

49 - PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIEW OF BODY, TIME, SPACE AND HUMAN RELATION THROUGH CAPOEIRA PRACTICE

ANDRÉ LUIZ TEIXEIRA REIS

Universidade de Brasília – UnB, Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brasil
andrereis@unb.br

INTRODUCTION

Capoeira is one component of Brazilian culture. It combines and synthesises elements of dance, fight, acrobatics and play. In this strange dance the dancers imitate movements and attitudes of certain animals by performing specific movements with their bodies, especially with feet and legs (Almeida, 1986). The game is played inside a circle formed by musicians and players, who arrange themselves in a certain order.

For the purpose of this research, participants experienced capoeira lessons over 7 months of maintained regular participation in that lessons. This study was based upon Van Manen theoretical framework (1990). The aforementioned existential 'life worlds' were related to the participants experiencing the elements of capoeira lessons: the capoeira game – fight and dance, the capoeira songs (playing musical instruments, singing and clapping hands), the capoeira group – the participant himself and others, and the implications for the social world.

METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

This qualitative study explored the phenomenon of participants' lived experience. This style of research starts by asking the theoretical question of how participants observe and describe their experiences. Moreover, there are concerns related to the ways these participants' consciousness and its intentionality affect the described experience (VAN DER ZALM & BERGUM, 2000). To answer such questions, phenomenology was developed to illuminate the various ranges of human experiences, the context of these experiences, and how these experiences may be described (SPIEGELBER, 1965; BURCH, 1989; HAMMOND, 1991; ELDRED, 1997).

Phenomenology began with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, acknowledged as the founder of this philosophical movement, who stressed that phenomenology is concerned with facts, feelings, concepts, dream images, sensations, fantasies, thoughts and referential objects related to the topic (theme) and to the experience (MAGGS-RAPPORT, 2001). Husserl's phenomenology required reflection on the content of the mind to the exclusion of everything else. However, Heidegger (2000) claimed that researchers should make manifest what is hidden in ordinary, everyday experience. He understood that description (what he called the structure of everydayness, or being-in-the-world) was found in an interconnected system of equipment, social roles, and purposes. For Heidegger, being 'thrown' into the world among things in the act of realising projects is a more fundamental kind of intentionality. For this philosopher, we are what we do in the world.

More recently, Van Manen (1990) incorporated the notion of 'lifeworld' to express the 'lived experience' through phenomenological perspectives. Lifeworld is the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations. The author explains that lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relations could be an updated framework for grasping human experiences and for generating fresh views of taken-for-granted behaviours and experience:

Lived space (our physical environment). According to the author, this is the space where we find ourselves and which can affect the way we feel. He believes that our fundamental sense of being is linked to the 'becoming' to the space we are in, transcending meanings of that space (church, school, cities), experiencing feelings of loss, strangeness, vulnerability, excitement and stimulation. The space that human beings move in and find themselves at home. The quality of meaning of a particular experience in a lived space. The author explain that phenomenological research explores the various qualities and aspects of that lived space; the social character of space, which has something to do with the our fundamental sense of being; the cultural and social space in which people need to be around themselves in order to feel comfortable or intimate; and making the difference between place to 'stay' and place 'to be'.

Lived time (our situatedness in, and sense of, passing time). The author stresses that lived time is concerned with temporal dimensions of past, present, and future, and how it affects experience. However, this dimensioning considers the subjective time. This is our temporally way of being in the world – thinking about an open future or recollecting the past. The author asserts that getting to know the person is a process of knowing his or her personal life history and where they feel they are going to and the experiences that somehow leave their traces on their selves. Also and yet, he evaluates that it is true that the past change under the pressures and influences of the present. Moreover, 'we may reinterpret who I once was or who I am now. The past changes itself, because we live towards a future, which we suspect as yet a secret mystery of experiences that lie in store for us (LINSCHOTEM cited by VAN MANEN, 1990).

Lived body (our corporeal and mental experiences). The author stresses that we are always bodily in the world. As example, he explains that when we meet another person in his or her landscape or world we meet that person first of all through his or her body. In our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time – not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather in spite of ourselves.

Lived relation (our interaction with others). It is explained that this interaction is the lived relations that we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share. The opportunity of meeting others that may allow us to transcend our selves and to find out that, to our surprise, the person is very different from the way we expected. He adds that in a larger existential sense human beings have searched in this experience of the other, the communal, the social aiming a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, grounds for living, as in religious experience of the absolute Other, God.

METHODOLOGY

TECHNIQUES FOR GATHERING AND REDUCING INFORMATION

Specific techniques are required for this study. Through these, information from participants and from researcher were gathered, transcribed and reduced. The reflexive journal was based researcher on participant observation, while participants were interviewed to produce narrative accounts about their experiences. This information was reduced according to the theme of

enquiry, which is related to how participants (researched/researcher) experienced Capoeira lessons.

Participant observation –researcher's reflexive journal

Participant observation needed to be intense and focused on how people experienced 'being' in a group. Observations were made concurrent with the participants' experiences. The researcher was immersed in and shared the same environment and social context where Capoeira was experienced by participation in over 7 months of lessons.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews were semi-structured and addressed how was the process of getting mastery while living time, body, space and human relation through capoeira's experience.

Tape-recorded discussions were transcribed and coded for interpretation. The information from participants' accounts and from the researcher's reflexive journal represent the data from which the Findings were derived.

Phenomenological reduction – units of meanings

The transcribed information from the participants and researcher describes experiences of capoeira. From this, the reduced information from the participants/researcher presented individuals experience through significant statements – the units of meanings. Priority is given to transcripts in the data reduction stage, while the reflexive journal is used to support rebuilding stage of data management, and to give names to the units of meanings.

In accordance with studies by Creswell (1997) a range of significant statements are extracted from all participants' description, phrases and sentences that directly pertain to the investigated phenomenon. This range of significant statements allows the researcher to rebuild the individual and collective social experiences in the next process known as horizontality.

Information were condensed down into the elements of body, space, time and human relations as those that pervade the social experience of the participants in the existent framework proposed by Van Manen (1990).

Horizontality – phenomenological rebuilding

Horizontality is a process of making a whole picture of the essential structure of what and how such phenomenon is being experienced. After this, the development of an interpretive explanation was undertaken.

FINDINGS

As exposed, participants had attended lessons over 7 months of regular participation in capoeira lessons, four times per week. This equates to 80 lessons, each of 1½ hours, totalling 120 hours of capoeira for full attendance. A group of 150 people with the average age from 17 to 32 years old were recruited to attend regular lessons.

As previously explained two waves of individual interviews with 25 participants each was conducted. The interviews were done either after or before the training according participant's availability. The length of the interviews varied from 20 to 50 minutes.

Interviews plus field noted produced 130 pages of single spaced, font 12 A4 pages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TIME EXPERIENCED IN CAPOEIRA

The length of time spent participating in capoeira might be proportionate to the awareness felt on the part of the individual of the changes brought about in his previous experience of life. Time is a factor in the adherence to and repeated experience of capoeira, in building skills and pursuing goals. From this, the cumulative process of striving to attain mastery and group/social achievement can be better acknowledged. Thus regular and persistent participation in capoeira might go beyond the students' initial expectations of what they originally thought they might gain or accomplish from practice, as an opportunity to look back at the goals that were set and what was achieved.

The time spent practicing shows the experience as a process of achievement. Participants are encouraged to reflect upon how much the practice of capoeira enables them to apply their inner autonomy and choices in real-life scenarios, not merely within the group of capoeira.

Prolonged participation may increase the sense of rhythm, timing, body dialogue and concentration, social and self-improvement. Also, fear and a sense of vulnerability in ones interactions with others may in time be challenged and finally addressed.

SPACE EXPERIENCED IN CAPOEIRA

Space in capoeira for the effects in SSWB is understood as the environment that creates opportunities for a variety of interactions between people. This is communal integration. With a view to achieving this, questions like how human behavior is stimulated by environment can be raised (ALEXANDER and SEIDMAN, 1999).

The experience of physical, social, and psychological space will show the importance of the relationship between the practitioners of capoeira within the context of the experience of the game: the gym/street/park where the 'roda' is taking place, music, the physical space for the players in the game, the way they make use of it, share it, and the emotions they experience within this space.

The participants will determine the extent to which the social and ritualistic interactions in capoeira might occur. This may consist of taking turns in different activities during the game; the exchange of greetings, singing, playing musical instruments and 'buying into the game', all of which relate to the way in which such space is consciously experienced.

Prolonged practise of capoeira in a particular location might, in time, make the participants feel a certain connection to that place, to consider the environment in which they practice as being their own, like a second home. In spite of this, a feeling of being 'out of place' or uncomfortable with one's environment might be undergone.

BODY EXPERIENCED IN CAPOEIRA

Body is regarded as being changeable, shapeable and malleable to the experience. In the case of this study, achievement through experience seems to be the way in which the body will adapt to the changes in SSWB.

Maintained experience might produce effects on social interaction through movement and group cohesion related to motor behavior (BRAWLEY, 1996). It could effect goals such as breaking barriers of body communication, motor limitation and coping with adversities (LAPIERRE, 1997). This raises the question of whether the elements of fight, dance, art et al. in capoeira are personally combined and developed by the individual and by the group as a whole. Furthermore, the SSWB factor can be related to the way in which the participants connect their bodies through fluid and harmonized movements (acrobatics and kicks) when playing in partners.

HUMAN RELATIONS EXPERIENCED IN CAPOEIRA

Human relations seem to be one of the most important elements of capoeira experiences. Capoeira is a group activity in which the performance turned in by the group as a whole is very important for the overall effectiveness of the game. Participants may have found working with others enhanced their enjoyment and therefore their input into the game.

They might have experienced relationships with different individuals from different backgrounds - forming a degree of intimacy with these individuals that helped them to understand and tolerate such differences. In this way, tolerance might be one of the most important social aspects of capoeira because through it, relationships outside the game can be fostered from within. The importance of respecting differences could strike a balance between the efforts made in breaking down the barriers of intolerance and the responses received in the process. At the same time, capoeira, as a physical group activity is related to the development of physical skills. Thus the relationship formed between more skilled and lesser skilled individuals is of particular interest in as much as it has an effect on one's experience of well-being.

Attaining a degree of proficiency in the art of capoeira might reveal social interaction as a determinant for happiness or life satisfaction (COOPER, 1992) and show that successful involvement with people can be reached. As a result of this, the participants might come to understand the nature of human relations in capoeira experience and how it exerts an influence on their social well-being. The results indicate that Van Manen's framework of lived experience of body, time, space and human relation might be an up-to-date principle applicable to researchers interested in to study human experiences in sports and physical activities.

REFERÊNCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

- ALMEIDA B. **Capoeira: a Brazilian Art Form. California, USA: North Atlantic Books**, Berkeley, 1986. 287p.
- AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS. **Australian Social Trends**. In: ABS, Canberra, 1999.
- BAUM (1999) **Building healthy communities: health development & social capital project – western suburbs of Adelaide**. SA Community Health Research Unit and Department of Public Health. Adelaide: Flinders University of SA, 1999.
- BAYLY L. & BULL F. **How to build social capital: a case study of an enduring community walking group**. Eastern Perth Public & Community Health Unity & Department of Public Health, UWA, 2001.
- BENNER P. **The tradition and skill in interpretive phenomenology in studying health, illness, and caring practices**. Interpretive Phenomenology (Benner P. ed.), Sage, Thousand Oaks, California, pp. 99-128, 1995.
- BERKMAN L. **The role of social relations in health promotion**. Psychosomatic Medicine, London, 57(3):245-54, 1995.
- BERKMAN L. **Social relationships, connectedness, and health: The bonds that heal, 1997**. Disponível em <<http://obsr.od.nih.gov/Publications/SOCIAL.HTM>> Acesso em: 25, set. 2002.
- CHOU K. **Influences on adolescents in an ecosystem: uniformed groups**. Journal of Genetic Psychology, England, UK, 160(3):270-279, 1999.
- COBB S. **Social support as a moderator of life stress**. Psychosomatic Medicine, USA, 38:3-14, 1986.
- COLAIZZI P. **Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it**. Existential, London, 6:75-86, 1978.
- COOPER H. **Social activity and subjective well-being**. Personality and Individual Differences, 13(5):573-583, 1992.
- CRESWELL J.W. **Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing Among Five Traditions**. London: Sage, Vaile R. & King M. eds, 1997, 320p.
- DIENER E. & FUJITA F. **Social comparisons and subjective well-being**. In: B. BUUNK & R. GIBBONS (Eds). Health, Coping, and Social Comparison. New York: Mahwah, 1997. p. 329-357.
- DIENER E. **Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life**. Annual Review of Psychology, London, v. 4, n.5, p.05-23, jun. 2003.
- ELDRED M. **A short presentation of "what is" phenomenology**. England, 1997. Disponível em: <www.connect.net/ron/phenom.html> Acesso em: 20 set. 2001.
- FORSYTH D. **Why so social an animal? The functions of groups**. USA, 1996. Disponível em: <<http://www.has.vcu.edu/psy/faculty/fors/functions.html>> Acesso em: 23 abril 2001.
- GARRICK J. **Doubting the philosophical assumptions of interpretive research**. Qualitative Studies in Education. London, Vol. 12, n.2, p.147-156, ago. 1999.
- HEIDEGGER, M. **Being and time**. 7. ed. Oxford: Blackwell publishers Ltd, 2000. 450p.
- HERMANOWICZ & HARRIET M. **Ritualizing the routine: collective identity affirmation**. Sociological Forum, Albania, vol. 14, n. 2, p.197-214, ago. 1999.
- HILDINGH C. (1995). **Social support in self-help groups, as experienced by persons having coronary heart disease and their next of kin**. Journal Nursing Studies, USA, vol. 32, n.3, p.234-245, mar. 1995.
- HOUSE J. **Work Stress and Social Support**. 2.ed. USA: Reading, MA, 1981. 240p.
- HOWARD P. (1994) **The Death of Common Sense**. New York: Random House, 1994. 288 p.
- KAHN R.; ANTONUCCI T. **Convoys over the life course: attachment, roles, and social support**. In: BALTES P.; BRIM O. (Eds). Life-span development and behaviour. New York: Academic Press, 1980, p. 253-286.
- KOERNER A. **Relational schemas: the universal grammar of relationships**. In: DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS INTERNATIONAL. The Sciences and Engineering, vol. 59, n. 9, 1999, p.51-68. 1999.
- MARLEAU-PONTY M. **Phenomenology of Perception**. 2.ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962. 274p.
- REISA L. **Educação física & capoeira – saúde e qualidade de vida**. Brasília: Thesaurus, 2001. 208p.
- RITTNER B.; SMYTH N. **Time-limited cognitive-behavioral group interventions with suicidal adolescents**. Journal of Social Work with Groups, London, n.22, vol.3, p.55-75. 2000.
- SHUMAKER S.; BROWNELL A. **Toward a theory of social support: closing conceptual gaps**. Journal Sociology, n. 4, p.11-36. 1984.
- THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY. **Position statement of the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC): II. Children in sport**. Sport Psychologist, Sueden, n.10, v.3, p.224-226. 1996.
- VAN MANEN M. (1990) **Researching lived experience**. Ontario: State University of New York Press, 1990. 268p.
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. **Balancing mental health promotion and mental health care: a joint**. In: WHO/EC MEETING, 1999. Belgium, n.2, p.22-24.

SQSW 504 BLOCO JAPTO 608 - EDIFÍCIO PORTO REAL
 SETOR SUDOESTE - BRASÍLIA - DF
 CEP: 70.673-510
andrereis@unb.br

PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIEW OF BODY, TIME, SPACE AND HUMAN RELATION THROUGH CAPOEIRA PRACTICE

ABSTRACT:

This research describes experiences through specific physical activities in a group. Capoeira is a traditional Brazilian physical activity that evolves group work, self-defense, dance, acrobatics, music and musical instruments. Four elements developed by Van Manen (1990) were used for exploring the experiences: body as corporeal and mental experiences, time as the situatedness and the sense of passing time, space as the physical environment, and human relations related to the interaction with others. The phenomenology was the philosophical and methodological principle. According to Heidegger (2000), it considers that researchers should be conscious for the hidden elements inside people's everyday experiences (p.123). In this qualitative study, eighty people attended regular capoeira lessons. Non-structured interviews were applied to fifteen randomized participants. The result indicated lived time as significant for the experience and participants realized bad and good aspects of life co-existing in a social setting. In this sense, participants evaluated that lived body, lived time, lived space and lived human relation brought an intrinsic balance between positive and negative elements along the practice of capoeira, as a normal consequence of living in a group, and it may offer an optimum space for coping and problem solving.

KEY-WORDS: sport, exercise, phenomenology, psychology, capoeira

VISION PHÉNOMÉLOGIQUE DE CORPS, LE TEMPS, ESPACE ET DES RELATIONS HUMAINES DANS LE JEU DE CAPOEIRA

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article décrit l'analyse des expériences individuelles et collectives à travers la pratique de la capoeira. La capoeira est une activité physique traditionnelle du Brésil impliquant un travail de groupe, l'auto-défense, de la danse, des mouvements acrobatiques, chants et instruments de musique (ALMEIDA, 1986). L'analyse théorique a été fondée sur la phénoménologie. Selon Heidegger (2000), la phénoménologie est préoccupé d'établir des principes théoriques et méthodologiques pour la description-interprétation de la subjectivité de l'expérience humaine. Compte tenu de cette prémisse, Van Manen (1990) a présenté quatre éléments qui aident directement dans la compréhension des expériences de vie de l'homme: corps, temps, espace et des relations humaines. Dans cette étude exploratoire qualitative, 80 personnes ont participé régulièrement à des classes de capoeira et, de ce nombre, 50 ont été interrogés pendant plus de 7 mois d'engagement. Les résultats indiquent que le temps vécu chez les pratiquant (capoeiristas) a été important pour la compréhension que les aspects positifs et négatifs de la vie co-existent dans des espaces sociaux. En ce sens, l'expérience corporelle, le temps de la participation, l'espace de vie et les relations interpersonnelles étaient équilibrés entre les événements positifs et négatifs. Par conséquent, il était évident que l'espace social de la capoeira, ainsi que d'autres formes d'interaction en groupe, crée une occasion propice pour le développement personnel, la médiation et la résolution des conflits.

MOTS-CLÉS: sports, de la phénoménologie, de La capoeira.

LA VISIÓN FENOMENOLÓGICA DE CUERPO, EL TIEMPO, ESPACIO Y RELACIONES HUMANAS A TRAVÉS DEL JUEGO DE CAPOEIRA

RESUMEN:

Este estudio describe las experiencias individuales y colectivas a través de la actividad física en grupos específicos. Capoeira es una actividad física tradicional brasileña de trabajo en equipo, autodefensa, danza, movimientos acrobáticos, canciones e instrumentos musicales (Almeida, 1986). El estudio teórico se basó en la fenomenología. Según Heidegger (2000), la fenomenología se ocupa de establecer los principios teóricos y metodológicos para la descripción-interpretación de la subjetividad de la experiencia humana. Teniendo en cuenta esta premisa, Van Manen (1990) presenta cuatro elementos que ayudan directamente en la comprensión de las experiencias de la vida humana, cuerpo, tiempo, espacio y las relaciones humanas. En este estudio cualitativo de investigación, 80 personas participaron regularmente en las clases de capoeira y de éstos, 50 fueron entrevistados durante más de 7 meses. Los resultados indicaron que el tiempo de práctica de Capoeira fue significativo para la comprensión de que los aspectos positivos y negativos de la vida co-existen en los espacios sociales. En este sentido, la experiencia corporal, el tiempo de participación, el espacio de vida y las relaciones interpersonales fueron equilibradas entre los acontecimientos positivos y negativos. Sin embargo, era evidente que el espacio social de la Capoeira, así como otras formas de interacción grupal, ofrece excelente oportunidad para el desarrollo personal, mediación y resolución de conflictos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: deportes, la fenomenología, la capoeira.

VISÃO FENOMENOLÓGICA DE CORPO, TEMPO, ESPAÇO E RELAÇÕES HUMANAS ATRAVÉS DO JOGO DA CAPOEIRA

RESUMO:

Esta pesquisa descreve experiências individuais e coletivas através de específica atividade física em grupos. A capoeira é uma tradicional atividade física brasileira que envolve trabalho de grupo, defesa pessoal, dança, movimentos acrobáticos, cânticos e instrumentos musicais (ALMEIDA, 1986). O referencial teórico deste estudo foi baseado na fenomenologia. De acordo com Heidegger (2000), a fenomenologia se preocupa em estabelecer princípios teórico-metodológicos para descrição-interpretção da subjetividade das experiências humanas. Considerando esta premissa, Van Manen (1990) apresentou quatro elementos que diretamente auxiliam no entendimento das experiências vivenciais humanas: corpo, tempo, espaço e relações humanas. Neste estudo qualitativo-exploratório, 80 pessoas participaram regularmente de aulas de capoeira e, destas, 50 foram entrevistadas ao longo de 7 meses de engajamento. Os resultados indicaram que o tempo experienciado em capoeira foi significativa para o entendimento de que bons e maus aspectos da vida co-existem nos espaços sociais. Neste sentido, a experiência corporal, o tempo de participação, o espaço vivencial e as relações interpessoais foram equilibradas entre positivos e negativos acontecimentos. No entanto, evidenciou-se que o espaço social da capoeira, assim como outras formas de interação de grupos, oferece enriquecedora oportunidade de desenvolvimento pessoal, mediação e solução de conflitos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: esporte, fenomenologia, capoeira.