77 - SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR LEISURE NEEDS IN THE CITY OF NOVO HAMBURGO/RS/BRAZIL

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INTRODUCTION

This article is the culmination of a 2-year (2010-2011) research project entitled, "Youth demand for sport and leisure: a diagnostic study in the city of Novo Hamburgo, RS." Debate on the concept of youth is extremely relevant because it is on the basis of this concept that young people's ways of life and forms of behavior are interpreted. The concept also determines whether or not societies provide organized care for people in this age group and influences the way in which their rights and responsibilities are viewed. Furthermore, the way that youth is conceived determines the social projects and public policies designed to meet the needs of these subsets of the population for leisure-time physical activity.

This research project focuses on the subject of youth and sport/leisure in the city of Novo Hamburgo, RS, Brazil. Youth is related to the increased visibility that young people have gained over recent years, highlighted by Bango (2003) as the notoriety of youth. According to the Brazilian national youth council (Conselho Nacional de Juventude - CONJUVE, 2006), which is an institution of the federal government, being young is a social condition and not a problem. This perspective is of fundamental importance because it solidifies the understanding of citizenship as state of equilibrium between the possibilities for constituting citizenship associated with free time.

According to Esteves and Abramovay (2008) the best way of defining young people nowadays is by means of characteristics that recognize the enormous diversity among young people – which can be defined by their different genders, age groups, social classes, ethnicities, residences, economic status and other factors. Notwithstanding, it is clear that there are several aspects that are common to all types of young people. This is also the approach to youth adopted by CONJUVE (2006), which describes being young as a social condition with specific qualities that manifests in different ways depending on historical and social characteristics.

This study is justified by the importance of sport and leisure from the perspective of citizens' quality of life and social inclusion and by the preeminence of an assertive policy with relation to these practices. These data have been collected with the intention of encouraging governmental organizations to reflect on the need to formulate policies. Furthermore, these foundations could serve as support for the third sector which invests in social projects. As a result, joint assertive policies between public authorities and entities that promote social activities of a socio-educative nature could leverage activities in Novo Hamburgo.

On the basis of these principles, this research project, conducted in conjunction with the "Body, Movement and Health" research team at the Universidade Feevale, provides the conditions to stimulate regional development, since, in addition to revealing possibilities for understanding the needs of young people, it also proposes assertive actions that governmental organs and civil society can take, in the form of public policies on youth.

Therefore, the overall objective is to conduct a diagnosis of sport and leisure activities offered to young people by the public authorities in the city of Novo Hamburgo, RS, Brazil. Our specific objectives are as follows: to determine whether the young people studied felt that they are served by actions taken by the public authorities with relation to sport and leisure; to identify the city's sport/leisure projects focused on youth; to determine which projects are being implemented; to determine how many young people are involved in projects; to identify partnerships between the private sector and federal, state and municipal governments involving direct transfer of resources and training of personnel and human resources; and to trace the profile of the city's young people together with their needs in terms of sport/leisure activities.

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

This is a descriptive, quantitative study of a sample of 60 young people from the city of Novo Hamburgo, RS, Brazil. A questionnaire containing both open and closed questions was administered during the first 6 months of 2010 in a number of different neighborhoods in Novo Hamburgo, RS, Brazil. In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to be residents of Novo Hamburgo and be aged 18 to 29 years, which is the CONJUVE (2006) definition of the age range for "young people".

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Universidade Feevale. All of the young people interviewed were approached in public places and asked to read and then sign a free and informed consent form including explanations about the study. After signature of the form, the questionnaire was administered. Once all data had been collected, they were analyzed as percentage distributions.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The young people who were the objective of this research, and who also made it possible by taking part, can be described in terms of their sociodemographic profile as follows: they were young people of both sexes aged 18 to 29; 80% were single and 20% married; 91% were employed; an average of 65% of the young people worked 40 hours per week; 9% did not have any type of employment; 62.6% were studying, 56% had either already graduated from or were still on an undergraduate degree course, and 37.4% were not attending any educational institution. Nevertheless, the number of young people in education is increasing, although it was observed that the majority of these young people are not restricting themselves to educational activities, because for many of them the work environment enables them to acquire knowledge and learning, in addition to providing them with financial freedom, even when their family circumstances do not demand this.

When the subject is leisure, we must understand that the conflict between free time and time dedicated to study/work results in a lack of time in which to engage in activities such as leisure. The need to enter the employment market ever earlier also means young people have even less time available for leisure. When young people are in this situation, trying to balance all three elements, education, employment and leisure, they can find themselves performing badly in the first two activities, even though these are necessary to achieve their objectives, simply because there is not enough time in their day for all of these activities.

With regard to sport or physical activity during leisure time, the results showed that 60% of the young people interviewed took part in some type of sport or leisure activity, while 40% did not engage in any of these activities. Attempting to

balance studies with work results in a lack of free time, as mentioned above, and young people who split themselves between these two activities (study and work), hoping to ensure stability in the future actually fail to make the best use of the time available to them.

Young people tend to emphasize the importance in their lives of being both consumers and producers of culture and of having access to places for leisure and sport (UNESCO, 2004). In general, places to have fun, types of leisure, use of free time and the frequency of that use are indispensable indicators of young people's was of being (GARCIA, 2009). Ninety-two percent (92%) of the young people would engage in some type of physical activity/sport if they had the opportunity, but 8% were not interested in taking part in physical activity. It is notable that more than 70% of the young people were interested in group sports, possibly because these receive more publicity in the media and are culturally the types of activity that arouse the greatest interest and are easier to access. Another possibility is that the majority of the sample were males, who are culturally more inclined to engage in sporting activities.

We should emphasize the finding that the locations for practicing physical activity mentioned by the young people illustrate the weakness of public facilities, since the great majority of locations mentioned were private. These included fitness centers (31.6%), gyms and/or sports fields and courts (26.9%) and private clubs (12.2%), while the public places mentioned were schools (7.4%) and outdoor public areas (12.2%). The young people were more likely to engage in these activities in the evenings and at night, which is linked to the fact that many of them were combining studying and working (as interns), meaning that this was the only time left available for leisure activities. UNESCO (2004) has pointed out that indicators on cultural equipment justify and emphasize the concerns about a lack of locations for the young population to engage in leisure and culture. While the young people interviewed do take part in activities in public areas and at public institutions, private locations were mentioned with much greater frequency and offer a wider range of sport/leisure and physical activities.

Public spaces are becoming ever rarer in urban environments. In addition to their scarcity, another factor that should be made explicit is vandalism of public spaces and the fact that they are not valued in comparison with private locations (RECHIA, 2009). In common with the data cited above, our study also supports this position, since the results illustrate that the locations where the young people interviewed take part in the majority of their leisure activities were of a private nature. Some of these young people are aware of public parks and squares, as will be discussed below, but these were not mentioned as being appropriate for leisure-time activities.

The young people stated that one reason why they didn't engage in these activities was a lack of free time and also stated that if the infrastructure were better and locations were more accessible they would be more likely to take part. These findings are in line with the results of a study published by Goellner et al. (2009), which listed impediments related to lack of time, whether because of employment or taking care of the family, children and the home, in addition to a lack of interest in regular physical activity.

As a result of these stated needs, we found that 51.7% of these young people were unaware of the existence of leisure equipment in the city, while 45% believed that leisure equipment was available. However, when they were asked to name the places they were aware of, 45% were unable to mention any locations of this type. The lack of leisure equipment and infrastructure that could be used by this population is alarming, since most could not list appropriate places and the locations most mentioned were squares and parks (21.7% and 15% respectively). These data paint a picture that illustrates just how much needs to be done before these young people engage in sport and leisure activities.

Fraga explains that access to leisure equipment in a city can be determined by three dimensions, as follows:

> the physical dimension (whether equipment actually exists); the financial dimension (whether the prices charged and additional costs involved are accessible) and the dimension related to training-predisposition (whether there is stimulation and intervention from teachers and coaches, meditation, which makes it possible to understand the significance of the varying cultural manifestations)
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> (Translated from Fraga 2009, p.71).

According to Rechia (2009) the municipal government is guilty of great negligence with relation to the public spaces it provides for the public. This is further aggravated by a lack of political education of the users, who are not encouraged to realize the importance of awareness of the right to an adequate environment and the possibility of diversifying experiences in the leisure time-space. It is therefore necessary to create more public spaces, to look after them and for the community to adopt them, revitalizing and reclaiming places for leisure in the city.

Gastaldo (2009) agrees with the author, emphasizing the importance of preserving public spaces such as squares and parks, mentioned by the young people studied here, since the simple fact that the leisure equipment in public squares is exposed to the elements means it is subject to severe wear. This is further compounded by damage caused by vandals. The relationship changes, however, when public leisure equipment is occupied by the people who frequent these spaces, interacting with each other. Respecting the dimensions covered by Fraga (2009) and the need for the community to take ownership of these spaces.

These young people's primary concern with relation to the places in which they practice leisure-time activities is a worry about security (35%), followed by whether the infrastructure available is adequate for their needs and allows them to engage in leisure activities or sport, and whether the materials available are appropriate and in good working order (6.6%). These items are all linked with each other or with other proposals, contributing to describe what this population needs for their leisure.

The social relevance of leisure attracts the attention of that section of this population who congregate in parks and squares at the weekends, but others, worried about violence, stay at home or frequent safer and more predictable places such as shopping centers and private clubs during their free time, seeking to engage in the widest variety of activities (STIGGER, 2002).

Concern for health/quality of life (28.4%), leisure/pleasure (19.8%) and social interaction (2.4%) are some of the objectives that are related with each other or with others, but it is these that stand out the most in these young people's quest to improve and perfect their leisure experiences. If there is this attempt to deal with situations of social vulnerability, there are failures in the system, since the use of private places prevails over public areas, contradicting the adequacy of public leisure areas for this population.

If this population is to be able to take quality advantage of its leisure time, it is necessary that free time corresponds with available and accessible places for leisure. It is generally understood that one possibility for achieving these young people's objectives is for public authorities to prioritize construction and maintenance of public leisure areas in line with the population's needs and desires (RECHIA, 2009).

FINAL COMMENTS

This study has described the profile of young people who both work and study, accumulating a workload that makes it impossible for them to take part in any type of physical activity, because they do not have free time, whether to rest or to take part in activities that give them pleasure. The need to enter the employment market and the demand for ongoing education are characteristics that form the profile of the young people in this city.

These young people, “deprived” of active public policies that satisfactorily meet their needs, are the result of this construction of free time, or lack thereof, causing an incessant demand for more effective public policies that adequately control youth policies in the leisure dimension.

It can be concluded from this study that even when balancing work, study and leisure, our young people still try to engage in physical or sporting activities, using their free time in the best manner possible. Even though the city investigated here has a policy for sport and leisure focused on the “youth” age group, it does not cover all young people, being restricted to a small proportion of them who are considered socially vulnerable.

The lack of public sport and leisure programs has led to the emergence of activities that are isolated from some sectors of society. The few sport and leisure options that do exist are basically the responsibility of the private sector and over the years we have witnessed the expansion of private clubs, associations, fitness centers and gyms, which people must pay to use, while the public areas have become unfit for purpose and are vandalized.

Public authorities do not meet their requirements, so young people resort to services provided by the private sector to practice physical and/or sporting activities. Public policies aimed at these young people are recent and do not effectively amplify the idea that young people should take ownership of public places to engage in physical and sporting activities, resulting in greater demand for private locations, due to their better condition and greater degree of security, rejecting public spaces.

The demand for private services is a result of a lack of free time for leisure, since places that do not demand great effort become more attractive, so private locations are innovating and are used more than public spaces. This, however, increases even further the amount these young people need to work, to pay for access to private facilities, reducing even further the time available to discover and take ownership of public spaces.

Young people who do not have the necessary spending power or free time are consigned to the sidelines of physical inactivity, because greater investment in this section of physical activity is not considered and young people's needs increase every day as they go after new opportunities in education, employment and free time and are faced with unhealthy conditions in the city.

In our understanding, the subject of youth merits investigation because tomorrow's society will be built upon the foundations of today's investment. Actions aimed at childhood and youth subsets of population groups, especially those in situations of greatest vulnerability, are a superimposition of childcare onto youth. In other words there are a large number of projects focusing on this population, in the main conducted by non-governmental organizations, since the progress made in defending and caring for the young population is still recent. Young people in this wide age group have very eccentric tastes. We may consider it acceptable that there is at least this initiative for a public youth policy.

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SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR LEISURE NEEDS IN THE CITY OF NOVO HAMBURGO/ RS/BRAZIL

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to diagnose sport and leisure activities offered to youth by public authorities in the Brazilian city of Novo Hamburgo, RS. This was a quantitative, descriptive study of a sample of 60 young people from Novo Hamburgo. A questionnaire containing both open and closed questions was administered during the first half of 2010 in a number of different neighborhoods in Novo Hamburgo, RS. The main results were as follows. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the young people questioned reported that if they were given the opportunity to take part in some type of physical activity/sport they would be in favor of doing so, but 8% had no interest in engaging in physical activity. It was notable that more than 70% of the sample of young people were interested in group sports. We should also emphasize the finding that the locations for practicing physical activity listed by the young people illustrated the weakness of public facilities, since the great majority of locations mentioned were private. The respondents reported that one reason why they didn't engage in these activities was a lack of free time and that factors that could encourage them to do so would be better infrastructure and more accessible locations. As a result of these complaints, we found that 51.7% of these young people were unaware of the existence of leisure equipment in the city, while 45% believed that leisure equipment was available. The young people's main concerns relating to the locations where they engage in activity were adequate safety and whether or not the infrastructure and materials (6.6%) available were appropriate and in good working order. We conclude that despite having to balance work, study and leisure, our young people still try to engage in physical or sporting activities, using their free time in the best manner possible. Even though the city investigated here has a policy for

sport and leisure focused on the youth age group, it does not cover all young people, being restricted to a small proportion of them who are considered socially vulnerable.

KEYWORDS: youth, young people, sport/leisure; public policies

PROFIL SOCIO-DÉMOGRAPHIQUE ET BESOINS EN TERMES DE LOISIRS DE JEUNES DE LA VILLE DE NOVO HAMBURGO, RS, BRÉSIL

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cette recherche quantitative et descriptive était d'établir un état des lieux des activités sportives et de loisirs proposées par les pouvoirs publics aux jeunes de la ville brésilienne de Novo Hamburgo (état du Rio Grande do Sul). Pour ce faire, un questionnaire de questions ouvertes et fermées a été appliqué à un échantillon de 60 jeunes de différents quartiers de la ville au cours du premier semestre 2010. Les principaux résultats montrent que si les jeunes avaient l'opportunité de pratiquer une activité physique/sportive, 92 d'entre eux y sont favorables, contre 8 % qui ne sont pas intéressés. Plus de 70 % ont fait part de leur intérêt pour les sports collectifs. Les espaces privés sont préférés aux espaces publics, jugés précaires pour pratiquer des activités sportives. Les jeunes mettent en avant les besoins suivants : davantage de plages horaires disponibles, meilleure infrastructure, locaux plus accessibles. À partir de ces besoins, nous avons pu constater que 51,7 des jeunes méconnaissent l'existence d'installations sportives dans la ville, et que 45 % pensent que ces installations existent. La préoccupation des jeunes par rapport aux lieux destinés aux activités sportives concerne la sécurité, l'infrastructure et un matériel (6,6 %) adéquat et en bon état. Il ressort de cette étude que même en cumulant travail, étude et loisirs, les jeunes cherchent à réaliser une activité sportive ou physique en utilisant le mieux possible leur temps libre. Si la ville étudiée développe un projet centré sur le sport et les loisirs pour les jeunes, elle ne répond cependant pas aux attentes de l'ensemble des jeunes, mais seulement d'une très petit groupe dit en situation de vulnérabilité sociale.

MOTS-CLÉS : jeunesse ; sport/loisirs ; politiques publiques.

PERFIL SOCIODEMOGRÁFICO DE LOS JÓVENES Y SUS NECESIDADES DE PASATIEMPOS EN EL MUNICIPIO DE NOVO HAMBURGO / ESTADO DE RIO GRANDE DO SUL / BRASIL

RESUMEN

Este trabajo tuvo como objetivo analizar las acciones de deportes y pasatiempos ofrecidas por el Poder Público para la juventud en la ciudad de Novo Hamburgo, Estado de Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. La presente investigación es cuantitativa, con enfoque descriptivo, teniendo como muestra 60 jóvenes de la ciudad de Novo Hamburgo-RS. En el primer semestre de 2010, se aplicó un cuestionario de preguntas abiertas y cerradas, en diversos barrios de la ciudad de Novo Hamburgo/RS. Como resultados principales, se destaca que si los jóvenes tuviesen la oportunidad de realizar alguna actividad física/deporte, 92% fueron favorables, no obstante 8% no tienen interés en hacer actividad física. Se resalta que más del 70% de los jóvenes tienen interés en deportes colectivos. Se señala que los espacios citados por los jóvenes demuestran la fragilidad de las áreas públicas, pues el espacio privado sobresale como el lugar en donde se realiza actividad física. Los jóvenes presentan como problemas a ser solucionados para realizar estas actividades de interés: falta de disponibilidad de horas, mejor infraestructura, lugares más accesibles. A partir de las necesidades de los jóvenes, verificamos que 51,7% de los jóvenes desconocen la existencia de equipos para usar en el tiempo libre en el Municipio, mientras que a 45% les parece que hay estos equipos. Entre las preocupaciones de los jóvenes, cuanto a los lugares en donde se realiza la práctica de actividad, sobresale la inquietud referente a la seguridad, infraestructura del local y materiales (6,6%), ser apropiado y en condiciones de uso. Concluimos que aun conciliando trabajo, estudio y pasatiempos, nuestros jóvenes procuran realizar actividades físicas o deportivas utilizando el tiempo libre de la mejor manera posible. Aunque el Municipio analizado tiene un proyecto en el ámbito de deportes y pasatiempos para ese nivel de edad de la juventud, el plan no atiende a todos los jóvenes, sino, realmente, a un grupo muy pequeño de ellos denominado estado de vulnerabilidad social.

PALABRAS CLAVES: juventud, deportes/pasatiempos; políticas públicas

PERFIL SÓCIO DEMOGRÁFICO DE JOVENS E SUAS NECESSIDADES DE LAZER NO MUNICÍPIO DE NOVO HAMBURGO/ RS/BRASIL

RESUMO

Este trabalho teve por objetivo diagnosticar as ações ofertadas de esporte e lazer pelo poder público para a juventude na cidade de Novo Hamburgo, RS. A presente pesquisa é quantitativa, com abordagem descritiva, tendo como amostra 60 jovens da cidade de Novo Hamburgo/RS. Foi aplicado um questionário de questões abertas e fechadas no primeiro semestre de 2010 em diferentes bairros da cidade de Novo Hamburgo/RS. Como resultados principais destaca-se que se os jovens tivessem a de oportunidade realizar alguma atividade física/esporte 92% foram favoráveis, porém 8% não tem interesse em realizar atividade física. Destaca-se que mais de 70% dos jovens tem interesse em esportes coletivos. Salientamos que os espaços citados pelos jovens demonstram a fragilidade dos espaços públicos, pois o espaço privado se sobressai como o local que se realiza atividade física. Os mesmos apresentam como necessidades para realizar essas atividades de interesse são: falta disponibilidade de horário, melhor infraestrutura, locais mais acessíveis. A partir destas necessidades dos jovens verificamos que 51,7% dos jovens desconhecem a existência de equipamentos para o lazer no município, enquanto que 45% acha que tem equipamentos de lazer. A preocupação com jovens quanto aos locais que realiza a prática de atividade sobressai à preocupação com a segurança, infraestrutura do local e materiais (6,6%) ser apropriado e em condições de uso. Concluímos que: mesmo conciliando trabalho, estudo e lazer nossos jovens procuram realizar atividade física ou esportiva, utilizando a melhor forma possível o tempo livre. Mesmo o município pesquisado apresentar um projeto no âmbito do esporte e lazer para essa faixa etária da juventude, o mesmo não atende a todos os jovens, mas sim uma parcela muito pequena, dita como em estado de vulnerabilidade social.

PALAVRAS- CHAVE: juventude, esporte/lazer; políticas públicas