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ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIONS AND PUBLIC POLICIES: A RELATIONSHIP TO PROMOTE THE SPORT

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Abstract

Objective: to understand the essence of the actions developed in the sport of Lavras/MG to say whether they can be considered entrepreneurial. The purpose seeks to understand how public policies and entrepreneurial activities can be articulated to promote the sport in this municipality.

Methodology: the research followed an interpretivist epistemological orientation based on the methodology of research-action using the analysis of thematic content as analysis technique. The qualitative approach and the following research methods: face-to-face interviews with open script, documentary analysis, field diary and brainstorming were chosen.

Main results: the results point to the existence of an entrepreneurial action in the public context, involving the public power in a particular way without, however, having originated in it.

Theoretical/methodological contributions: the approach of the entrepreneurial action for the public context; and the use of action research as methodology for the studies about entrepreneurship.

Relevance/originality: the study draws attention to another way of interpreting entrepreneurship in the public context by shifting the focus from the entrepreneur to the entrepreneurial action itself. Its application to the studied phenomenon attest to the originality of the research.

Implications for management or social: the findings of this study allow public managers to review their decisions in order to articulate entrepreneurial actions and public policies in promoting innovative actions in sport.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial Actions. Public Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial Actions in the Public Context. Sport.

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AÇÕES EMPREENDEDORAS E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS: UMA ARTICULAÇÃO PARA PROMOVER O ESPORTE

Resumo

Objetivo: compreender as ações desenvolvidas no esporte de Lavras/MG, para afirmar se elas podem ser consideradas empreendedoras. O propósito é entender como articular políticas públicas e ações empreendedoras na promoção do esporte nesse município.

Metodologia: o estudo seguiu uma orientação epistemológica interpretativista, apoiada na metodologia de pesquisa-ação, e utilizou, como técnica, a análise de conteúdo temática. Optou-se por uma abordagem qualitativa, com os seguintes métodos de pesquisa: entrevistas presenciais com roteiro aberto, análise documental, diário de campo e *brainstorming*.

Principais resultados: os resultados apontam a existência de uma ação empreendedora no contexto público, que envolve o poder público de modo particular sem, entretanto, nele ter se originado.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas: a abordagem da ação empreendedora para o contexto público; e a utilização da pesquisa-ação como metodologia, para os estudos sobre o empreendedorismo.

Relevância/originalidade: o estudo evidencia outra forma de interpretar o empreendedorismo, no contexto público, desviando o foco do empreendedor para a ação empreendedora, propriamente dita. As suas aplicações ao fenômeno estudado atestam o ineditismo da pesquisa.

Implicações sociais ou para a gestão: os achados deste estudo permitem aos gestores públicos rever suas decisões, a fim de articular ações empreendedoras e políticas públicas, na promoção de ações inovadoras no esporte.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo. Ações Empreendedoras. Empreendedorismo Público. Ações Empreendedoras no Contexto Público. Esporte.



ACCIONES EMPRENDEDORAS Y POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS: UNA ARTICULACIÓN PARA FOMENTAR EL DEPORTE

Resumen

Objetivo: Entender las acciones desarrolladas en el deporte de Lavras/MG, para indicar si pueden considerarse emprendedoras. El propósito es entender cómo articular las políticas públicas y las acciones emprendedoras en la promoción del deporte en este municipio.

Metodología: el estudio siguió una orientación epistemológica interpretativa, sustentada en la metodología de investigación-acción, y utilizó, como técnica, el análisis de contenido temático. Optamos por un enfoque cualitativo, con los siguientes métodos de investigación: entrevistas cara a cara con guión abierto, análisis de documentos, diario de campo y lluvia de ideas.

Resultados principales: los resultados apuntan a la existencia de una acción emprendedora en el contexto público, que involucra a las autoridades públicas de una manera particular sin, no obstante, originarse allí.

Aportes teóricos/metodológicos: el acercamiento de la acción empresarial al contexto público; y el uso de la investigación-acción como metodología para los estudios sobre el espíritu empresarial.

Relevancia/originalidad: el estudio muestra otra forma de interpretar el emprendimiento, en el contexto público, desviando el enfoque del emprendedor hacia la propia acción emprendedora. Sus aplicaciones al fenómeno estudiado dan fe de la originalidad de la investigación.

Implicaciones sociales o de gestión: Los hallazgos de este estudio permiten a los gestores públicos revisar sus decisiones, a fin de articular acciones emprendedoras y políticas públicas, en la promoción de acciones innovadoras en el deporte.

Palabras clave: Emprendimiento. Acciones emprendedoras. Emprendimiento público. Acciones emprendedoras en el contexto público. Deporte.



1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of public policies may suffer some variations according to the focus that is given to it, however, the term does not usually escape the fact that they are actions for which public resources are destined. Souza (2006, p. 26), for example, summarizes that public policies are constituted "[...] at the stage when democratic governments translate their electoral purposes and platforms into programs and actions that will produce results or changes in the real world". These actions will provide social well-being by guaranteeing society's right of access to education, health, sports and leisure public services, among others (Nogueira, 2001).

Although Brazilian public management has always been seen as a time-consuming institution, managerialism, based especially on the ideals of an entrepreneurial government, has enabled a new way of making public policies more efficient (Bresser-Pereira, 2010). Despite the fact the entrepreneurship has been limited for a long time to business organizations (Valadares, Emmendoerfer, Alves & Morais, 2012), the phenomenon has become an interesting tool for public organizations.

Entrepreneurship, however, was incorporated into public administration with some peculiarities of traditional entrepreneurship, such as the fact that it is associated with the image of an individual - the innovative ruler, who perceives public problems, acts at opportune moments, and takes entrepreneurial attitudes in search of solutions (Valadares et al., 2012) -, emphasizing the figure of the public manager. This individualistic review of entrepreneurship, as the act of a specific actor, raised questions and was criticized in the academy, mainly because it underestimates the existence of actions developed from initiatives of other actors.

Entrepreneurship then began to be studied from another perspective of analysis: entrepreneurial action (Gomes, 2010). When studying entrepreneurship focusing attention on the action itself and not on the entrepreneurial individual, Lima (2010) chooses the result of an act as being more relevant than whoever practices it. In the conceptions of Alford and Hughes (2008), a public entrepreneurial action is the one that manages to create public value by counting on the collective effort of individuals or organizations in the search for better social results.

Based on the precepts of entrepreneurial action it became interested in investigating the actions that are developed in sport, considering it is recognized as a mechanism of social well-being and democratization due to the social dimensions it covers (Eiras, Silva, Souza & Vendruscolo, 2010). It was decided to carry out the investigation in the municipality of Lavras/MG due to the historical experience in the



sports area, once experienced by the city, which saw successful athletes emerge, but which no longer achieves the same recognition; and also due to the municipality's investments made in recent years in the sports area, even without significant public policies related to sport.

The following question arose from this sense: how are sports actions developed in Lavras/MG? Therefore, the objective was specifically to know the context of this actions to understand how they occur and whether or not they can be characterized as entrepreneurial.

It is hoped that the results of this research offer theoretical, methodological and practical contributions to the field studied. In theoretical terms, the discussion about entrepreneurial action and its specificities, in the public context, may help in understanding, defining and disseminating the concept, which still lacks consensus. The use of action research demonstrates the possibility of applying a practical methodology for studies of entrepreneurship in methodological terms. As for the practical aspects, the study shows that evaluating entrepreneurship through entrepreneurial actions is the most effective way to understand the essence of an entrepreneurial act. Therefore, the proposed framework will be a great ally in this sense.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE

2.1 PUBLIC POLICIES AND SPORT

According to Rodrigues (2010, p. 28), conceptualizing public policy is not a simple task because it cannot be understood only as a "mere decision". This consideration corroborates the definition of Rua and Aguiar (2007, p. 1) about public policy being a set of decisions to allocate public resources, which "[...] usually involves more than one decision and requires several actions strategically selected to implement the decisions already taken".

On the other hand, Hofling (2001) address public policy as the "State in action", that is, the achievement or materialization of the actions of the government rulers through the implementation of government projects, and programs and actions aimed at the society.

It is important to emphasize, however, that in public administration, unlike private organizations, any decision can only be made in accordance to what is provided by law, because "in public administration there is no freedom or personal will. In private administration it is lawful to do everything that the law does not prohibit, however, in public administration it is only allowed to do what the law authorizes" (Meirelles & Paixão, 2003, p. 86). In other words, to perform any act, the manager must act through public



policies, which according to Souza (2006, p. 26), after being “designed and formulated, unfold into plans, programs and projects [...]”.

Such development is contained in article 165 of the Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988), which establishes the creation of laws by executive authority to establish the multiannual plan, budget guidelines and annual budgets containing objectives and goals that will fix public expenditure. Thus, a public policy is the one that is provided for in the budget pieces known as: Multiannual Plan (Plano Plurianual - PPA), Budget Guidelines Law (Lei de Diretrizes Orçamentárias - LDO), Annual Budget Law (Lei Orçamentária Anual - LOA) and Expense Breakdown Frame (Quadro de Detalhamento de Despesas – QDD).

In this sense, public resources must be distributed in the budget to guarantee the fundamental rights of society such as access to education and health, social assistance (Nogueira, 2001), sports and leisure. According to Tubino (2010), sports area deserves attention from public policies because it is not just a foreseen and guaranteed right of the society by the Constitution of the Republic (1988) (“Art. 217. It is the duty of the State to foster the practice of formal and informal sports, as a right of each individual...”), but also a mechanism for social well-being, democratization and sociocultural relevance, which encompasses other social dimensions, beyond the quality in health, configuring itself, in this way, as a great commitment to citizen formation.

In other words, sport transcends cultural and social environments, being present in different contexts and around the world, as an instrument that bring together the social differences, such as classes, religion and gender diversity (Ratten, 2011; Bickel, Marques, Santos, 2012). According to Brito (2012, p. 7):

[...] sport represents a great element of national identity and an important means of social inclusion, proven to be a tool that, if used properly, assists in the construction and acquisition of ethical and moral values, while also allowing intellectual development, facilitating the learning and social interaction of children and young people, in addition to improving their physical well-being and promoting health.

Sport can be an important instrument for public management because it demonstrates commitment and social responsibility, opening up possibilities for the construction of social values and a more egalitarian society (Silva, Terra & Votre, 2006).

In addition, for presenting such relevance and social impact, sport is an area prone to the development of entrepreneurship, since innovation and change are key-elements of its context (Ratten, 2011), which, if associated with some purposes, such as physical



well-being, inclusion and social life, are also conducive to the development of entrepreneurial actions.

2.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIONS AND THEIR STAKEHOLDERS

Entrepreneurship is a worldwide phenomenon that drives the economy and promotes the social development of a country by bringing innovations, promoting productive activities and even allowing the updating of processes that need to be improved (Cunha, Silva & Yamaguchi, 2011).

In its origin, the term was used to define the action “of those who take risks and start something new” (Zen & Fracasso, 2008), being intrinsically linked to an individual's act. As the entrepreneur is a social being and lives on the relationships he establishes, a vision essentially based on his skills and profile has started, at first, to be propagated (Paiva Júnior, 2004). This perspective, however, began to be questioned by authors, such as Zen and Fracasso (2008), Paiva Júnior and Mello (2009), Gomes (2010) and Gomes, Lima and Cappelle (2013), for whom, the result of an act is more relevant than whoever performs it.

Then, another view of entrepreneurship studies emerge: the entrepreneurial action, concerned with the action itself, and with its effects in the environment where it is produced (Gomes *et al.*, 2013). Differentiated from classic entrepreneurship, for presenting an approach focused on action, regardless of who idealizes it or who puts it into practice, it can be carried out by the entrepreneur, as well as by other members of the organization.

Although the entrepreneurial action is different, in the public context, the discussion on this subject occurs in a similar way in private organizations, differing only in relation to the purpose of the acts and the actor who practices them. The concept of entrepreneurship has become attractive to the public sector since the neoliberal reforms initiated by Margaret Thatcher, in England, and Ronald Reagan, in the United States. These actions culminated in New Public Management (Kim, 2010) which brought with it the incorporation of management methods from private organizations to public management, such as the idea of entrepreneurial government. This new administration became known as “Managerial Public Administration” in Brazil, and it started to be used in 1995, when the Brazilian state apparatus was reformed (Bresser-Pereira, 2010).

Public entrepreneurship can be understood as an action or a combination of actions capable of improving the allocation of resources to promote benefits to the



population (Kim, 2010). In this way, the public aspect of entrepreneurship leaves aside the strictly economic issue and starts to be defined in terms of decision making, innovation and proactivity of the manager (Diefenbach, 2011). Nevertheless, public entrepreneurship remains the practice of an individual, that is, linked to the innovative image of the ruler and his government (Valadares *et al.*, 2012).

Entrepreneurial action in the public context is concerned with social changes (Silva, Valadares & Andrade, 2016), therefore, it is not an act of the “public entrepreneur”, but the collective effort in the search for better social results (Zen & Fracasso, 2008). Thus, it can be carried out by several stakeholders: public entrepreneur, public servants or even by civil society and private initiative.

To better understand the role that these stakeholders play in public management, some researchers prefer to conceptualize them, such as Beyers and Kerremans (2004) that claim that everyone who works in public management is essentially “Bureaucrat”, or Lotta (2012), whom called frontline public servants, such as teachers, doctors and social workers, by “Street Level Bureaucrats”, as they are responsible for making public policy reach society. Pires (2012) appoints those who occupy positions advising managers in political decisions and in the formulation of public policies of “Medium Level Bureaucrats” or “Medium Level”, and Borges and Cappelle (2018), who, from previous studies, coined the term “White Collar Bureaucrats” to characterize those who have the discretion to make decisions in public organizations, such as Mayors, Municipal Secretaries, Governors, Secretaries of State, President of the Republic and Ministers (Figures 1 and 2).

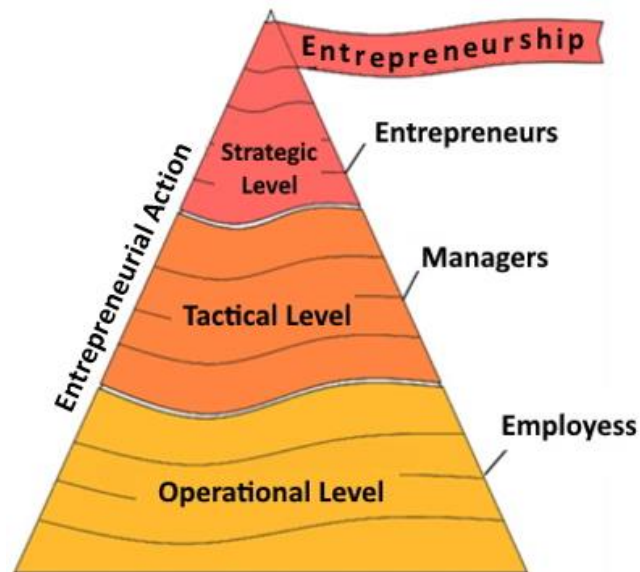


Figure 1. Entrepreneurial x Entrepreneurial Action in the Private Sector
Source: Own elaboration (2018) from Sobral and Peci (2013).

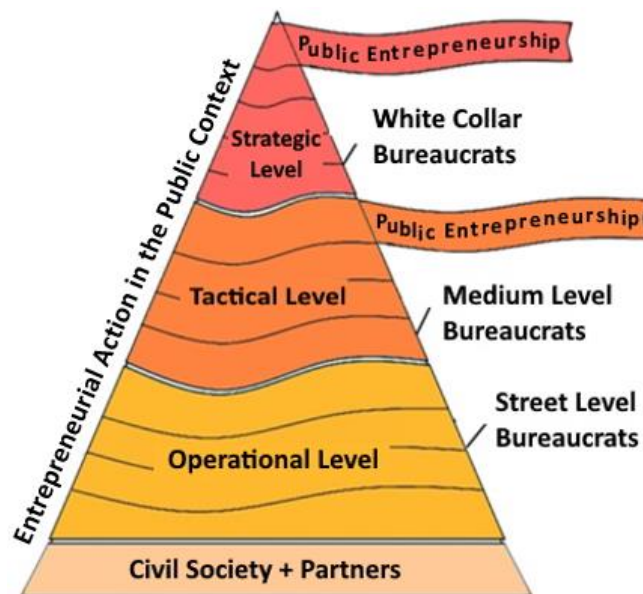


Figure 2. Public Entrepreneurship x Entrepreneurial Action in the Public Context
Source: Own elaboration (2018) from Sobral and Peci (2013).

Referring to the organizational pyramid (Sobral & Peci, 2013) that presents the three organizational levels, it is clear that the classic entrepreneurship, that is practiced in private sector organizations, is the result of the entrepreneur's initiative, that is, the decisions of those who occupy the strategic level, thus meeting the precepts of Cunha *et al.* (2011). According to the concepts defined by Gomes (2010), entrepreneurial action is



a practice that can be initiated by any individual in the organizational environment, such as the entrepreneur, tactical level managers, and operational level employees.

Public entrepreneurship, in turn, is an act practiced only by the organizational top (“white collar bureaucrats and middle level bureaucrats). On the other hand, an entrepreneurial action can be the initiative of several actors: civil society and other partners like a private initiative, the street level bureaucrats, middle level bureaucrats or even the white collar bureaucrats. It is important to highlight that these actions can become public policies if they are planned in the budget pieces; however, a public policy by itself cannot be considered an entrepreneurial action.

2.3 A FRAMEWORK FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIONS

An entrepreneurial action often arises from an event that is understood by one or more stakeholders as being a problem (Monllor & Murphy, 2017). Stakeholders who identify themselves with these situations perceive in entrepreneurial action a possibility to create economic and or social value and thus resolve the impasse (Viswanathan, Echambadi, Venugopal & Sridharan, 2014). Therefore, entrepreneurial actions in the public context are not identified by great innovations or by great enterprises, but by the social meaning they provide (Silva *et al.*, 2016). The public value created (Alford & Hughes, 2008), in the words of Sousa, Paiva Júnior, and Lira (2010, p. 341), is not due to “the fact that something is offered by the public sector, but because it is a value produced by collectivized actions and consumed collectively by the citizen”.

Because it is an action that shares objectives, entrepreneurial actions count on the presence of several stakeholders and provide a voice to them and to those who did not always have the opportunity to participate in political decisions and who form the “army of forgotten people” of Gomes (2010, p. 103). In this collective effort (Zen & Fracasso, 2008) it is also intended to understand the interactions that are established among the actors in the action process (Spedale & Watson, 2014), which are endowed with meanings (Paiva Júnior, 2004) due to the positive results they cause in society, and the personal and social progression of those involved (Silva *et al.*, 2016). Another characteristic is the existence of ethical principles and values in the action, considering that their presence brings credibility and trust, and favors the construction of partnerships and alliances between the public sector, the private sector and civil society as a whole (Sousa *et al.*, 2010).

Furthermore, one of the most relevant characteristics of entrepreneurial action in the public context is the commitment to change (Gomes *et al.*, 2013) that causes the



transformation of the existing reality into a new reality. According to Nascimento (2018), evaluating entrepreneurship in the public context through entrepreneurial actions is the most effective way to understand the essence of an entrepreneurial act. Therefore, knowing the aspects that characterize an entrepreneurial action is extremely necessary and equally important to define an action in this way (Figure 3).

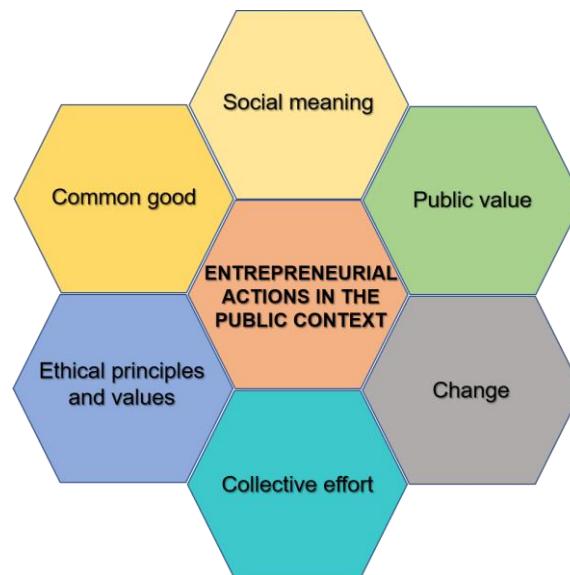


Figure 3. Framework: entrepreneurial actions in the public context
Source: Authors' own elaboration (2018) based on the authors mentioned in the subchapter.

Based on the authors mentioned above, a framework was developed to guide researchers when attributing the entrepreneurial character to an action. In this way, entrepreneurial actions in the public context can be conceptualized as those that join collective efforts, observe ethical principles and values with the aim of promoting the good of the community resulting in the creation of values without necessarily originating from the public power itself. Thus, entrepreneurial actions are committed to change, have social significance, and transform the reality of the context and of the actors where they are inserted.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Methodological rigor is one of the most relevant points to ensure the validity of scientific research and is intrinsically associated with the ontological and epistemic positioning of the researcher (Dresch, Lacerda & Miguel, 2015). Hence, considering the research objectives, from the social science matrix of Burrell and Morgan (1979), this study (Figure 4) was guided by an interpretative epistemological position, as it sought to



understand reality from social interactions, actors involved, meaning of actions and common-sense knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 2010). Considering the subjectivist approach, a qualitative methodology known as action research was adopted. The choice was made due to its possibility of intervening in the environment, a remarkable feature that differs from other qualitative methodologies (Thiollent, 2003).

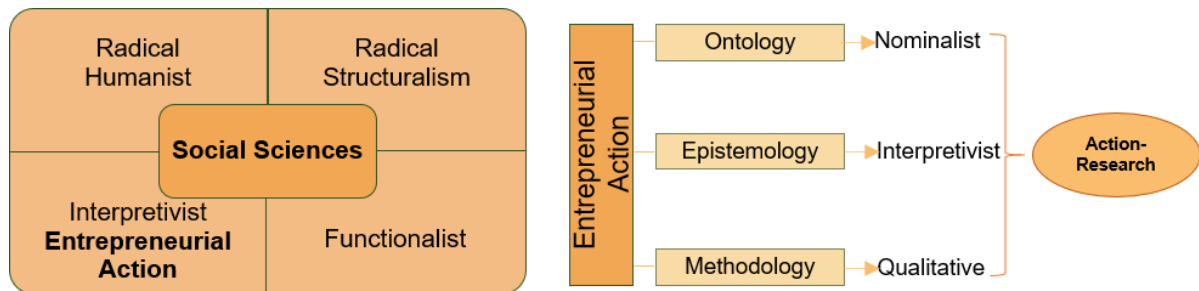


Figure 4. Research positioning

Source: Authors' own elaboration (2018) based on the matrix of Burrell and Morgan (1979).

It was chosen: (1) the sport, as an area of investigation, because sports promotion is an obligation provided for by law and because sport presents a context prone to actions in view of its social reach; (2) the municipality of Lavras in Minas Gerais, as the research field, due to the historical scenario already experienced by the city in the sports area and the investments that the municipality has made in recent years in this area; and (3) the project "Launch for a New Horizon" ("Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte"), as an investigation phenomenon, because it had characteristics of an entrepreneurial action.

The research process was carried out in six phases. In the first one, the research was registered at the University's Pro-Rectorate of Research and submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Lavras (COEP/UFLA) through Plataforma Brasil, in order to comply with legal and ethics regulatory requirements in the development of scientific investigations. Then, the municipality of Lavras was asked for authorization so that the study could be carried out.

In the second phase, which took place in the second half of 2017, the empirical research began by surveying the public policies developed by the City Hall. At that time, documentary research was used as an instrument of data collection through: (a) searches on the official website of the municipality; (b) analysis of the budget pieces PPA, LDO and LOA implemented in the period 2014-2017; the PPA planned to be executed in the interstice from 2018 to 2021; and the LDO and LOA, planned in 2017 to take effect in 2018. A first interview was also carried out with the Municipal Sports



Secretary of the municipality to support the documentary research and verify the existence of other actions, which were not provided for in the management instruments. Thus, eight projects (men's and women's futsal, basketball, handball, volleyball and schools of capoeira, karate and taekwondo) were listed and visited in order to identify in practice whether they were aligned with the research. Among them, an action which was developed in one of the neighborhoods was selected as the object of investigation because it stood out due to the similar characteristics of an entrepreneurial action.

The third phase (first half of 2018) was the entry of the researcher in the field. The researcher was introduced as a technical assistant to participate in training, wearing specific clothing for the practice of sports; to get involved in basketball games; and promote the interaction with other actors. In this phase, data were collected through participant observation and they were recorded in field diaries. The information was used to describe in detail the action, its participants, the relationship between them and also support the inference of the interviews. Therefore, they are diluted throughout the results.

During the field research, important documents were also found, such as essays written by students at school and project records. In parallel to the direct participation in the project, interviews were conducted with the Sports Secretary (who was interviewed for the second time), the idealizer of the action, the sponsor, a social assistant from the neighborhood, and a journalist from one of the local newspapers, who produced several articles about sport in Lavras, highlighting the position of the municipality in the sports context. The interviews were conducted through an open and unstructured script, and recorded, after signing the Informed Consent Form (Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido - TCLE). The interviews enable to associate the speeches and field perceptions. To preserve the identity of the participants, they were identified by the role they play and the activities they perform. The profile of the interviewees and the relevance of each to the study are shown below (Figure 5).



Interviewee	Genre	Identification Code	Occupation	Relevance for research
Secretary of Sports, Leisure, Tourism and Culture	Male	Secretary of Sports	Responsible for the public policies developed in the sport area of Lavras.	He contributed to the search of policies, projects and actions developed in the municipality within the scope of sport.
Idealizer of the Action	Male	Idealizer	Idealizer of the studied action. He is currently a public servant and the teacher responsible for training.	He has played a fundamental role in exposing the studied action through the presentation of the objectives, pretensions and history of the project.
Sponsor of the Action	Male	Sponsor	He supports the project by sponsoring snacks, uniforms and trips to external games.	She was important for understanding the project as a collective social action.
Social Assistant	Female	Social Assistant	She accompanies young people and their families involved in the action.	He contributed to verify what the studied action represents in the lives of people and the community that participate in it.
Chief Editor Journalist	Male	Journalist	He is a public servant in the Communication Directorate and Chief editor of a local newspaper.	He contributed to place the municipality in the sports scene by understanding its relation with the sport.

Figure 5. Profile, identification and relevance of the interviewers
Source: Authors' own elaboration (2018).

In the fourth phase of the research (second half of 2018), the data obtained were analyzed and interpreted. They were treated according to the following criteria: (a) full transcription of the interviews, which were subsequently analyzed through the content analysis technique of Bardin (2011); (b) systematization of all the material collected, from the resumption of the proposed initial objectives; (c) identification of previous categories based on objectives; (d) dismembering and regrouping data that did not fit the created categories, in emerging categories; and (f) thematic analysis, based on the relevance of the themes in order to identify the nuclei of meaning.

It is important to note that the categorization followed the mixed grid, that is, previous categories already defined from the study objectives, and emerging categories that showed up from the data collected in the field, as shown below (Figure 6).



PREVIOUS AND EMERGING CATEGORIES
Category 1: Lavras and its prominence in the sports scene (emerging category)
Category 2: Public policies developed in the sport area of Lavras (previous category)
Category 3: The project “Launch to a New Horizon” (“Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte”): an action for sport in Lavras (emerging category)
Category 4: Can the studied action in sport be considered entrepreneurial? (previous category)
Category 5: Interventions, changes and possible articulations among public policies and entrepreneurial actions (previous category)

Figure 6. Categories used in thematic analysis
Source: Authors’ own elaboration (2018).

Some data that had not been initially foreseen in the study nor determined in the specific objectives were found as the field research progressed. These data were relevant to the understanding of the investigated phenomenon, such as the sports context in Lavras and the project “Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte”, which became the investigative locus. For this reason, two new categories called emergent categories were created by the technique of Bardin (2011). Afterwards, the categories gave rise to the titles used in the results and discussions.

In the fifth phase, held in 2018, a brainstorming session was held with all participants to discuss the intervention proposals. Finally, the sixth phase, in 2019, was the return to the field to assess the changes brought about by the interventions.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 LAVRAS AND ITS PROMINENCE IN THE SPORTS SCENE

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2010), Lavras, municipality located in the region known as “Campo das Vertentes”, in the south of the state of Minas Gerais, has an estimated population of 92,200 inhabitants and has a significant HDI (Human Development Index) of 0.782. According to the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (2009), approximately 41% of its population is composed of young people up to 18 years old who are undergoing training and personal, social and professional development. This scenario is conducive to the development of sports practices as the sport in this age group helps not only in physical fitness, but also in the formation of the individual and in living in society (Bernardes, Yamaji & Guedes, 2015).

With a significant history in the sports scene (Silva, 2017), as the local journalist, interviewed in this research, points out, the city hosted important teams that competed in



the first division championships, such as Fabril Esporte Clube, which success in 80's; and trained athletes who dressed up the shirt of the Brazilian national team , such as (a) Ana Paula Rodrigues (volleyball), who played in the Olympics and the Grand Prix; (b) Ricardo Rogério de Brito, known as the “Alemão” (soccer), who played for Atlético de Madrid, São Paulo and Botafogo, and also couched the América Mineiro team; (c) Cláudio Roberto da Silva, known as “Caçapa” (soccer), who played for Atlético Mineiro and Lyon, in France; (d) Admilson Bosco Chitarra (athletics); and (e) Alfredo Scheid Lopes (athletics).

Beyond that, there are two universities in the municipality that have undergraduate courses in physical education, courts, gymnasiums, soccer fields, running tracks and outdoor gyms for practicing sports. Analyzing the municipal budget pieces (PPA, LDO, LOA and QDD), it was found that Lavras invested about five million reais in infrastructure and sports material in the last five years.

It is important to emphasize that the fact of having these items does not make sport happen in Lavras, but the presence of these resources (knowledge, infrastructure and financial investments) generates the expectation of the existence of many sports actions.

Therefore, due to this brief description for purposes of contextualization (not historical survey) and justification for choosing the investigated field, Lavras presents itself as a study site for the development of entrepreneurial actions in sport.

4.2 PUBLIC POLICIES DEVELOPED IN THE SPORT AREA IN LAVRAS

The term “Public Policy” is used in society to broadly define the activities for which public managers will allocate the financial resources from the collection, pointing out their purposes, objectives and demonstrating the fulfillment of the government's obligations. Among these actions, it is foreseen in the caput of article 217 of the Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988) the promotion of sports practices.

Therefore, the sports secretary was asked about the policies developed in the municipality in the second phase of the research. He answered: “With the initiative of the municipality we have projects for men's futsal, women's futsal, basketball, handball and volleyball. They are distributed in schools [...]. We also have capoeira, karate and taekwondo schools”. However, it was verified that none of the projects listed by the secretary is specifically foreseen in the budget when analyzing the PPA, the LDO and the LOA of the municipality. In this regard, he replied:



“The projects are not in the QDD as a specific action, but we use other actions such as the “maintenance of the activities of the Secretariat”, for example, hiring people and consumables to carry out the project. The right thing was to have all this in the budget, but this is the first year of the administration of this government and we are improving many things”. (Sports Secretary)

The various sports activities held in Lavras are not considered public policies as they have not been provided for, according to regulatory instruments, in the public budget. For this to happen, after the formulation of public policies, they must be transformed into plans, programs, and projects (Souza, 2006) which, once conceived, must be provided for in the budget pieces: PPA, LDO and LOA, as recommended by the Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988).

The secretary was then asked if he knew about other sports projects carried out by other initiatives, even if not from the City Hall, to which he replied:

“There is a partnership in basketball idealized by [the idealizer of the action]. He wants to take basketball to the poorest neighborhoods in the city [...]. The project "Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte" is carried out in partnership with [sponsor of the action] and it is a project that had its groundwork very well done [...]”. (Sports Secretary)

According to the secretary, there was an action developed in a poor region of the municipality that was conceived by a teacher and was carried out through a partnership between the City Hall and the private sector. These aspects are listed by Sousa *et al.* (2010) and, because that, this action was selected as a possible entrepreneurial action.

4.3 THE PROJECT “ARREMESSO PARA UM NOVO HORIZONTE”: AN ACTION FOR SPORT IN LAVRAS

The action highlighted by the secretary is a project known as “Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte” (“Launch to a New Horizon”), studied in the third phase of this research, which started as follows:

“I was at the Sports Department and didn't have much space to make my dreams come true there, so I talked to [ex-mayor] and asked her to go to Novo Horizonte. One of the reasons was that I already knew the problems in that neighborhood, you know, which was too discriminated against and had a very bad reputation. Then, thinking about offering a leisure option to the community and what I like to do is basketball, I thought of setting up a school with no pretensions to competition. At first, they used to go barefoot, the girls used to wear skirts, slippers [laughs], whatever way they could. I had the balls, a terrible court and the boys were totally undisciplined”. (Idealizer)

According to the idealizer, the project started in 2007 in a neighborhood chosen due to the fragility experienced by the local community. The lack of physical structure and scarce sports equipment were the first difficulties faced for the development of the action.



In order to better understanding this action, a social assistant from the neighborhood was asked to discuss about it. According to her,

"The project has been there for ten years and has been performing a nice job with the children who live in that neighborhood [...]. It is a territory that has a great vulnerability, you know. The project comes to assist these children in the social and health areas and everything through sport, it is through what they like to do that we will be able to rescue and give these children more opportunity". (Social Assistant)

It turns out that the social assistant perceives this action as a possibility to modify the vulnerable situation experienced by the local community. When defining entrepreneurial action, Boszczowski and Teixeira (2012), reveal that it is committed to providing a situation of greater social well-being. According to the reports, the project currently serves about 150 children and teenagers of both sexes in the age group between 8 and 14 years old. In the words of the idealizer, the objective of the project is "teaching lessons to the whole life through basketball". It is noticeable in the statements that the project involves several people who have the same purpose:

"Above all things, we have to prepare young people for life. Some of them, in the project, will probably not want to be professional basketball athletes, but then they can be right people, good professionals and because that it is important to include the culture of education [...]". (Sports Secretary)

"Sport, this energy of sport, is not enough by itself [...] Therefore, it is also necessary to teach values". (Sponsor)

One of the most relevant aspects of an action is the result it will cause in the space where it is being performed. In this sense, it is possible to notice that people involved in this action are not focused on finding "great sports talents", but on training conscientious citizens, who have the possibility to make personal and professional choices. It meets the personal and social progressive development of those involved, emphasized by Silva *et al.* (2016).

In addition, according to Sousa *et al.* (2010), the presence of ethical principles and values in the action has great relevance not only because it conveys credibility to get the support of other actors but also impresses confidence for the local community and for those involved. It is observed that this action is not just described as a sports project because there are other pillars in its construction that allow it to be described as a set of actions of several people who are part of a chain and who are concerned about the social welfare of the people:

"There is a good combination that has worked these years of ... city hall, private initiative, the community and a very motivated and very competent coach". (Sponsor)



"In the project we count on the support of [sponsor of the action], the city hall and the people who come to know the project and get delighted, you know" (Idealizer)

"[...] we have a well-targeted support from the public medical sector that already exists to provide greater monitoring of everyone who is on the project, even as a way of physically accompanying them". (Sponsor)

"It is a project that was fortunate to have the support of many people". (Sports Secretary)

The set of several joint actions, such as those mentioned in the reports, between public organization, private organization and local community, in search of the same objective, is seen by Souto (2006) as a way to achieve good social results.

4.4 CAN THE STUDIED ACTION IN SPORT BE CONSIDERED ENTREPRENEURIAL?

An action in the public context needs to present some specific characteristics that qualify it to be considered entrepreneurial, among which, contain ethical principles and values (Sousa *et al.*, 2010), be developed with collective efforts (Zen & Fracasso, 2008), create public value (Alford & Hughes, 2008), be endowed with meanings (Paiva Júnior, 2004), and cause changes (Silva *et al.*, 2016).

Based on the framework presented, the action was then analyzed in the fourth phase of the research. The idealizer explains how relationships were built in terms of collective efforts in one of his statements:

"There were some games here and the president of FEEMG [Federação de Esportes Estudantis de Minas Gerais - Student Sports Federation of Minas Gerais] decided to go there to see what it was like. When he saw the boys, he asked: 'Do you only have this material?' Then I said: 'yes!'. 'Does anyone help you?' I said: 'no!'. Then a van arrives with a basketball, cone, hoop, mattress...Then, he says: 'They are very poor! [cry]. 'Do you distribute snacks?' I said: 'no! He said: 'make the budget, I will send the money.' Then I looked for the [sponsor of the action] who said: 'I sell yogurt and mozzarella at cost price.' Then I went to the bakery and explained...'I make bread at cost price' [laughs]. Then the FEEMG president sent the money and after a while the [sponsor of the action] said: you will not pay anymore!" (Idealizer)

It is interesting to remember that the action started with the intention of offering a leisure activity for young people. However, the credibility of the project has led some institutions and the private sector to become interested in the action, as well as people from civil society and public authorities:

"I met an ex-athlete and he said: 'what is this much bread for?' [laughs]. I said: 'for a basketball project.' He said: 'I pay!' Then I called [the President of FEEMG] and said that I didn't need it anymore and he said: 'but I send sports equipment!' And then it got better... [cry]. The City Hall gave us the court to train and transportation". (Idealizer)

Joint efforts in an entrepreneurial action do not depend on who acts on it, because what is relevant is the creation of public value, that is, be carried out with joint



commitments and be used collectively by people, thus causing possibilities of changing a vulnerable reality. Regarding this reality, the social assistant highlights:

“Visiting families, we notice a lack of one to all. So, this project, right, causes a process of change in the lives of those children. During my visits, I saw cases of families that have rice, but they don't have beans, in the other one, they have beans, but they don't have rice... meat and vegetables only occasionally. So, I see that these are cases of extreme vulnerability. In each family I visited, I saw the chemical dependency installed, if it is not dependence on one thing, it is on another [...]”. (Social Assistant)

This social situation is also highlighted by the idealizer:

“Many used to go training because they did not have anything to eat [crying]. Once they interviewed one of the girls: ‘Do you like basketball?’ She said: ‘I didn't even know what that was. Then, the project came here and I found out there was a snack, I used to come because the snack, I wanted to eat’. Look what a thing! And then they started to like basketball...” (Idealizer)

It is possible to notice that there are serious social problems in the neighborhood and this, somehow, reflects in the lives of young people who experience this situation on a daily basis. Therefore, the social assistant emphasizes that one of the purposes of the action is to show young people that they may have new opportunities for the future: “The idea is to make those people motivate themselves, you know, for new perspectives in life, to have dreams [...]” (Social Assistant).

In this sense, the bond of trust provided by the action makes this possibility of change become real.

“Some girls have already left basketball and they are returning with their children. The little ones stop being on the street and go to the project... a bond of trust and love was created between the coach, the project and those children. The situation you saw there is a feeling of security, well-being, of being like this... valued as a person”. (Social Assistant)

In this thinking, action is associated with many positive aspects in the social context (Silva *et al.*, 2016). In the speech of two young participants in the project, it is clear what the action represents in their lives:

“The Feeling of Sport: basketball is life, union and respect, it requires a lot of dedication for a perfect time. I dream of being someone in life, winning and being recognized. That is why I fight for my dream to achieve and very successfully achieve [...]” (Excerpt 1: Poetry of a participant of the action)

“Sport is Health: Sport brings us together to make us believe that there in the future, someone important we will be become. Believe, win, battle... basketball we will play. I want to be someone in life, study, play, I want to travel, I am going a long way to know another place [...]” (Excerpt 2: Poetry of a participant of the action)



The excerpts above come from essays written by two participants who are 14 years old and study at a public school, in the 7th grade. It is observed that the project is endowed with senses, meanings and it is linked to principles, such as respect, professional merit, willpower, the spirit of collectivity and the search for a better future, while it also reveals itself as a catalyst for dreams.

Although it was conceived by one person, the project was developed from the involvement of several others, including support from public authorities and private initiative. These collective efforts contributed to maintaining the project and made it possible to overcome ten years of existence. This is in line with the precepts of Zen and Failure (2008) about the collectivity. It is also something that is enjoyed by the community thus creating the public value, emphasized by Alford and Hughes (2008).

It was evident both in the reports and in the observations noted in the field diaries that the action is concerned with passing on to young people not only the practice of sports, but moral values, ethical principles, thus building the perception of citizenship that are relevant points highlighted by Sousa *et al.* (2010). These characteristics and credibility contribute to the success of the project due to the positive meanings in the participants' lives and the possibility that significant changes will happen, as proposed by Silva *et al.* (2016).

Based on the framework that was built and developed in this research, an action would need to simultaneously add six essential characteristics to be considered as entrepreneurial: (1) have social meaning; (2) present public value; (3) be committed to change; (4) count on collective effort; (5) respect ethical principles and values; and (6) aim at the common good. Because of the presence of all these aspects and the change in social reality, the action called “Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte” (“Launch for a New Horizon”) is an entrepreneurial action in the public context of Lavras. However, it is important to stress that it is not a policy made by public management, but an action that provided value to the society in which it is inserted without having originated in this sphere.

It is also relevant to highlight that the conclusion about the entrepreneurial act of the analyzed action was only possible through the construction of the framework which enabled the qualitative analysis of each attribute of the investigated phenomenon. Its effective use in the analysis and in the presentation of research results prove the relevance of the framework for investigations on the theme, allowing researchers of the entrepreneurship topic to better understand the phenomena in this area. In this sense, its categories can be useful to: evaluate the entrepreneurial act of social projects and public



policies; compare the social scope of an enterprise; and assist managers in making decisions about the allocation of public resources for investment, or even in establishing partnerships between the public and private sectors. It is a tangible method when the purpose is the analysis of actions.

4.5 INTERVENTIONS, CHANGES AND POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN PUBLIC POLICIES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIONS

Following the proposed methodology, a method known as brainstorming was used in the fifth phase of the research. This activity was carried out in a participatory manner among the involved actors: students, researchers, secretary, idealizer, sponsor and social assistant. It aimed to jointly raise possible improvements for the project.

This action research team was trained a priori to carry out the activity. Thus, the following interventions were proposed: (1) constitute the action as a public policy that should be foreseen in the municipality's budget pieces and maintain sharing with other actors (private sector and civil society); (2) expansion of the action to other neighborhoods in Lavras; (3) seek new partnerships in such a way as to encourage a cycle of actions; (4) add professional courses and other sports that can be taught in conjunction with basketball; (5) find alternatives to bring the participants' families closer to the action; (6) seek partnerships with other public institutions such as the Federal and State Governments.

The municipality of Lavras has historic conditions to promote sport in the city, although the previous category 2 has shown few results in relation to what was expected when the emerging category 1 showed up. In other words, it was initially considered that there could be many public policies in sport in the city because this area of study is so relevant in Brazilian legislation and the municipality of Lavras has a vast sporting scenario. However, these expectations were not met. Therefore, an intervention is necessary to make the studied action be configured as a legally established public policy.

In addition, the expansion of this action to other areas of the city may favor the emergence of new entrepreneurial projects, stimulating sharing with other social actors through partnerships, as emphasized Sousa *et al.* (2010). By resuming the municipality's legacy in sports with the encouragement of entrepreneurial actions such as the one investigated (articulating sports activities, education and ethical principles), as found in Previous Categories 3 and 4, it will be possible to start a new cycle of actions with the



presence of public and private institutions. The interventions foreseen in the Previous Category 5 are essential for effecting the change, as mentioned by Gomes *et al.* (2013).

To conclude the action research cycle, the researchers returned to the field in 2019 to check what interventions were applied and what changes they are generating. Among the six proposed interventions, only the first and the sixth have not yet been put into practice. The first intervention has not yet been applied because the Multiannual Plan (PPA) is made only in the first year of a new administration's mandate, that is, in the municipality of Lavras, the next PPA will only be constituted in 2021. The sixth intervention has not yet been applied because it is necessary to foreseen in the budget pieces the resources for an action.

On the other hand, the project is already being extended to two other neighborhoods in two centers at the Escola Municipal Itália Cautieiro Franco (“Itália Cautieiro Franco Municipal School – CAIC”) and Escola Municipal José Luiz de Mesquita (“José Luiz de Mesquisa Municipal School”). The third, fourth and fifth interventions were converged on the creation of an institute called “Sete Gerações” (“Seven Generations”). The institute will seek partnerships to provide students different courses during the period they are not at school, school reinforcement and different sports activities.

It was possible to notice, in this return to the field, that the previous reality perceived during the research (for example, few students, demotivation of participants and teachers, and absence of families) is undergoing significant changes. The number of students served has increased; families are closer; and the creation of the institute is demonstrating the seriousness of those involved, increasing the confidence of people with this action.

These changes and the transformation of this action into public policy will enable the emergence of a new reality in the neighborhood community that has never been noticed before. It is going to be possible because it will expand the resources available for the action and the project's credibility, and, for this reason, the increase of partnerships and the visibility of the municipality of Lavras that will demonstrate its commitment and interest in entrepreneurial actions like this.

Moreover, great talents may arise due to this articulation between entrepreneurial actions and public policies. It will lead the municipality to emerge again in the sports scene or even in other modalities with the expansion of sports activities. This articulation is also relevant in demonstrating the concern of public management in fulfilling its social responsibility to its population.



5 CONCLUSIONS

The greatest relevance of a scientific investigation is in the contributions provided by its results. It is expected that the theoretical precepts addressed and the empirical research developed can bring relevant contributions to local public management and to the development of new research on the theme, having. It is also expected that the research will have a social impact and theoretical, empirical, methodological relevance.

In practical terms and answering the research question, it was found that the municipality of Lavras develops sports projects, but needs to create new public policies to encourage sport in the city in a more effective way. Among these projects, an entrepreneurial action known as “Arremesso para um Novo Horizonte” (“Launch for a New Horizon”) was found. Although this project is not a policy per se, it is an action that involves the government in a particular way, without originating in it. Therefore, for sport to stand out again in the history of Lavras, it is necessary that the executive government better articulate public policies and encourage sports practices and entrepreneurial actions in sport.

As for theoretical contributions, the concept of public policies and entrepreneurial actions were discussed, which allowed the creation a framework and, consequently, it was possible to explain about such conceptions. It is important to highlight that the concept of entrepreneurial actions is not yet consolidated in the literature, especially when characterizing its aspects in public administration. In the development of the research this was a hindrance to the construction of the theoretical basis, but on the other hand, it was possible to discuss the nature of these actions and thus contribute to broaden its meaning and define its concept in the public sector.

Another significant contribution was the construction of the characteristics of entrepreneurial actions within the conceptualization of entrepreneurship as a branch of this worldwide phenomenon and not as something new conceptually detached from its origin. In this sense, the built framework was relevant to the analysis and research inferences and may assist other researchers who are addressing the theme. In addition, it is a didactic explanation that can support public managers in the construction of entrepreneurial public policies.

The case of the municipality of Lavras reveals that theory and practice need to go on together in order to be effective in acts and depth in actions. Contributing financially to a project does not mean and does not guarantee the existence of an action as a public policy. It is only an incentive. Furthermore, the recognition of a public action as entrepreneur needs to go beyond financial promotion. It is necessary to demonstrate its



social impacts to then guarantee its forecast in legal terms. The case under analysis can serve as a learning experience for other mayors, public entrepreneurs and secretaries in the recognition of entrepreneurial actions in their municipalities and in the definition of public policies.

It should be noted that social research is not exempt from limitations, even because it is conditioned to the ontological and epistemological position of its researchers and, for this reason, they are subject to complementation in new studies. Therefore, for future researches, it is suggested that: this study can be applied to other contexts, respecting local circumstances; new methodologies can be applied; and new theoretical contributions can be made to the concept of entrepreneurial actions in the public context.

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