

162 - COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE PRACTICE OF CAPOEIRA IN BRAZIL (CURITIBA) AND IN SPAIN (AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF CASTILLA AND LEÓN)

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INTRODUCTION

Probably originated in the XVI century and with multiple developments in the next centuries, the Capoeira suffered several transformations. It was officially forbidden for more than 120 years and today it is present in many countries from the five continents, where it represents the Brazilian culture.

The Capoeira is still in process of changing since it has to adapt to each place that it gets into. It is an activity very widespread for the entire world and in Europe there are countries where it has been practiced for over 30 years. In Spain it is becoming more and more popular and it has been practiced for nearly 25 years.

In the 1980s the great Capoeira's groups, a model that appeared in the 1960s and that got stability in the organization of this subject, have a big expansion. These groups have a big part of responsibility in the diffusion of Capoeira through the world thanks to their strategies – association, franchising and so on. It could be said that, practically, there are no group in Brazil that have not representatives abroad that manage go in and live legally in another country only to teach the Brazilian culture. Nowadays, Capoeira is recognized in any big city of the world.

So, it becomes important to register the advances of Capoeira and the way it and its disseminators are penetrating into and adapting themselves to other spheres of society and in other cultures.

METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out a comparative study between the practice of Capoeira in Brazil (Curitiba) and in Spain (Autonomous Community of Castilla and León), it was necessary to verify which type of public join this activity, collecting some references about the comprehension of the point of view of the natives with regard to the diffusion of Capoeira in these regions and their relationship with this activity through the analysis of their narratives obtained in an open interview with 150 students of Capoeira in 2008 in some training centers and meetings and events in these two places.

Another important factor to understand how Capoeira is introducing and adapting itself to Spain is know what do the protagonists of this history think and feel. They are the professionals that are teaching Capoeira in that country, who related fragments of their lives in Brazil and in Spain, the difficulties they had and still have, they make comparisons between the students and between the learning processes, what do they intend to do and what are their opinions about the Capoeira out of Brazil.

RESULTS

Analyzing the interviews with the professionals, we can notice that almost all of them already taught Capoeira at gyms and schools in Brazil and they decided go to Spain for economic purposes and also with the objective of to get new experiences.

Few of them have not had difficulties to introduce Capoeira in the Spanish cities where they are living and working. Some of these problems are little knowledge about Capoeira, problems related to the language, discrimination and prejudice, the cultural shock, the shyness of Spanish people to start the practice and also because bad professionals that did not work seriously and abandoned the students that worked previously in the same city. They comment the difficulty to introduce Capoeira to schools, where almost all of them worked in Brazil.

They work at schools, city halls and mainly at gyms. Each professional had nearly 50 and 60 students on average in 2008.

Most of them have another work because they cannot manage live only on Capoeira like they did before going to Spain.

To these professionals, there are few similarities between Spanish and Brazilian students. They notice similarities in the will of learn and in the passion of some people. The differences are countless. They said that most of Spanish capoeiristas are not loyal, do not get involved totally, do not have commitment – batizados, shows, trips – and these professionals believe that the Spanish do not understand all that Capoeira transmits; they do not understand the spirituality that exists in it and they do not have it like a way of life. In their opinions, the Spanish students make more inquiries, which demands more preparation from the teachers and that, in general, Spanish students have a little more difficult to learn, but it seems that they like it more than the Brazilian students, that see the Capoeira very common and with an easy access. Many of them think that all these differences exist because this activity is still very new in Spain and that this situation is changing gradually.

They also think that the Brazilian capoeiristas are humbler and that they respect more the traditions and teachers, learn easily and have more body consciousness. They comment about the superiority in the swing and malice of Brazilian people, which also can facilitate the learning process, and they point out that in Brazil the Capoeira is practised more like a fight, which is not very appreciated and accepted for most of Spanish.

In their speeches they focus the difficulty related to the language. The music goes with Capoeira and is its soul and that is why this can be one of the most complicated subjects for the professionals. Portuguese and Spanish are very similar, however, it seems that many Spanish do not make an effort to understand the songs and to answer the choir in the "roda". In international meetings and events we can notice that many people from other nationalities (French, Israelis, English and so on), that should have more problems because of the difference between the languages are speaking Portuguese almost perfectly, answering the choirs and singing in the "rodas" of Capoeira.

All the professionals interviewed say that they want to come back to live in their native country, but some of them say that they still need a financial improvement before this.

They believe that today, the Capoeira abroad needs more organization and discussion, that there are a lot of professionals little qualified and taking advantage of Capoeira and they think that there is little contact with masters. However, they say that this activity is becoming more and more known and it is showing that Brazil is not only a reference in samba or soccer.

With the interviews, we prove that in the Spanish group there is more male participation and that the ages are between 18 and 34 years old. In Curitiba, the difference between male and female students is not so accentuated and the middling age is between 11 and 24 years old.

The number of people that study is very similar in the two groups. Nevertheless, most of Brazilian students work, while in Spain prevails the group that do not work.

In Spain there are students from different social classes, like in Brazil. In Castilla and León the students earn an average of 500 and 1.110 Euros and in Curitiba, about 500 and 1.100 Reals. Neither of the groups has many representatives from the upper class.

In Casyilla and in Curitiba the Capoeira is mainly found out through shows, friends, gyms and TV. In the Spanish television, important facts to its finding out are the advertisements, frequents in the entire Europe.

Most of castellanos practice Capoeira at gyms, but there also are schools adopting the Capoeira like an optional activity. The Muzenza Group, for exemple, has instructors teaching at schools in Valladolid, Salamanca, Ponferrada, Segovia, León, Zamora and Benavente, not to mention other cities out of Castilla and León. Some cities offer more resistance than others in accept the Capoeira like an optional activity, but it is been accepted little by little. In Curitiba, most of capoeiristas is at gyms, although, this activity also has a lot of students at schools.

The most important reason/objective for practice Capoeira either in Castilla or in Curitiba is the same – Sport/Martial Art and next, culture and leisure. However, the teaching methodology and the intensity of the training in Castilla sometimes have to be adapted.

Like the teachers said, there are other aspects in the training of Capoeira in Spain that are very different to the way it is done in Brazil and in other places where Capoeira is more developed. Although people are saying good things about Capoeira and that they are happy with it and with the things associated to this, most of students are not training so seriously like in other countries. Frequency is an inconstant aspect; they skip many classes and have gaps in their trainings. Regarding traditions and rules that come with Capoeira, it is very difficult that they respect and adopt them. The people that respect more are those that have been to other countries, since they know more students that are more experienced in this world and then they notice that in Spain people behave in a different way.

When we see the answers about what Capoeira is, we can notice that most of Spanish students try to define literally what it is. On the other hand, the Brazilian students answer what they feel about it. So, they have different ways of see, feel and live this art. We can see it in the examples:

Capoeira is “a way to express feelings”; “Freedom” and “My life” – (Brazil)

or

“Fight”; “Martial Art”; “Sport” and “Culture” – (Spain).

Many Spanish students enroll in Capoeira because it attracted their attention, since it is really eye-catching and beautiful. After that, they carry on with it because they discover that it is very funny and that there is a good friendly atmosphere. There is a chain and you can know a lot of new places and people. There are a lot of trips and events in Spain and in other countries, which also attract the attention of Spanish students. This can prove the idea that what they really want is enjoy themselves. In Brazil people also choose Capoeira because it is eye-catching and beautiful, and, besides, because in this activity there is no prejudice and because it is a sport originated in Brazil. It is part of Brazilian history.

In Spain there are still few students of Capoeira. In Castilla and León there were 13 Muzenza's teachers of in 2008, all of them were Brazilian and that, in the direct interviews said they had a sum of 645 students. There are few people training in Castilla, since this activity is very new in this region (less than 10 years) compared to Madrid, for example, where the first teacher arrived more than 20 years ago. A good explanation for the Capoeira has arrived so late to this region could be the climate; because it is very different to Brazilian climate and then most of the teachers choose cities where they do not feel a very hard contrast. We can see it clearly when we notice the amount of teachers from north or north-east of Brazil living in the south of Spain (the hottest region of this country). Castilla is at the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula and it is one of the coldest regions of this country. Another reason, that makes me sad, is the reserved characteristic of many cities from Castilla and León related to accept and receive new experiences about other cultures.

It is hard to believe, but currently we still can detect the existence of prejudice related to Capoeira from upper classes' people and from people that are against the integration of manifestations from other cultures and countries. The barefoot, touch the floor with hands, the sweat, the capoeirista's color and so on are some of the aspects they refuse. Unfortunately, we still can hear sentences like: “What are those monkeys doing crawling across the floor?”, and it does not mean that it does not happen in Brazil.

The reason for exist few Capoeira's students in Spain could be because that in this country this activity is not legally recognized like a sport and that is why we notice the resistance of many institutions in adopt it like an activity. They still do not know how to classify the Capoeira.

CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that both of the groups practice Capoeira because it is eye-catching and amazing, involves music, is not boring, is an activity where people are equal and at the same time it is magical and has its historical element always present. However, we notice that the professionals say that it is still very difficult to Spanish students get involved into Capoeira, which it is atypical having loyal disciples that really follow and respect them, like most of Brazilian students are. It seems that they do not devote themselves totally – it is only one provide more – following the capitalist ideals, rationalized and controlled. These are the elemental similarities and differences found between the two groups studied.

We saw that the capoeiristas leave Brazil looking for no more prejudice, affirmation, legitimacy, respect and a better economical situation, but it is clear that not always they have an easy acceptance and adaptation.

It is important to point out that something very dangerous in this great expansion is that many bad qualified people are leaving Brazil in order to teach Capoeira abroad. Like this, there are a lot of people from other countries that have little experience in Capoeira that are teaching it. On the other hand, it is known that there are many capoeiristas from other nationalities that decided to teach Capoeira and dedicated the time, studied, looked for knowledge and are good professionals. I believe that people are more and more aware about the opportunists, but it is clear that it is difficult to recognize them, since Capoeira is little or nothing known in many places. Another important thing about it is that many professionals are afraid of the forgetfulness about the masters.

It was necessary to carry out a research with the natives from Castilla and León and from Curitiba, like with the professionals of Capoeira that live in Spain in order to know a little more about what is the meaning and function people are attributing to Capoeira in Spain and in Brazil, since, like said MAUSS (1971, p. 340), “we cannot have a clear point of view about the body techniques differences if we do not reckon a triple consideration, instead of an only one, no matter if it is physical or mechanical, like could be an anatomical or physiological theory of the walking or that, conflicting, it was sociological or psychological, what do we need is a triple point of view, that of the ‘full man’”

According to this same author, one body technique is followed by a succession of interdependent acts, which happen to the individual not only for itself, but with the help of education, its society and the place it has in there. So, we can say that the present contrasts noticed in the professionals' speeches about the big amount of differences between the students of Spain and

Brazil are perfectly normal, since each society has its own habits.

After analyze the students' answers and speeches, we see that the Capoeira in Castilla and León seems to attract attention of people who already practice because it is exotic and fashionable like fight and acrobatic play and, also, like the curitibanos think, because it is not only one sport, rationalized, bureaucratic and indifferent to the little local variations. The Capoeira, like it is been doing by the most of the great groups, do not have explicit rules. This absence of rules allows an adaptation to the social mutations. Here we have an impasse, because the Capoeira was not accepted in many places and institutions in Castilla and León because it is not recognized like a sport. Schools, public institutions, some companies seem to need a more scientific justification, in other words, more rational. Some like this occurs in Curitiba, where the Capoeira do not receive enough support from private and public institutions because it is not an elite sport.

The body discipline is a basic instrument of all kinds of domestication and, maybe thinking about what is more specific at sports, or in other words, the ruled manipulation of the body, and the fact that the sport, like every subject in every totalitarian institution is one way to obtain from the body one admission that the soul could refuse, we could understand better how most of the authoritarian systems use the sport (BOURDIEU, 1988). This could be a good explanation to understand why many Spanish institutions reject the Capoeira. It is not recognized like a sport yet and, therefore, it cannot "tame" people.

Also with regard to this topic, BOURDIEU (1983, pp. 178-179) mention that

"the constitution of a field of sport practices goes parallel to the creation of a sport philosophy, that is a political philosophy of sport. Dimension of an aristocratical philosophy, the amateur theory converts the sport in a disinterested practice, like the artistic activity, but that adjust itself better than art to the affirmation of future bosses' manly virtues: sport is conceived like a school of bravery and virility, capable of 'reforming the character' and suggesting the will to win that is the mark of the true bosses, whenever it was a will to win following the rules – the fair play, willingness chivalrous totally contrary to the vulgar persecution of victory to any price".

In spite of be very happy with the Capoeira, most of castellanos do not have the intention of continue in the activity, is not assiduous and aim only the leisure. It is difficult to a professional work at a space where people are going in and out constantly. The Capoeira had to adapt itself one more time, since that in one dynamic society everything has to be dynamic. Those people that make a living on Capoeira are forced to submit themselves to the interests of those people that are "consuming" the "product" Capoeira.

To BOURDIEU (1983, pp. 193-194),

"the beginning of transformations of practices and sports consumption has to be searched in the relationship between the transformations of supply and the transformations of demand: the transformations of supply (invention or importation of sports or new equipments, reinterpretation of ancient sports or plays, etc.) are originated in the fights for the imposition of the legitimate sport practice and for the conquest of the costumers of quotidian players, fights between the different sports and, in the interior of each sport, between the different schools or traditions, like the fight between the different categories of implicated agents in this competition: on the other hand, the transformations of demand are a dimension of the transformation of life styles and they obey, therefore, to the general laws of this transformation."

Nevertheless, we have to take care with the adaptations related to the Capoeira because we cannot let its characteristics vanish. Also, it is necessary that the professionals that are abroad organize themselves better and that they discuss more the subject.

We can observe that the Capoeira abroad is becoming equal to the Capoeira in Brazil. A common opinion between the professionals is that this activity is growing faster and faster and having more support than in the country that gave raise to it.

The differences between the students from one place or another are cultural – in the way they are, habits, life style, climate, economy... Everything influences. Not only the habits and differences between cultures, but it seems that something could be failing in the teaching-learning process in Spain, regarding to what the professionals said about the gap of respect to the traditions, basis and masters. The teachers should stop to observe their own classes, their method of teach, so think and try to find the way of make the students absorb the Capoeira with everything that is linked to it, in spite of the resistance that exists. Thus, this fail could be affecting the formation of capoeiristas considering the self-sufficiency and little humility that some people show.

The teachers complain about this, but they do not see that sometimes the students are only imitating the character of their teachers or of some capoeirista they admire and we know that there are a lot of egocentric people in the world of Capoeira that only want to be strong, to "fly" with their acrobatics or that are worried about being feared in the "rodas". So, they could be forgetting the most important thing, which is being a good educator.

Each one, in each way hopes the same things from the Capoeira – practice a sport that is different to everything, where do not have space for prejudices, to learn about another culture, in the case of Spanish people, and to preserve and learn about their own culture, in the case of Brazilian. The students say that the Capoeira has something that differ itself to everything. They do not know how to express very well what is it and they say that only the people that practice it know it.

It is clear that the Capoeira already does not belong to Brazil. It was created and developed in Brazilian's territory but currently, and actually, it belongs to the whole humanity. Nevertheless, many Brazilian people do not know the power of Capoeira out of Brazil; that our culture, our habits and language are being learnt in many countries because of the Capoeira. They do not know that the Pelourinho and many other Brazilian's places are full of tourists-capoeiristas that are investigating and learning about our roots and history on the Capoeira's and the brave capoeiristas' influence.

With this study we can understand a little more about this social change process, including the renewing of values and definitions that involves the art-fight in question. We also can understand how are overcome the cultural and institutional walls to the Capoeira's practice in other spheres out of where it was born like a popular manifestation, checking which meaning and function people are attributing to this activity nowadays and enabling a little exploration of how it is introducing and adapting itself to the Spanish society.

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COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE PRACTICE OF CAPOEIRA IN BRAZIL (CURITIBA) AND IN SPAIN (AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF CASTILLA AND LEÓN)

ABSTRACT

The expansion of Capoeira starts in the 1970s and this process was not and is not so easy like it is thought. The comparative study between the practice of Capoeira in Brazil (Curitiba) and in Spain (Autonomous Community of Castilla and León) shows how the introduction and the adaptation of Capoeira in Spain are working through the way of its disseminators are trying to captivate the new followers, understand what are they looking for in this activity and at the same time, to be careful to do not lose its essence. Also, it reveals which kind of people attend to this activity and what is the meaning that they are attributing to its practice nowadays in its original country and in Spain. In order to do this study, 150 Brazilian and Spanish students were interviewed as well 13 Brazilian professionals of Capoeira that were teaching this art in Spain in 2008. As a part of the results, we can notice that while the Brazilian students live Capoeira in all its aspects, the connection between the Spanish students and the Capoeira seems to be only like consumer-product, showing clearly the capitalist society ideals.

KEY WORDS: Capoeira; comparative study; society.

ANALYSE COMPARATIVE DE LA PRATIQUE DE LA CAPOEIRA AU BRÉSIL (CURITIBA) ET EN ESPAGNE (RÉGION DE CASTILLE ET LÉON)

RÉSUMÉ

L'expansion de la Capoeira à travers le monde commence dans les années 70 et, contrairement à ce que l'on peut penser, ce processus n'a pas été, et n'est toujours pas, facile. L'analyse comparative de la pratique de la Capoeira au Brésil (Curitiba) et en Espagne (région de Castille et León) nous montre comment la Capoeira s'insère et s'adapte en Espagne à travers de ses divulgateurs qui essayent de capter de nouveaux adeptes et de comprendre ce qu'ils recherchent dans cette activité, tout en prenant soin de ne pas perdre l'essence de la Capoeira. Nous centrerons notre étude sur le type de public qui accède actuellement à cette activité et sur le sens que celui-ci donne à cette pratique autant dans son pays d'origine qu'en Espagne. Cette analyse se base sur les entrevues réalisées au Brésil et en Espagne durant l'année 2008 auprès de 150 pratiquants de Capoeira et de 13 professionnels brésiliens qui enseignent la Capoeira en Espagne. Une partie des résultats obtenus montre que, alors que les brésiliens vivent la Capoeira sous tous ses aspects, les espagnols entretiennent avec la Capoeira une simple relation de consommateur-produit ce qui reflète clairement les idéaux de la société capitaliste.

ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO ENTRE LA PRÁCTICA DE LA CAPOEIRA EN BRASIL (CURITIBA) Y EN ESPAÑA (COMUNIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE CASTILLA Y LEÓN)

RESUMEN

A partir de la década de los setenta se inicia la diseminación de la Capoeira por el mundo y al contrario de lo que se piensa, ese proceso no fue y sigue sin ser fácil. El análisis comparativo entre la práctica de la Capoeira en Brasil (Curitiba) y en España (Comunidad Autónoma de Castilla y León) enseña cómo la Capoeira se está insertando y adaptando en España a través de cómo sus divulgadores intentan cautivar a los nuevos adeptos, entender lo que buscan en la actividad y a la vez tener el debido cuidado para que su esencia no se pierda. De la misma manera, nos muestra que tipo de público accede a esta actividad y cuál es el significado que se atribuye a su práctica en la actualidad en su país de origen y en España. Para este análisis se realizaron entrevistas abiertas con un total de 150 practicantes de Capoeira de Brasil y de España y con 13 profesionales brasileños que enseñaban Capoeira en España en el año de 2008. Cómo parte de los resultados obtenidos, se puede percibir que mientras los brasileños viven la Capoeira en todos sus aspectos, la relación entre los españoles y la Capoeira parece ser meramente de consumidor-producto, proyectando claramente los ideales de la sociedad capitalista.

ESTUDO COMPARATIVO ENTRE A PRÁTICA DA CAPOEIRA NO BRASIL (CURITIBA) E NA ESPANHA (COMUNIDADE AUTÓNOMA DE CASTILLA E LEÓN)

RESUMO

A partir da década de 70 inicia-se a expansão da Capoeira pelo mundo e ao contrário do que muitos ainda pensam, esse processo não foi e continua sem ser fácil. O estudo comparativo entre a prática da capoeira no Brasil (Curitiba) e na Espanha (Comunidade Autónoma de Castilla e León) nos mostra como está sendo a inserção e adaptação da Capoeira na Espanha através de como seus divulgadores tentam satisfazer os novos adeptos, entender o que procuram na atividade e ao mesmo tempo ter o devido cuidado para que a sua essência não seja perdida. Também nos é revelado que tipo de público acede a esta atividade e qual é o significado que se atribui à sua prática na atualidade em seu país de origem e na Espanha. Para este estudo foram realizadas entrevistas abertas com um total de 150 praticantes de Capoeira do Brasil e da Espanha e com 13 profissionais brasileiros que se encontravam ministrando aulas de Capoeira na Espanha no ano de 2008. Como parte dos resultados obtidos, pode-se perceber que enquanto os brasileiros vivenciam a Capoeira em todos os seus aspectos, a relação entre os espanhóis e a Capoeira ainda parece ser meramente de consumidor-producto, projetando claramente os ideais da sociedade capitalista.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Capoeira; estudo comparativo; sociedade.