in force in Argentine school Physical Education, not without resistance and opponents, during the first four decades of the 20th century. It consisted of exercises without devices and games for the upper grades, as well as games distributed and applied with a physiological criterion in the lower

proposed by the director Juana Cortelezzi;⁷ and the third, which began in 1940 and ended in 1946, had the new regulations of the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction⁸ as its main reference, which continued with the proposal of a differentiated practice; he played softer sports than those experienced by boys, such as basketball;⁹ and it presented practices with regulations adapted to women, such as basketball.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We understand gender, following Judith Butler (2006, p. 11), as the “apparatus through which the production and normalization of the masculine and feminine take place”. This is not always constituted in a coherent or consistent way in different historical contexts, intersecting with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. Thus, it is impossible to separate gender from the political and cultural intersections in which it is constantly produced and maintained (BUTLER, 2018). In this way, institutions operate by standardizing individuals of both genders based on a priori categories (male/female), where institutional discourses constitute the individuals they wish to have, producing leaks of meaning: “Gender can present in ways that break or deviate from mechanical patterns of repetition, giving them new meanings and sometimes categorically breaking those chains of gender-normative citations and leaving space for new ways of living the genre” (BUTLER, 2019, p. 69). Thus, and this is key, what is presented as natural is nothing more than the result of power relations. In this way, women and men are not a reflection of “natural” reality but the result of a historical and cultural production (LAMAS, 2000).

On the other hand, we adhere to a relational vision of gender, since “there is no feminine identity and difference, if there is not, on the other hand, coined in a furious dialectic, a masculine identity and difference” (LA CLECA, 2005, p.16).

Regarding femininity, Simone de Beauvoir (2018) affirmed that “we are not born as women, we become one”, to indicate that biology is not destiny, society establishes a whole life program so that a subject transform into a woman. In this way, the condition of women is socially constructed and historically determined by the social environment (VALOBRA, 2010). Femininity, understood as a historically situated regulative ideal, has been traversed throughout history by different practices and knowledge that constituted it (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2006), of which we are interested in this case, especially, bodily practices. Historically, women were thought to be responsible for life within the home, as well as for reproduction (OLAVARRÍA, 2004). Following a relational vision of genders, the construction of bodies gives rise to power resources that are distributed inequitably between men and women. Men's bodies are thought of as active, hard, strong, fit for work, war, and command; while women's bodies must be passive, delicate, weak, suitable for light work, emotional bodies to be penetrated by men and prepared for motherhood, home bodies that must be protected: complementary bodies to those of men (OLAVARRÍA, 2004).

grades, which laid the foundations of a methodized gymnastics (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2006). It started from the criticism of military exercises and games without method, which lacked physiological foundation. This system, despite including women in practice, played an active role in the construction of masculinities and femininities, configuring an unequal map between male and female students.

⁷ Juana Cortelezzi (1887-1973) entered as an intern at the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas* in 1907, the year it was created. She was a director between 1934 and 1939. She is recognized for being the first woman to reach the position of tenured professor at the *Universidad Nacional de La Plata* and for her contributions to the teaching of Geology. She graduated in 1909 as a pharmacist and as a secondary school teacher in Natural Sciences and Chemistry. In 1927 she received her doctorate in Chemistry. In addition, she worked at the *Universidad de Buenos Aires* since 1926.

⁸ This not implies that in the previous periods the different regulations in force were not considered and respected.

⁹ It was one of the games that integrated the gymnastics classes into the “temporary courses of physical exercises for teachers”, which began to be taught in 1901 and derived from the *Instituto Nacional Superior de Educación Física*. The latter facilitated the dissemination of the sport in the hands of the graduates of the institution. Thus, in 1903, basketball was already practiced in women's institutions, such as the Atalanta Club. So, “this game was designed for both sexes, but it was clearly oriented towards the female stereotype since it outlawed physical contact, shock, force, and movements considered vulgar for women at that time. The games suitable for the female were more passive, soft, without strong body contacts in contrast to the games played by men” (NAVARRO AND PRATTO, 2015, p. 6).

In this article, we start from the consideration that “dressing the body constitutes a contextualized bodily practice that expresses the relationship between the body, clothing, and culture, in a certain social context and historical moment” (FACCIA, 2019, p. 38), highlighting the social sense that the suit gives to bodies through gender, a category that governs the ways of dressing according to the stereotypes imposed by culture. We understand clothing as another human skin, one culturally created, which refers to the ways of constructing sexed bodies, concerning the intelligibility regimes that the social norm installs (BÁEZ, 2013). Thus, we consider it central when it comes to constructing the genre. In this way, we understand that clothes and ornaments constitute, in a profound way, an “education of the body” (SOARES, 2011). Therefore,

between utility, necessity, protection, and comfort, but also between artificiality, dream, or seduction, clothing, and ornaments affirm human traits, reveal inclusions or exclusions, as well as the differences between a bodily nature and the marks of culture (SOARES, 2011, p. 1).

WOMEN AND THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND SPORTS CONTEXT

In Argentina, the first decades of the 20th century were characterized by the fact that women exercised incomplete, secondary, unequal, deficient, and less valuable citizenship, differentiating social, civil, and political rights (BARRANCOS, 2011b; GIORDANO, 2014). This period shows a kind of diastole and systole in terms of body sovereignty, highlighting the double sexual standards and the civil rights of women (GIORDANO, 2014), the heterosexual model as the basis of the hegemonic familial pattern (RAMACCIOTTI and VALOBRA, 2014) and the role of the State and the Church as moralizers of the attributes of gender and sexuality (BEN, 2014). In addition, since the first decades of the 19th century, various institutions had begun a process of “maternalization” of women (LIONETTI, 2007; VALOBRA, 2010). The work of women, outside the home, beyond teaching, did not have legitimacy until the second half of the 20th century (BARRANCOS, 2014). Following Nari (2005, p. 18), “the concern for maternity and the maternalization of women [confusion between woman and mother, or between femininity and maternity] was found to be linked to the needs to “populate” the “Argentine desert”, once some of the illusions placed on immigration have been frustrated”.

Thus, through formal and non-formal education, an attempt was made to internalize the maternal ideal in women of different social classes, to change and homogenize their practices regarding the upbringing of children. However, maternity on the political level opened both perspectives of guardianship and control over women and their bodies, as well as liberation (NARI, 2005).

In this way, the idea of the “modern woman” is transmitted from different Argentine publications. This concept is not without contradictions:

because, on the one hand, it characterizes these women as active, and knowledgeable about the “real world” whose horizon is much more than a room; but on the other, in its pages it includes novels and embroidery patterns that (...) correspond more to the interests of “traditional” women than of the supposed “modern” women (BONTEMPO, 2016, p. 333).

In other words, this image of the “modern woman” presented certain nuances and ruptures, being linked, only in part, to issues such as pleasure and autonomy. In addition, the figure of “modern youth” symbolized the hopes and concerns associated with the sociocultural transformations of the period, embodying fears of moral and cultural decadence, but also evidencing tensions between gender, nation, and modernity, which marked Argentina from the 1920s and 1930s (TOSSOUNIAN, 2020).

In this context, female physical culture and its varied arsenal of bodily proposals became a space for the dispute in which supposedly legitimate practices, knowledge, and discourses on how to define a certain fictional female bodily ideal circulated and were reappropriated. This idea was accompanied by adequate, dignified, and correct uses of desire, pleasure, sensitivity, eroticism, emotions, sexual morality, or certain body aesthetics, legitimizing practices from biomedical, religious, and pedagogical discourses, whose boundaries were highly porous (SCHA-RAGRODSKY, 2016). Thus, the temporal space that we address has as its national context

a scenario of mobile and unstable practices, knowledge, and discourses with multiple faces: diversity of meanings and positions on femininities and sexualities, shared nuclei of oppressive meanings on sexual difference and desire, phallogocentric bodily hierarchizations, and regionalizations, explicit forms of coercion and naturalization on certain body styles, compulsive inclusions of some sports techniques and practices, silent exclusions on certain kinetic-moral scripts, subtle modes of domination referred to certain body aesthetics, unequal proxemic modes, tensions, conflicts and disputes over “licit” and legitimate natural body patterns, complex processes of semantization and re-semantization of the body, negotiations, alliances, agreements on gestural universes, as well as gaps, twists, small leaks, disobedience and resistance (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2016, p. 15).

DEVELOPMENT

Obstruction and concealment of the female body: Long skirts (1929-1934)

From the first year addressed, Rodríguez Jurado stated that compulsory, outdoor in both school gymnastics was carried out, “with the appropriate uniform and following the hygiene rules essential for the best result” (RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, 1929, p. 26). The justification for the use and the characteristics of the uniform were produced from the medical discourse, especially hygiene, which was presented as a knowledge that governed the moral, sexual, and erotic uses of the bodies; that is, it institutionalized a certain notion of a good life or a healthy life. The following year, when referring exclusively to the plan for men, a regulation included the need to use “gymnastics suit” (RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, 1930, p. 20). In the available photographs, these students can be seen wearing short pants and short-sleeved shirts, both white (RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, 1929; EL DÍA, November 8, 1946).

As far as women are concerned, the use of uniforms also intervened in the moral, aesthetic, and kinetic universe at the same time, forming part of the differentiated material culture. Thus, it was influenced by issues that made movements and postures allowed, which undoubtedly had moral, erotic, and aesthetic connotations. It is a central practice to allow, encouraging, and prescribing certain movements of the body, while discouraging, prohibiting, outlawing certain others, and encouraging modesty among the students.

When asked about the general uniform of the Colegio de Señoritas, Adelina Nélica Bibbó (student of the institution between 1929 and 1933) states that “she had nothing. We didn't have a shield... I didn't have anything. The white overall, on here and nothing else” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 184).



Illustration 1. Uniform of the students of the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas. Early years of the 1930s. Archive of the Víctor Mercante High School.

Grace Mildred Meckert (who was a student between 1934 and 1936) recounts that they did gymnastics “with those long uniforms or skirts”, to which she adds: “terrible, long skirts” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 196), and that the change was carried out by Juana Cortelezzi in 1935. The photos support the idea that these are long skirts that probably have considerably limited certain movements such as the opening of the legs. It is possible to consider these uniforms as “objects that are constitutive of the school experience, that demarcate different margins of freedom (for example, for girls and boys), distinguish between public acts of the body and intimate ones, and allow particular interactions with the materials and textures of the artifact, among other aspects” (DUSSEL, 2019, p. 22).



Illustration 2. Female students of the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas in a physical exercise class. No date. As it is the Colegio Nacional building, the photo could be from before 1931. Archive of the Víctor Mercante High School.



Illustration 3. Exhibition of 1932. *El Argentino* newspaper, November 9, 1932.



Illustration 4. Female students of the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas. 1934.

At that time, as seen in illustration 4, femininity was also defined by the use of details such as bows, in keeping with the clothing of women in the region, at least since the 19th century (CHÁVEZ GONZÁLEZ, 2006). Therefore,

sport is also adjectived in clothes if sportswear is designed and sold if it generates a specific market for both genders, and it also generates a distinction between the genders. Thus, for women, fashion in general -and even sports fashion- was always more emphatic on the element “elegance” (SOARES, 2011, p. 88).

Considering beauty as a cultural construction since the Renaissance it was associated with women, hoping that they would achieve aesthetic perfection from a rigorous moral attitude that controlled their actions (VIGARELLO, 2005). In this sense, there seems to be a vigilance of the female body, in terms of maintaining a “feminine essence”, as well as her sexuality, moving away from other unwanted, mistaken, pathologized sexuality exercises, such as the cases of the hysterical woman, the prostitute, the virile. Regarding Argentina, a series of publications were in the same direction, at least since the 1920s, thinking of exercises in general or, specifically, sports that do not dispel femininity as ideal (BONTEMPO, 2016). The covers of those publications

they exalted a dominant female body pattern: slim, young, white, stylized, neat women, desirable in the eyes of the heteronormative male gaze, with well-defined curves, insinuating gazes, painted lips, complicit smiles, sensual poses, with little or tight clothing, and quasi-erotic (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2020, p. 87).

Some sports such as swimming, tennis, and certain athletic activities were imaginarily and arbitrarily linked to the female universe (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2020).

Then, being feminine meant not leaving the subsidiary place reserved for women:

Feminizing women is, above all, feminizing their appearance and use of the body. Her posture, voice, face, muscles, way of dressing, gesturing, and exercising her sexuality are subject to surveillance and inhibitions that are internalized through submission to the “other.” Being that “other” is abstract, collective, and socially imposed (GOELLNER, 1999, p. 119).

Regarding the administration and surveillance of female bodies, in the Memoria of 1934, Rodríguez Jurado explains that in clothing and presence “students must go to class with their heads uncovered, without stockings, worn with sandals or shoes without heels and flexible; their clothes must be the usual gym clothes” (BENIGNO RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, 1934, p. 15). Elements referring to appearance rules or regimes are presented here. For males, he simply clarifies that they must attend classes “provided with an appropriate uniform for practicing the exercises [and that] they observe the essential

hygiene rules” (RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, 1935, p. 200). This justification, based on hygienic discourse, for the use of differentiated uniforms for gym classes, would present moral reasons linked to the construction of a differentiated universe for men and women, respectively. From the reading of the queer theory, we can see how “the materiality of the body does not remain independent of social discourses” (MARTÍNEZ, 2015, p. 326). In the words of Butler (2018, p. 18), “the regulatory norms of «sex» work in a performative way to build the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the sex of the body”.



Illustration 5. Girls from the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas in a basketball game. 1934. Archive of the Liceo Víctor Mercante.

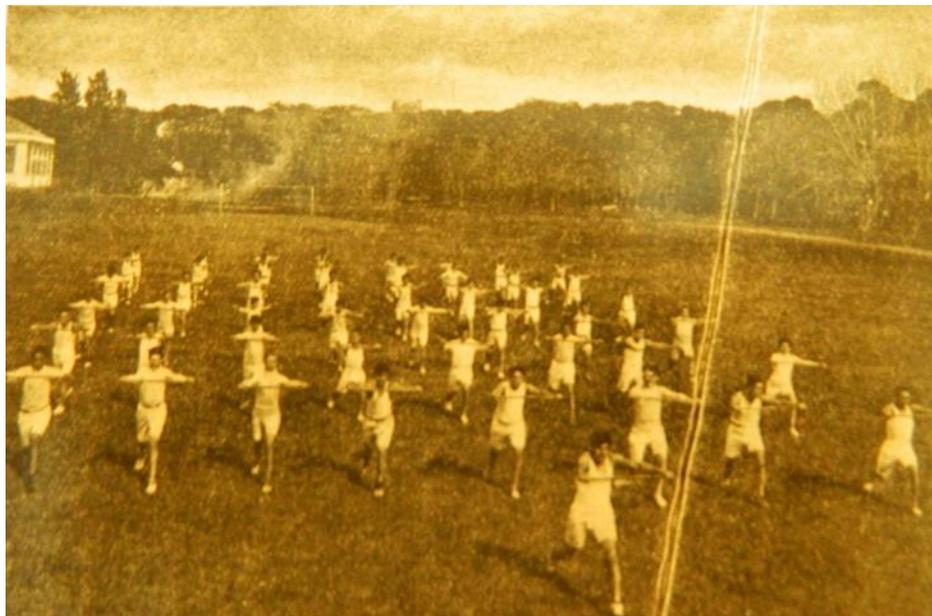


Illustration 6. Students of the Colegio Nacional with their uniforms. Rodríguez Jurado (1929).

From the photographs presented here, we are also interested in highlighting the appearance of the women in their tied hair. Following the French feminist historian, Michelle Perrot,

hair is a matter of hairiness. Hair is linked to the intimate, and also: by its internal penetration and by its proximity to sex. Its roots penetrate the body, in the “I-skin”, to use Didier Anzieu's expression, the thin film that defines the limit between inside and outside. The hair covers the sex (PERROT, 2009, p. 41).

That is why loose hair at that time was arbitrarily linked to seduction, eroticism, even prostitution, and sin. In the words of Patricia Aristizábal Montes (2007, p. 119), “The long hair as a weapon of seduction and vital strength has been a recurring theme in literature, where the tacit relationship that exists between the abundance of hair and appetite has been taken advantage of sexual appetite”. In this sense, linked to a certain modesty and discretion with the female condition, in the same period the *Instituto Nacional de Educación Física* established the use of headbands or turbans to hold the hair as mandatory (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2006).

From the educational institution, through the use of the uniform, a differential school aesthetic is transmitted for men and another for women. Therefore, we refer to

a system of operations that converts the sensory world of the subjects into certain sensibilities through the sanction of value judgments. Consequently, it develops a vocabulary of specific categories (beautiful/ugly, pleasant/unpleasant, etc.) for classifying sensations (PINEAU, 2013, p. 1).

In this system, the difference hierarchizes positions, roles, attributes, functions, and aesthetics. Thus,

the colors, costumes, dispositions, gestures, and gender positions that can be summed up in «good taste», «common sense» and «correct feelings» in teachers and students are not casual, naive, and universal, but rather respond to a historic production campaign: these brands are awarded or sanctioned, allowed or prohibited, according to their degree of adaptation to the models imposed by the educational institution, and are taken up again in other more or less institutionalized educational spaces (PINEAU, 2019, p.22).

In this way, it is possible to appreciate how the sphere of the aesthetic has played a role as a trigger of affections and emotions, being a programmatic aspiration of authorities, educators, teachers, and many other actors to influence their students in certain ways (TORO-BLANCO, 2021), pursuing certain purposes, such as binary and hierarchically differentiating bodies.

In this sense, school uniforms for physical exercises also contribute to the process of gendering and sexualization. We understand that it is a binary process (there are only two opposite options), which excludes other possible sexual identities, prioritizing certain economies of desire over others.

The women's uniform is following what was shown by the press (general and sports) from the beginning of the century and until well into the 1920s, as shown by Kaczan (2016). In the words of this author:

The bell skirt that covered even the shoes made any extraordinary dexterity difficult and prevented the visualization of the separation or opening of the legs, as a need to possibly protect the disturbing sexual fantasies that this unequivocal sign of femininity aroused (KACZAN, 2016, p.30).

Scharagrodsky, Manolakis, and Gosende (2003), who analyzed textbooks on Physical Education for teachers, between 1880 and 1930, coincide in showing women with a large part of their bodies covered.

However, it was not a process of imposition or absolute regulation of the bodies from the uniform. Among the fugues and resistances, partly linked to its use, we find another story by Adelina Nélica Bibbó, about the day the music teacher took them to sing at the *Teatro Argentino de La Plata*. She dressed them in a white tunic and a crown of peach blossoms to sing *La Traviata* and *Himno a la Universidad*. There they began to run behind the stage, threw down a curtain, and broke a statue.

The concealment of the body was part of the transmission, from the education provided by the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas, of certain domesticity for the students, as well as the promotion of the image of a woman-mother and the allusion to a supposed “feminine nature”. Values such as grace, beauty, and sensitivity were promoted for the students, from the Argentine System of Physical Education, which we understand destined to a potential heterosexual male desire. For men, on the other hand, values such as autonomy and responsibility, chivalry, and honor were transmitted.

Certain liberation of the female body: shorts or baggy pants (1935-1939)

A new uniform began to be worn in 1935, the year after Cortelezzi's assumption as director. It is about the use of shorts or baggy pants. Faced with this change, we understand that the use of the gymnastics uniform meant for the students the possibility of carrying out more varied movements and breaking with the physiological trap of intensity: girls and women, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, they had to be moderate in their physical executions, which in the 20s and 30s was being eroded, at least in certain social actors (TOUSSONIAN, 2021). It implied the use of clothing that for that moment broke with the traditional, signifying a disruptive fact for the time.

Grace Mildred Meckert explains that Cortelezzi was the one who renewed the gymnastics and the clothing because she was not satisfied with the previous clothing. For this reason, she established the baggy pants as mandatory:

in baggy pants yes (...) and my teacher Cleónida Avena... well she too. But she, when Juana told her that she also had to wear those short shorts... and other things she didn't like... then she was offended, because she had to tell us that this was the uniform we had to buy, with the right pants short and everything else (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 196).

At the same time, Grace, who introduces herself as “big as fat” says that when the gym teacher asked her what to wear, she began to cry. The next day she was summoned by the director, telling her that she had been humiliated. Given this circumstance, Juana Cortelezzi responded: “You do not have to wear that. If you don't want to wear it, don't wear it” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 196), although she ultimately decided to wear it. This would show some relative freedom in the choice of uniform by the students. Regarding the general attire, he affirms that “Juana [Cortelezzi] brought [from Germany] that uniform that had the collar like this, worn with buttons and she liked that it was well starched and we had a cape. So, the girls rejected that navy-blue cape” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 200). Regarding the help of the Cooperating Association for the purchase of uniforms around 1936, it is explained that it contributed, taking charge of 16 units for the outfits for gym classes (CORTE-LEZZI, 1936).



Illustration 7. 5th-grade students after competing in basketball. *El Plata* newspaper, November 8, 1935.

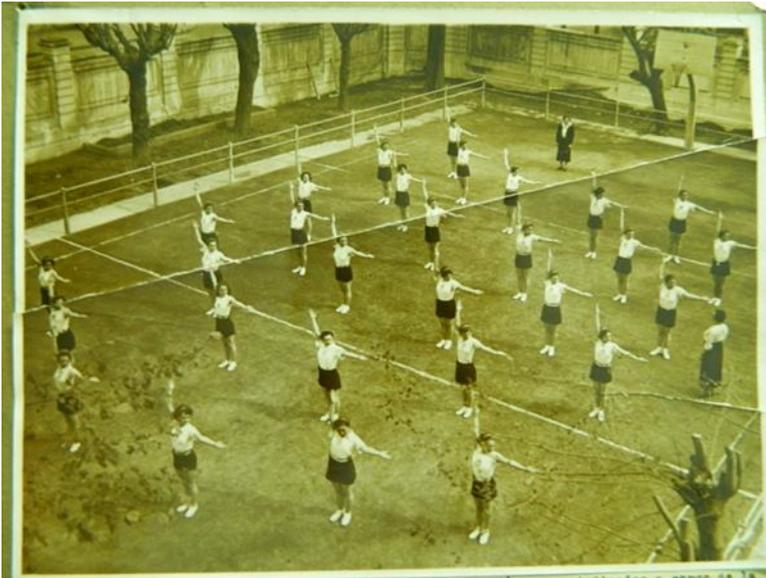


Illustration 8. Methodized class by Professor Cleónida Avena and assistant María Manini (both in the photograph). October 1936. Archive of the Liceo Víctor Mercante.



Illustration 9. Students in gymnastics uniform. 1937. Archive of the Liceo Víctor Mercante.

The baggy pants or shorts used by the students are clothing that is close to that presented by the students (which would indicate a certain equality between them) and allow greater freedom of movement, while allowing the exhibition of the women's legs, unlike the long skirts used in previous years. However, among the rules of appearance, there is evidence of the obligation to continue wearing the hair up (so as not to arouse indecent feelings in the others in public spaces), to sin, and even to prostitution. Furthermore, it could be inferred that, from the display of women's legs, their bodies are being built for the desire of the heterosexual man.

Based on the work of Kaczan (2016), we see that these shorts coexist and gradually replace the previous clothing. As the author points out:

towards the 1920s, participating in the process of modernization of women—in which appearance was part of political emancipation—and hand in hand with technological advances in the textile industry, the clothing used for gymnastics became more functional and the body is plausible to develop with greater autonomy. The innovations allow the replacement of rigid materials by elastomeric fabrics and the dress becomes light, a meager and tight mesh is implemented that highlights the charms and the curves thus creating “a new more hygienic and more pleasant morale” (MANGUDO, 1927, cited in Kaczan, 2016, p. 30).

From this quote, it is important to highlight how the clothing worn by women has clear effects on their emancipation and autonomy while considering elements such as pleasure, previously

denied, which is in line with the image of a modern woman (TOSSOUNIAN, 2020). We want to highlight the fact that, in the specific case that we are analyzing, the use of light clothing and the empowerment of the exhibition of women's legs occurs only in this second period that begins in the mid-30s. Therefore, it is carried out with a certain delay in what was disseminated by the aforementioned graphic publications. However, as has been said, showing the legs is an act of liberation, but at the same time an act of dependence in the face of the desiring hetero-masculine gaze.

As indicated, students were already wearing shorts, at least, since 1929. Therefore,

the social construction of masculinity and femininity has supposed different and opposite body forms, as well as gestural manifestations, control of emotions, habits, tastes, and attitudes that are differentiated from each other. In this logic, female body techniques differ from male ones and operate following visualization and clothing uses (ZAMBRINI, 2010, p. 144).



Illustration 10. Student in gymnastics uniform. 1937. Archive of the Liceo Víctor Mercante.

In the *Memoria* of 1936, it is stated that the director of the school has adopted a new model of white apron for the daily use of her students, which she will make compulsory for the 1937 course (CORTELEZZI, 1937). In a commemorative book about the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*, it is stated that “this model, attached to one side and a high collar, along with the cape, was the classic Liceo uniform until 1969. Prof. Cortelezzi, Director of the school at that time, was inspired by the one used by German schools that she had just visited” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 362).

In the same *Memoria*, Cortelezzi states that he has commissioned the making of the sports pennant that bears the UNLP seal embroidered in white and the inscription “CSS” on a blue background. In addition, he “has adopted a badge, which affects the shape of a shield, and which also bears the initials of the establishment, as a complement to the physical exercise uniform” (CORTELEZZI, 1937, p. 38). This is linked to the construction, by the *Colegio*, of a certain sense of belonging, which would contribute to the production of identity meanings in being part of the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*. In this, it can also be inferred the intention to distinguish from other schools that contributed other capital (BOURDIEU, 2012).

The clothing used in gymnastics classes was controlled, at least around 1938, by Aurora Duquet, an assistant teacher who was also in charge of accompaniment on the piano and seeking discipline. Such is the importance assigned to the obligatory attire that is included in the *Memoria* in the following way: “The students have always responded to the obligation to attend physical exercise classes wearing their uniforms and in the change of clothing in the time assigned to them before starting the class” (CORTELEZZI, 1939, p.2).

In 1939, the head of the discipline explains that at the entrance she was in charge of inspecting the complete uniform, “making them remove the scarves, colored belts and ornaments” (CORTE-

LEZZI, 1939, p.17), reason contributing once again to the promotion of a certain aesthetic, delimiting an allowed kinetic universe, as well as a certain morality.¹⁰ At that time, in the national and international context, the use of ornaments is arbitrarily assigned to women¹¹ who associate with beauty to a greater extent than men, which allows us to see once again how femininity was (and is) a symbolic and political construction. However, this dominant discourse was qualified or resisted by different voices and publications at the end of the 1930s in Argentina, such as the magazine *Cultura Sexual y Física* (LEDESMA PRIETTO and SCHARAGRODSKY, 2020). There, for example, the way to classify the bodies from the supposed impartial male voice was questioned. According to Ledesma Prietto and Scharagrodsky, they also went beyond the dominant aesthetic criteria and highlighted the importance of pleasure and joy during bodily practices, while opposing the regulation of female desire, which produced nervous and sexual imbalances, and they rejected the hypocrisy of double standards and sexual prejudices towards women.

In this second period, the image of the woman-mother continued to be present at the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas* with references, from Physical Education to the “nature of women”, also alluding to a supposed “feminine sensibility”. For men, on the other hand, the subject, patriotic and hygienic values were promoted, a “winning spirit” was transmitted and character formation was sought.

New concealment of the body: the skirt pants and the blouse of the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction (1940-1946)

In 1940, the new director of the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*, Faustino Legón, established that for the teaching of gymnastics, the regulations of the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction of Nación should be adopted, doing the same with the uniform. That attire will then be used for at least until 1946. In Resolution No. 1, shortly after taking office, the director of the Colegio told the director of the department that, together with Professor Cleónida Avena, “study and propose in detail complete the verbally agreed clothing to be required from the beginning of the next course, on the basis that it is imposed by the aforementioned Ministry (**blouse, skirt-pants...**)” (LEGÓN, 1939, p. 2). It is necessary to highlight at this point that the authority that decided on the attire of the female bodies was a man, unlike the previous period in which the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas* was in charge of a woman. Along these lines, the DCF presented an androcentric view since, during the eighteen years of its existence, its authorities were exclusively men, while women only participated in teaching classes at the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas* and worked in the doctor's office of the institution. The same happened with the referents (Physical Education teachers and doctors) who were taken as authorities.¹² This was following what happened in public and private, national and provincial organizations, in which the specific field of “physical culture” and physical education was thought of, conceptualized, elaborated, and defined by men or by certain men, taking the male body as the ideal or universal, and that of the woman as the particular, hierarchically inferior, with limitations (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2014).

It is worth clarifying that, both in this period and in previous ones, the national regulations were followed, which allowed a series of modifications applied by the UNLP and by each school. Then, on March 6, 1939, Circular No. 3 of the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction, in charge of César Vásquez, established a new uniform, both for the teachers of the subject and for the students:

By resolution issued on the date, it has been established that in educational establishments dependent on the Ministry, physical education teachers will wear the following uniform: wide, white, **non-transparent** blouse, with a turned-down collar, three-quarter sleeves, fastens under the skirt; **non-transparent** royal blue **skirt-pants**, avoiding buckled belts; white, soft, rubber-

¹⁰ We have not found in the available sources references to the men's attire being checked as well.

¹¹ Following Maldonado Acosta (2018, p. 102), we understand adornment as “that set of elements that beautify women, that allow them to represent themselves and at the same time represent their social hierarchy through the family. It is made up of her clothing, the accessories used for herself and at home; It also implies knowing when and how to take them without crossing the line of the contradictory, following the canons imposed on society and the cost that challenging them would mean”.

¹² Among them, doctors such as Maurice Boigey (France), Godofredo Grasso (Argentina) and Julio Rodríguez (Uruguay) stand out.

soled sneakers, preferably without heels; short white stocking rolled around the ankle; and white sweater, with a closed neck and long sleeves. The students will have the same uniform with the difference that the skirt-pants will be dark navy blue and its length will reach the vertex of the kneecap (ARGENTINA, 1939, p. 216-217; the highlights belong to us).

We highlight the reference to the non-transparent skirt, which we understand in the sense of a certain fear of showing certain parts of the woman's body. That is, we identify in this type of allusion the manifest intention of hiding certain parts of the female body.



Illustration 11. Mandatory uniforms for Physical Education teachers and students were established by the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction of Nación. Bulletin 1939, year 2, no. 6.

If we consider illustration 11, we understand that the image intends to build the female figure, manufacturing, for example, the waist with a certain thickness, since, obviously, not all women had that waist or that body. At this point, it is possible to perceive how images and discourses are performative, considering performativity as a specific modality of power (understood as discourse): “The power that discourse has to materialize its effects is therefore consonant with the power it has to circumscribe the sphere of intelligibility” (BUTLER, 2018).

Precisely in 1938, César Coll, Minister of Justice and Public Instruction of Nación (entity in which the aforementioned resolution had been generated), visited the Colegio Secundario de Señoritas and was struck by the fact that the teacher did not have the regulated uniform, but street clothes (CORTELEZZI, 1939).

Catalina Lerange, a student at the Colegio between 1940 and 1945, refers in her work to the uniform used for the other general classes. She states that the use of a white smock was mandatory for classes, excursions, and official events and that it was a faithful copy of the one worn by high school students in Berlin: “With almost elegant lines, it has two boards in the front and one in the back.” the rear; high neck. It turns on with a row of buttons on the left side” (LERANGE, 1949, p. 22). She alludes to the fact that they were not allowed to exaggerate “the headdress” or the excessive use of jewelry or accessories, in line with what happened in the previous period, and that the Colegio was not responsible for the loss of these valuables. As for gym clothes, she confirms what we have already stated:

The so-called “equipment” consisted of navy blue skirt-pants, a white piqué blouse, white sneakers, and pumps. A triangular-shaped scarf for the head in the colors red and blue; and, in the

center of the chest, the shield, with the beloved letters: C.S.S. During the winter we had to use the well-known “windbreakers” (LERANGE, 1949, p. 23).

The use of the headscarf is confirmed by the former student interviewed; she linked it with a certain modesty by not showing her loose hair, with the aforementioned (imaginary) relationship of that aesthetic with the eroticism of women.

Following Scharagrodsky, clothing was a central concern of this school discipline, which contributed to regulating certain attitudes, values, and behaviors arbitrarily linked to the masculine and feminine on the bodies:

the dress codes and their use became, during Physical Education classes, powerful control mechanisms over what is allowed, what is appropriate, and what is correct for each gender. Clothing -and its effects on body appearance- hid a whole strongly normalizing moral universe” (SCHARAGRODSKY, 2006, p. 187).

For this last period, Enilde Houstaix, another student at the Colegio between 1941 and 1946, also explains that the gymnastics uniform was “blue gabardine skirt-pants, white pique blouse or a white zip-up windbreaker. Everything that was bought in «Gath y Chaves». A red and blue handkerchief because we played basketball and baseball in the garden” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 203). Regarding the class uniform, she states that “it was the white overall with two boards, German type (...)” (ORTUBE, 2001, p. 203).¹³ Beyond the reference to the fact that compulsory clothing was purchased in Gath and Chaves, the institution's cooperator collaborated with the students to obtain it (LEGÓN, 1941, 1943), as also happened in previous periods (COR-TELEZZI, 1936).

In 1944, in the Minutes of a meeting of the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*, Rodríguez Jura-do states that the students must attend the act of April 14 in the Plaza San Martín in skirts (it is said that there will also be an act at the same time in *Plaza de Mayo*). This indicates some concern about showing uniformity in very crowded events.

Two former students of the Colegio from the end of this period affirm that for Physical Education classes a skirt and a blouse was used: “Skirt-pants are pants that have a board... two boards, similar to a skirt” (interview 2019, p.3). Here again, we can see how the uniforms, by fostering a certain aesthetic, present a thinkable kinetic universe as well as an unthinkable one, mixed with moral issues. Then, the interviewees give an account of a new change that would have occurred with the dissolution of the Department, explaining how they felt their change in terms of comfort:

The uniform change was in 1946 or later. The new uniform was a white bloomer, not shorts, and jogger pants for the winter. **It was fantastic for me to wear baggy pants, not the skirt-pant. What happens is that when you fell to the ground and had to raise your legs, those pants... No, no, you were going to show the parts, but the boards came crashing down on you. It was not comfortable for exercise.** It was more comfortable than wearing a skirt, and at the beginning of all we used the uniform because we did rhythmic gymnastics with hoops, we didn't throw ourselves on the ground or anything (interview 2019, p.4, the featured one belongs to us).

Following Inés Dussel (2003), clothing has effects on students' school experience and was part of a process of modern homogeneity and equality through appearances. Its effects are linked to the possibility of establishing certain social relationships and the authorization, from the school institution, of certain configurations of the body. Thus,

the uniforms are consciously and deliberately symbolic since in them, there is a reasonable selection in their design that is inserted within the representations about the duty of men and women. The uniforms are a symbol of the regulation that is exerted on the bodies to inscribe attitudes and behaviors standardized and considered normal. For the ones who use them, it represents giving a sign of belonging to a social group and placing themselves within a hierarchy (CHÁVEZ GONZÁLEZ, 2006, p. 172).

¹³ “Gath and Chaves” was a store located at 7 and 50, known as one of the large and traditional stores of La Plata. It was a brand that in 1945 had 19 branches throughout the country. It also meant refinement and good quality.

In this way, we witness a regulation of the bodies in pursuit of equalization (within the groups of male and female students, respectively), at the same time that a differentiation is sought between each group.



Illustration 12. Exhibition of Physical Education in which the students wear the aforementioned skirt-pants and blouse. *El Argentino* newspaper, November 8, 1946.

This return to a certain concealment of the body in this third period was reinforced for women with the prohibition of having bare shoulders for Religion classes.¹⁴ The interviewees say that at that time women could not go to church with short sleeves and without a hat. For this reason, the teacher attended classes with many shawls to provide them to the students who went without sleeves, and they affirm that “the one who insisted a lot on that was especially this priest” (interview 2019, p. 6). However, the students resisted the use of this type of uniform, constantly questioning the priest about why it was necessary to use it if it was not requested in other subjects.

In this way, there seems to be a setback in the display of women's legs and the fact of facilitating their movements. However, the fact that it was a skirt-pant meant the inclusion in the history of women's clothing as a highly symbolic sign of masculinity, such as pants (BARD, 2012). In other words, it was somewhat eccentric for women to wear a kind of pants, but it was for the context of the early 20th century, when it allowed greater movement without losing modesty (KACZAN, 2016), not for the early 1940s, as it happened in the analyzed case. In this way, a process is carried out (not exempt from ambiguities and resistance) of differential and unequal allocation of moralities, aesthetics, and emotions, of their regulation, understood as situated cultural and social practices (AHMED, 2015).

This setback in the school uniform is part of the search, for the subject, for a certain discretion by the students. There is a return to domesticity, although paradoxically, the image of a woman-mother gives way, in part, to the idea of a working woman and the search for responsibility, also for them. In the three periods analyzed, different parts of the body were exercised in male and female students: while they trained all parts of the body through numerous and varied sports (with a predominance of arm strength work), they participated in activities that focused on the lower part, with speed and flexibility predominating.¹⁵ In the latter one can appreciate a certain fear of the masculinization of women.

¹⁴ Presidential Decree 18411 of December 31, 1943 provided that, in all public schools of primary, post-primary, secondary and special education, the teaching of the Catholic religion would be taught as an ordinary subject of the respective curricula, and created the General Directorate of Religious Instruction. This did not apply to schools dependent on the University. However, De Labougle, president of the UNLP, applied the same measure in this house of studies (BELINCHE and PAN-ELLA, 2014).

¹⁵ It is important to highlight that, historically, flexibility was thought of as a supposedly feminine capacity or condition, understanding that certain motor capacities corresponded to a greater extent with men or with women (SCHARA-GROD-SKY, 2006).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning the mandatory uniform for gymnastics classes at the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*, we established three great moments, coinciding with three main ways of understanding femininity and female physical culture: the Argentine System of Physical Education of Romero Brest (since 1929), the German and rhythmic gymnastics proposed by the director Cortelezzi (from 1935 to 1939) and the regulations of the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction (from 1940 to 1946) that continued with the proposal of a differentiated practice. The first is characterized by the use of long skirts that hid part of the women's bodies, making their movements difficult. This agrees with what the Argentine sports press reported on clothing at the beginning of the 20th century and until the beginning of the 1920s. In the second moment, the clothing consisted of baggy pants or short pants, instrumented by the new director of the Colegio, which meant an advance in terms of the liberation of the women's body, but also its exhibition for the hetero-masculine gaze. They showed an advance in terms of the liberation of the women's body, but also its exhibition of the hetero-masculine gaze. This implied, then, the authorization of new movements and erotica, or forms of presentation and bodily exhibition, approaching that uniform to that of the students, evidencing a certain equality between them, although late in the case of women. This clothing resembles the new clothes used by them when doing physical culture throughout the 1920s and 1930s, as depicted in sports publications. However, the female students are seen with their hair tied, which would limit that freedom. The third and last moment would represent a setback in terms of liberation and equality, since it is implemented, following the conservative policy of the National Directorate of Physical Education of César Vásquez, a skirt-pant, and a blouse. The use of a headscarf is required, in line with the previous period in which the students wore their hair tied. According to a student interviewed, it was an outfit that limited certain movements, such as opening the legs while they were on the ground. In this context, it was interpreted as an eccentric change for women, but when it was carried out at the beginning of the century (and not at the beginning of the 1940s) since, in symbolic terms, “the woman put on the pants” (KACZAN, 2016).

In this way, the uniforms contributed to two simultaneous processes: one of equalization within each group (boys and girls), and another of binary differentiation (only two mutually exclusive options) between both groups, which translated into inequality in favor of the students (which mutated, in part, in the second period). Thus, the costumes were part of an instance of ordering, disciplining, and regulation—not fully materialized—which were resisted, accounting for a certain approach and distance from the local context, as well as a swing between autonomy, liberation, or emancipation (through the possibility of movement and display of the body) and dependence (through motor limitations and hiding certain parts of the body and exalting others, and showing the legs to the heterosexual male gaze). The latter was entrenched in the promotion of values such as beauty, elegance, and sensitivity, aimed at potential heterosexual male desires.

At this point, unwanted femininities would have been linked to women who did not respect the mandatory uniforms and who wore their hair loose, which at that time was imaginarily linked to eroticism and prostitution. In the case of the third period, the unwanted way of being a woman was related to exaggerating the dress when attending school.

Also, on repeated occasions during the three periods, the use of uniforms for Physical Education classes presented a hygienic justification for students, so the medical discourse was present.

What happened with the teaching of Physical Education at the *Colegio Secundario de Señoritas*, in terms of the transmission of femininities, and concerning the use of uniforms for classes, accounts for a permanent tension in society between equality and inequality between women and men, dependency and autonomy, not at all a linear path that went from inequality to equality or less inequality. It seems that it was a matter of supervised autonomy. On the other hand, there were permanent ambiguities, contradictions, advances, and setbacks in terms of women's emancipation.

REFERENCES

- AHMED, Sara. *La política cultural de las emociones*. Ciudad de México: Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género de la UNAM, 2015.
- ARCHETTI, Eduardo. *Masculinidades. Fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Del Dragón, 2016.
- ARISTIZÁBAL MONTES, Patricia. Eros y la cabellera femenina. *El hombre y la máquina*, n. 8, p. 116-129, 2007.
- BÁEZ, Jésica. *Los modos de vivir el cuerpo sexuado de los/as/xs jóvenes en la escuela secundaria*. Tesis (Doctorado en Ciencias de la Educación). Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2013.
- BARD, Christine. *Historia política del pantalón*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2012.
- BARRANCOS, Dora. Ideas socialistas en cuerpos sanos (Argentina, 1920-1930). En: SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo (Comp.). *La invención del "homo gymnasticus". Fragmentos históricos sobre la educación de los cuerpos en movimiento en Occidente*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2011a, p. 423-440.
- BARRANCOS, Dora. Género y ciudadanía en la Argentina. *Iberoamericana. Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*. Vol. XLI: 1-2, p. 23-39, 2011b.
- BARRANCOS, Dora. Sentidos, sentimientos y sensibilidades (1880-1930). *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Cuerpos, Emociones y Sociedad*. Vol. VI, n. 15, p. 27-39, 2014.
- BELINCHE, Marcelo y PANELLA, Claudio. *Memorias de la universidad: Un relato fotográfico sobre la identidad de la UNLP*. La Plata: Edulp, 2014.
- BEN, Pablo. La ciudad del pecado: moral sexual de las clases populares en el Buenos Aires del 900. En: BARRANCOS, Dora; GUY, Donna y VALOBRA, Adriana. *Moralidades y comportamientos sexuales. Argentina, 1880-2011*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2014, p. 95-113.
- BONTEMPO, María. El cuerpo de la mujer moderna. La construcción de la feminidad en las revistas de Editorial Atlántida, 1918-1933. En: SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo (Coord.). *Mujeres en movimiento. Deporte, cultura física y feminidades. Argentina, 1870-1980*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2016, p. 329-348.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre. *La distinción: criterio y bases sociales del gusto*. Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2012.
- BUONUOME, Juan. *Periodismo militante en la era de la información. La Vanguardia, el socialismo y los orígenes de la cultura de masas en la Argentina (1894-1930)*. Tesis (Doctorado en Historia). Victoria: Universidad de San Andrés, 2016.
- BUTLER, Judith. Regulaciones de género. *La ventana*, v. 3, n. 23, p. 7-35, 2006.
- BUTLER, Judith. *Cuerpo que importan. Sobre los límites materiales y discursivos del "sexo"*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2018.
- BUTLER, Judith. *Cuerpos aliados y lucha política. Hacia una teoría performativa de la asamblea*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2019.
- CARBALLO, Carlos. *Proponer y negociar: el ocaso de las tradiciones autoritarias en las prácticas de la educación física*. La Plata: Al margen, 2003.
- CATTARUZZA, Alejandro. *Historia de la Argentina. 1916-1955*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2009.

- CHÁVEZ GONZÁLEZ, Mónica. *La introducción de la educación física en México: representaciones sobre el género y el cuerpo, 1882–1928*. Tesis (Maestría en Historia). Ciudad de México: El Colegio de San Luis, 2006.
- DE BEAUVOIR, Simone. *El segundo sexo*. Buenos Aires: Penguin Random House, 2018.
- DE LUCA, Rubén. *Funcionarios bonaerenses (1810-1950)*. Buenos Aires: Dunken, 2008.
- DI PIERO, María. Métodos de admisión a la educación y concepciones de justicia distributiva: representaciones docentes en una escuela secundaria tradicional en Argentina. *Andamios*, v. 14, n. 35, p. 379-402, 2017.
- DUSSEL, Inés. La gramática escolar de la escuela argentina: un análisis desde la historia de los guardapolvos. *Annuario de Historia de la Educación*, n.º 4, 2003.
- DUSSEL, Inés. La cultura material de la escolarización: reflexiones en torno a un giro historiográfico. *Educar em Revista*, Curitiba, Brasil, v. 35, n. 76, p. 13-29, jul./ago. 2019.
- FACCIA, Analía. Discursos sobre el cuerpo, vestimenta y desigualdad de género. *Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios en Diseño y Comunicación*, n.º 76, año 20, p. 37-48, 2019.
- FRYDENBERG, Julio. *Historia social del fútbol: del amateurismo a la profesionalización*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2011.
- GALAK, Eduardo; KOPELOVICH, Pablo; PEREYRA, Martín. Entre el nacionalismo y la internacionalización: la primera década de la Dirección General de Educación Física (Argentina, 1938-1947). *Praxis educativa*, v. 25, n. 2, mayo/agosto, 2021.
- GAYOL, Sandra; PALERMO, Silvana. *Política y cultura de masas en la Argentina de la primera mitad del siglo XX*. Los Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2018.
- GIORDANO, Verónica. (Doble) moral sexual y derechos civiles de las mujeres, 1888-2010. En: BARRANCOS, Dora; GUY, Donna y VALOBRA, Adriana. *Moralidades y comportamientos sexuales. Argentina, 1880-2011*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2014, p. 389-408.
- GOELLNER, Silvana. *Bela, maternal e feminina: imagens da mulher na Revista Educacao Phsyca*. Tese (Doutorado em Educacao), 1999. Campinas: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1999.
- HERNÁNDEZ SAMPIERI, Roberto; FERNÁNDEZ COLLADO, Carlos; BAPTISTA LUCIO, Pilar. *Metodología de la investigación*. México: Mc Graw-Hill Interamericana, 2003.
- KACZAN, Gisela. La práctica gimnástica y el deporte, la cultura física y el cuerpo bello en la historia de las mujeres. Argentina 1900-1930. *Revista Historia Crítica*, n. 61, p. 23-43, 2016.
- KIRK, David. Primeras formas de educación física en el Reino Unido: una narración visual. En: SHARAGRODSKY, Pablo (Comp.). *La invención del "homo gymnasticus". Fragmentos históricos sobre la educación de los cuerpos en movimiento en Occidente*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2011, p. 153-164.
- KOPELOVICH, Pablo y GALAK, Eduardo. Una pedagogización de los deportes. La figura de Benigno Rodríguez Jurado y sus políticas sobre cultura física y deportes. *Revista Materiales para la historia del deporte*, n. 20, 2020.
- LAMAS, Marta. Diferencias de sexo, género y diferencia sexual. *Cuicuilco*, v. 7, n. 18, 2000.

- LA CLECA, Franco. *Machos. Sin ánimo de ofender*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI de Argentina Editores, 2005.
- LEDESMA PRIETTO, Nadia y SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo. Cultura física, cuerpos y sexualidades en la revista *Cultura Sexual y Física*, 1937-1941. *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, v. 27, n.4, p. 1225-1243, out-dez. 2020.
- LEGARRALDE, Martín. *Historia del Colegio Nacional de La Plata entre 1887 y 1918, y su articulación con los proyectos pedagógicos*. Informe anual. Inédito, 2000.
- LINARES, Luciana. “A la conquista de la opinión pública!”: eugenesia latina a través de la revista *Viva Cien Años*, Argentina, 1934-1947. *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, v. 25, n. 1, p.179-192, 2018.
- LIONETTI, Lucía. *La misión política de la escuela pública: educar al ciudadano de la república (1870-1916)*. Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2007.
- MALDONADO ACOSTA, Laura. (2018). La mujer y el adorno: arma de doble filo. En: DELGADO DE SMITH, Yamile; HAMIDIAN, Benito; ARANGUREN, Williams. *Estudios de género: tejiendo redes para el desarrollo sostenible*. Venezuela: Universidad de Carabobo, 2018, p. 101-112.
- MARTÍNEZ, Ariel. La tensión entre materialidad y discurso: la mirada de Judith Butler sobre el cuerpo. *Cinta moebio* 54, p. 325-335, 2015.
- MARTÍNEZ MAZZOLA, Ricardo. Gimnasia, deportes y usos del tiempo libre en el socialismo argentino (1896-1916). En: SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo (Comp.). *Miradas médicas sobre la cultura física en Argentina. 1880-1970*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2014, p. 275-299.
- MIRANDA, Marisa y VALLEJO, Gustavo. *Una historia de la eugenesia: Argentina y las redes biopolíticas internacionales*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2012.
- NARI, Marcela. *Políticas de maternidad y maternalismo político*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2005.
- OLAVARRÍA, José. Modelos de masculinidad y desigualdad de género. En: LOMAS, Carlos. (Comp.). *Los chicos también lloran. Identidades masculinas, igualdad entre los sexos y coeducación*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2004, p. 45-63.
- ORTUBE, María. *Nuestro Liceo*. La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2001.
- PERROT, Michelle. *Mi historia de las mujeres*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009.
- PINEAU, Pablo. La escuela como máquina estetizante. *Revista Todavía*, n. 30, 2013.
- PINEAU, Pablo. Aportes para un nuevo manifiesto: historiografía educativa sobre estéticas y sensibilidades en América Latina. En: PINEAU, Pablo.; SERRA, María Silvia.; SOUTHWELL, Myriam (Edit.). *La Educación de las sensibilidades en la Argentina moderna. Estudios sobre estética escolar II*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2019.
- NAVARRO, Luciana y PRATTO, Juan. De-generando cuerpos: El Cestoball como deporte ¿Femenino? 11.º Congreso Argentino de Educación Física y Ciencias, 28 de septiembre al 2 de octubre de 2015, Ensenada, Argentina. En: Publicaciones 11.º Congreso (2015). Ensenada: Universidad Nacional de La Plata. Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, 2016.
- RAMACCIOTTI, Karina y VALOBRA, Adriana. “Peor que putas”: trébedas, safistas y homosexuales en el discurso moral hegemónico del campo médico, 1936-1954. En: BARRANCOS, Dora; GUY, Donna

- y VALOBRA, Adriana. *Moralidades y comportamientos sexuales. Argentina, 1880-2011*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2014.
- ROMANIUK, Susana. Educación física, eugenesia y construcción de la otredad. La Reforma Educativa de la provincia de Buenos Aires (1936-1940). En: 11.º Congreso (2015). Ensenada, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2016.
- SAUTU, Ruth.; DALLE, Pablo; BONIOLO, Paula; ELBERT, Rodolfo. *Manual de Metodología. Construcción del marco teórico, formulación de los objetivos y elección de la metodología*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2005.
- SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo; MANOLAKIS, Laura y GOSENDE, Eduardo. La educación física en los manuales y textos escolares (1880-1930). Análisis de las categorías de género, espacio-tiempo y nacionalidad. *Géneros*, v. 11, n. 31, 2003.
- SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo. El padre de la Educación Física argentina: fabricando una política corporal generizada (1901-1938). En: AISENSTEIN, Ángela y SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo. *Tras las huellas de la Educación Física Escolar Argentina. Cuerpo, género y pedagogía 1880-1950*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2006, p.159-197.
- SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo. Masculinidades en movimiento en las clases de educación física argentinas, o acerca de cómo no quedar en “off side”. En: PIEDRA DE LA CUADRA, Joaquín (Comp.). *Género, masculinidades y diversidad. Educación Física, deporte e identidades masculinas*. Madrid: Octaedro, 2014, p. 160-185.
- SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo. Palabras preliminares. En: SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo (Coord.). *Mujeres en movimiento. Deporte, cultura física y feminidades. Argentina, 1870-1980*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2016, p. 11-16.
- SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo. Cuerpos, feminidades y deportes. Las tapas de la revista El gráfico, Argentina 1920-1930. *Arquivos em movimento*, v. 16, n. 2, p. 62-91, 2020.
- SOARES, Carmen. *As roupas nas práticas corporais e esportivas. A educação do corpo entre o conforto, a elegância e a eficiência (1920-1940)*. Campinas: Autores Asociados, 2011.
- SOUTHWELL, Myriam. Formato, pedagogías y planeamiento para la secundaria en Argentina: notas sobresalientes del siglo XX. *História da Educação*, v. 22, n. 55, p. 18-37, 2018.
- STAKE, Robert. *Investigación con estudios de casos*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata, 2005.
- TORRICELLA, Andrea. Cultura física, discurso científico y usos de la fotografía. Convergencias epistemológicas en torno a las re-presentaciones del cuerpo, Argentina 1910-1940. En: SCHARAGRODSKY, Pablo (Comp.). *Miradas médicas sobre la cultura física en Argentina. 1880-1970*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2014, p. 59-82.
- TORO-BLANCO, Pablo (2021). Estética escolar y regímenes emocionales en el centenario de la Independencia (Chile, 1910). *Revista História da Educação* (Online), v. 25, p. 1-23, 2021.
- TOSSOUNIAN, Cecilia. *La Joven Moderna en la Argentina de entreguerras: Género, Nación y Cultura Popular*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2021.
- VALOBRA, Adriana. La ciudadanía política femenina en la Argentina de la primera mitad del siglo XX. Aportes para una aproximación conceptual y recursos didácticos. *Clío & Asociados*, n. 14, p. 86-112, 2010.

VIGARELLO, George. *Historia de la belleza. El cuerpo y el arte de embellecer desde el Renacimiento hasta nuestros días*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 2005.

ZAMBRINI, Laura. Modos de vestir e identidades de género: reflexiones sobre las marcas culturales en el cuerpo. *Nomadías*, n. 11, p. 1-13, 2010.

FUENTES

ARGENTINA. *Decreto presidencial n.º 18411* del 31 de diciembre de 1943.

ARGENTINA. MINISTERIO DE JUSTICIA E INSTRUCCIÓN PÚBLICA. *Boletín*. Año II, n.º 6, 1939.

COLEGIO SECUNDARIO DE SEÑORITAS. Acta de reunión de profesores. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1944.

CORTELEZZI, Juana. *Memoria del Colegio Secundario de Señoritas 1935*. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1936.

CORTELEZZI, Juana. *Memoria del Colegio Secundario de Señoritas 1936*. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1937.

CORTELEZZI, Juana. *Memoria del Colegio Secundario de Señoritas 1938*. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1939.

DIARIO El Argentino, 8 de noviembre de 1946. La Plata.

DIARIO *El día*, 8 de noviembre de 1946. La Plata.

DIARIO *El Plata*, 8 de noviembre de 1935. La Plata.

EX ALUMNAS del COLEGIO Secundario De Señoritas. 2019. La Plata.

LEGÓN, Faustino. *Resolución n.º 1*, 7 de noviembre de 1939.

LEGÓN, Faustino. *Memoria del Colegio Secundario de Señoritas de 1940*. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1941.

LEGÓN, Faustino. *Memoria del Colegio Secundario de Señoritas de 1942*. Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1943.

LERANGE, Catalina. *Seis años en un Liceo*. Buenos Aires, 1949.

RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, Benigno. Departamento de Cultura Física. En *Boletín anual del Colegio de la Universidad de La Plata*. Número 1, 1929.

RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, Benigno. La Cultura Física en el Colegio. En *Boletín anual del Colegio de la Universidad de La Plata*. Número 2, 1930.

RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, Benigno. *Informe del año 1933 sobre el desempeño del Departamento de Cultura Física de la UNLP*. Universidad Nacional de La Plata. Archivo histórico del Liceo Víctor Mercante, 1934.

RODRÍGUEZ JURADO, Benigno. El Departamento de Cultura Física del Colegio Nacional. *Boletín de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata*. Tomo XIX. Número 1, 1935.

Submitted: 03/11/2022

Approved: 07/13/2022

CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LOS AUTORES: AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION:

Author 1 – Director of the doctoral thesis and text writing.

Author 2 – Producer of the doctoral thesis and text writing.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.