

Somatic Culture In Colombia: Beginnings And Transformations Of The Concept In 27 Years Of Research

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present succinctly, how the concept of somatic culture was born in our environment, and how it has been the evolution and transformation of the concept itself, that has resulted in interdisciplinary work around the dimensions of somatic culture (sexuality-eroticism, motor expressions, health, aesthetic ideal, semiotics, work, biopolitics, emotions). The exercise allowed not only to trace the origin of the somatic culture concept, but also made it possible to cover the methodological scenario on which somatic culture has made its foray, that is, the educational and social spheres, thus allowing that during the 27 years of the group's existence, many research and intervention projects were born, which have founded and consolidated two lines of research: somatic culture and educational context; and somatic culture and sociocultural construction.

Keywords: Somatic, culture, education, sociocultural, research.

THE COLOMBO-GERMAN AGREEMENT AS A HISTORICAL ANTECEDENT

Since 1974, there was an academic and scientific cooperation agreement subscribed between the governments of Colombia and the German Federal Republic, administered by the National planning office of Colombia, in the period between 1975 and 1980; developing in this context, a series of programs in the formerly named Sports Science Institute of the University of Antioquia, today, Institute of Physical Education and Sport.

The intent of the agreement was framed in advising for the implementation of curricular programs in Physical Education, at the University of Antioquia (Faculty of Education - Sports Science Institute) and at the Universidad del Valle, institution in which the program in health sciences is organized. In the period between 1980 and 1985, the agreement is extended, and the German University of Sport organizes many events for the dissemination and consolidation of the academic and scientific program; in this period, emerges the need to investigate the concept of body in the area of physical education, since the concept of physical exercise that defines the area of physical education, is overcome through a permanent process of reflexive and theoretical-practical inquiry [1].

In 1984, the basic cooperation agreement was signed, antecedent of the academic-scientific cooperation project that would be signed later in 1993, between the rectors of the German

University of sport and the University of Antioquia, which would be periodically renewable by mutual agreement between the parties on the development of joint work. The program was aimed at promoting research, teaching and extension, and the research component was responsible for promoting its development, the objectives were oriented to carry out joint scientific works of local, national and international interest, promote the exchange and socialization of the information thus obtained [2].

THE CONCEPT OF BODY AS ANTECEDENT TO THE CONCEPT OF SOMATIC CULTURE

The permanent inquiry into the role of the body in Physical Education, especially from the 90s onwards, It allows us to observe that different disciplines have dealt with it, highlighting that interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity contribute precisely to the development of ideas and concepts, thereby enabling a comprehensive vision and an important epistemological contribution to the development of a discipline.

The theoretical framework of the Somatic Culture group is based, among many other theories, on the readings carried out on the relations of the body with the experiences of perception of the objects around us from a philosophical-phenomenological perspective of Merleau -Ponty ("... but our phenomenal body, and there is no mystery in that, since our body, as the potentiality of this of that part of the world, surges toward objects to be grasped and perceives them.") [3]; or from a sociological perspective of Touraine, of a subject that is in permanent interaction with a society where the mass production and diffusion of cultural property, occupies the central place that previously had occupied the material property of industrial society, and they turn to a consuming subject ("...consumption is the expression of the social level, ... it is closely determined by social status) [4]; or the anthropological perspective supported by Arboleda, where variations in the use of the body are systematically linked to cultural patterns and social structure, where they are learned through the educational system as a gestural mediator of social behavior [5], but where each social development according to Rittner, also contains a socio-cultural expression of the body and a transformation of the body's systems of interpretation, since social changes are also unified in the transformations of body and personality ideals, which regulate the relationship of individuals with their bodies [6].

THE FOUNDING CONCEPT OF "HABITUS" AND ITS RELATION TO SOMATIC CULTURE

Before referring to the concept of Somatic Culture and its meanings, it is necessary to refer to the concept of "Habitus", raised by Bourdieu, who said to it as the "system of acquired schemas that function in a practical state as categories of perception and appreciation, or as principles of classification at the same time as organizing principles of action" [7], where the individual has the creative, active, inventive capacity and not that of a transcendental subject, rather he is an acting subject. The explanation that Téllez (2002) gives to the term habitus is understood as:

"a system of acquired, permanent and transferable dispositions that generate and classify actions, perceptions, feelings and thoughts in the social agents in a certain way, generally escaping the conscience and the will. Such dispositions are usually incorporated from the earliest childhood, throughout the lives of individuals, through a whole process of multiform and prolonged socialization that enables the appropriation of the world, of the self and of others" [8].

It is interesting to observe that the habitus, as a product of history, establishes individual and collective practices, producing “history” according to the principles engendered by history, thus ensuring the active presence of past experiences, which is deposited in each organism in the form of a principle of perception, thought and action, and generally tend to guarantee the conformity of practices and their consistency over the time [8].

THE SOMATIC CULTURE CONCEPT

The official introduction of the concept of Somatic Culture in Colombia, has its genesis in the international event held in July 1994, in the Coldeportes Antioquia auditorium (today Indeportes) and which was called "Sport and modern society". The event included the 3rd International Seminar on Sports Sociology and the 1st International Seminar on Sports Pedagogy and Didactics; such activities commemorated 25 years of Coldeportes Antioquia and 25 years of the Institute of Physical Education at the University of Antioquia.

The conference of the director of the Institute of Sociology of sport of the German University of sport, the University Professor Doctor Volker Rittner, entitled Body, health, sport and lifestyle as benchmarks of social development, hints at the relationships of sport, the health and lifestyles in a social context, and they are part of somatic culture.

For Dr. Rittner, under the concept of somatic culture, it should therefore be understood, “a system of values and norms related to each other, in a given society, which includes perception and use, or use of the body as a whole” [6].

The central topics of the concept relate three aspects:

1. The different dimensions of somatic culture.
2. The effect of transformation between the dimensions of somatic culture.
3. Changes in somatic culture in the processes of development and modernization

The concept has implicitly developed some dimensions which refer to:

1. The use of the body in work systems.
2. The conception of disease and health, or the care of disease systems as well as the availability of medical knowledge.
3. The norms and values concerning to feeding (drink and food).
4. Sexuality and eroticism.
5. The aesthetic perception of the body in the field of the dominant body ideal.
6. Hygiene practices.
7. Phenomena of body language and gesticulation.
8. Phenomena of movement and sport.

EVOLUTIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF SOMATIC CULTURE BASED ON LOCAL RESEARCH

Once the academic and scientific cooperation agreement was formalized, the macro research called “Somatic Culture and social profile of a Latin American city, Medellín. Interdisciplinary research of the sport phenomenon” (in spanish: “Cultura Somática y perfil social de una urbe latinoamericana, Medellín. Investigación interdisciplinaria del fenómeno deporte”). This research was linked to the German Sports University of Cologne, and the support of the Cologne Club, the University of Antioquia through the dependencies of the Institute of Physical Education, the school of

bacteriology, and the faculties of Public Health, Medicine and Socials & Human Sciences, and under the auspices of state companies such as Inder, Indeportes Antioquia and private companies.

This research allows the concept to be developed and it is thus observed that the Somatic Culture for the year 1997 is defined by the following textual review:

"Somatic culture refers to the uses of the body that go through the operational and touch the system of meanings, perceptions, attitudes, practices and individual and collective representations of it in a sociocultural context; corresponds to a participation of the body in the sociocultural project and to the grammar with which the sociocultural is inscribed in the body" [2].

Similarly, the dimensions of somatic culture are directly related to the body and aspects of sexuality, health, motor expressions and the aesthetic ideal:

"... To approach the study of somatic culture, it is necessary to observe it from defined dimensions that are interchangeably combined with categories associated with bodily functioning: sexuality and eroticism, preferably linked to pleasure; aesthetic ideal and body language, referring to expressiveness and symbolism; eating habits, hygienic habits, health, work, associated with need and maintenance; sport, related to pleasure, maintenance, expressiveness and performance; and finally, the movement dimension, associated with the need category" [2].

The Interdisciplinary Group Somatic Culture in 2002, presents the results of the research in the educational context, is the interdisciplinary study of body culture in adolescents in the city of Medellín, where the concept of the body is interpreted from adolescents, which it allows the evolve to the body concept again, and integrated into the sociocultural environment as noted below:

"With Somatic Culture, reference is made to the uses of the body that go through the operative and touch on the system of meanings, perceptions, attitudes, practices and individual and collective representations of it, in a sociocultural context. It corresponds to a participation of the body in the social and cultural project and to the grammar with which it is inscribed in the body. In such a way that aspects such as gender, economic conditions, geophysical space, confession, educational level, age, are relevant in understanding a visible particularity in the uses of the body" [1].

In this way, the interpretation of the study in schoolchildren allows an expansion and precision of the dimensions of somatic culture, through the founding disciplines, thus establishing that:

"... Thus, in the first place, health allows us to explain the body from its organic nature based on the ideal sciences to clarify the corresponding problems: Medicine, Nutrition, Dietetics, etc. Secondly, sexuality makes it possible to understand the affective and erotic nature through disciplines such as Behavioral Psychology or psychoanalysis. Thirdly, the Motor Expressions emphasize the expressive and social possibilities of body movement and, thanks to theoretical-practical fields such as Physical Education or theoretical-conceptual ones such as Sociology, Sociology of Sport, this facet of embodiment is fully explained, and fourth, the Aesthetic Ideal offers an interpretive platform to evaluate the meaning of its appearance or image in many of the searches and expectations that the body poses to individuals and groups: Philosophy Aesthetics or Anthropology; they offer suitable hermeneutical elements for this"

Between 2004 and 2006, the Somatic Culture research group again carried out a study in the teachers of primary and secondary educational institutions, reinforcing elements from cultural perspectives that allow an expansion of the concept, but still inconclusive.

"Body culture refers to the uses of the body that go through the operational and touch the system of meanings, perceptions, attitudes, practices and individual and collective representations of it in a sociocultural context; It refers to the sociocultural construction from the body and the way in which culture constructs the body, the latter would operate, therefore, both as constructor and construct. It corresponds to a participation of the body in the social and cultural project and to the grammar with which said project is inscribed in the body" [9].

With the articulation of the corporeal and the cultural, it seeks to offer a semantic space that allows the body to be given an integral meaning while exhibiting a foundation for overcoming the classic nature / culture opposition [9].

CONCLUSION

For the Somatic Culture research group, and for Dra. Arboleda in particular, between body and culture a relationship has been generated in which both parties have permeated and co-constructed, which has left traces that can be traced; Here, from the body, it has been interested to characterize culture in its identity matrix. The body, in this case, has been expressing the passage of culture and its daily occurrence in: perceptions, attitudes, practices and representations. In this journey, "... Not only have social ties become evident in the body, but from its collective restraints have been generated in which interpretations of the world and universes of meaning have been interwoven; It has therefore been a mapping of socially founded content. The same could be said in many ways, however Le Breton (2002) has paved the way and has synthesized it very beautifully:

"The body is the place and time in which the world becomes a man immersed in the uniqueness of his personal history, in a social and cultural field in which the symbolic of his relationship with others and with the world is watered down" (Le Breton, 2002: 35) [10].

Therefore, an integrating and unifying concept is offered in this way that allows the understanding of the uses of the body, thus the Somatic Culture is offered as the articulating theoretical framework of a research group that supports its work in educational and socio-cultural contexts, and where the dimensions of sexuality and eroticism, the aesthetic ideal, health, motor skills, motor expressions, semiotics, work, biopolitics, emotions, find meaning in an intrinsic relationship with culture and body culture.

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