131 - THE ADVENTURE OF ORGANIZING SPORTS IN NATURE: MAPPING OUT THE ADVENTURE RACES IN SOUTHERN RIO GRANDE DO SUL

ENIO ARAÚJO PEREIRA;
GUSTAVO DA SILVA FREITAS.
Physical Education School, Federal University of Pelotas, Pelotas, RS, Brazil
epereira@ufpel.tche.br

The Event

This work reveals the participation of a technical team in the organizing of the Adventure Races "Grito das Águas" ("Waters Cry") that happened in southern Rio Grande do Sul in 2005 and 2006. We don't aim at teaching how a sports event in this area should be prepared and organized, but we only want to show a set of actions that established a way for making adventure races.

Before exploring some key subjects related to this experience it is indispensable to set the political and cultural background against which the event was set. In 2003 the non-governmental organization called FITUR (Society for the development of the sustainable tourism in Pelotas) presented the project "Waters Cry - Cultural Sports Meeting of southern RS" to the state government. The project was aproved by the Regional Council for the Development of the Southern Region (COREDE- SUL) and was set to have its first edition between October/2004 and May/2005, in 22 cities of southern Rio grande do Sul. The project aimed at the self-sustainable social and economic development of the region, considering especially the tourism aspect. It was justified because it would make possible the happening of a sports and cultural event which involved the community of southern Rio Grande do Sul in an eco-educational project. This way, the project was aproved for that year and for the following year and could count on resources from the state. This achievement reveals the recognition of the importance of the theme by the the city administration and, also, by different sections of society that perceived in it a way for exploring the environmental needs.

Exploring, from the point of view expressed in the project, meant having the capacity to establish new actions that would not only fulfill environmental interactions but would also go beyound environmental preservation. When we refer to environmental problems it is usually a spot of nature in danger and the necessary precautions that first appear. The project intends to go beyond this first concern and amplify the objectives and concepts related with the environment and nature, as proposes Guatari (1990:08):

The political groups and the government seem to be totally unable to takle this problem in a more general way, with all its implications. Even though they are starting to get partially conscious of the more evident dangers which threaten the natural environment of our societies, they usually approach only the industrial damages, and only in a tecnocratic perspective, but only an ethical and political articulation - the one I call ecosophy - between the three ecological records (the environmental record, the social relationships record, and the human subjectivity one) could satifactorily clarify such questions.

There are nowadays new ways of dealing with the world. This new pattern of behavior has been determined by the technological and scientific advances that have taken place in western society, as well as by the changes in work relationships, the great transformations in the consumers market, the changes in the human relationships and the transformations caused by populational growth in the urban outlines. These new trends motivate and defy individuals and groups to find and set new ways of living and a possible social model, one that can stand the changes. The growing of these new practices would create what Guattari (1990:15) called the new "ways of being in group". He says:

In all the individual and collective spheres, in what concerns every day life or the reinvention of democracy - in urban outlines, artistic creation, sports, etc. one should, each time, search for instruments for the production of subjectivity, moving towards an individual and/or collective resingularization, instead of trying to fit a model set by the media, which is a synonym for desolation and despair.

Therefore, we emphasize the intention of the project Waters Cry to hold to this concept of ecologic reunion and, at the same time, leaving space for a singular intervention. This makes possible an action based on the encounter of theoretical references and the aims of the project, namely: a). the relationship with environment, in what concerns the contemplation of the natural beauties and the preservation and valuing of water resources the exploring of natural wealth through the tourism; b). the social relationships made possible through the group work, through the support given to the athletes, and the creation of relationships based on friendship and respect brought up by individuals and group interactions during the event; c). the human subjectivity related with the ethical, aesthetic and political construction based on the making choices and taking decisions of how to set oneself in the world and, more specifically, of how setting oneself in the organizing of an Adventure Race.

We are aware of our limitations in what concerns making clear in this work the real range and significance of this intervention. Even though, we defy ourselves to meet this challenge. First, because we intend to describe an activity which we consider pleasurable in both academic and professional levels, and that leads to new spaces of nonconventional learning and work in the Physical Education area. Second, because we believe that there is lack of academic productions which explore the questions concerned with the organizing of this type of event, compared to the amount of work on the risks practicing adventure races.

Forming a Team

As soon as we learned about the project from the president of FITUR and one of the creators, Professor Elizete Jeske, from Catholic University of Pelotas, we perceived it was a good opportunity for professionals of Physical Education, not only because they could contribute with the technical aspects, but also because it would be na opportunity to acquire more experience in the area of adventure races. It was necessary to put together a team of technicians that would be responsible for all the preparation of the event, from the setting of a regulation to more specific details, such as the choice and setting of the routes, the making of tools to be used during the competitions, the contacting with other teams involved in the project, and other actions necessary to solidify each of the events moments.

We took over the technical coordination of the project Waters Cry Adventure Races, representing the Physical Education School of the Federal University of Pelotas, assuming it as a great challenge. The group was formed by Professors Enio de Araújo Pereira, Mario Azevedo Jr and Gustavo Freitas who already had some experience in the area as students of the Physical Education course and, more specifically, in the discipline of Excursionism, Professor João Gilberto Giusti who had knowledge in organizing sports events,and Professor Anderson Fernandes who had great hability in vertical techniques and mountain bike and was coordinated by Professor Enio Araújo Pereira, who was an expert and had already a large experience in

the area of adventure sports. Considering the group experiences in the area and the field work developed by all of us, we chose the observing participation method (Wacquant, 2002) to serve as a reference for our project. Wacquant that "*the body itself serves as an instrument of investigation and reference of knowledge*". This way, the observer becames an experimentator and the experimentation turns into a means for observation.

A group of students attending the Physical Education Course about 40 helped the main team and worked as arbitrators during the competitions. The participation of students reveals another contribution by the Waters Cry Project, that is, creating opportunity for further practice by the students in the field of adventure sports especially for the ones who were attending the Excursionism course and also served as a type of peer teaching counted officially as a practice. Moreover, students were really willing to participate and didn't take the activity as obligation or just to add some more ours to their curriculum. This emphasizes important aspect related with the noncompulsory subjects and their importance in a course's syllabus. Later on we will further explore the participation of the students in the event.

It is important to emphasize that the event happened in two editions, in two different years. Considering the project aimed at involving the entire southern part of Rio Grande do Sul, which is formed by 22 cities, the region was divided into 5 (five) micro-regions. In each of the regions there was a previous selection and one or two teams were classified for the final competition. This division also made possible a further exploration of the natural and cultural wealth of each micro-region and of their history.

Mapping tracks

It may sound exagerating, but the adventure in a Adventure Race begins long before the start. As members of a technical team that has organized 12 (twelve) competitions in a very short time interval, we are able to describe a process that mixed reason and emotion. The planning happened two and a half or three months before the first selective competition and four months before the Final Competition. As the project was financed by FUNDERGS (Foundation for Sports and Leisure in Rio Grande do Sul) the money was released late and it shortened the time for the preparation and for the event itself. Fortunately, it did not interfere with the events success.

There were many important aspects involved, but we will comment on ly the most relevant ones. If we were to compare our activities with the writing of an account on a research we could say that we first searched for a theoretical basis and then did the field work. Therefore, we began by writing a regulation for the competition. This regulation aimed at making clear, especially for the athletes, which were the individual and group compulsory equipments, the teams responsibilities, the structure of tests (time and route) and the penalties. We wanted to establish very clear criteria which would support the evaluating of all competitors, as well as serve as a basis in the case of any legal appeals by competitors.

Along with writing of the regulation, other two activities turned to be basic in this part of the process. When we work in a ambitious project such as this one, it is necessary to be prepared for any unwanted happening and, so, we needed the support from the city's Firemen, the Police, the City Administration, and also from people who lived along the competition routes. We needed materials to be used during the preparation and during he event itself, some of them we borrowed, so there would be enough time for setting a bugget, presenting it and buying the items. Besides that, we needed the cartographic maps of the regions included in the project. Some of these were given by the Mirim Lagoon agency. The analysis of the maps was essential for the first setting of the routes, and for the final and more delicate decisions about detours and corrections in loco and taking I to account what was really there as showed in the maps. Next, we will move from the theoretical part of the work to the practice itself, even though [illegible]



A look at the route in the rural area of Pelotas, together with people from the region

Field Work

Among the cities that formed each micro-region one was chosen to be the headquarters for the selective part of the competition, depending on the events needs and on the cities characteristics. The local administration of the chosen city, through its sports and leisure, education or environment department, was responsible for suggesting a route for the part of the competition that would take place in that region. This autonomy given to the partners on suggesting a route was part of the ideal of the project of taking advantage of the ecological sites, natural beauties and historical and cultural wealth of each region. Along with that, the city representatives would suggest the sport they considered more apropriate for that region. The technical team was to visit the places as many times as necessary in order to:

· *Test the route proposed*. After the presentation of the route by the city representative, the technical team would check if it was really possible and apropriate. This was done by actually covering the route. This way we marked the exact locations for the PC's (Control Stations), AT's (Transition Areas) and PPO's(Compulsory Stop Stations). Another justification for this attitude was the need to equate distances and times within the limits pre established in the regulations and considering human limitations;

· *Find alternatives to the route, if necessary*. Only the evaluation in practice would determine the ratification or adjustment of the route. The importance of the maps again is present at the moment, because we trust in the road map and if 'the' form a kind of mirror, since the displacement of athletes depended directly-correct-apart from a reading of a map drawn up well;

· *Establish contacts with residents of the region*. The success of the project in terms of its tourism and culture, we should always take into consideration as a technical team responsible for the route, was very 'linked' to the mobilization of popular cities - seat competitions. The contacts with associations, industry groups and residents in general been indispensable not only in places that belonged to the path that the race would take place but also in the unconditional support the proposal for the development of the region;

Ø *Find out the safety conditions of the course*. One of the predominant features of the technical team in the execution of this work was the placing of conditions of security ahead of any other item. We know that the search for sports in

nature is the growing demand for new environments to practice sports, especially away from urban disturbances. Above all we must consider this quest as a demand for 'adrenalin', the adventure, the danger adjacent to the tests, the unpredictability of certain situations. If on the one hand the extreme sports and nature bring this emotion aspects that should not be overlooked by the organization of a Race of Adventure, on the other, basic requirements of safety and conditions of redemption can not be forgotten. Installs in the process of building the race the tension between emotion and reason whose traces are that alternatively at all times: here is a difficulty to translate the human subjectivity.

These activities not only these, but they are basically consolidated as the paths explored by the technical team. Paths that had obstacles, slips, rapid advances, strategic setbacks, work as a team, disappointments, joys and pains, nothing of atypical than a Race of Adventure can offer.

Getting to the Start Point

As we got closer to the beginning of the event, a more effective and careful attitude by all the involved in the Waters Cry, and especially the technical team was necessary. After the field work, we had to organize all the collected information about each route in order to prepare the navigation instruments that the competitors woud use during the competition. Here we must emphasize a considerable change from the first to the second edition. While in the first Waters Cry, in 2005, the material handed to the competitors was just the maps, in 2006 they had the Race Book and the Road Book. The service of the team's competitors facilitated? We do not think from this approach. Initially longer be bound by the technical advance and allowed acquired not only by the organization of the 1 st edition but also by experience in participation as customer support during the Ecomotion-Pró 2005. And second, the exclusive delivery of the map in 1 st edition required to provide much information about the trip during the briefing or arbitrators put in places where there probably unsure of displacement. In the 2 nd edition, they did not need longer be spoken, and clearly detailed. A reading of the Race Book already formed part of the technical capacity of the teams for the race.

A recovery on the participating teams involved in another of the same or greater level in relation to the arbitration of race. The preparation of about 40 academic-arbitrators lacked adhere to the demands of a competition of this size. For this reason, places of learning were constituted by technical team through lectures, meetings and workshops in order to enable the trainees in the conduct of the various tasks authorized by this sport, which went from the effective employment of the equipment through a conference specific language (communication) of the Race of Adventure, to the knowledge of rescue procedures and first aid.

We had the perception that a fine line separated the success of failure, every detail should be seen as something dangerous: and this is one thing. Another was the consummation of the way we wanted, without contingencies, without by chance, all as planned or organized: the failure was imminent of the practice did not escape, but in to be certainly so they happen less and perhaps why, today, we are ready to submit relevant experience in the area of sports in nature. Nature this face that challenge through our fears, our intuitions, from the top of our ignorance, the bottom of our ambitions and, above all, the proposition of a "*ecosofia"* possible.

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Av. República do Líbano, 320
Telefone: (53) 32234089 / (53) 99822974
e-mail: epereira@ufpel.tche.br

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ABSTRACT

This work is a refletive exercise based on the account of the way the Adventure Races in southern Rio Grande do Sul, entitled "Grito das Águas" ("Waters Cry"), which happened in 2005 and 2006, were organized, from the point of view of the team responsible for organizing the event. Aiming at the mapping and analysing of the actions taken during the construction of the project, which were considered as significant, we came to reflect in more detail upon these acions. The text is the result of the review of pictures taken during the setting of the events and of the reports given by the organizers. Besides these two sources we also relied on our own memories as participants of the events, even thou we know that these aren't always trustworthy. This way we believe we approach the type of observing-participation methodology (Wacquant, 2002). The exercise itelf reveals the ethical and political principles which served as a guideline for an approach of the environment that goes beyond its preservation. The need for an ecological approach, based on environmental records, and also on records of social interactions and of human subjectivity, as suggested by Guattari (1990), leads us to recognize the Adventure Race as a potential practice that makes possible a deeper exploring of the ecology theme and the search for new ways of collective living.

KEY WORDS: Physical Education, Adventure Sports, Ecology

L'AVENTURE D'ORGANISER DES SPORTS DANS LA NATURE: UNE CARTOGRAPHIE SUR LES COURSES D'AVENTURE DE LA ZONE SUD/RS

RÉSUMÉ

La réalisation de ce travail se configure comme un exercice réfléchissant qui part d'une histoire d'expérience concernant l'organisation des Courses d'Aventure de la Zone Sud/RS nommé ` Cri des Eaux ', produites dans les années de 2005 et 2006, un regard d'à l'intérieur de l'équipe technique responsable de son exécution. Avec l'objectif de mappement de même conceptuellement, et analyser les actions juridictions comme significatives pour tel nous voyons refléter de forme plus détaillée le processus de construction de ce projet. L'édition de cette écriture a été possible à travers la révision de sources photographiques concernant le processus d'organisation de l'événement et aussi de la re-lecture des Rapports d'Activités des

deux éditions annuelles élaborées et délivré comment charge fonctionnel de l'équipe technique. À ceux-ci deux facteurs nous pouvons ajouter que nous lançons main de propre mémoire - avec tout son caractère digne de confiance et falível - de qui a été immergé dans le parcours de cet événement en nous approchant d'une méthodologie de participation-observatrice (Wacquant, 2002). Cet exercice révèle de lui-même les principes éthique - politique qui ont guidé l'idée d'un positionnement sur environnement outre leur conservation. L'exigence d'un abordage dans le champ écologique à partir de leurs registres environnementaux, des registres des relations sociales et des registres de la subjectivité humaine suggérés par Guattari (1990) fait avec lequel caractériser la Course d'Aventure comme une pratique dans potentiel avec l'intention d'deexplorer de plus en plus thématique écologique dans la proposition de nouvelles formes collectives à vivre.

MOTS-CLÉS: Éducation Physique, Sports d'Aventure, Écologie.

LA AVENTURA DE ORGANIZAR DEPORTES EN LA NATURALEZA: UN MAPEAMENTO SOBRE LAS CARRERAS DE AVENTURA DE LA ZONA SUR/RS

RESÚMEN

La realización deste trabajo, se configura como um ejercicio reflexivo que parte de um relato de experiencia a respecto a la organización de las Carreras de Aventura de la Zona Sur/RS denominada “Grito das Águas”, que se pasáron em los años de 2005 y 2006, desde uma visión de dentro del equipo técnico responsable por su ejecución. Con el objetivo de mapear, incluso conceptualmente, y analizar las acciones dichas como significativas. Para eso venimos a reflexionar de forma mas detallada el proceso de construcción de este proyecto. La edición de esta escritura fue posible a través de la revisión de fuentes fotográficas relacionadas al proceso de la organización del evento y así mismo de la relectura de los Relatos de Atividades de las ediciónes anuales elaboradas y entregadas como encargo funcional del equipo técnico. A estos dos factores se puede añadir que echemos mano de la propia memoria - con todo su caracter confiable y falible - de quién estubo inmerso en el transcurso de este evento acercándonos de uma metodología de *participación-observador* (Wacquant, 2002). Este ejercicio revela por si solo los princípios ético-políticos que nortearon la idea de um posicionamento sobre el medioambiente para más allá de su preservación. La exigencia de un abordaje en el campo ecológico a partir de sus registros ambientales , de los de las relaciones sociales y de los de la subjetividad humana con la sugerencia de Guattari (1990), hace com que caractericemos la Carrera de Aventura como uma práctica em potencial a fines de explorar cada vez más la temática ecológica em la proposición de nuevas formas colectivas de vivir.

PALABRAS LLAVE: Educación Física, Deportes de Aventura, Ecología

A AVENTURA DE ORGANIZAR ESPORTES NA NATUREZA: UM MAPEAMENTO SOBRE AS CORRIDAS DE AVENTURA DA ZONA SUL/RS

RESUMO

A realização deste trabalho configura-se como um exercício reflexivo que parte de um relato de experiência a respeito da organização das Corridas de Aventura da Zona Sul/RS denominada 'Grito das Águas', ocorridas nos anos de 2005 e 2006, por um olhar de dentro da equipe técnica responsável por sua execução. Com o objetivo de mapear, inclusive conceitualmente, e analisar as ações alçadas como significativas para tal vimos refletir de forma mais detalhada o processo de construção deste projeto. A edição desta escrita foi possível através da revisão de fontes fotográficas relativas ao processo de organização do evento e também da re-leitura dos Relatórios de Atividades das duas edições anuais elaborados e entregues como encargo funcional da equipe técnica. A estes dois fatores podemos acrescentar que lançamos mão de própria memória - com todo seu caráter confiável e falível - de quem esteve imerso no percurso deste evento aproximando-nos de uma metodologia de *participação-observante* (Wacquant, 2002). Este exercício revela por si só os princípios ético-políticos que nortearam a idéia de um posicionamento sobre meio ambiente para além de sua preservação. A exigência de uma abordagem no campo ecológico a partir de seus registros ambientais, dos registros das relações sociais e dos registros da subjetividade humana sugeridas por Guattari (1990) faz com que caracterizemos a Corrida de Aventura como uma prática em potencial no intuito de explorar cada vez mais a temática ecológica na proposição de novas formas coletivas de viver.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Física, Esportes de Aventura, Ecologia.