31 - BODILY PRACTICES AND RELIGIOSITY: DISCOURSES OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

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Introduction

In the scope of the discussion concerning bodily practices, the topic of body and religiosity has not been debated with enough frequency in the academic field, especially in the area of Physical Education. The only field that has provided a broader perspective on body and religiosity has been Social Sciences but in Sociology and Anthropology we find that this matter has been pronounced and discussed more thoroughly.

The importance of religiosity in the social and political life of a society is easily perceived and, as with other institutions (media, culture, scientific knowledge, family), it exerts a significant amount of power on society and is reflected in bodily manifestations. Religiosity can be identified in the manifestations of various institutions whether traditional (represented by school, church, family, etc.) or modern (media, science and others), confronting values, behavior and creating styles of living. Dance, sport, seasonal bodily practices, even if non-religious, also manifest traces of religiosity. For this reason, our intention is to verify the relation between bodily practices and religiosity and the possible influence of religious institutions on physical activity/bodily practices, with the use of semi-structured interviews with religious leaders.

Body: between the secular and the *sacred*

As the object of our study is in the area of the corporeal, focused on the eternal opposition between the secular and the *profane*, between what is permitted and what is not, we consider it important to provide an understanding of the *profane* and *sacred* in relation to the body, that constantly permeates man in his fight against the oppositions that surround him. In Elíade (1992, p. 17), we find that "[...] a primeira definição que se pode dar ao *sagrado* é que ele se opõe ao *profano*." The author then proceeds to state that the *sacred* resides in the absolute truth under all historical inclemencies: "Tudo que os mitos contam a respeito de sua atividade criadora pertence à esfera do *sagrado* [...]. Em contrapartida, o que os homens fazem por própria iniciativa, o que fazem sem modelo mítico, pertence à esfera do *profano*: pois é uma atividade vã e ilusória, enfim, irreal" (ELÍADE 1992, p. 85).

The conceptions of *sacred* and of religiosity propagate and persist throughout history in an imaginative way, symbolizing as absolute truth that which it seeks to transmit (ELÍADE, 1992). This continuity is possible through two institutions: tradition and culture. As Eliade said (1992), there is only perpetuation of the mythical through the ritualistic tradition, through the transmission of behavior, religiosities or any practice that denotes the manifestation of realities.

Much attention has been dedicated to the body, which was unveiled as an object and target of power. "[...][...] ao corpo que se manipula, se modela, se treina, que obedece, responde, se torna hábil". For Foucault (1987, p. 117), school, for example, plays this role. With the exercise of power of social institutions, the body becomes an instrument a manipulative, tame, submissive object that is, above all, useful; and in addition, incapable of creating conflicts and rebellion. This is discerned in Foucault (1987, p. 118), who sees the malleable body as that which "[...] pode ser submetido, que pode ser utilizado, que pode ser transformado e aperfeiçoado". Moreover, the body only becomes useful when it is also productive, submissive, intelligible and easily manipulated and does not flee from the connotation of domestication. Both are perceived inside one same perspective: a restrictive work that seeks to create obedience to rules and a way to immobilize conflict, making bodies malleable, not allowing them to form personal opinions. Then, there are the institutional factors that, including the educational, promote the conformation of bodies and influence, subjugate and even create bodily techniques that, according to Mauss (1974, p. 407), "[...] são maneiras dos homens servir-se de seus próprios corpos".

Theoretical production: body, religiosity and Physical Education

The theoretical production concerning bodily practices and religiosity in Physical Education are still at an embryonic stage and there are insufficient studies aimed at the issues discussed in this work. Some studies will be discussed, however, in the area of Physical Education regarding religiosity, that encompass its possible contraposition to physical activity as well as its practice.

Rigoni (2005) noted the interference of religious culture with body techniques inside the school universe, more precisely, during Physical Education classes. In his observation, he sought to confirm if the religious doctrines, from the teachings handed down by religious institutions, of certain students interfered with their learning and body technique He verified that when a student performed certain movements, like the high jump for example, he or she would use an alternative technique than that used by the other students, due to the impaired movement caused by the restricted use of their clothing. The author managed to talk to the families of these students so that they could attend class with more appropriate clothing. However, the students continued to perform the movements as they did before.

Like Rigoni (2005), Santos and Mandarino (2005) describe a school experience concerning a student that was prohibited to take part in Physical Education classes by her church. The teacher realized that the student was eager to participate in the activities proposed to the students in class. Subsequently, the school decided to prohibit such restrictions set by the religious leaders concerning school issues.

A matter of discussion between these two studies is the reaction and attitude of the teacher when faced with this problem. We saw that, in Rigoni (2005), the intervention of the teacher was directed to the family of the children. In Santos and Mandarino (2005), the settlement was between the institutions School and Church. By analyzing this situation, we can see that family matters and problems, even of a personal nature, are extended to the Church and, in this case, resolved by the Church.

Gabriel and Vieira (2001) went beyond the above-mentioned authors. They extrapolated the school context, verifying the possible religious influence in the development of adolescents, in their customs and values, as well as in the practice of leisure in a religious community of 35 adolescents. They noted that leisure activities of the youths of the community are pervaded by a conception, dedication and devotion to the *sacred* that which the religious institution considers positive to the young body and that the attitudes, thoughts, decisions and personal relationships are intricately connected to the doctrinarian authority, which exerts the greatest power over their lives. They found that there is a strong influence of the Church in relation to the practice of leisure, showing that the institution has played a preponderant role in the formation of their values. In spite of the prohibitions and limitations imposed on the youths, they appeared to be docile and in conformation with the situation in their answers and did not

show aversion with regard to the hindrances of their leisure practices. As a result, we can identify the exercise of power between the religious institution and the youths that, for Foucault (1987, p. 119), is the "mechanics of power, [a] calculated manipulation of one's elements, one's gestures and one's behavior".

Salomão and Carmo (2005) tried to show the applications of leisure inserted in the religious context of Christian bias, in which they demonstrated the transformation of leisure through history. They state that leisure was considered profane, sinful against the purification of the soul. Apart from being condemned by the Church for many years, leisure collided with the capitalist industrialization process that considered it unfavorable for production, as it is intricately related to free time. Today, it is possible to identify the presence of moments of leisure in the religious context. It is associated to recreational and periodical events, like seclusion, walks and trips, shows, activities related to theatre and comedy, animated songs and hymns, rhythmical and choreographed, that transformed the cult into a mimetic context (of dance and song) provoking the "*awakening of the emotions*".

The subjacent arguments: what religious leaders say about bodily practices

Discourse analysis was used for this study accompanied with semi-structured interviews. In these interviews, five religious leaders of the Baptist, *Assembléia de Deus, Maranata, Universal do Reino de Deus and Adventist* churches were asked four questions with the intention of confirming the content of their discourses on the body and physical activity, so as to verify the existing relation between their practice and the doctrinarian matters of the evangelic churches in this study.

The municipality of Grande Vitória chosen for the survey was Vila Velha Espiritu Santo State. The selection of the religious denominations was carried out according to the typology: Historical Protestantism, Pentecostalism, Neopentecostalism and Independent Christians, in accordance with Mariz (1998). The relations between theoretical constructs, permitting the interpretation of actions and representations of collected data, where verbal messages were used, and inferences of data obtained in the answers of the interviewed religious leaders were analyzed and observed.

Results and discussions

From the answers obtained in the interviews, we elaborated a reduction of the discourses for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of categories observed in the responses, which is fundamental for the discourse analysis based on Fiorin (2005).

The first question put to the leaders of religious institutions had the objective of marking a relation between science and physical activity, so as to understand the thoughts of these leaders regarding the practice of physical activity and its importance. "According to medical science, the practice of physical activity leads to health and a healthy body. How does the church analyze this?" The responses of the leaders brought two points to light that deserve to be analyzed: firstly, we can see that, for some leaders, physical activity is important in itself: "The body must be cared for with different activities"; "I consider physical activity to be of great importance"; "Physical activity is important for the development of mind and body"; "People can become healthier and have a healthy body"; "It is important to have a healthy body". From these answers, we noted that all the subjects perceive physical activity as something important and necessary for the development of the individual. There was no contraposition in relation to the question. Furthermore, this scientific question is present in Gomes (2005), when he states: "Cartesian thought freed the body from the domain of the Church to the yoke of science".

The aim of the second question was to know "if any type of physical activity was practiced amongst the members of the church?" and to verify if there was any type of incentive or support on behalf of the institution concerning the practice of physical activity. After analyzing the answers of the leaders, we found that any incentive, when present, "[...] is given during seclusion, in projects like "*Projeto Bom de Bola*" (Good Ball-Player Project), "Specific departments for the practice of physical activity" and in associations, "[...] where the young and members of the church are encouraged to practice sports with all the necessary orientation, although infrequently". Only one of the leaders was neutral, saying in his discourse that "[...] the church does not encourage it but is not opposed". According to the leaders, the churches are not against the practice of physical activity and four of them even encouraged the members as long as they were duly supervised by the church. For interpretation of the results, we sought in Foucault the dominion that institutions seek to place on the body. Power and surveillance are the means they employ to establish control over the body.

The intention of the third question was to verify "whether the doctrine of the institution is opposed to the practice of any physical activity or if it sets norms for such practices". For this question, our aim was to know if there are objections in relation to the practice of any type of physical activity and the use of adequate clothing for sport practices, as we found in the studied articles. After being posed this question, we verified that only one of the leaders involved in the study seemed not to oppose and much less restrict any bodily practice, stating that, "people are free to think and act. We only provide spiritual orientation". The other leaders claimed that the doctrine of their churches was opposed to and also restricted certain bodily practices, like "capoeira", "activities that involve *candomblé*" and "sensual and carnivalesque dances, physical activities of the religious philosophical type and violent sport".

Concerning clothing, they said they were against the use of "scandalous clothing" and that they orientate people to "not use very showy clothes" because of excessive exposure of the body and its value. Dance, man's primitive expression, has always encountered opposition. It is a ritual in that the body transcends and becomes dangerous for the institutions as, in the transcendence, it escapes control. Historically, dance symbolizes the profane face that Christianity always condemned. The actions of the body must be rightly controlled, metrified, probed. If dance leads to sensuality, the gestures, expressions, while the body dances, can identify sensuality, posture, beauty and weightlessness. It is all related to the trascendence of emotions found in sport, play and games, the lucid; that which the body liberates.

We can see from the answers of the leaders that there is a total restriction concerning capoeira or any other practices that involve or that might have ontological origins, which is explained by Gomes (2005). There is an almost complete rejection of Brazilian cultural expression, carnival or any practice or activity that involves *candomblé*.

For motives described by Lopes (1992), many teachers of Physical Education defend the inclusion of capoeira in schools. Withal, it is condemned by many due to its African roots and its relation with *candomblé*, mostly present in the songs and rhythms. Moreover, this inclusion has posed a problem for some schools because of resistance and restrictions of a religious and familial nature. According to Prandi (1998), the religion of the orixás, which includes *candomblé*, mysterious and secret worship, implying the idea of danger and risk regarding popular imaginary, and any similarity, awakens prejudice. In relation to clothing, we can use the theory of Gomes (2005) as reference, that considers clothing a manifestation of the body, much as dance, sport, theatre, choreography in cults, etc. Therefore, they can be excluded under the allegation that they are an apology of sexuality, considered profane by many religious denominations.

The last question refers to the school context and asks, "How could the leaders resolve the problem of students that do not participate in Physical Education classes and that use religiosity as an impediment factor", as we saw in Rigoni (2005) and

Santos and Mandarino (2005). In their answers, the leaders attribute this impediment to the parents and, in a lesser degree, the family. "The parents should be orientated better" and "An analysis of the problem should be carried out with the youth and his or her family". At no point did the leaders attribute the problem to matters of the religious universe in which these youths and their parents participate. The leaders exonerate the issue of any religious influence and claim that it all depends on the education the children receive from their parents, as "There are families that allow it and others that do not". Most of the leaders made their position clear in relation to the school institution, manifesting an idea of obedience and no opposition to the school-power in their discourses: "It can be resolved by orienting parents to obey the school norms", "It could be resolved by orienting parents to not oppose school norms". This shows that there is a hierarchization of the social institutions in that one obeys the other and, in this case, the Church obeys the school. This hierarchization is wise, not free. The relation of power present in the social institutions and in society is explicit, revealing that, "[...] in any society, the body is trapped in the inside of very cramped powers that impose limitations, prohibitions or obligations." (FOUCAULT 1987, p. 118).

Conclusion

The present study tried to establish relations between bodily practices and religiosity in relation to the conceptions of that which is *sacred* and secular, maintained and propagated by the religious institution, taking into consideration the dual vision of man. This dualistic condition and the conceptions of the *sacred* can negatively influence the practice of physical activity.

Faced with the issues discussed with the religious institutions and the matter of bodily practice, we can identify in Foucault (1987) a relation of power and dominion of bodies of the social institutions. In this assumption, we can also add the religious institutions even though all the religious leaders interviewed in this study manifested that they were in favor of physical activity and were conscious that its practice is important for the physical and mental well-being of the individual. We could observe that, even being conscious of the advantages of bodily practices; there are restrictions from some of these practices. For this reason, we conclude that there is orientation and opposition from the church in some aspects of the field of physical activity.

As it would be impossible to change all the religious philosophy of society, it is relevant to try to ease certain aspects related to its interference in school, considering that the main objective of education is the integral development of the human being. The teacher of Physical Education must try to obtain more knowledge in issues that might help to understand people more and the context of their cultural, social and political experience, as well create an awareness concerning the importance of physical activity and its practice.

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BODILY PRACTICES AND RELIGIOSITY: DISCOURSES OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The body and religiosity subject situated in the scope of the bodily practices is a theoretical production seldom discussed in academic circles, especially in Physical Education. The objective is to verify the relation between bodily practices and religiosity, as well as the possible influence of the religious institutions in the practices of physical activities / bodily practices. The study used the sacred and profane categories based in Elíade (1992) and control, power and authority by the institutions according to Foucault (1987). The speech analysis was used to interpret the interviews performed with five religious leaders from the following churches: Baptist, Assembléia de Deus (God's Assembly), Maranata, Universal do Reino de Deus (God's Kingdom Universal) and Adventista do Sétimo Dia (Seventh Day Adventist). The interviewed leaders belong to the city of Vila Velha - ES. The verbal message was used for this study, with inferences of the data achieved in the answers from the religious leaders. It was concluded that there are restrictions for the practice of physical activities. Regarding the indication of activities, the leadership is not against it as long as they are subjected to the institutions. It is noticed that, although the practice of the activities obey to several behavior standards, the body does not escapes from the vigilance and control of the institutions. It was noticed, in the speech of the interviewed, a clear comprehension of the body in two different sides: body and soul facing the used bibliographic references.

Key Words: 1. Bodily practices 2. Sacred. 3. Profane.

PRÁCTICAS CORPORALES Y RELIGIOSIDAD: DISCURSOS DE LÍDERES RELIGIOSOS

La temática cuerpo y religiosidad en el ámbito de la discusión de las prácticas corporales, constituye una producción teórica poco debatida en el medio académico, sobre todo en la Educación Física. Se objetiva verificar la relación entre las prácticas corporales y la religiosidad, bien como la posible influencia de las instituciones religiosas frente a las prácticas corporales. Se utilizan las categorías sagrado y profano, basándose en Elíade (1992) y control, poder y dominación por las instituciones, conforme Foucault (1987). Se analiza el discurso para interpretar las entrevistas de cinco líderes religiosos pertenecientes a las iglesias: Bautista, Asamblea de Dios, Maranata, Universal del Reino de Dios y Adventista del Séptimo Día. Los entrevistados son del municipio: Vila Velha-ES. Se concluye que hay restricciones para la práctica de actividades físicas. Cuanto a la indicación de actividades, los liderazgos no se oponen a la práctica, pero deben estar sujetas a las propias instituciones. Aunque la práctica de las actividades obedezcan a diversos padrones de comportamiento y el cuerpo no escape a la vigilancia y control de las instituciones, se percibe, en la conversación de los entrevistados, una nítida comprensión del cuerpo en dos distintas facetas: cuerpo y alma, lo que viene al encuentro de los referenciales bibliográficos utilizados.

Palabras-llave: Prácticas corporales. Sagrado. Profano.

PRATIQUES CORPORELLES ET RELIGIOSITÉ : DISCOURS DE DIRIGEANTS RELIGIEUX.

La thématique corps et religiosité dans le cadre de la discussion des pratiques corporelles constitue une production théorique peu débattue dans le milieu académique, surtout, en Education Physique. L'objectif est de vérifier le rapport entre les pratiques corporelles et la religiosité, ainsi que l'influence possible des institutions religieuses face aux pratiques corporelles. On utilise les catégories sacré et profane, en se basant sur Eliade (1992) et contrôle, pouvoir et domination par les institutions, selon Foucault (1987). On analyse le discours pour interpréter les interviews de cinq dirigeants religieux appartenant aux églises : Baptiste, Assemblée de Dieu, Maranata, Universelle du Royaume de Dieu et Adventiste du Septième Jour. Les personnes interviewées sont de la ville de : Vila Velha-ES. On conclut qu'il y a des restrictions pour la pratique d'activités physiques. Quant à l'indication d'activités, les dirigeants ne s'opposent pas à leur pratique, cependant elles doivent être soumises aux institutions en question. Quoique la pratique des activités obéisse à diverses normes de comportements et que le corps n'échappe pas à la surveillance et au contrôle des institutions, on aperçoit, dans les mots des interviewés, une nette compréhension du corps en deux faces distinctes : corps et âme, ce qui vient à l'encontre des références bibliographiques utilisées.

Mots-clé: 1.Pratiques corporelles. 2. Sacré. 3. Profane.

PRÁTICAS CORPORAIS E RELIGIOSIDADE: DISCURSOS DE LÍDERES RELIGIOSOS

A temática corpo e religiosidade situada no âmbito da discussão das práticas corporais trata-se de uma produção teórica pouca debatida no meio acadêmico e, sobretudo na Educação Física. As Ciências Sociais é a área que dá maior enfoque a relação existente entre corpo e religiosidade, encontrando na Sociologia e na Antropologia as maiores articulações e discussões pertinentes a esse tema. Objetiva-se verificar a relação entre as práticas corporais e a religiosidade, bem como a possível influência das instituições religiosas frente à prática de atividades físicas. O estudo utilizou as categorias *sagrado e profano*, baseando-se em M. Elíade (1992) e *controle, poder* e *dominação* pelas instituições conforme M. Foucault (1987). Utilizou-se da análise do discurso para interpretar as entrevistas conforme Fiorin (1999) e Bardin (1998), realizadas com cinco líderes religiosos pertencentes às igrejas: *Batista, Assembléia de Deus, Maranata, Universal do Reino de Deus e Adventista do Sétimo Dia*, do município de Vila Velha ES. Para esta pesquisa foi utilizada a mensagem verbal, com inferências dos dados obtidos nas respostas dos dirigentes religiosos. Concluiu-se que há restrições para a prática de atividades físicas, percebendo que, embora a prática das atividades físicas e de lazer não sejam negadas, as mesmas obedecem a diversos padrões de comportamentos, não escapando o corpo da vigilância e controle das instituições. Quanto a indicação de atividades físicas as lideranças não se opõe a prática, contudo, as mesmas devem estar sujeitas as próprias instituições. Percebeu-se, na fala dos entrevistados uma nítida dualidade - compreensão do corpo em duas distintas faces: corpo e alma o que vem de encontro com os referenciais bibliográficos utilizados.

Palavras-chave: 1. Práticas corporais 2. Sagrado. 3. Profano.