

125 - THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES: POLICY STUDY HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL

GABRIELE FASOLO¹
 LUANA DE PAULA MIOTTO^{1,2}
 ALINE JUGLAIR¹

1. Faculdade de Pato Branco, Pato Branco, Paraná, Brasil
 2. Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná, Pato Branco, Paraná, Brasil
 gabefasolo@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to describe and analyze the points concerning the construction of genders, especially in Physical Education classes. When contextualizing the constitution of values that currently define genders, it is observed the fundamental need to broach the historical and social factors which have established cultural essential concepts this study is focused.

Regarding the social field, it is essential to consider the constant cultural transformation to assign meanings to the distinctions - often exclusions - between genders. From this conception, it is proposed to investigate what posture the school embraces while facing the differences between the sexes.

It is widely known that during Physical Education classes gender construction relations are made evident, in force of the opportunity of corporal exhibition and expression among students. The Physical Education Teacher plays an important role in this process, assembling pedagogical actions which allow the coeducation establishment, trying to obtain a progressive gender equality settlement.

THE SOCIETY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERS

Through the representations established by society culture while contextualizing its values and customs, the importance of analyzing factors which constitute the current definition of gender is noticed.

As we contemplate the construction of genders it is essential to consider the constant cultural transformation of society, since the consequent values appropriation vary in accordance with the specific characteristics of a period. However, even if the details of each time differ according to the cultural constitution of a certain group, it is understood that some characteristics and values are always present, being transferred along the historical periods.

Both men and women represent historically distinct roles in society through standards models, rules, and patterns imposed by their members. Louro (2001, p.24) considers:

Roles would be, basically, standards or arbitrary rules that a society establishes for its members and they define their behavior, their clothes, their ways to relate or behave... Through the learning of roles, each one should know what is considered suitable for a man or woman in a specific society, and respond to these expectations.

Despite the differences between men and women are obvious as the basic physical, biological and physiological, conceptualization of gender not only regard these aspects, because society in fact appropriates values, meanings and representations about the cultural conception of gender.

However, either under physical, biological or physiologic optics, these characteristics must not be seen merely as gender distinction aggravating. These facts highlight that differences are inevitable and if understood correctly, instead of promoting forms of exclusion, will contribute to equality in society. Where there is a recognition that each person is unique and different from any other, irrespective of sex, color or age.

It is very important to clarify that sexual characteristics are not what determine who is who, but it is the way the values are attributed to these characteristics, that is, what one thinks or talk about it, is in fact which is female or male in a historic moment of a given society (LOURO, 2001). The process that conceives the construction of gender is long, the result of the cultural social-historical evolution, being linked to a complex web of ideas and values, becoming more complicated any attempt to awareness an ideology contrary to the usual.

Louro (2001, p. 32) supports the idea of destruction of the thought that there is "[...] a natural and stable place for each gender". Based on the concept of gender that emphasizes the pluralism between the existing conflicts in the processes by which culture constructs and distinguishes bodies and subject into women and men, we must accept that factors that involve the construction of this concept will arise from "marks" of society, such as: class, sexuality, ethnic/race, nationality and religion (LOURO, 1997). Meyer (2003, p. 16) points out that "The concept of gender also stresses that, as we were born and live in times, places and specific circumstances, there are many and conflicting ways of defining and living the femininity and masculinity".

Something that can be considered a positive factor as Sayão (2002) says, is the fact that despite the society historically conceive the body from the biological basis, establishing definitions of masculine and feminine, it is in our days that this distinction has represented a provisional and capable construction of constant and objective and subjective changes, reporting that the body does not have a universality.

It is important to highlight that nowadays the biological factor has a great height in male and female distinction, however, the fine line between culture and its constant transformations allow the change of habits and conceptions, seeking for society's knowledge.

THE SCHOOL AND GENDER DISTINCTION

According to Wenzel and Stigger (2006), the school is an educational, curricular and pedagogic system, but it's indeed a social and cultural space as well, given the relationships acquire particular importance at scholar context through intimacy and constant exchange of ideas, concepts, affection and knowledge.

Although interpersonal relationships begin in the family, the school is where students begin socializing with people of similar age. Santos (2008) points out that the educational institution has a decisive role in the process of awareness, guidance and instrumentalisation of the students' bodies.

As previously mentioned, the facts that generate this kind of distinction - or exclusion in most of the times - are established by the constant cultural changes in society. Sousa and Altmann (1999) report that children are individuals with a background of previous values, meanings, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors acquired even before attending school. These meanings are often assigned within the family itself: girls get dolls and boys get toy cars for their amusement.

Luz Junior (2002) mentions that defining genders from the biological differences between them naturalizes maleness and femaleness perspectives, for instance: men are strong and brave, women are delicate and fragile. In this sense, Santos (2008)

claims that if the educational institution classifies individuals by social class, ethnicity or gender, it will certainly contribute to (re)produce and rank differences. However, the school should not stand as an aggravating factor for any kind of exclusion, for besides imparting knowledge, it builds and transforms culture.

As emphasized by Luz Junior (2002, p.74) "Gender relations in educational culture are, since a long time, contributing to establish pedagogical actions in which postures and body movements are set up and scheduled for each gender." Notoriously, the establishment of gender distinction is due to cultural factors and for that reason has a settled symbolism among boys and girls, which becomes evident on the distinct treatment granted to each. For instance, girls must be delicate while roughness is expected from boys. These behavioral patterns are required by teachers, classmates, parents and the whole society.

These distinctions, which were mainly created outside the scholar universe, will also inevitably appear within the school. Therefore, it becomes essential to deal more carefully with this issue when factors that are helping to increase gender stereotypes move into a cultural building environment, especially in classes that require a higher level of contact among the students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND GENDER DIFFERENCES KEEPING

In Physical Education classes – when interaction, physical contact and body language become evident – the students have opportunity to express themselves like in no other course, because the contact with the classmates' and their own body happens more vigorously than in other subjects from scholar curriculum. Goellner (2003) analyses that physical activities (such as gymnastics, sports and martial arts) were not suitable for women for a long time, because it could be harmful to their fragile sex nature. Like Fraga (2000, p. 117) considers:

In despite of male and female bodies' constitution at the most diverse scholarship instances, it seems that in Physical Education this distinction is repeatedly emphasized. Even today, from a socially accepted physical abilities hierarchy, girls are considered "naturally" more fragile than boys, justifying the need of a special structure to protect girls from the innate "brutality" of boys.

The distinguished treatment applied to the sexes leads to bad consequences to the student in such way that, as states Saraiva (2002), "[...] end up on hindering an intercultural learning on scholar physical education, sports practices and general leisure practices". The students themselves notice the different approaches and start to react "like expected". Lima and Diniz (2007) highlight that the act of dealing with boys and girls in uneven ways requires a certain kind of behavior that must be attended by the students. Assuming that a boy is more aggressive and active than a girl, the teacher expects from him attitudes that not necessarily match his personality, but end up considered as "normal".

In practice, when sorting students by gender in Physical Education classes, the teacher divides and establishes the group on the lack of contact among them. Fact that contributes to increase significantly the competition between boys and girls, however, most of the times this competition remains implicit and unexpressed.

At mixed classes naturally emerge a higher number of conflicts, which this time have an opportunity to happen. Would the conflict be an useful object for learning? Individuals in a social context cannot be deprived from the interaction between sexes, considering men and women live together in daily social life. Thus, facing issues, conflicts and adversities may be a valuable learning object.

Nevertheless, Abreu (1993) notes that "the conflict itself is not an object, nor a goal to be achieved, but a guideline for debates and reflections upon the very conflict situations, which might or might not be noticed by society". That proves that division usually hides disagreement due to the lack of practical experience.

Therefore, Physical Education can explore conflicts as practical experience exercise. Through integrative activities, the teacher allows natural conflict situations to appear, which are important for the students' social improvement. For that reason, teachers must be ready to get involved into this process, once they are builders of character and of the whole individual.

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER'S ROLE ON ESTABLISHING COEDUCATION

As defined by the Aurélio (1988) dictionary, coeducation means simultaneous and joint education of individuals of both genders. Its goal is to offer equal opportunities to male and female students. However, the simple fact of teaching mixed classes does not match this goal, the teacher's pedagogical practice is essential in this process.

According to Brodtmann (1986) among the reasons standing for coeducational physical education classes, there are two basic arguments: the first one recognizes that gender integration increases experiences and motor skills in both genders, the second is to promote social improvement by establishing groups on gender diversity.

An integrative pedagogical alternative is the insertion of cooperative games in the Physical Education classes. As demonstrates Orlick (apud Brotto, 2002) cooperative games are an excellent pedagogical scheme, because they have no exclusionary or selective characteristics. They are based in acceptance, cooperation, involvement and amusement, and therefore, decrease competition. The teacher must modify any activity aiming the students' integration, covering every structural content described by the National Curriculum Standards (PCNs, 1998, p. 68): martial arts, sports, gymnastics, rhythmic and expressive activities and recreational games.

Although, adjustments that emphasize gender distinction should be avoided. In the case mentioned by Sousa and Altmann (1999), allowing a goal to be scored only after all the girls have touched the ball points out that the rule adjustment is because of them. On the other hand, to impose that the whole team needs to touch the ball before score a goal encourages social inclusion.

However, Abreu (1993) notes that boys are unwilling to accept practicing activities with girls in the beginning. But when the girls show themselves able to execute a particular activity, the discomfort disappears, what makes sexual distinction irrelevant. Likewise, boys with unsatisfactory motor skills are also prejudice victims.

Then, social exclusion is directly related to the skill level, which is usually determined by the diversity of motor experiences or the lack of it due to cultural factors. Abreu (1993) points the influence of the media on education, different task assignments to brothers and sisters within the family, parents that demotivate girls in engaging on a more active life and even distinct kinds of children's games as reasons for this lack of skill.

As verified, performance distinction will certainly appear among students. However, the teacher must essentially provide multiple opportunities of motor experiences (Abreu, 1995) allowing evolution in a high range of motor fields and by extension the balance of skills.

To perform such activities is only the first step on dealing with the social exclusion issue. It is essential for the students to understand the gender relation and realize that conceiving the differences between them from an exclusionary point of view is socially harmful. The teacher must encourage the debate about this subject during the classes – when the conflict situation shows up – or gathering the group for an instant of reflection at the end of the activities.

Therefore, physical education classes must be considered as a constructive element of coeducation. As demonstrates

Saraiva (1999) classes dividing boys and girls shall be avoided, for equality of opportunities can only be reached together. Mixed classes are an essential step on the progressive battle against gender exclusion. They are indispensable element for constructing equalitarian relationships which can launch deeper social changes.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

After analyzing the factors which constitute the gender construction, it is noticed how fundamental is the role of the Physical Education Teacher while building and transforming concepts. The coeducation plays an essential part in this process.

The Coeducational classes are excellent to crush gender exclusion parameters, socially established. The teacher should use them essentially to achieve the adaptation of the rules, providing integration and proposing a great variation of motor experiences.

Even the teacher perform such practices, it is extremely important that the teacher stimulates the debate about gender issues. So, questing the effective social transformation, the students need to understand that gender distinctions seen as exclusion factors are bad for all society members.

It is fundamental, however, that gender issues become discussed in the teacher formation process, so they, in their daily practice, can be ready to prevent eventual conflicts, and enable their students to create means to collapse the discriminatory and sexist speech established in the society value constitution.

This question being clarified, the teachers contribute in the paradigm shift, attending an essential function in what concerns to the transformation and construction of the society values.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

ABREU, N. G. "Análise das percepções de docentes e discentes sobre turmas mistas e separadas por sexo em aulas de Educação Física Escolar". In: ROMERO, E. **Corpo, mulher e sociedade**. Campinas: Papirus, 1995.

ABREU, N. G. "**Meninos pra cá, meninas pra lá?**" In: VOTRE, S. J. Ensino e avaliação em educação física. São Paulo: IBRASA, 1993. p. 101-120.

AURÉLIO, F. B. H. Dicionário Aurélio Escolar da Língua Portuguesa. 1. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1988.

BRASIL. Secretaria de Educação Fundamental. Parâmetros Curriculares nacionais. Brasília: MEC/SEF, 1998.

BRODTMANN, D. **Elementos e princípios da Educação Física: uma antologia**. Rio de Janeiro: Livro Técnico, 1986. p. 93-122.

BROTTO, F. O. **Jogos cooperativos: o jogo e o esporte como um exercício de convivência**. Santos: Projeto Cooperação, 2002.

FRAGA, A. B. **Corpo, Identidade e Bom-mocismo: cotidiano de uma adolescência bem-comportada**. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000.

GOELLNER, S. V. "**A produção cultural do corpo**". In: LOURO, G. L. et al. **Corpo, Gênero e Sexualidade: um debate contemporâneo na educação**. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 2003.

LIMA, F. M.; DINIS, N. F. "**Corpo e gênero nas práticas escolares de Educação Física**". Currículo sem Fronteiras, Paraná, v. 7, n. 1, p. 243-252, janeiro/junho 2007.

LOURO, G. L. **Gênero, sexualidade e educação: uma perspectiva pós-estruturalista**. Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1997.

LOURO, G. L. **O Corpo Educado: pedagogias da sexualidade**. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2001.

LUZ JUNIOR, A. A. "**Gênero & Educação Física: tornando visíveis fronteiras e outras formas de reconhecimento**". In Motrivivência, nº 19, dez/2002, Florianópolis, Editora da UFSC, p. 87-98, 2002.

MEYER, D. "**Gênero e educação: teoria e política**". In: LOURO, Guacira Lopes et al. **Corpo, gênero e sexualidade: um debate contemporâneo na educação**. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 2003.

SANTOS, C. et al. **Diversidade sexual na escola e a homofobia: a capacitação de professores como estratégia de intervenção**. In: Fazendo Gênero 8 - **Corpo, Violência e Poder**, Florianópolis- SC, 2008.

SARAIVA, M. do C. **Co-Educação Física e Esportes: Quando a diferença é mito**. Ijuí, Rio Grande do Sul, Editora Unijuí, 1999.

SARAIVA, M. do C. "**Por que investigar as questões de Gênero no âmbito da Educação Física, Esporte e Lazer?**" In: Motrivivência, nº 19, Florianópolis, Editora da UFSC, 2002, p. 79-86, dezembro/2002.

SAYÃO, D. "**Por que investigar as questões de Gênero no âmbito da Educação Física, Esporte e Lazer?**" In: Motrivivência, nº 19, Florianópolis, Editora da UFSC, 2002, p. 87-98, dezembro/2002.

SOUSA, E. S.; ALTMANN, H. **Meninos e meninas: expectativas corporais e implicações na educação física escolar**. Cadernos Cedes, n. 48. 1999. Disponível em: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/ccedes/v19n48/v1948a04.pdf>. Acessado em 27/04/10.

WENETZ, I; STIGGER, M. P. "**A construção do gênero no espaço escolar**". In: Movimento, Porto Alegre, v. 12, n. 1, p. 59-80, janeiro/abril, 2006.

Address: Linha Manfrói, Interior, s/n
City: São Domingos, SC
Postal Code: 89835-000
E-mail: gabefasolo@gmail.com

THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES: POLICY STUDY HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL**ABSTRACT**

This paper analyses gender issues through a historical, social and pedagogic perspective, evaluates educational influence on male and femaleness conception and defines the role of the physical education teacher on establishing coeducation as a tool to gradually promote equality between sexes.

KEYWORDS: Physical Education, gender, coeducation.

LA CONSTRUCTION DU GENTE COURS D'ÉDUCATION PHYSIQUE: UNE ÉTUDE HISTORIQUE, SOCIAL ET PÉDAGOGIQUE**RÉSUMÉ**

Cet article examine les questions de genre dans une perspective historique, social et pédagogique, évalue l'influence de l'éducation sur la conception culturelle de masculinité et féminité et définit le rôle de professeur d'éducation physique dans l'établissement de la mixité comme un outil pour promouvoir progressivement l'égalité entre sexes.

MOTS-CLÉS: Éducation Physique, genre, mixité.

LA CONSTRUÇÃO DO GÊNERO EM AULAS DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA: UM ESTUDO HISTÓRICO, SOCIAL E PEDAGÓGICO**RESUMO**

Este artigo analisa as questões de gênero através de uma perspectiva histórica, social e pedagógica. Avalia a influência da educação na concepção cultural de masculino e feminino e define o papel do professor de Educação Física no estabelecimento da coeducação como ferramenta para promover progressivamente a igualdade entre os sexos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Física, gênero e coeducação.