

25 - EPISTEMOLOGICAL NOTES ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND *DE-SCHOOLING*

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The project of contributing to the Brazilian Physical Education, focusing on the epistemological plan in order to fundament a Physical Education theory with wide empiric base and reflexive fundaments is not new. This matter was brought to scene 15 years ago (BRACHT, 1989). We present here the systematization of a set of ideas we have been divulging in different texts and contexts, once the studies we develop in the Laboratory of Physical Education Studies Center of Physical Education of the Federal University of Espírito Santo (LESEF/CEFD/UFES) have provided elements to formulate a work hypothesis that may guide a theoretical alternative towards the thinking of the identity and social legitimacy in the Field Of Physical Education (PAIVA, 2003a, 2004).

In short, this hypothesis has been formulated on the following terms: without giving up its *scientification* process (GEBARA, 1992), the Physical Education can/must *re-pedagogizate* (BRACHT, 1999), remaining in the wider field of education, without, however, considering only a scholarly dimension perspective. Consequently we could visualize the possibility of production of practices of a *de-schooled* Physical Education (PAIVA, 2005), professionally launching itself to the challenge of re-enchanting the human formation regarding the body, in educational environments apparently as inhospitable for this goal as gym clubs, leisure streets, hospitals, etc. We rely on the concept of educational environment as proposed by Vaz (2002), that every experience carries an explicit and socially located pedagogical relationship. The educational environment with greater visibility has been the school, but it also exists in other institutions where one can identify a more or less systematized set of body pedagogies.

Considering that the qualified thinking needs to question the evidence, specially those presented in the form of questions and which easily lead to a discussion *with* and not *about* the theses 'being either ours or others' (BOURDIEU, 1998), the present essay has the purpose of giving visibility to an important operation that not only precedes, but also refreshes and re-feeds long term researches, which is, to make public professional interchanges (DE CERTEAU, 1994) that inspire and defy us to the epistemological consideration in the area. We propose a small textual colloquium between authors who have dedicated themselves to the thinking of Brazilian Physical Education, a very selective "meeting" considering the time-space available here. The proposal is to resume the dialogue with the afore mentioned texts of Ademir Gebara and Valter Bracht and fundament the perspective of *de-schooling*, supported by the concept of *school form*, developed by Vincent, Lahire and Thin (2001).

ADEMIR GEBARA E VALTER BRACHT: TWO VERSIONS HISTORICIZING SCHOOLING/SCIENTIFICATION AND PEDAGOGIZATION/DE-PEDAGOGIZATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A synthesis exposing how Gebara (1992) and Bracht (1999) analyze the phenomena of schooling/scientification and pedagogization/de-pedagogization was presented in Paiva (2005). In the present study, we highlight their arguments referring to the 1930 and 1980 decades, in which one gets the moments of "installation" and "crisis" of the Brazilian Physical Education into perspective. The Gebara and Bracht's theories when rearranged, problemized, transformed in hypothesis and empirically checked, open ways for another possibility of synthesis with epistemological unfolding in the historicization of the field. We will focus our analysis on two points.

The first one puts into perspective: a) the idea of *schooling* and b) the idea that the contribution of the medical thinking, in Brazil, to theorize the Physical Education, has risen based on a markedly biological theoretic-methodological frame-work.

In Gebara's interpretation, the *schooling* phenomenon would have Fernando de Azevedo's ideas as an educational milestone, since before that, only the existence of a legislative project can be identified, permanently marked by the mandatory character precedent to the pedagogical project. This would have interfered in the content of the discipline itself and isolated it from the context of the others which composed the scholars' curriculum. He even draws attention to the educational facet of medical knowledge produced in the XIX century in Brazil, but the contributions brought by this production to the conception of the Physical Education field are denser than he supposes. Moreover, suspecting of Bracht's interpretation, if we consider as basis the medical theses supported in the College of Medicine of Rio de Janeiro (FMRJ) in the XIX century, we can see that his arguments hardly identify with the ones known today as the theoretic-methodological framework, which stems from biological sciences.

Paiva (2003b) showed that the production of the medical-hygienist knowledge in the XIX century invents the requirement of school, producing a cultural arbitrary that makes the need for the project/process of *schooling* of social and *Physical Education* possible. That movement created the conditions to make viable the conception of the specific field of Physical Education. The medical knowledge classified the school as the social place for a *Physical Education* capable of reaching and realizing the project of integral education as one of its "branches". To accomplish this, it was necessary, among other things, to take care of the teachers' education; teachers who (also) understood of *Physical Education* and its more efficiently schoolable and schooled: the gymnastics. It was because *Physical Education* became a *school thing*, mainly Physical Education transformed in a school discipline, that the favourable conditions for the *arising* of a specific professional were created. As a *school thing*, new conditions to become an academic discipline appear, i.e., the one that, among other monopolies, claims the scientific and pedagogical arbitration of questions related to the discussion of legitimate form of body excellence, triggering and formalizing its mechanisms of self-regulation through their own instances of glory.

The synthesis above also question the theses of the second point we would like to approach, which refer to the "new level" aimed by Physical Education with its *scientification*, and the unfolding of its theorization.

According to Gebara (1992), it was this new level that allowed the discussion on the Physical Education Object, defined by him as an object with plasticity capable of arranging it into many social, cultural, affective and environmental matching possibilities. This new level would have imposed a *de-pedagogization* and one or, at least, a sort of "*de-schooling*" of the Physical Education.

But why do we say that, for Gebara, the *scientification* implies "*de-schooling*"? Because in another text published in 1998, Gebara tries to build a differentiation between Physical Education professionals/teachers and researches, where the pedagogical/scholar dimension would belong only to the former. This distinction affirmed and validated by him obscures the epistemological problems put for the area. The theoretical validity of this apotheosis of the specific plasticity attributed to the object of Physical Education deserves to be questioned. Broadly speaking, it seems that all objects of study are "plastic" because they were and dated by their historicity and by the sciences in charge of them. However, this observation does not imply to

1 Trying to differentiate meanings for the same term, I graph Physical Education when I refer to the present use of the school and academic discipline, and *Physical Education*, in italics, to highlight an important element of the culture in the XVIII and XIX centuries - as a reference one can use Francisco de Mello Franco and Francisco José de Almeida's treaties, as well as, already in a process of re-signification, the generic meaning of education as attributed by Spencer in the XIX century. I graph, finally, "physical education" between inverted commas and in small letters to refer to the undetermined, ambiguous or confusing use.

2 We propose the term, although not conceptually, to oppose to the *schooling* phenomenon, highlighted by Gebara as an important element for one to understand the configuration of the field/area.

3 It is necessary to highlight it has not always been so. Just observe the elements which, among others, are brought by the studies of Victor Melo, Ricardo Lucena, Marcelo Proni and Wanderley Marchi Jr. for the comprehension of the concept of the sports field in Brazil.

disconsider that a field including the scientific one (BORDIEU, 1983) is a social space of legitimate confrontation of the symbolic struggles for the construction of senses.

Gebara (1998) declares to inspire himself in the Bourdieu's Theory of Fields in order to think the significance and conceptual dimension of Physical Education. It occurs that all his discussion is about the sportifying process, based on reflections about the constitution of the sportive field. Thus, regarding the origin of the questionings which he puts concerning this perspective of analysis, the arising question is to know why Gebara employed efforts to think about the significance and the conceptual dimension of Physical Education from a naturalization of the belonging to (academic) discussions of Physical Education to the sportive field.

Let us consider the possibility of equating his contributions in other words. If we take the 1998 text as basis, we see that Gebara recognizes, for instance, an increasing amplitude and autonomy in the sportive phenomenon. He is right. He also considers, according to this rationale, that it is possible to build objects of study within this theme, doing just and only Sport History, Sport Sociology, Sport Physiology, etc., what is also correct. He declares that teaching (professional behavior that characterizes one that intervenes pedagogically) requires different procedures for research (by analogy, a professional behavior that characterizes whoever intervenes scientifically). That is a possible distinction, but it needs to be mediated by the disconcerting question of what it is to do a research in Education, and by extension, in Physical Education, if we admit that the questions in the field are supported by the identity triad education-science-body. Can the researchers in Physical Education disconnect from the problems that afflict the *behavior of a professional that intervenes pedagogically*?

Within the perspective proposed, just to mention an example, studying Sport History is not the same as studying Physical Education History. The theme sport is only part of Physical Education History, therefore, part of the worries of the researchers of the areas, if those are dedicated to problemizing such theme from the logic of the Physical Education field.

Due to the increasing amplitude and autonomy of the sportive phenomenon which Gebara and Bracht recognize but analyze differently, precisely because of that we need to put into perspective what is at risk and what is the meaning of this game in the sportive and Physical Education fields, and be careful when establishing homology between those fields. When we consider as basis the logic of sportive field, today much more linked to the logics of consumption and speculation as Gebara himself identifies (1998) than to the educational logic, the sport moves away from Physical Education.

If we assume that we do not want and this is an important distinction in the epistemological, political and ideological plan to submit the logic of the Physical Education field to the logic of the sportive field, and in a wider view, to the symbolic and material goods market itself,<sup>4</sup> the central question to undo/redo the arrangement of the theses on *schooling, scientification, de-pedagogization* and *re-pedagogization*, and *de-schooling* of Physical Education is to know who are the "we researchers" that operate at this new level. If Physical Education researches attached to the specificity of the field are or not wanted.

It is a fact that the school daily routine and the academic daily routine have distinct logics and ways of intervention, but it seems deceiving to suggest that the ones researching Physical Education should not be "restricted" to their pedagogical dimension. If we follow the process of the conception of the Physical Education field in Brazil articulated to the social *scholarization* processes, we can see that what gives its social identity and monopoly in dispute is the discussion of scientific and pedagogical interventions in body related matters.

Evidently, as shown in Ana Márcia Silva's study (2001), it cannot be obscured that the academic common sense in Physical Education, necessarily not occupied by its epistemological pertinence, has made current a set of representations, practices and strategies in the academic field and outside it, which favour and endorse the thesis of the origin of structural subordination of the Physical Education field to the sportive field. But one cannot forget that this subordination is one of the possibilities and that it depends very much on the specialists, field agents, representations and practices they assume as legitimate, to operate in the reproduction of this sense or in the production of a new one. The hypothesis of work we propose sums efforts towards this second direction.

We endorse the idea that the unfolding of a *scientification* process brought new challenges to the area, giving it a new reconfiguration. We believe, however, that it is necessary to qualify this movement, researching and facing in the theoretical-epistemological plan what makes it meaningful. Under these terms, we move away from Gebara's position which dichotomizes the researcher and teacher's activities and thinks the "new level" in an optimistic way, incorporating gains from other areas of knowledge and resume Bracht's ideas among others when he proposes that Physical Education, using academic practices, focuses on constructing objects of study from the problematic that has given it (and can go on giving) identity and origin.

#### DE-SCHOOLING: A CONCEPT TO INVENT

We would like to, minimally, give a theoretical consequence to the idea of "de-schooling", to fundament it.

Promptly, with *de-schooling* we might want merely to allude to the fact that the professional activity in Physical Education no longer focuses, primarily, on the school. Today, it encompasses not only the organization of cultural entertainment activities in specific communities but also the prescription of physical conditioning programs to a diversified public. It should be pointed here that the debate about field identity of Physical Education must neither be confused with the debate on professional education, with the identity of the social practices identified as "physical education" (dance, martial arts, physical activities...) nor with the social identity of the professional practices with which the Physical Education professionals, teachers or undergraduates, might get involved.

For instance: as the owner and manager of a gym club, the undergraduate is closer to administrative and business professional practices than to teaching practices which originate gym classes. The gymnastics class in a gym club may also be considered *de-schooling*, as well as the gym club management. But that does not mean, *ipsis litteris*, that, mainly as a consequence of that second unfolding, the professional education in Physical Education should be structured around administrative and commercial practices. Undoubtedly, they are eventually in the range of action of a professional of the area, but they are neither in the core of the discussion on the field nor in the structure of its professional identity.

But that is the weak sense that we would like to attribute to the term in the reflection. The strong sense is that one that articulates with the notion of *school form* proposed by Vincent, Lahire and Thin (2001). The *school form* is the socialization way thought and practiced as education that has led to a generalized pedagogization of the daily routine and which establishes a kind of specific social relation inside and outside the school.

In the inside, it allows us to think the characteristic of school practices (time, space, materials, knowledge); in the outside, ultimately, to think the behavior of the educated human produced in the relationship with the State and other institutions. These authors try to show in their researches and theorization about *school form* that the socialization way defined on and by it "has not stopped understanding and generalizing to become the predominant socialization way of our social formations". (Vincent, Lahire and Thin, 2001, p. 20). Its predominance can be seen, primarily, in the *schooling* process, slowing transforming into *schooling* the social, that is, the moment when school and *schooling* develop until they become essential in producing and reproducing the contemporary social formations to which school criteria impose themselves: the role of classifications, judgments, modeling, school perceptions outside the school institution. Here it is characterized what the authors call border overflow, where the *school form* crosses and characterizes the socialization in different institutions and social groups. This phenomenon can be exemplified,

The trend of many families (especially in the upper and middle classes) to multiply the "extra-school" activities for their children [...]. It is necessary to highlight the meaning given to these activities by a number of parents: they aim not only to occupy their children's spare time and acquisition of specific knowledge, but also to 'learn a discipline', 'to get the taste for the effort', etc, thus expressing their 'educational' worries (VINCENT, LAHIRE AND THIN, 2001, p.22).

This same trend, despite having another meaning, is identified by them in the popular classes. In this case, it would be less about an assumed educational activity and proposed by the parents. In the popular classes, it is the organized movements and/or social politics that take charge of the development of "extra-school" activities in different spaces in the school itself, in the squares, street courts, churches, Community Centers, etc. trying to ensure the systematic occupation of the children and young with the purpose of taking them off the streets, away from drugs, preserving them from the negative influence of their own family and even opening future professional perspectives. In this sense,

The organized actions aim not only to watch the kids, but also to make them acquire 'regular life habits', of diligence, punctuality. Besides, the [scholar reinforcement] actions are today included in great number in the 'extra school' activities, the school requirements and practices are thus partially resumed [by cultural entertainers]. (VINCENT, LAHIRE AND THIN, 2001, p. 23). Vincent, Lahire and Thin also observe that the educational initiatives of this order are directed not only towards the children, but also towards the parents, who are always invited, in different forums, to participate in courses and meetings about a variety of subjects. The authors conclude thus, that the school way of socializing, that is, the thought and practiced socialization as education and pedagogy, has progressively been put as socially legitimate and predominant what does not prevent modulations and resistances, nor releases it from different appropriations operated by distinct groups. But, what has been put as a constant, whether we like or not, is the possibility/tendency to turn each initiative into an educational initiative, each activity into a pedagogical activity, whose goal, not always explicit, is to form people, to form their bodies, to form their knowledge about themselves and the world and their relationship with it, to form their ethics, their moral standards.

However, this referendum offered by history to the *school form* does not correspond to the one that has been given to the school, so questioned about their many and different successes and failures. Despite being the producer and spreader of the *school form*, the school no longer has its monopoly. The idea of *de-schooling* could translate this process of this border overflow of the *school form*, socially incorporated as *habitus*.

This small draft instigates us to question if this trend identified by Vincent, Lahire and Thin does not invite us to a collective effort to question, within this perspective of analysis, the Projeto Segundo Tempo (Second Half Project) and the like, our customized training programs, our sports initiation classes, and so many other "services" to be provided by our Physical Education professionals. It seems to us that this strong sense can fertilize the identity discussion on the field, having as a work hypothesis the initially presented formulation.

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#### EPISTEMOLOGICAL NOTES ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND DE-SCHOOLING

ABSTRACT: Through textual interchanges (De Certeau, 1994), the hypothesis of *scientification* of Brazilian Physical Education is presented and discussed here, supported by processes of *re-pedagogization* and *de-schooling*.  
KEY-WORDS: Physical Education, Epistemology, Theory of Fields.

#### NOTES EPISTEMOLOGIQUES SUR D'EDUCATION PHYSIQUE ET LA DESCOLARISATION

RESUMÉ: Au moyen d'échanges textuels (De Certeau, 1994), l'hypothèse d'étudier scientifiquement l'Education Physique brésilienne est présentée et discutée, en s'appuyant sur les processus de retour à la pédagogie et de la descolarisation.  
MOTS CLES : Education Physique, Epistemologie, Théorie des Domaines.

#### APUNTES EPISTEMOLÓGICOS SOBRE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA Y DESESCOLARIZACIÓN

RESUMEN: Por medio de intercambios textuales (DE CERTEAU, 1994), presenta y discute la hipótesis de *cientificación* de la educación física brasileña, apoyada en los procesos de *repedagogización* y *desescolarización*.  
PALABRAS CLAVE: educación física; epistemología; teoría de los campos.

#### NOTAS EPISTEMOLÓGICAS SOBRE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA E DESESCOLARIZAÇÃO

RESUMO: Por meio de intercâmbios textuais (De Certeau, 1994), apresenta e discute a hipótese de *cientificização* da Educação Física brasileira, apoiada nos processos de *repedagogização* e *desescolarização*.  
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Física, Epistemologia, Teoria dos Campos.