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School and Sport from an Intercultural Education Perspective

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Abstract

This research addresses the opinion of foreign students from Latin or Caribbean countries on the intercultural social issue. Students at a public high school in Blumenau-Brasil and their relationship with the practice of sports. The main objective of this study is to describe how the practice of sports performed by these groups can be understood in an intercultural way within a historical and social context and its relationship with education in modern Brazilian society. This is qualitative research that used interviews and observations with 6 Haitian students in a high school in Blumenau-SC. This study achieved results that we can use to understand and deepen the discussion of issues related to intercultural education and sport to improve teacher preparation and teaching practice in search of quality education.

Keywords: Education, Interculturality, Sport, Latin America and the Caribbean.

1. Introduction

Sport has an undeniable impact on today's society. This impact is evident in several areas, especially in social relations and the school is not exempt from this influence. The sociology of sport explains how people interact with each other in a sporting environment to determine how the sport process affects their development and socialization, or how people fit into society¹.

Sport is seen as beneficial, as it is an activity that promotes friendship, freedom to express one's skills and social mobility. Sage² suggests that sports provide a social environment for the acquisition of culturally valued personal and social attitudes, values, and behaviors. Furthermore, it is implied that what is learned in the sporting scene is transferred to other spheres of real life. Later, sports are being preferred by some classes and some ethnic communities, such as the Haitians who immigrated to Blumenau and who are part of this study.

The main objective of this study is to describe how the practice of sports by foreign students from Haiti can be understood in an intercultural way within a historical and social context and its relationship with education in modern Brazilian society.

2. Methodology

This research establishes theoretical concepts about sport, interculturality and education and has as priority to investigate the relationship between education and sport to better understand this process in its intercultural aspects. Initially, these issues were investigated using conventional library sources, placing strong emphasis on the interpretation and analysis of primary sources.

Six Haitian students from the High School in Blumenau-SC participated in the study. Of these adolescents, 5 were male and one female. These students gave their opinion on understanding the influence of sport on their lives to identify how sport is present and how it can be presented within an intercultural education.

Data collection was carried out by one of the researchers who observed the students' behavior, seeking with this a greater reliability of the answers and personal characteristics that could interfere in the research.

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The six Haitian students' study at night high school and are aged between 16 and 20 years, all African descent. The names of participants are fictitious to preserve real identities, distributed as follows:

Table 1. List of Participants

Fictitious Name	Class	Age
Wes	2 ^o . 3	16
Nick	3 ^o . 2	18
Phar	3 ^o . 2	18
Dive	1 ^o . 1	17
David	1 ^o . 3	16
Peg (Female)	3 ^o . 2	20

The researcher made a brief presentation of the research objectives and questions were related to sport, education, and culture. Opinions were given by the groups at random.

3. Results and Discussions

The qualitative analysis of the information began by looking for themes that emerged from the participants. The act of collecting and organizing data served as the first phase of analysis. A primary method of qualitative analysis was through the organization of units into emergent categories. The analysis was carried out to provide verification and authenticity of the influences created by the sport within an intercultural perspective. The categories that emerged were:

3.1 Multiculturality – In this research, what was observed was that Haitian students have their own space, when at leisure, such as between classes. Likewise, they sit together or close together in classrooms. They say they are rarely questioned by teachers or peers about their culture. Dive mentioned that "the history teacher once asked about the history of Haiti, but that was it." Phar commented that "...Brazilian students are not very curious about Haitian culture..." He continued by saying that there is a Brazilian student who asks about Haiti, but "...there is only one in his class...". I then asked how they felt about this situation. Phar replied that "...it's normal for you to be in another country and have to live within the culture...after all we are the strangers...". The expressions of anguish among the interviewees were striking and they seemed very saddened by the lack of interest of Brazilians in foreign culture. Foreigners suffer from this adaptation, after all, these are profound changes that need to be absorbed to succeed in a new cultural, economic, and academic condition.

Questions were asked about the habits that students had in their country of origin and that they try to keep here. David then replied "...here in Brazil everything is different...the language...the food..." I asked what the biggest difficulty for him was, he then replied that it was the language, because "...don't understood nothing...but now...will...". Phar said that "...in Haiti I played soccer in my free time and here...I also play...so it's the same...". According to the students, football is also the most popular sport in Haiti and basketball is on the rise. I then asked how football could boost their education in a different country. Nick commented that "...I think the school is cooler when there's football...ping-pong...but Brazilians don't like to play with us..." out of frustration, he said "...we didn't play very well...and they have teams already...we were left out...we were also separated at halftime...not only in physical

education..."

What is perceived in current education is the presence of different cultures, where foreigners or even Brazilians from other regions live together peacefully and conserve their cultures. However, the intertwining between cultures is not evident.

3.2 Interculturality – Weissmann³ names the intercultural process as *mestizaje*, which constitutes a combination or assembly of heterogeneous elements, in which each one retains its particularity, within which the difference is preserved. The Intercultural perspective was observed in the research through the behavior and responses of Haitians, and this perspective is extremely important in pedagogy.

Intercultural education results in the belief that educational spaces are somehow always between cultures: different knowledge, value systems, systems of representations and interpretations of reality, habits, ways of acting, etc.

Sport helps young people from other cultures to be accepted into small groups at school. This is an inclusive process in which the teenagers understand the importance of teamwork and citizenship. Nick said: "Sports help people socialize, and they learn to work as a team." Sport socialization is the process by which individuals learn skills, values, attitudes, norms, and knowledge of the roles of sport, directly or indirectly, through social systems⁴. Unlike many classrooms, sport can make teenagers the authors of their own culture, because they practice and are involved in it.

I followed the idea and asked the group about the socialization that happens in sport and Phar mentioned: "Sport is a good thing. It's like life. For example, in competition, if you lose, you cry and feel bad, but you go and talk to the opposing team as a form of admiration and respect." Socialization happens in sport and is perhaps the biggest benefit of it. It is based on the belief that sport, when properly presented and organized, contributes significantly to the social and moral education of young people and is an effective means of producing benefits for the individual and society.

Nick then commented: "I like the idea that in some competitions all the athletes are in the same place. That's cool because they can be more integrated. They are still competing, but they are also friends and live in a group." Sport can be part of the democratic system through the eventual participation of the population of all ages, genders, and levels, and it can reflect on social acceptance.

3.3 Exclusion – Despite the positive comments regarding sport and socialization, participants explained how they feel excluded at school by their Brazilian colleagues. Both in regular activities at school, as well as during Physical Education classes. Collins⁵ identified single parent families, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and elderly people without secondary or indexed pensions as disproportionately over-represented in the social group suffering from poverty and social exclusion. We can consider for this study, Haitians as ethnic minorities and therefore suffer some exclusion or discrimination. Wes stated that "Brazilian students do not let us participate with them or they never choose us to play football on their team, we are always the last to be chosen".

According to David, this separation doesn't just happen at

school. He stated that “on weekends we are together... among ourselves... Brazilians don't invite us to other things... like birthdays”. I asked their opinion about why this happens, and Nick said, “we don't have much contact with Brazilians...only in church...but most of the time we are with other Haitians or with our families...my parents are too always with the Haitians...”. These exclusion issues are not simple to solve. However, the complexity of the issues that contribute to the creation of social exclusion should not be used as an excuse for sport not to play as full a role as possible in assisting the development of some ethnic groups.

4. Conclusions

Sport is a social and cultural practice that has symbols, mechanisms, and a language with unique characteristics. Sport is part of our culture and plays an important role in the production and reproduction of interpersonal relationships and can act as an element that facilitates integration and differentiation in social terms.

However, when this does not happen, sport also serves to maintain discrimination. As Valente (2003) says, with no space for culture itself, imposed sport does not contribute to the fight against racism or to the adequate treatment of cultural diversity, on the contrary, they incorporate, when they do not reinforce, the same problems that it intends to overcome, as the criticism of stereotype and prejudice.

The study presented a conception that sport can be an extremely useful tool for the benefit of the socialization of “strange” people to the culture.

On the other hand, sport can be used as an instrument in the search for a more equal and less discriminatory world. It is characteristic of sports to be democratic, where, in essence, everyone can play, regardless of their economic, religious, or racial issue. This is a real possibility and could be better explored in the context of foreigners both by teachers and by Brazilian or foreign students themselves.

To alleviate adaptation difficulties, we can suggest the use of sports as an intercultural possibility during Physical Education classes. This would be possible with examples of bodily practices such as typical dances or fights from Haiti and Brazil, thus demonstrating the richness and diversity of existing expressions.

It is precisely for these reasons that school sport, as a motor and training practice in terms of value, is a space that collectively houses the positive potential of school and sport for the inclusion of the immigrant population.

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