
PHYSICAL EDUCATION GRADUATE PROGRAMS: NOTES ON THE BOOK “DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION GRADUATE PROGRAMS”

PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA: APONTAMENTOS SOBRE O LIVRO “DILEMAS E DESAFIOS DA PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA”

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RESUMO

Trata-se de um artigo de opinião relativo ao livro “Dilemas e desafios da Pós-Graduação em Educação Física”, organizado por pesquisadores ligados ao Colégio Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte (CBCE) e publicado pela Editora Unijuí no ano de 2015. A temática da obra busca abordar a produção do conhecimento em Educação Física no Brasil, sobretudo, os dilemas e desafios existentes nos Programas de Pós-Graduação da área. A título de conclusão, o artigo aponta que o livro em questão atua também como uma ferramenta política para tentar mudar as regras de funcionamento do campo científico na Educação Física brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Educação Física; Epistemologia; Produção do Conhecimento; Pós-Graduação.

ABSTRACT

This is a review of the book “Dilemmas and Challenges of Postgraduate in Physical Education”, organized by researchers at the Brazilian College of Sport Sciences (CBCE) and published by Editora Unijuí in 2015. The work subject seeks to address the production of knowledge in Physical Education in Brazil, especially the existing dilemmas and challenges in Postgraduate Programs area. By way of conclusion, the review points that the book in question turns out to be a political tool to try to change the operating rules of the scientific field in Brazilian Physical Education.

Keywords: Physical Education; Epistemology; Production of Knowledge; Postgraduate.

Introduction

Physical Education Graduate programs in Brazil are still very recent. The first Master's in the area were created in the mid-1970s^{1,2}. According to Kokubun³, during the constitution of the programs, there were major changes in Physical Education in the country, which were marked by an increase in the number of teachers with Master's and doctoral degrees, growth of research groups, and improvements in intellectual production, among other elements.

When it comes to Physical Education as an area of research and production of knowledge, there is an epistemological heterogeneity, with objects and contents that span several areas of knowledge, more inclined to both natural or human sciences^{4,5}. Such a fact is reflected in graduate programs, which makes the scientific/academic field of Physical Education a highly complex and polysemic social space⁵.

With the epistemological heterogeneity found in Brazilian Physical Education graduate programs, observing the complexity of evaluations and the creation of political measures to structure this space, several authors from the area entered the field putting as object of study the Brazilian Post-Graduation in Physical Education itself. Some chose the

construction path of this social space^{1,3,6, 9}, while others chose to point out the limitations of the programs^{5,9,10-13}.

The efforts made by the abovementioned researchers defined the configuration of Post-Graduation in Physical Education in Brazil. However, such articles show a very troubled scenario marked by a controversial debate, especially with respect to the structure of programs, the role of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel [*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*] (CAPES) and the influence of the evaluation system materialized in Qualis. Thus, the present article intends to analyze the content of criticisms contained in the book “Dilemmas and Challenges in Physical Education Graduate Programs” [*Dilemas e Desafios da Pós-Graduação em Educação Física*]¹⁴. The work is a collection organized by a group of researchers associated with the Brazilian College of Sports Sciences [*Colégio Brasileiro de Ciências do Esporte*] (CBCE) and has at its core a strong criticism of the Physical Education graduate system in Brazil. By analyzing this book, the article aims to identify what the central content of the criticism is, seeking to understand possible epistemological movements carried out by it within the scientific field of Physical Education nationwide.

Contextualizing the work

As mentioned above, the work “Dilemmas and Challenges in Physical Education Graduate Programs” is formed by a large group of researchers associated with the CBCE; it presents an introduction written by Simone Rechia [Federal University of Paraná (*Universidade Federal do Paraná*)-UFPR, current president of the institution], Paula Cristina da Costa Silva and Felipe Quintão de Almeida, both from the Federal University of Espírito Santo [*Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo*] (UFES), who at the time were the Vice-President and the Scientific Director of the organization. In addition to this introductory part, the book contains two more. The first one is composed of 12 articles, in which the 17 authors focus their analyses on the theme of Post-Graduation in Physical Education and its relation with what they call a productivist character in doing science. Such articles derived from lectures given at the 4th and 5th editions of the CBCE Graduate Forum, organized in 2012 and 2014, in Florianópolis and Vitória, in that order¹⁴.

The second part of the book is composed of 13 texts written by 46 authors. Each of them represents a CBCE Thematic Working Group (TWG) and has as prerogative to carry out a type of analysis regarding the production by each of the working groups that make up the institution¹⁴. This second part was produced following the model of books previously published by the CBCE in 1999 and 2007^{15,16}. In this sense, it is possible to see the presence of two different proposals in a single work. The first one deals with the dilemmas and challenges of Post-Graduation in Physical Education, while the second one focuses its efforts on a balance of productions resulted within the different TWGs that compose the CBCE.

It is evident, from the introduction, through the twelve articles of the first part, with some exceptions, that the analysis axis revolves around a strong criticism of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel [*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*] (CAPES), more specifically the so-called Área 21, institution that manages Post-Graduation in Physical Education in Brazil. In the opinion of most of the authors that make up the collection, the hegemonic ways of doing science in the area brings countless side effects to Brazilian Physical Education. In order to continue the presentation of the analyzed book, an overview of the arguments contained in the first part of the collection will be presented.

The first chapter, by Marco Paulo Sttiger, Raquel da Silveira and Mauro Myskiw, researchers associated with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul [*Universidade*

Federal do Rio Grande do Sul] (UFRGS), aims to identify how the induction processes promoted by the CAPES's evaluation criteria act in the constitution of scientific culture in Post-Graduation in Physical Education in Brazil. The analyses are supported on interviews with some researchers from the area, as well as documents of *Área 21*. The authors conclude that the current form of doing science has been privileging the quantitative criterion of scientific production and the "impact" of journals. Such elements, in the opinion of the authors, call into question the effectiveness of the CAPES's evaluation system.

The next chapter was written by Rosane Kreuzburg Molina and Vicente Molina Neto, professors at Vale do Rio dos Sinos University [*Universidade Vale do Rio dos Sinos*] (UNISINOS) and UFRGS, respectively. The authors express concern about the predominance of researches in Physical Education based on a quantitative approach, while advocating on the importance of scientific studies supported by a more qualitative bias. Concluding, they point out that, in order to improve the quality of production, educational research should be redirected to items that are of interest to teachers, reflecting the importance of enhancing incentives for teacher training and the need to research with them.

The third article, titled "Quantity vs Quality as to Production of Knowledge in Physical Education: challenges of a concrete experience" [*A quantidade -vs- qualidade na produção de conhecimento em Educação Física: os desafios de uma experiência concreta*], was written by Márcia Ferreira Chaves-Gamboa [Federal University of Alagoas (*Universidade Federal do Alagoas*)-UFAL] and Silvio Sánchez Gamboa [State University of Campinas (*Universidade Estadual de Campinas*)-UNICAMP]. Based on the reality of Northeast Brazil, the authors present three understandings of the discussion about quantitative and qualitative research methods. The first perception justifies the opposition and/or incompatibility between both approaches. In its turn, the second one defends the complementarity between quantity and quality. Finally, the third approach relies on the unity between the abovementioned methods. To argue in favor of the third approach, the authors use Marxist concepts, as they consider this theoretical reasoning as the most fruitful possibility to construct a science and a technology capable of explaining conflicts, dilemmas, deficiencies and regional inequalities, as well as making change and transformation viable.

The next chapter is "Challenges and dilemmas in Physical Education Graduate Programs: knowledge and specificity" [*Desafios e dilemas da Pós-graduação em Educação Física: conhecimento e especificidade*], by the researcher associated with the UFES Valter Bracht. The author briefly addresses the constitution and specificity of Physical Education, seeking to show the weakening of the pedagogical area within Post-graduation, as well as alternatives so that this area does not end in extinction. The options presented for this problem would be the creation of professional Master's in Physical Education that seek to focus on the pedagogical theme or the migration of Physical Education to the Great Interdisciplinary Area.

The theme of the fifth article – written by the professor of the Federal University of Santa Catarina [*Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*] (UFSC) Santiago Pich – is the academic identity of Physical Education. The author points out that the problem has been present since the so-called "crisis" occurred in the 1980s. Pich also talks about the practice of the CAPES's Area 21 coordinators (Go Tani, Eduardo Kokubun and André Rodacki) and their influence on the constitution of an identity for Physical Education. In the author's view, the current coordinator André Rodacki, unlike the previous two, does not engage in a public debate with the researchers and this, in his opinion, impoverishes the epistemological discussion in the area.

The next two chapters explore the theme of Professional Master's. In the sixth article, Dartagnan Pinto Guedes, professor at Norte do Paraná University [*Universidade Norte do Paraná*] (UNOPAR), presents the experience of the Professional Master's in Physical

Exercise in Health Promotion organized at UNOPAR. In the seventh chapter, Suraya Cristina Darido [“Júlio de Mesquita Filho” São Paulo State University (*Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho”*)-UNESP] and Fernando Jaime González [Regional University of Northwest Rio Grande do Sul State (*Universidade Regional do Noroeste do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul*)-UNIJUÍ] describe the current proposal of a network Professional Master’s in the area of school Physical Education, coordinated by UNESP. Both texts point out advantages in the creation of Professional Master’s for the Brazilian Physical Education.

In the article “Challenges and Dilemmas in the Publishing of Scientific Journals in Brazil” [*Desafios e Dilemas da editoração de revistas científicas no Brasil*], Ivone Job, librarian at UFRGS’s School of Physical Education, promotes a reflection about Brazilian journals related to Physical Education and Sports, pointing to the main characteristics concerning the management of the journals. The author recommends actions to improve management, based on the following aspects: 1) transparency in the detailing of editorial policy, in clarifications on copyright and conflicts generated by opinions, and investment in the training and recognition of reviewers; 2) professionalization and financial sustainability of journals through alternatives such as public policy support and/or payment for authors; 3) dissemination through social networks and the internationality of journals and; 4) careful preservation of digital documents, recommending reliable software. The mentioned measures could, in the author’s opinion, help foment journals in the Physical Education field in Brazil.

The article by Alexandre Palma, professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro [*Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro*] (UFRJ), titled “Health Under the Eyes of Socio-Cultural Studies: difficulties, possibilities and challenges” [*A saúde sob o olhar dos estudos socioculturais: Dificuldades, Possibilidades e Desafios*], evidences several obstacles to researchers in the area, such as: 1) overvaluation of scientific knowledge; 2) criticism of qualitative researches; 3) lack of solid bases in the Social and Human Sciences; 4) relations of power that permeate this sphere. Thus, the author proposes measures to explore the health theme in the Social and Human Sciences within Physical Education graduate programs and, thus, to increase visibility to this type of research in the scientific community of the area.

The tenth article is called “Challenges and Dilemmas in Physical Education Graduate Programs: socio-cultural studies and the Área 21” [*Desafios e dilemas da Pós-graduação em Educação Física: os estudos socioculturais e a Área 21*], written by Otávio Tavares (UFES). The researcher emphasizes that, although a great part of the difficulties in Post-Graduation is related to the quantitative evaluation of Intellectual Production fomented by the CAPES, it is a systemic problem that involves several factors: 1) difficulty in the scientific production of postgraduate students, aggravated by shorter viva deadlines; 2) the amateur structure of Brazilian journals; 3) dispute for fomentations for the research that has productivity as currency; 4) veiled competition between graduate programs; and 5) the epistemological diversity of researches in Physical Education. By addressing in a systemic, complex and articulated way the dilemmas of socio-cultural studies, the author bets on the capacity of clarification and the possibility of agreements within Physical Education as a challenge to meet the dilemmas exposed.

In the chapter titled “Productivism and Ethics in Physical Education Research: readings, a short story and some cases” [*Produtivismo e ética na pesquisa em Educação Física: Leituras, um conto e alguns Casos*], the author Edison de Jesus Manoel, professor at the University of São Paulo [*Universidade de São Paulo*] (USP), reports his experience as an advisor and member of representative committees of Área 21. In his text, he describes the work routine in that job. Among the tasks, the author highlights long meetings at which little was discussed about research, objects and/or themes of study. He evidences in his report only

themes addressing scores that should be directed to the different programs and a growing stimulus to productivism for those who aspire to enroll in graduate programs. In this chapter, there is a strong criticism of the classification system, because, in the author's opinion, the scores given during the CAPES evaluation period do not represent the work of a professor.

In "Dilemmas and Challenges in Graduate Programs: pressure for publishing, academic productivism and scientific/publishing ethics" [*Dilemas e desafios da Pós-Graduação: pressão por publicação, produtivismo acadêmico e ética científica/em publicação*], the researcher from Oswaldo Cruz Foundation [*Fundação Oswaldo Cruz*] (FIOCRUZ) Murilo Mariano Vilaça, articulating part of the existing bibliography with data collected on research in Physical Education from 1994 to 2013, provides a discussion about productivism and its implications in the academic environment. The pressure for production, the emphasis on the amount of publications and the standardization in the evaluation of what a productive researcher would be are elements that indicate advantages in the dispute for resources and positions in the career.

In turn, the rest of the articles compose part two of the book and analyzes the production of the 13 Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) that make up the CBCE: Physical Activity and Health; Communication and Media; Memory of Physical Education; Leisure and Society; Sports Training; Genre; Body and Culture; School; Vocational Training and Labor World; Inclusion and Difference; Social Movements; Epistemology; and Public Policies. These chapters were written by members of the scientific committee of each working group, totaling 46 authors from more than 40 different university institutions. All the texts perform a quantitative survey of productions presented in each TWG and linked to the annals of the last three CONBRACEs (2009, 2011 and 2013).

A characteristic present in the set of articles of the second part of the book refers to the exposition of the most explored and neglected themes by the researchers linked to each group. The texts also explore the most used theoretical and/or methodological approaches by each TWG. However, only in some texts referring to the groups Memory of Physical Education and Sports; Leisure and Society; Vocational Training and Labor World; and Inclusion and Difference there was an attempt to approach the central theme of the book, that is, the relation with the dilemmas and challenges of Post-Graduation in Physical Education. This issue shows a certain disconnection between the parts of the book.

Despite this mismatch between the parts, the analysis of the book in its entirety denotes a common element to the 25 chapters that compose the work. All of them have as premise to carry out an evaluation of the production of knowledge in Physical Education. However, the rupture that exists between the parts is more evident than their connection, since the first twelve chapters seek to understand the structure that makes up the scientific field in this area. In their turn, the other thirteen articles aim to present a balance of the production by each working group of the institution. It should be pointed out that such issues do not diminish at all the content of the elements contained in the parts; they only evidence that they are two different editorial projects.

Final Remarks

With respect to the general context of the book, it is necessary to make a first note about the criticisms made by the work in question. After all, certain practices rooted in the authors of the chapters themselves in their way of doing science are virtually hidden, that is, despite analyzing the practices of the scientific field, the authors do not consider themselves as producers and/or reproducers of these procedures. Thus, the analysis is not sufficiently detailed from an analytical point of view.

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu¹⁷ indicates that the agents of a scientific field, when exposed to an academic social structure, through the exchanges they establish, tend to internalize certain *habitus* slowly and gradually. It is then presumed that these agents – in this case the authors of each chapter of the book – have incorporated a specific logic of the academic field and that the diverse historical tensions existing in this space are reflected in their scientific practice. It is believed that production, especially in journals of greater impact, has become an important currency – which, according to the very argumentative line of the book as a whole, is pursued at all times by the social actors of scientific production in PE. Researchers tend to seek legitimacy, prestige and power through it. Most of the articles that make up the first part of the book – with the exception of those by Ivone Job, Alexandre Palma, Otavio Tavares and Murilo Vilaça – seem to forget this role, criticizing the field as if they were not part of its operation, that is, at various moments, the authors seem to forget that they are agents who are also seeking better positions within the scientific field. This point is only mentioned briefly in the chapters written by Alexandre Palma and Murilo Vilaça and with greater emphasis in the essay by Otavio Tavares.

To interpret this question within the academic universe of Physical Education in Brazil, the contributions brought by Bourdieu¹⁷ may have a high degree of proficuity, since the French sociologist infers that researchers organize themselves in university institutions and scientific entities to be strengthened, to remain in a dominant position and/or even to subvert the logic of the field, going from dominated to dominant. It seems that the very political strategy of the book resides in this last point of subversion of the logic of the field. This question can be clearly perceived in the following passage from the book's introductory text:

The pressure for production is certainly present every day among those who are part of (or want to be part of) graduate programs and who, somehow, need to be supported by national, state and international foment agencies. In addition, the amount of production is an ever-present element in the very internal mechanisms of evaluation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for diverse purposes, such as competitive examinations and internal notices for fomentation or granting of Scientific Initiation (SI) scholarships or functional progression, just to mention a few examples. Researchers/professors feel this on the skin, but the state of pressure and paralysis is so great that it hinders the dialogue, the construction of spaces for reflection and, on the contrary, favors the production of unhealthy levels of tension in everyday life in search for the famous 'production' and, what is worse, the demotivation and withdrawal of many relevant researchers from the area of Physical Education graduate programs^{14:11-12}.

To think about conditions of production it is necessary to go beyond the simple criticism of the system in force in the Brazilian Post-Graduation, as the authors did in the lines reproduced above. It is necessary to enter, as Bourdieu teaches¹⁷, the specificity of the observed social locus. This is only possible from a deeper immersion into the structure of the field. A first point to be considered is that all researchers in Brazil have their scientific practices structured by the CAPES, to some extent. In general, they seek insertion in the set of publications in order to be accredited to the programs and thus to be able to develop their research and follow their academic trajectories, that is, productivity – especially that focused on journals with an impact factor – configures as a symbolic capital that acts by positioning them in hierarchies of power within the field.

After professors are accredited to a program, they need to maintain certain levels of productivity to keep such position – which is prestigious within the university sphere.

The co-authoring system, the institutionalization of research groups and the implementation of large national and international partnership networks converge to reproduce this logic faster. Thus, the social capital also appears as a fundamental element, as it results from a network of relationships that can be transformed into important symbolic gains such as increased scientific capital and the acquisition of an institutionalized cultural capital. In this way, there is some bias in the analysis that centers the “fault” of the field structure on the CAPES, because within a process of ruptures and continuities, as Bourdieu proposes¹⁷, agents establish disputes and organize themselves to be able to “participate in the game” from more advantageous positions. The dominant one in the quest to remain in the position of power, and the dominated one in the attempt to accumulate the capital needed to “join the game”.

This search for increased scientific capital results in a dispute for legitimated spaces within Post-Graduation in Physical Education in Brazil. This question is evident when analyzing the relationship of the 63 authors who participated in the work with the programs of Area 21. Consulting the Sucupira Platform¹⁸, as well as each author’s Curriculum Lattes, it was detected that only 18 (28.57%) are currently professors in Physical Education graduate programs. Another 18 (28.57%) are accredited as professors in Master’s and doctoral courses of another area of knowledge (Education, Communication, etc). The remaining 27 (42.86%) do not work in any program, 9 of which (14.29%) still have their PhDs in progress. These data indicate that the book in question was composed mostly of agents who are outside the Post-Graduation in Physical Education; after all, 44 (71.43%) of the authors are not accredited to a program in the area. In this sense, it is possible to state that the main objective of the analyzed book is political, that is, the authors are agents who aspire to remain in and/or enter an institutionalized space that will bring them symbolic benefits.

Concluding, it should be pointed out that the notes presented in this article by no means seek to disqualify the content of the analyses contained in the work organized by this group of Physical Education researchers. Many of the criticisms made are pertinent and should be based on the agenda of a policy for Post-Graduation in Physical Education in Brazil. Nevertheless, the arguments herein provided in response to the authors’ remarks are based on the understanding that all agents, as well as the various scientific entities of the area, including the CBCE itself, are involved in this complex “game” that is doing science today. After all, the predisposition for the action of researchers in the Physical Education area relies on rules belonging to the scientific universe, a space in which researchers wage political wars to establish themselves in prestigious positions, which would justify the election of objects of studies, the strategies to keep productivity and, consequently, the highest positions in this field.

Finally, one last remark needs to be made. After all, even if the quest for a scientific capital centered on productivity is questionable in some respects, it is undeniable, as Tani^{8,19} and Rodacki²⁰ point out, that the indicators focused on journals of international impact used by the CAPES constitute one of the few tools intended to qualify the Brazilian scientific production. Thus, based on these authors, it is believed that the arguments that studies supported on the human sciences in Physical Education do not publish and/or are not interesting to international journals become contradictory and poorly founded. In some cases, it seems that it is much more about the clarification of the criteria practiced by the researchers of the area themselves than the search for scientific practices that can insert them in the international scientific community. The inclusion in the global scenario requires a series of individual and collective investments so that changes in the “doing science” culture in Physical Education can be implemented towards

a scientific community that steps out of its “comfort zone” and becomes more present, active and relevant internationally.

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