30 - CAPOEIRA IN THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

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INTRODUCTION

In the current world, sports can be understood as involving all cultural forms of movement and can be identified as a social phenomenon, as it contributes to the transmission of educational and cultural values (VAGO, 1996; TANI, 1997). However, one must be cautious with the terms "transmission" and "values". In a context of social inclusion, transmission can not be limited to the traditional concept of a formal relationship between professors and students, where the latter is the "withholder of knowledge" and the former is the "gatherer of information". Therefore values can not be exclusively those reproduced by society for their "efficient maintenance". According to Júnior and Sobrinho (2002), the necessary actions for these contributions should be political and socially contextualized in order for the subjects not to be conditioned to accommodation but to be guided by questioning, thus learning to be conscious regarding their social responsibilities.

According to Freitas (1997), the sport used to help with social inclusion, amongst other characteristics, must present a historical, social and cultural identification with its participants. In Brazil, the sport which presents these characteristics, mainly in relation to the common layers of society, is capoeira (FALCÃO, 1998). According to Silva (2001) capoeira can be defined as a Brazilian cultural popular manifestation, for belonging to a social layer of society that constantly demands to be manifested through the struggle of classes. Thus, to understand capoeira as a cultural popular manifestation demands the understanding of its origins and its historical trajectory of political transformations.

The origins of capoeira are an example of this relationship between sports and the population. Negros of different African tribes and ethnic backgrounds were mixed in the slave quarters of numerous colonizer countries. However, the origins of capoeira sprung from a cultural syncretism which took place exclusively in Brazil. Other examples are: 1) the forced recruitment of negro slaves to form the "front line" of the Brazilian army during the Paraguay War; 2) the inclusion of capoeira in the Brazilian Penal Code in 1890 and the resulting police persecution; 3) the use of capoeira groups for political-party purposes during the transaction from an Empire to a Republic, in Rio de Janeiro during the 19th century; 4) the "strategic recognition" of capoeira as a national sport, based on the rhetoric of the context of the Getúlio Vargas (CAPOEIRA, 1996) populist lecture. After all, to know the history and legacy of a people through a popular cultural manifestation, such as capoeira, is a motivating and economically feasible alternative for education and social inclusion.

According to Frigerio (1989), capoeira involves elements of art, fight, folklore and sport. Art can be understood through musical aspects (singing and the playing of instruments), aspects of crafts (confection of instruments) and theatrical aspects (staging, *mandinga* and garments). Fight involves blows, shunning, counter attack and attack dynamics and *malícia* (seducing the opponent at a technical-tactical situation of fragility and the moment to strike a well aimed blow). Regarding fight, capoeira presents two determining characteristics which are interrelated: 1) fight to the rhythm of chants and musical instruments; 2) fight without the need of physical contact with the other capoeiria fighter. Thus, according to Sodré (2005), the objective is to involve/maliciously seduce the other capoeira fighter, thus avoiding direct confrontation. The folkloric aspect of capoeira is present in history, tradition and fundaments, plus the following folkloric entertainment absorbed by capoeira: maculelê, puxada-de-rede and samba de roda. Lastly, capoeira whilst being a sport, can be categorized under the form of combat, inserted in a competitive context in championships, rules and regulations, scores, titles and prizes or, according to Reis (1997), in a sociological context, as a symbol of resistance of the lower common classes.

According to what was observed, capoeira can make it easier to acquire principles and values, such as: self-esteem, respect, solidarity and self overcoming (ABIB, 2005), necessary for social, educational and cultural inclusion (JÚNIOR; ABIB; SOBRINHO, 2000). Thus, we can say that capoeira is acquiring a pedagogic status, becoming a non-formal possibility of education (REIS, 2001; SILVA, 2001).

Capoeira is currently present in formal curricula from basic and middle education, as a component of school level physical education or through social projects (SOUZA; OLIVEIRA, 2001; JÚNIOR; ABIB; SOBRINHO, 2000; FALCÃO, 1998) to higher learning, as a discipline of physical education courses and extension projects (CAMPOS, 2000; SILVA, 1995).

Thus, the aim of the current study was to present concrete results of a university extension action that aided in the social inclusion of children through capoeira.

PROJECT EXECUTION METHOD

In Brazil, public universities present three support columns for a quality education: learning, research and extension. Extension refers to the "social arm" of higher learning institutions, as learning extensions represent the transmission of knowledge produced in the academy for the civil community. However, it is also necessary for this process, as it provides a "two way lane" in the production of knowledge.

Therefore, the Department of Physical Education and the Extension and Culture Assistant Dean of the Federal University of Acre, believe capoeira as being a vehicle of social inclusion that helps in the transmission of cultural and educational values. The characteristics of the above mentioned project are presented as follows.

Aim

The aim of the capoeira extension project was to attend the community of a poor neighbourhood next to the university campus.

Time in Force

The project has been in force from the beginning of 2005 to the present date. However, the data presented in the current study was collected over a period of two and a half years (February of 2005 to May of 2007), with small interruptions during the "Christmas break" (between December 22 and January 1).

Execution Location

As this is an integration initiative, the project actions were coordinated by professors and students of the university and carried out at a state run school and a sports public square of the above mentioned neighbourhood.

Key Public

The public, who attended the project, were children, youngsters and adults of that community. It was estimated that throughout the two and a half years, over 200 students participated in the project, where the majority were children and youngsters. Of this number, an average of 80 students were "fixed", or rather, remained frequent to the project while the other 120 students alternated in a relatively constant flow.

Service Hours

The students kept contact with capoeira through 1 hour long classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the neighbourhood state school. One class of 12 year old children and the other class of 13 years old youngsters and over and adults practiced capoeira from 3 pm to 4 pm and 4pm to 5pm respectively.

The "big class" took place on Saturdays (a differentiated class involving all students of both groups), followed by a round of capoeira. The Saturday activities took place from 8am to 11am at the local neighbourhood square and were only open to members of the community.

Actions

The actions that executed the capoeira extension project throughout the two and a half years can be classified into four categories: practical classes, theoretical classes, workshops and lectures.

The practical classes include the following: 1) Technical learning (swaying, shunning, blows, movement and dexterity), tactical learning (attack, counter-attack, falls) and of origins (posture in different types of round, critical interpretation of music and dynamic comprehension of berimbau into round of capoeira; 2) The acquisition of techniques is fundamental for capoeira angola; 3) The learning folkloric entertainment, such as: maculelê (rhythmic notion, basic steps and variations), the puxada-de-rede (rhythmic notion and basic steps) and samba de roda (rhythmic notion and basic steps); 4) Notion of the principal strokes of musical instruments involved in capoeira: berimbau (capoeira, capoeira angola, maculelê and samba de roda), pandeiro (capoeira, capoeira angola and samba de roda) and atabaque (capoeira, capoeira angola, maculelê, puxada-de-rede and samba de roda).

The theoretical classes, with the help of pedagogic resources, such as video cassette recorders, DVDs, television and posters (created by the students), involve the following: 1) The comprehension of the historical trajectory of capoeira; 2) The discussion of the importance of popular cultural manifestations for the construction of Brazilian cultural identity of; 3) A critical analysis of the role of the negro in Brazil; 4) The knowledge of history of the great capoeira masters.

The workshops were sporadic actions, however continuous (quarterly frequency) and generally, administered by invited professors, counter-masters and masters. These workshops were about the following: 1) The construction of musical instruments used in capoeira with the original "raw material" (berimbau, pandeiro and caxixi) and with alternative and recycled material (berimbau, atabaque and pandeiro, caxixi, reco-reco and agogô); 2) Setting up choreographies regarding folkloric entertainment (maculelê, puxada-de-rede and samba de roda), including their models and specific scenarios.

The lectures were presented in two levels: 1) Subjects related to the practice of physical activities (sedentarism, prevention and rehabilitation of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, physical activity and health promotion) were administered by physical education professionals and physiotherapists; 2) Subjects regarding health (teenage pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, use of legal and illegal drugs and hygiene) were administered by doctors, nurses, social assistants and through statements of members of the local community. These lectures took place on average, two or three months and were not restricted to the students of the project. On the contrary, they were encouraged to take their parents along and friends from the local community and other neighbourhoods.

There were another two category actions besides the current four, considered capoeira extension project goals. Two events were organized involving local capoeira participants and guests from other locations in the country. The first event took place at the end of 2005 and was named "I Course of Capoeira Capacitation and Modernization", which counted with the presence of Master Jacaré de João Pequeno (Salvador-BA) and Master Lobão (São Paulo-SP), who provided the students with an in-depth knowledge regarding capoeira angola and regional capoeira, respectfully. The second event which took place in May 2007 was the "I Festival of Capoeira in Acre" which counted with the presence of masters, counter masters and professors of different municipalities of the State. This event involved courses, workshops, cultural presentations and degree exchanges.

RESULTS

From a total of 200 students who attended the project, 38 were identified as drug users (Figure 1). These students were in the age group of 8 to 16 years, where 15 were of the female gender and 23 from the male gender. This identification was possible through conversations with the students themselves, their friends and acquaintances.

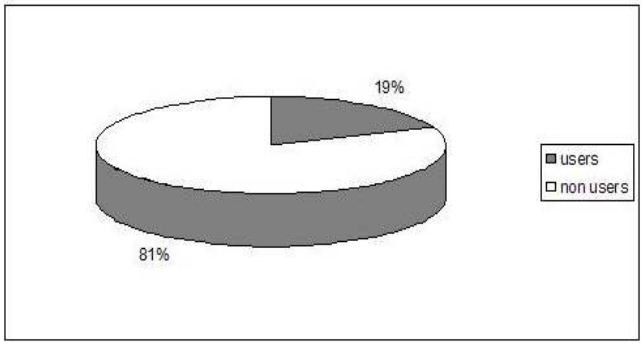


Figure 1 - Percentage of students identified as drug users.

Among the above mentioned students identified as drug users, four abandoned the project during the period of execution. According to Table 1, the 34 remaining students (roughly 90%) were successful in the project.

Types of Drugs	Moment of the Project Execution		
	Start	Finish	
	Users	Users	Non Users
Legal (cigarettes and alcoholic beverages)	34	0*	30
Illegal (marijuana and cocaine paste)	4	0	4
TOTAL	38	0*	34

* Four students abandoned the project during its execution.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The intention of this study was to present capoeira as a didactic, cultural and economically feasible social inclusion alternative. Social inclusion is understood as being the process where the individual becomes a member of society, not in a quantitative manner (just another number in the census), but qualitative, or rather, a critic who is conscience of his social responsibilities (JÚNIOR; SOBRINHO, 2002). Political and socially engaging actions are necessary, mainly through cultural popular manifestations.

Within this perspective, the Acre Federal University Capoeira Extension University Project enabled children, youngsters and adults of low income and limited access to traditional means of education and culture (eg: quality schools, cinemas, theatres, newspapers) to not only have contact with music, art, movement, dance, physical activity, information and culture, but especially, to make part of this environment as a "cultural production agent". Therefore, corroborating with Abib (2005), many students became citizens, recovering their self esteem and overcoming their own limitations (and limitations imposed by society).

In relation to results regarding dropping drug use by a significant portion of students, the capoeira project provided these children and youngsters, a way of filling in their spare time which involves music, learning to use musical instruments, access to basic health information, quality of life and physical activity. Thus, according to Reis (2001) and Silva (2001), capoeira presents itself as a non-formal possibility of education, promoting social inclusion and contributing to an increased education, critical for social living.

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***CAPOEIRA* IN THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION**

ABSTRACT

Capoeira can favour the critically contextualized acquisition of cultural and educational values, promoting social inclusion through the movement of art and music. Therefore, the current study suggests that capoeira, as a popular Brazilian cultural manifestation is propagated by universities through university extension projects. The objective of one of these initiatives, which was the social inclusion of children through *capoeira*, attended to roughly 200 children, youngsters and adults from a poor neighbourhood of Rio Branco (AC) in two and half years. Practical classes, theoretical classes, workshops and seminars were periodically carried out within these project actions. The most expressive result was from children and youngsters who quit using legal and illegal drugs. Thus, capoeira proved to be a non formal possibility of education, promoting social inclusion.

KEY WORDS: *Capoeira*; Social Inclusion; Culture.

LA *CAPOEIRA* DANS LE PROCESSUS D'INCLUSION SOCIALE
RÉSUMÉ

La *capoeira* peut favoriser l'acquisition des valeurs culturelles et scolaires, dans un contexte cirtique, en promouvant l'inclusion sociale à travers le mouvement, de l'art et de la musique. De cette façon, la présente étude suggère que la *capoeira*, comme manifestation culturelle populaire Brésilienne soit disséminée par les universités à travers des projets d'extension universitaire. Une de ces initiatives, lesquelles a eues par objectif l'inclusion sociale d'enfants au moyen de la *capoeira*, a fait attention dans deux ans et demi à des 200 pesonnes environ parmeis lesquelles il y avait des enfants, des jeunes et des adultes d'un quartier trop pauvre de Rio Branco (AC). Parmi les actions du projet ils ont été réalisées périodiquement des leçons pratiques, des leçons théoriques, des ateliers et des conférences. Le résultat le plus expressif a été d'enfants et jeunes qui ont cessé d'être usagers de drogues licites et illicites. Ainsi, la *capoeira* s'est montré une possibilité non formel d'éducation, en promouvant l'inclusion sociale.

MOTS CLÉS: *Capoeira*; Inclusion Sociale; Culture.

LA *CAPOEIRA* EN EL PROCESO DE INSERCIÓN SOCIAL
RESUMEN

La *capoeira* puede favorecer la adquisición de valores culturales y educacionales, críticamente relacionados, promocionando la inserción social a través del movimiento, del arte y de la música. De esa manera, el presente estudio sugiere que la *capoeira*, como manifestación de la cultura popular brasileña, sea diseminada por las universidades por medio de proyectos de extensión universitaria. Una de esas iniciativas, que tuvo por objetivo la inserción social de niños por medio de la *capoeira*, atendió en dos años y medio a cerca de 200 niños, jóvenes y adultos de un barrio carente de Rio Branco (AC). De entre las acciones del proyecto se impartieron periódicamente clases prácticas, teóricas, talleres y ponencias. El resultado más expresivo fue el de niños y jóvenes que han dejado las drogas lícitas e ilícitas. Así, la *capoeira* se ha convertido en una posibilidad no formal de educación, promoviendo la inserción social.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Capoeira*; Inserción Social; Cultura.

A CAPOEIRA NO PROCESSO DE INCLUSÃO SOCIAL
RESUMO

A capoeira pode favorecer a aquisição de valores culturais e educacionais, criticamente contextualizados, promovendo a inclusão social através do movimento, da arte e da música. Desta forma, o presente estudo sugere que a capoeira, enquanto manifestação cultural popular brasileira seja disseminada pelas universidades através de projetos de extensão universitária. Uma dessas iniciativas, que teve por objetivo a inclusão social de crianças por meio da capoeira, atendeu em dois anos e meio cerca de 200 crianças, jovens e adultos de um bairro carente de Rio Branco (AC). Dentre as ações do projeto foram realizadas periodicamente aulas práticas, aulas teóricas, oficinas e palestras. O resultado mais expressivo foi o de crianças e jovens que deixaram de ser usuários de drogas lícitas e ilícitas. Assim, a capoeira mostrou-se como possibilidade não-formal de educação, promovendo a inclusão social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Capoeira; Inclusão Social; Cultura.