122 - PUBLIC POLICIES FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION FOR YOUTH: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

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INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The population of adults and elderly people is currently increasing in Brazil, already counting on policies tailored to meet their demands. Young people, in our view, deserve a look in the field of research concerning their need for sports and leisure, since the constitution of the society of tomorrow is based on the investment in the youth of today.

The need to develop public policies, as presented by Sposito (2003) in an overall design, is associated with a set of coordinated actions based on own resources, both financial and human, which involve a temporal dimension as well as some ability to impact.

The increased presence of youth issues is related primarily to the visibility that young people gained during democratization processes that occurred in Latin America in the late 1980s. However, while Bango (2003) highlights the notoriety that young people have gained in recent years, Abad (2003) emphasizes the deinstitutionalization of youth and mentions some causes, such as: the crisis of traditional family and spread of new forms of family; depletion of the illusion of social mobility; the mass emergence of young people who, not finding social actions that meet their needs, have been pushing for public policies. The causes underlying this destabilization of young people are making the processes of identity consolidation increasingly polymorphic, complexifying educational/training processes based on traditional social structures.

Taking all these inconsistencies into account, we conceptualized youth as a transitional phase of life from childhood to adulthood during which important biological, psychological, social, and cultural changes occur, varying across societies, cultures, ethnicities, social classes, and gender (UNESCO, 2004, p. 23).

According to Costa and Pires (2006), in youth culture, environments conducive to the formation of new peer groups without the strict rules imposed by society may be observed during leisure time. Leisure is a space/time to develop social relationships and exchange experiences, through which young people seek to structure new forms of individual or collective identity.

Leisure is often associated with recreational activities and mass events, such as movies, theater, sports, etc., which might contribute to a partial and limited view of young people's activities. Leisure is the pursuit of personal fulfillment, a break from obligations, a time to relax, enjoy, recreate, and have fun. It is the search for self-fulfillment through knowledge that meets our interests, practiced in a variety of leisure options. It is a special time to experience values that can contribute to moral and cultural changes (MARCELLINO, 2006).

Therefore, as practices routinized and incorporated into the life of an individual in the context of leisure, sports practicing is one among many ways of expressing a certain lifestyle, which is thus related to the choices that groups can make within an always limited universe of possible choices (STIGGER, 2002).

The topic is justified by the importance of sports and leisure to quality of life and social inclusion of citizens and by the prominence of an assertive policy in relation to these practices. The objective of this essay is to review concepts related to sports, leisure and public policies for youth.

DIMENSIONS OF YOUTH

Entering the historical milieu that surrounds this social category, we observe that since the twentieth century, with more emphasis on the last decades, there have been many attempts to define a concept of youth, through joint efforts for the emergence of youth in national policies. However, the idea of youth as a distinct phase is perpetuated. We may link this concept to musical styles that were revealed and appeared in that period, such as: hip hop, rock, funk, among other styles that are markers of youth as a sociopolitical and cultural character of greater relevance (OLIVEIRA, 2009; GASTALDO, 2009). Musical styles, along with young people, are combined with characteristics and values related to energy and aesthetics in the search for something new, in a process that may be called "juvenilization" of society.

Establishing what youthful behavior is may seem fearful nowadays, since, increasingly, habits that were once considered attitudes of young people begin to be adopted by other age groups. Therefore, we adopted the definition of young age established by the Brazilian National Youth Council, considering as young people those aged 15 to 29 years (CONJUVE, 2006). According to data from a study conducted by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2006), cited by Castro and Aquino (2008), Brazil currently has 51.1 million young people aged 15-29 years, accounting for 27.4% of the national population. The underlying question is whether there are public programs and projects, as well as nongovernmental projects, which take account of the needs of a growing number of young people in our country.

In redefining the identity of the young according to the canons of adulthood, their possibilities of identification increase considerably if multiplied by the vast plurality of youth (sub)cultures. These subcultures include creative ways to demand recognition and resist the established standards, as well as innovative forms of integration in the spheres of social life. Given their strong presence in contemporary societies, these subcultures contribute decisively to the production and renewal of the repertoire of social values and practices.

According to Garbin (2009), youth tribes and their practices are characterized by their different cultures, which emerge in many places and contribute to nomadism and fluctuations, as well as to the "placeness" of areas, as a characteristic of youth culture and identity – assuming a cultural practice, in addition to aspects within the historical and social context.

The concept of youth(s) can be problematized, since it is crossed by a sense of belonging and identity that includes the manner of dress and props used by the young, musical styles, behaviors, slangs, attitudes, etc.. Some young people wear clothes that correspond to a musical style featured at the moment, others give their signs of identity through body piercings, earrings, tattoos, and other body marks; nevertheless, all of them seek to assert a uniqueness that does not indicate a form of dissent or social nonconformity, but a way of showing society that they exist and think (GARBIN, 2009; ESTEVES & ABRAMOVAY, 2008).

The differences are also expressed in multiple ways, especially in large urban centers, which become territories rich in demonstrations, expressivity, and belonging. Punk, skinhead, emo, anime, headbanger, black metal, fans of "pagode" and samba (Brazilian rhythms), funk and hip hop (street dancing), graffiti artists, musicians are some ways of labeling young people who say that they belong to or identify with specific cultures, which make part of an even larger repertoire of contemporary youth cultures. Some cultural practices may intersect with regard to incessant nomadism, performances and gestures that, in a playful and symbolic manner, celebrate sociability visible through the bodies of the young (PEREIRA & GARBIN, 2009; MAGNANI, 2005).

According to Brenner, Lânes and Carrano (2005), currently in Brazil, young people are seen as a particularly vulnerable population, demanding public policies that can promote the guarantee of historically evaded social rights. The data presented indicate the importance of designing policies for this significant portion of the Brazilian population; thus, the federal government, by establishing public policies for youth, highlights the need to think about this group of people.

The Brazilian National Youth Council states that youth is a social condition and not a problem (CONJUVE, 2006). This perspective is of paramount importance, because it solidifies the understanding of citizenship as a state of balance of the possibilities of constructing citizenship associated with free time. In relation to social policies, we observe discontinuity in the government's actions, and young people have therefore been devoid of specific policies to meet their demands, even though the Brazilian National Youth Council has established priorities for youth. That is, policies tailored to meet the needs of young people should ultimately leave the paper and go to the plan of actions to be performed.

In this process, one realizes that government agencies cannot cope with all necessary possibilities for the construction of citizenship. Although the Brazilian Federal Constitution, in article 217, states that it is the State's duty to foster formal and nonformal sports practicing, there are many gaps to be filled. Thus, an assertive policy between the government and social organizations of a socio-educational nature could encourage these activities.

YOUTH, SPORT AND LEISURE

Given the juvenilization of society and the conversion of youth into a cultural model, Brazil has never had as many young people as in the current period. Young people increasingly use a variety of spaces, being found in sectors such as economy, politics and sports. The underlying question is how to recognize, interact and value these multiple differences in a society with a vast territory in order to enhance youth identities and, therefore, their cultures. (CAVALCANTE, 2009). We draw attention to the diversity of youth organizations, who gather around various practices of cultural performance, strategies of solidarity, and community intervention. At this stage, young people begin to develop, in their juvenile condition, a new and different way of experiencing their leisure time, which lies in the everyday life of society (SOUZA, 2009).

Dayrell (2003) highlights that youth is also present in the spheres of plastic arts and performing arts, cultural movements, sports, and recreational activities. These dimensions of culture allow exchange, dialogue, coexistence and collective collaboration in developing public policies for youth.

Based on this premise, in 2006, the "National Youth Policy: guidelines and perspectives" was introduced, under the responsibility of the Brazilian National Youth Council. This agency established the following dimensions to be emphasized on policies: 1) education, work, culture, and information technology; 2) environment, health, sports, and leisure; 3) valuing diversity and respect for human rights. The World Development Report (2007) of the World Bank highlights the need for investment of government and civil organizations in youth, noting that young people should be prepared to become the "next generation", with opportunities for productive political/civic engagement, or even to become tomorrow's workers, entrepreneurs, parents, citizens, and leaders.

UNESCO (2004) also considers as being limited the public policies for youth with approaches focusing on federal governments; these are state-sponsored programs, whether or not subordinate to structural policies, which generally have a defined existence and are designed to operate on an more specific or limited social reality (CONJUVE, 2006). The programs and projects of the federal government will only be effective if undertaken by state and local governments, since sociocultural characteristics are crucial in order to have effectiveness in government actions. According to Maia (2003), one must take into account regional differences, cultural diversity, the political will of government officials, the ability to engage human resources, and financial resources.

Youth-targeted recreational and cultural events provide spaces for young people to process their most meaningful experiences. Outside the control of adults, the culture experienced in those moments becomes an important means of exchange, where information is then processed.

According to Stigger (2003), leisure is the result of a historical process of developing new forms of production, and it is today recognized as a consistent part contemporary society. In the modern sense, leisure arises as part of the institutionalized free time. Perhaps the greatest example is the weekend: days invented by men along a very complex history that have become unquestionably the special period for the characterization of leisure. Leisure presents sociological problems that have been overlooked by many sociologists, since they failed to move away from the standards, categories and dominant values of Western societies (DUNNING, 2003). As a result of this issue, Dunning (2003) points to a distinction between free time (category as a whole) and leisure, suggesting that the latter should be treated more specifically. All leisure activities occur during free time, but not all free time is filled with leisure.

In the current Brazilian social scenario, young people should be seen as subjects of rights, both universal and specific, requiring a set of general policies. In other words, actions and emergency programs should be combined, at the same time, to alleviate the most acute needs of young people, with structural policies (CONJUVE, 2006). A complicating factor in public policies for youth is the fact that young people are not seen as actors with their own identity. Moreover, the failure to consider the diversity among young people, regarding them as a monolithic and homogeneous group with no specific features or gender differentiation, only reflects the inability to realize that young people represent themselves through different languages and approaches in order to express their concerns and dissatisfactions (UNESCO, 2004). In this sense youth cultures take shape, since, according to Pais (1993), in addition to being socially constructed, they also have a spatial configuration. Thus, we realize the necessity of considering youth as a complex group with needs that are often repressed by the demands of other social groups.

This article sought to relate concepts of sport and leisure with youth, considering youth as a stage of life requiring actions and projects in these areas, which are still insufficient in the dimension of public policy.

Therefore, based on the conceptual scope presented herein, we propose the implementation of actions targeting young people through programs and projects by the federal government and its state and municipal counterparts, thus facilitating the consolidation of citizenship in this population segment.

Thus, we believe that the government should articulate actions in the fields of sports and leisure that meet the needs of young people, creating spaces suitable for the development of social inclusion, quality of life, and citizenship.

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PUBLIC POLICIES FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION FOR YOUTH: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to review concepts related to sports, leisure and public policies for youth. We understand youth as a transitional phase of life from childhood to adulthood during which important biological, psychological, social, and cultural changes occur. Sport in the context of young people's leisure activities is one among many ways of expressing a certain lifestyle, always related to choices that groups can make. Thus, public policies for youth should promote and encourage the multiple cultural and artistic dimensions of this population that falls short of demands to meet their needs, reshaping sectoral policies.

KEYWORDS: sports/recreation; youth; public policies.

POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES DANS LE DOMAINE DU SPORT ET DES LOISIRS POUR LA JEUNESSE: APPROCHES THÉRORIQUES

RESUMEN

Este texto tiene por objetivo revisar los conceptos relacionados al deporte, ocio y políticas públicas para la juventud. Entendemos juventud como el período del ciclo de vida en el que las personas pasan de la infancia a la condición de adultos y durante el cual se producen importantes cambios biológicos, psicológicos, sociales y culturales. El deporte insertado en el contexto del ocio es más una entre tantas maneras de expresar un determinado estilo de vida, siempre relacionado a las elecciones que los grupos pueden hacer. Así, las políticas públicas para la juventud deben valorizar y estimular las múltiples dimensiones culturales y artísticas de esta población carente de demandas para atender a sus necesidades, reformulando las políticas sectoriales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: deporte/ocio; juventud; políticas públicas.

POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS DE DEPORTE Y OCIO PARA LA JUVENTUD: ACERCAMIENTOS TEÓRICOS

RESUMEN

Este texto tiene por objetivo revisar los conceptos relacionados al deporte, ocio y políticas públicas para la juventud. Entendemos juventud como el período del ciclo de vida en el que las personas pasan de la infancia a la condición de adultos y durante el cual se producen importantes cambios biológicos, psicológicos, sociales y culturales. El deporte insertado en el contexto del ocio es más una entre tantas maneras de expresar un determinado estilo de vida, siempre relacionado a las elecciones que los grupos pueden hacer. Así, las políticas públicas para la juventud deben valorizar y estimular las múltiples dimensiones culturales y artísticas de esta población carente de demandas para atender a sus necesidades, reformulando las políticas sectoriales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: deporte/ocio; juventud; políticas públicas.

POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS DE ESPORTE E LAZER PARA A JUVENTUDE: APROXIMAÇÕES TEÓRICAS

RESUMO

Este texto tem por objetivo revisar os conceitos relacionados esporte, lazer e políticas públicas para a juventude. Entendemos juventude como o período do ciclo da vida em que as pessoas passam da infância à condição de adultos e, durante o qual, se produzem importantes mudanças biológicas, psicológicas, sociais e culturais. O esporte inserido no contexto do lazer é mais uma entre tantas maneiras de expressar um determinado estilo de vida, sempre relacionado às escolhas que os grupos podem fazer. Assim, as políticas públicas para a juventude devem valorizar e estimular as múltiplas dimensões culturais e artísticas desta população carente de demandas para atender suas necessidades, reformulando as políticas setoriais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: esporte/lazer; juventude; políticas públicas.