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Article

DANCE AND SCHOOLING: PROPOSITIONS IN THE BRAZILIAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION PERIODICAL PRESS IN THE 1930s AND 1940s

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how the theme of dance circulated in the Physical Education periodical press of Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s. It is grounded in cultural history theory, emphasizing the concepts of tactics, strategy, cultural circularity, and school culture. Methodologically, it uses documentary criticism and the evidentiary paradigm. Four Physical Education journals published during this period serve as primary sources, complemented by early 20th-century USA educational folk dance materials, to illustrate that the Brazilian periodical press disseminated early ideas about dance education in Brazil that were primarily based upon an already-established USA educational folk dance model. Altogether, this study reveals a widespread Brazilian effort to legitimize dance as school knowledge, situated within a wider cultural project of educational modernization and national identity building.

Keywords: Dance, Physical Education, Brazilian periodical press, USA.

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DANÇA E ESCOLARIZAÇÃO: PROPOSIÇÕES NA IMPRENSA PERIÓDICA BRASILEIRA DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA NAS DÉCADAS DE 1930 E 1940

RESUMO

Este estudo examina como o tema da dança circulou na imprensa periódica de Educação Física no Brasil durante as décadas de 1930 e 1940. Está fundamentado na teoria da história cultural, com ênfase nos conceitos de tática, estratégia, circularidade cultural e cultura escolar. Metodologicamente, utiliza a crítica documental e o paradigma indiciário. Quatro revistas de Educação Física publicadas nesse período servem como fontes primárias, complementadas por materiais sobre dança folclórica educacional dos Estados Unidos do início do século XX, para ilustrar que a imprensa periódica brasileira disseminou ideias iniciais sobre a educação da dança no Brasil baseadas, principalmente, em um modelo norte-americano já estabelecido. No conjunto, o estudo revela um esforço amplo, no Brasil, para legitimar a dança como saber escolar, inserido em um projeto cultural mais amplo de modernização do ensino e construção da identidade nacional.

Palavras-chave: Dança, Educação Física, Imprensa periódica brasileira, USA.

DANZA Y ESCOLARIZACIÓN: PROPUESTAS EN LA PRENSA PERIÓDICA BRASILEÑA DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA EN LAS DÉCADAS DE 1930 Y 1940

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina cómo circuló el tema de la danza en la prensa periódica de Educación Física en Brasil durante las décadas de 1930 y 1940. Está fundamentado en la teoría de la historia cultural, con énfasis en los conceptos de táctica, estrategia, circularidad cultural y cultura escolar. Metodológicamente, utiliza la crítica documental y el paradigma indiciario. Cuatro revistas de Educación Física publicadas en ese período sirven como fuentes primarias, complementadas por materiales sobre danza folclórica educativa de Estados Unidos de principios del siglo XX, para ilustrar que la prensa periódica brasileña difundió ideas iniciales sobre la educación de la danza en Brasil basadas, principalmente, en un modelo estadounidense ya consolidado. En conjunto, el estudio revela un amplio esfuerzo brasileño por legitimar la danza como saber escolar, inserto en un proyecto cultural más amplio de modernización educativa y construcción de la identidad nacional.

Palabras clave: Danza, Educación Física, Prensa periódica brasileña, USA.

INTRODUCTION

Dance[1] has often been misunderstood in educational contexts, being perceived merely as a physical activity or a theatrical performance, disconnected from broader educational objectives. As Soares (1998) explains, the schooling of bodily practices has historically been associated with pedagogical, moral, and political projects, which has contributed to these practices often being treated in a functional and instrumental manner within the school context.

In this regard, there is an emphasis on ways of teaching dance, to the detriment of problematizing its historical and cultural criteria of selection, which can be understood as part of this process of the schooling of the body. This article[2] aims to contribute to this discussion by showing how the analysis of dance, even when approached through written discourse rather than in its bodily materiality, makes it possible to reveal tensions within the educational and cultural spheres and to shed light on processes of national identity construction.

In particular, this study examines how the theme of dance circulated in the periodical press of Physical Education (PE) in Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s, a period marked by significant efforts to modernize the nation. Although school PE was dominated by military-style gymnastics methods at that time, a new culture of educational dance was developing, influenced by international ideas and serving as a potential vehicle for social reform (Carneiro, 2022).

In the 1930s and 1940s, with the creation of the first Brazilian journals on PE, a specialized press for PE teachers and a variety press[3] for a broader readership came into existence, providing a literary platform to address ideas and themes that could be used in teaching PE. One theme that arose in these publications was dance. Journal authors and editors treated it not as something separate from classroom learning, but as part of school knowledge.

Dance was approached as a sociocultural phenomenon that required careful conversion into curricular[4] content, which could then be strategically integrated into school environments

1 In the study, the use of the word *dance* in lowercase indicates a common usage, referring to it as a cultural phenomenon. The same word in uppercase refers to it as teaching content, specifically within the field of Physical Education. In direct quotations, the original spelling of the word has been preserved.

2 This work was carried out with the support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Brazil (CAPES) – Financing Code 001. The authors also thank Professor David Kirk for the careful reading and valuable suggestions that contributed to the improvement of this paper.

3 Specialized or teaching journals are printed materials aimed at teachers. They include educational proposals and theoretical discussions about the teaching of a particular knowledge area or practice, seeking to guide and provide a foundation for educators in carrying out their work. Variety journals, on the other hand, aim to address topics related to the broader landscape of sports practices, and therefore contain a wide range of subjects such as healthy eating, aesthetic body enhancement, health and quality of life, leisure, and recreation, among other topics. These journals also offer reflections on the school context and establish a dialogue with educators, even though they do not consider teachers to be the primary readership.

4 Although the term "curriculum" was not used in the sources analyzed, for the purposes of this study we employ this word to designate the set of Physical Education contents and practices planned for and directed toward the school, thereby facilitating the analysis of the pedagogical proposals presented.

through specific pedagogical and didactic methods. The overall aim of these efforts was to meaningfully incorporate dance into the newly created educational system established by the Francisco Campos Reform[5], during the government of Getúlio Vargas, president of Brazil from 1930 to 1945.

This period was marked by significant changes to Brazilian PE, especially with the introduction of the French PE Method through Regulation No. 7, the General Regulation of Physical Education[6], in 1931. Prior to Regulation No. 7, there had been no mandatory method for PE teaching in Brazil, although many teachers had learned about the Swedish (Ling) Method as part of their training (Schneider; Alvarenga; Bruschi, 2011).

With these efforts to modernize PE came a new reading culture in the form of a periodical press. Soon, discussions and debates arose within these specialized and variety journals about the use of Dance in PE. Previous research by Carneiro (2022) into the transformation of *dance* as sociocultural practice into *Dance* as PE content in Brazil by the periodical press, suggests that Brazilian intellectuals looked to a USA dance education model for guidance. Carneiro points out that although many authors and editors did not cite their sources, those who did often cited North American men who attributed different social and scholastic functions to dance, associating it with health, aesthetics, femininity, and the embodiment of virtues.

Carneiro (2022) offers a comprehensive view of how dance was negotiated in the Brazilian press at the time, but does not delve into the nuances of how advocates of dance discovered and selected teaching contents and methods for curricular consideration. This gap points to the complexity of the negotiations surrounding educational dance in Brazil, especially within a state PE system marked by military gymnastics and a rigid technical approach.

In this study, based on the analysis of discourses published in the periodical press of PE, dance is understood as a vehicle associated with projects of social reform, promoted by intellectuals who, in that historical moment, both saw themselves and were seen by others as responsible for addressing national issues. In justifying the inclusion of dance or proposing specific types of dance contents and methods as part of the school curriculum, these Brazilian intellectuals most frequently cited three American educators: Luther H. Gulick Jr., Elizabeth Burchenal, and G. Stanley Hall. The influence of these individuals on the development of dance within PE, both in the United States (USA) and in Brazil, will be examined in this article.

This text is organized into five sections, beginning with the source material and methodology, followed by a four-part analysis. The first part of the analysis examines how specific topics or themes that circulated in Brazilian PE journals in the 1930s and 1940s encouraged Dance discussions to be framed in specific ways. The second part analyzes dance

5 Decree No. 19,890, of April 18, 1931, known as the Francisco Campos Reform, led to major transformation within Brazilian public education, from secondary to higher education. This had significant implications for the schooling of Physical Education (Castro, 1997). The Francisco Campos Reform, named after the country's first Education Minister, sought to modernize the Brazilian public education system by standardizing grade levels and school cycles, and extending the duration of secondary education to be in greater alignment with more developed Western nations (Dallabrida, 2009).

6 Regulation No. 7 is from the *Règlement Général d'Éducation Physique*, the French Method, as pointed out by Bruschi (2019). This regulation was officially adopted for secondary education by the Francisco Campos Reform of 1931 (Horta, 1994).

as a form of play-based learning, highlighting the circulation and appropriation of modern theories of child development in the educational discourse present in the Brazilian periodical press of PE. The third addresses the development of an educational folk dance movement in the USA, in order to contextualize the historical and educational setting related to Gulick, Burchenal, and Hall. Finally, the fourth part highlights clues drawn from the Brazilian periodical press to show how characteristics and ideologies of the North American educational folk dance movement were assimilated in Brazil. Collectively, these findings reveal how ideas about dance circulated transnationally and were locally reinterpreted, anticipating the potential inclusion of dance in Brazilian PE.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY APPROACHES

The backbone of this study, the first set of sources, are four prominent Brazilian publications on PE from the 1930s and 1940s, which constitute the collection of the Instituto de Pesquisa em Educação e Educação Física (Proteoria), located at the Centro de Educação Física e Desportos da Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (Cefd/Ufes). These publications, created by different institutions, served the same purpose, to inform and educate readers about what was happening in the world of PE, sports, physical culture, and leisure. They are: the Revista de Educação Física (do Exército) (REFE) (1932 – present); Educação Physica (EPHy) (1932–1945); Revista Brasileira de Educação Física (RBEF) (1944–1952); and Arquivos da Escola Nacional de Educação Física e Desportos (AENEFDs) (1945–1966).

In the context of PE journals at the time, official publications such as the REFE journal linked to the Escola de Educação Física do Exército (Army Physical Education School), and the AENEFDs journal linked to the Escola Nacional de Educação Física e Desportos (National School of Physical Education and Sports), functioned as strategic vehicles of institutions aiming to consolidate PE aligned with State guidelines, with strict control over the content published. Meanwhile, commercial journals like the RBEF and EPHy journals, the latter linked to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), although also operating under editorial strategies, provided a relatively more open space for the circulation and experimentation of ideas.

The second set of resources used in this study, published in the USA, adds more depth to the Dance transmission story from the USA to Brazil. Specifically, these resources are the *Proceedings of the Third Congress of the Playground Association of America* (1909) edited by the Playground Association of America (PAA); the *Official Handbook of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League of the City of New York, 1910-11 (*1910) edited by Jessie Bancroft; and *The Healthful Art of Dancing* (1910) by Luther Halsey Gulick Jr. These publications serve to substantiate why the early twentieth century educational folk dance movement in the USA was able to strongly influence PE proposals for school culture in Brazil, decades later.

To identify relevant material on dance in Brazilian journals, a search was conducted for the words *dança* and *dansa* in the titles of articles published in Brazilian PE journals

from the 1930s and 1940s. Subsequently, the texts located were read in full, and those that addressed dance in relation to school PE, whether as teaching content, educational practice, or a formative element, were considered relevant. Through this process, 36 texts that mentioned or discussed dance were selected, distributed across four issues of REFE, twenty of EPHy, eleven of RBEF, and four of AENEFDs[7].

Next, documentary criticism (Bloch, 2001; Chartier, 1990) was employed as a methodology in an attempt to understand the printed materials in their historicity. According to Bloch (2001), the role of the historian is not to judge facts, discourses, or thoughts, but rather to understand them within their own contexts, with their specific motivations and meanings. This approach was complemented by the use of the evidential paradigm (Ginzburg, 1999) to identify small and even seemingly insignificant *clues* and *signs* in order to interpret the meanings intended by the respective authors and editors of the articles that addressed dance as a school subject[8].

Next, the concepts of *tactics* and *strategy* (Certeau, 1994) were used to interpret how reality is constructed by the actors involved, in terms of their daily practices. Certeau (1994) explains that individuals make use of tactics and do not submit to the mechanisms of domination, meaning the institutionalized norms and discourses that seek to define and direct practices, such as the military and medical principles that shaped PE in this period. The PE periodical press, consequently, not only functioned as a vehicle for disseminating normative discourses, but also offered a space of resistance, where authors and editors, by publishing on dance, were able to challenge the prevailing norms of the time.

In this context, culture also emerges as an important issue to be considered by the researcher in the analysis of any narrative, due to the process that Ginzburg (1987) refers to as *cultural circularity*. For this author, there is a constant circular relationship among the different existing cultures, which is likewise manifested in narratives through the uses, appropriations, and resignifications produced by historical subjects. In this way, we draw on the notion of *cultural circularity* to understand how dance was displaced, appropriated, and reinterpreted in the Brazilian periodical press of PE, highlighting both the incorporation of external models and the disputes surrounding the legitimation of certain repertoires in the school context.

Finally, this study draws on the propositions of Chervel (1990) and Julia (2001) to discuss the constitution of a *school culture* around dance in the 1930s and 1940s. This theoretical

7 The initial search identified thirty-seven articles related to the Dance theme, but one article could not be found. Twelve articles were by anonymous authors, and eight of these described regional and folk dances, mainly from other nations.

8 According to Ginzburg (1999), in order to understand the circularity of a theme, it is necessary to interpret clues and signs through the analysis of primary sources (Bloch, 2001). In this way, it becomes possible to grasp a reality that took place at a given time, based on an evidential observation that considers the practices and representations circulating in a specific period.

perspective makes it possible to understand how knowledge and practices related to dance, conveyed in articles from PE journals, began to circulate as forms of knowledge that could be appropriated within teacher education. In this direction, the concept of school culture helps to position printed material as a "strategy for the diffusion of practices, the standardization of knowledge, and teaching contents" (Schneider, 2003, p. 147, authors' translation).

SOCIAL VALUES AND NATIONALISM THROUGH DANCE

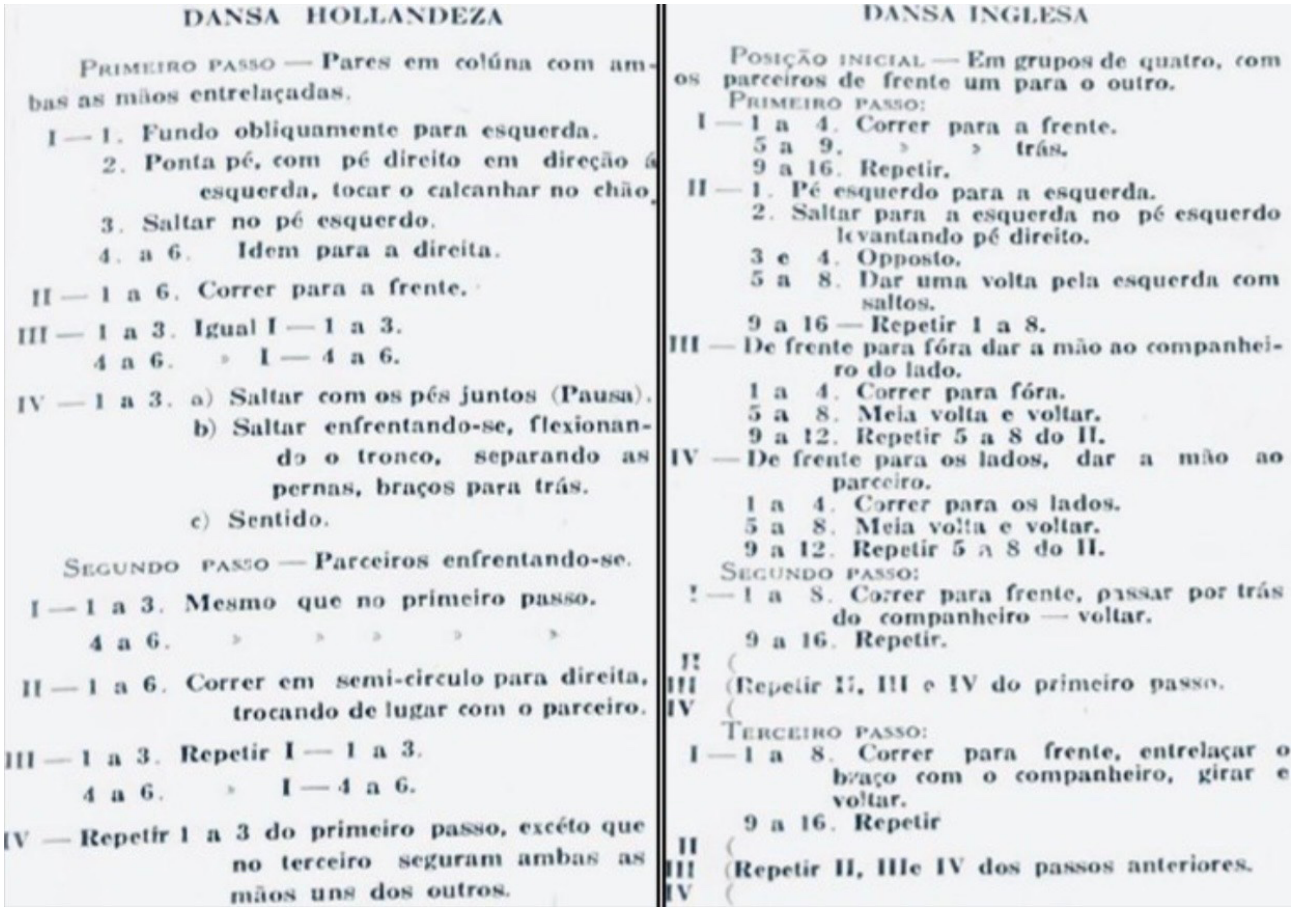
The examination of the themes that circulated in the four Brazilian PE journals (REFE, EPHy, RBEF, and AENEFDs) reveals much about the nature and scope of pedagogical discussions and debates in Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s. Nationalism stands out as a predominant theme, as would be expected in a politically tense era. The analysis of dance, situated within the context of PE curricula and teacher education texts in the field, suggests a state preference for regional and folk dances[9].

This perception stems from the recurrence with which this type of dance is mobilized in the articles analyzed, in which dance appears associated with the teaching of Brazilian culture and the formation of school culture (Pinheiro, 1933; Page, 1937; Murray, 1939; Guérios, 1947; Blanco, 1947; Stahl, 1948; Soares, 1948; Earp, 1947). In line with the nationalist discourses of the period, these authors shared the idea that regional and folk dances could inspire social unity and the positive recognition of cultural singularity (national).

João Ribeiro Pinheiro (1933), a Brazilian military officer, was the first-identified author to publish on the theme of dance in the select PE journals. He emphasised the importance of understanding dance as an original and natural "muscular expression" of one's inner conditions, and asserted that it should be felt joyously rather than imposed. The school PE environment, Pinheiro advocated, could be used "a) to promote dances for educational purposes; b) in accordance with the potential grouping of each class and its pedagogical progress; c) seeking to achieve this with stylized national dances" (1933, n. p., authors' translation). In 1933, the already consolidated use of national dances in PE in most Western countries also supported Pinheiro's idea that national groups refined their own dances for the purposes of PE (Anderson, 1983).

9 In the sources analyzed in this study, although there is no explicit definition that equates "regional dance" and "folk dance" as technical synonyms, both terms are frequently employed with very close and even overlapping meanings in the educational and cultural discourse of the 1930s and 1940s. This semantic proximity indicates a flexibility in the use of the concepts, reflecting a historical and cultural construction in process, in which dance was understood as a popular and traditional manifestation relevant to the formation of national identity. We emphasize that the notion of "folklore" at that time did not yet present its current anthropological rigor and functioned as a broad term to designate regional cultural practices valued for pedagogical and identity purposes.

Figure 1, *National Dance Prescriptions*, shows two national dances that Pinheiro (1933) suggested for use in Brazilian schools, and illustrates the types of cultural principles that may have informed his perspective regarding educational culture.



DANSA HOLLANDEZA

PRIMEIRO PASSO — Pares em colúna com ambas as mãos entrelaçadas.

I — 1. Fundo obliquamente para esquerda.
2. Ponta pé, com pé direito em direção à esquerda, tocar o calcanhar no chão.
3. Saltar no pé esquerdo.
4. a 6. Idem para a direita.

II — 1 a 6. Correr para a frente.

III — 1 a 3. Igual I — 1 a 3.
4 a 6. » I — 4 a 6.

IV — 1 a 3. a) Saltar com os pés juntos (Pausa).
b) Saltar enfrentando-se, flexionando o tronco, separando as pernas, braços para trás.
c) Sentido.

SEGUNDO PASSO — Parceiros enfrentando-se.

I — 1 a 3. Mesmo que no primeiro passo.
4 a 6. » » » » »

II — 1 a 6. Correr em semi-circulo para direita, trocando de lugar com o parceiro.

III — 1 a 3. Repetir I — 1 a 3.
4 a 6. » I — 4 a 6.

IV — Repetir 1 a 3 do primeiro passo, excéto que no terceiro seguram ambas as mãos uns dos outros.

DANSA INGLESA

POSIÇÃO INICIAL — Em grupos de quatro, com os parceiros de frente um para o outro.

PRIMEIRO PASSO:

I — 1 a 4. Correr para a frente.
5 a 9. » » trás.
9 a 16. Repetir.

II — 1. Pé esquerdo para a esquerda.
2. Saltar para a esquerda no pé esquerdo levantando pé direito.
3 e 4. Opposto.
5 a 8. Dar uma volta pela esquerda com saltos.
9 a 16 — Repetir 1 a 8.

III — De frente para fóra dar a mão ao companheiro do lado.
1 a 4. Correr para fóra.
5 a 8. Meia volta e voltar.
9 a 12. Repetir 5 a 8 do II.

IV — De frente para os lados, dar a mão ao parceiro.
1 a 4. Correr para os lados.
5 a 8. Meia volta e voltar.
9 a 12. Repetir 5 a 8 do II.

SEGUNDO PASSO:

I — 1 a 8. Correr para frente, passar por trás do companheiro — voltar.
9 a 16. Repetir.

II (
III (Repetir II, III e IV do primeiro passo.
IV (

TERCEIRO PASSO:

I — 1 a 8. Correr para frente, entrelaçar o braço com o companheiro, girar e voltar.
9 a 16. Repetir

II (
III (Repetir II, IIIe IV dos passos anteriores.
IV (

Figure 1 – National Dance Prescriptions

Source: Revista de Educação Física (do Exército) (1933)

Pinheiro (1933) described *Dansa Hollandeza* (Dutch Dance) and *Dansa Inglesa* (English Dance) as choreographically accessible, intimating the applicability of such dances for school PE contexts. *Dansa Hollandeza,* for example, included the instructions *Pares em colúna com ambas as mãos entrelaçadas* (Couples in a column with both hands clasped), *Saltar no pé esquerdo* (Jump on the left foot), and *Correr para a frente* (Run forward). *Dansa Inglesa* emphasized the arrangement of dancers in space and their collective rhythm, with such instructions as *Correr para frente e para trás* (Run forward and backward) and *Dar uma volta pela esquerda com saltos* (Turn to the left with jumps). Both of these dances lacked detailed instruction along the lines of how to hold hands, run, jump, and turn. It seems that these dances were not about technical prowess; they were about exercising with feelings of joy and unity.

Pinheiro mainly wrote about foreign dances in his 1933 article, but he also appealed for the inclusion of local dance content for Brazilian PE:

> From here we launch an appeal to those who are passionate about physical education so that, following this much-needed and brilliant example, they can stylize and convert dances in Brazil to physical education. The cateretê — the batuque — the samba (Pinheiro, 1933, n. p., authors' tanslation).

For Pinheiro (1933), dance was a necessary part of Brazilian PE for both girls and boys. He advocated the use of regional and folk dances from both outside and within Brazil, not only for their recreational value but also for promoting values aligned with efforts to instill a modern sense of Brazilian nationalism. This advocacy was associated with the idea that dance could educate the body and the spirit, articulating movement, morality, and a sense of cultural belonging, in dialogue with conceptions also present in Brazilian authors of the period, such as Soares (1948).

Generally, the dances identified in the Brazilian periodical press were described in terms of discipline, coordination, and collective rhythm. Pinheiro (1933) and other contributors associated these elements with ideals of civility and modernity linked to state educational projects aimed at building a sense of national order and progress. From this perspective, even when these dances took forms close to games or elementary exercises, they were mobilized as means for the diffusion of cultural values, beliefs, symbols, and shared identities at the local, regional, and national levels.

Similar to Pinheiro (1933), Ruth Murray (1939), an American professor of PE whose 1937 work was translated for EPHy[10], proposed that regional and folk dances were the most appropriate dances for a school environment. Murray explained that the use of such activities would give students knowledge of their own culture from a deeply distant or ancient past[11].

Whereas Pinheiro (1933) advocated the adoption of folk dances from other nations without explaining his reasons, Murray (1939) cited an inclusive PE model of dance from the USA to validate the use of diverse dance contents. However, she also criticized the way in which, in the USA, only foreign dances, especially European ones, were considered legitimate for the school environment. The defense of these practices can also be understood as part of a broader movement of circulation of foreign educational models, in which certain references came to occupy positions of greater legitimacy in the school space, to the detriment of other cultural manifestations. About the USA Murray wrote:

10 This journal featured the highest number of translated texts, most of which were written by educationists from the USA (Carneiro, 2022).

11 The importance of such an imagined shared past has been well-established in research into national identity construction (Anderson, 1983).

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> Like gymnastics, dances must have a foreign label to be acceptable. Consequently, our young men and women know much more about the dances of Scandinavia than those their fathers or mothers practiced, or still practice in distant communities. [...] Thus, European folk dances have become the beginning and end of the dance program (Murray, 1939, p. 45, authors' tanslation).

It is interesting to note that, although EPHy, as a commercial journal, reproduced the official state discourse on the importance of regional dances for the construction of national identity, in a tactical manner it also conveyed subtle criticisms, such as those presented in Murray's article. This tension reveals that, even within a nationalist project that promoted the valorization of regional dances, recognizing their importance as part of culture and national identity, there was an awareness of contradictions, especially regarding the predominance of recommendations for European dances in education.

Brazilian debates around dance for PE persisted into the 1940s. Many of the same themes remained in circulation more than a decade after Pinheiro's 1933 article. Stella Ferreira Mansur Guérios (1947), a Brazilian professor of PE, for example, echoed Pinheiro's idea that regional and folk dances, by their very nature, were able to capture a unique spirit of joy and fun as part of their hygienic and educational value.

At the same time, other intellectuals introduced new ideas about how dance should be approached, thereby bringing new themes into circulation. Maria Helena Pabst de Sá Earp (1947), a Brazilian also trained in PE, for example, conceptualized regional and folk dances not as an autonomous category, but as forms within a broader genre of *educational dance*. This view expanded the understanding of the function of dance, integrating regional cultural manifestations into a more general pedagogical context, and pointed to the need for a perspective that combined cultural preservation with educational and formative objectives. Thus, Earp's conception challenged rigid classifications and encouraged an integrated approach that valued both cultural roots and the formative aspects of dance in teaching.

According to Earp (1947), regional and folk dances were to be grouped with natural dance, modern dance, and similar expressive movement forms that had developed in Europe and North America over several decades. Educational dances, to Earp, were the dances that could and should be applied to school contexts, as "[...] a consequence of the great process of experimentation and evaluation observed in educational pedagogy" (Earp, 1947, p. 48, authors' translation). She proposed that dance, as an expressive art form, gave humans the information and solutions they needed to know themselves and to evolve.

Analysis of the articles from Brazilian PE journals suggests that regional and folk dances from different nations were the types of dances considered most suitable for school use. Although Pinheiro (1933) and other authors endorsed Brazilian dance content, discussions continued to revolve around the suitability and adaptability of dances from many nations. These dances catered to boys and girls of all ages, and their simplicity rendered them manageable for regular teachers to use as PE content, particularly at a time when: 1) PE was made compulsory in secondary schools; 2) the Swedish Method was being replaced by the French Method; and 3) most teachers lacked sufficient training in the new PE system.

Previous research (Bruschi, 2015; Carneiro, 2022) on the 338-page General Regulation of Physical Education shows that the French Method required a strong understanding of anatomy and physiology and was the basis for a teaching manual for specialized PE teachers, intended for all ages. However, the General Regulation did not include any theories or examples in relation to dance as teaching content. This presents a curious anomaly given that prominent Brazilian PE journals featured dance as a theme throughout this formative era.

Considering the dance-related articles from Brazilian PE journals through the lens of *school culture* as a system of knowledge addresses this discrepancy by illuminating didactical proposals related to dance education. Specifically, the idea of dancing with joyous spirit, introduced by Pinheiro (1933) and conveyed by many others authors in the periodical press, suggests that Brazilian ideas in regard to the use of Dance for PE likely were informed by play-based learning ideologies embedded in the modern education system.

DANCE AS PLAY-BASED LEARNING

The examination of clues and signs surrounding dance as a theme in the four selected Brazilian PE periodicals suggests that dances, especially regional and folk dances, were associated with games or play. Modern theories of child development, particularly those put forward by European theorists Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Froebel, and Maria Montessori, as well as by the American philosopher John Dewey[12], represented a break with mechanical teaching and a transition toward more child-centered and play-based approaches. These theories seem to have been recognized by Brazilian authorities who envisioned a modern public education system aligned with Western models.

The Brazilian authors and editors who contributed to dance discourses in the early PE journals sometimes cited popular theorists in support of their ideas, and justifiably so, as the concept of dance education was still controversial (Carneiro; Bruschi; Schneider, 2024). In 1947, for instance, the RBEF republished a Spanish article by the Uruguayan professor Raul Blanco, who wrote about pedagogical methods and teaching content based upon Froebel's theories about play and childhood[13]. In his text, Blanco provided examples of games and songs that could be used for young children's education. He encouraged teachers to refer to Froebel's

12 Among the main works that underpin these conceptions are Rousseau's Emile, or On Education; Froebel's *The Education of Man*; Montessori's *The Absorbent Mind* and *The Discovery of the Child: Scientific Pedagogy*; and Dewey's *How We Think* and *Democracy and Education*, all widely disseminated in early twentieth-century pedagogical debate.

13 Friedrich Froebel, a pupil of education theorist Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, developed his ideas around early child education in Germany in the late 1830s, and then coined the term *kindergarten* in 1840. The main objective of Froebel's kindergarten was "[...] to guide, direct and cultivate in children their divine tendencies, their human essence through play, occupations and free activities [...]" (Arce, 2004, p. 16, authors' translation). According to Arce (2004), Froebel promoted specific toys called "gifts" that supported children's natural course of play. Froebel's games and activities that included the "gifts" normally began with the children "[...] forming circles, dancing, moving and singing. In this way they would achieve perfect unity" (Arce, 2004, p. 15, authors' translation).

1843 *Los cantos en la madre* (Mother and Nursery Songs)[14], a series of action-songs intended to stimulate children's senses from their first months of life. Blanco classified Froebel's songs as *Rounds*[15] and *Danzas Gimnasticas*, and suggested that these kinds of playful activities – e.g., "[...] gymnastic games accompanied by songs" (Blanco, 1947, p. 30, authors' translation) – should be taught in childhood.

According to Blanco (1947), such games allowed teachers to carry out important pedagogical interventions by monitoring, evaluating, and correcting students while they practiced real-life actions, especially those related to industrial or agricultural work (for example, planting and harvesting). This concept of organized play, in which an adult facilitated playful activities considered a natural part of child development, was not only part of modern school culture but was also fundamental to a *playground movement* that began simultaneously in the United Kingdom and the USA in the late nineteenth century. This movement was supported by the opening of playgrounds outside school hours to offer children a supervised place to exercise and play, instead of being on dirty streets and in poorly ventilated buildings (Tomko, 1999; Nielsen, 2011).

In 1948, RBEF also published an article by Steffy Stahl, a dancer and teacher of rhythmic gymnastics and school dances in Venezuela, which reinforced the idea that dance was an intrinsic component of modern school culture, especially from the perspective of games and movement songs. In this text, Stahl (1948) briefly presented what she called the "modern method" of teaching rhythmic gymnastics and dance to children, stating that during the performance of these "rhythmic games," children "[...] execute their movements without realizing that these constitute an interesting part of their physical education" (Stahl, 1948, p. 51, authors' translation).

According to Stahl (1948), these games were an enjoyable form of exercise that stimulated the imagination, awakening children's natural desire to imitate what they most admired, from the behavior of animals to that of humans, such as the lightness and delicacy of fluttering butterflies, or the strength and martial emotion of soldiers.

Figure 2, from Stahl (1948), presents Dance as teaching content, with the caption *Invitación al Vals* (Invitation to the Waltz). The presence of a specific name for the activity, associated with the organization of bodies in a choreographed and guided arrangement, indicates that dance was treated as structured knowledge and capable of being taught. Furthermore, the context of the publication itself, focused on school PE, reinforces the understanding of dance as an integral part of the pedagogical repertoire intended for children.

The visual analysis of the image suggests that the choreography had a circular shape, similar to a game, since the children are arranged in a circle, maintaining a spatial organization that favors interaction among participants, a characteristic common in collective games

14 The authors were unable to find the complete work.

15 Children's games or games played in groups, in which participants form a circle and spin around holding hands, singing songs or reciting rhymes.

CC BY



Figure 2 – Invitation to the Waltz, performed by students from the municipal schools of Caracas, Cajebal, Gertrudes Carreño and Urdaneta

Source: Revista Brasileira de Educação Física (1948).

and play. The absence of visible hierarchy among the bodies and the centrality of the group reinforce the closeness of dance to a playful logic, more akin to playing than to a formal and rigidly structured choreography.

According to the author, this specific event involved more than a thousand children from municipal schools in the region, and they were the ones who made their own costumes to resemble traditional regional attire. The scale of the event and the active involvement of the children in producing the costumes indicate that the activity went beyond a merely festive character, taking on the contours of an educational practice that seemed to be linked to cultural valorization and bodily formation within the school context.

Regarding Figure 3, which presents four images of the same event, Stahl (1948) explains that the music accompanying the children's performance of Invitation to the Waltz was *Invitación al Vals*, composed in 1819 by Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826), a German composer of the Romantic era. She chose this classical arrangement because its expressive dynamics and rhythms stimulated the children's imagination and resonated with their natural play instincts.

The selection of photographs, presenting children organized in four distinct spatial arrangements, allows observation of the diversity of ways in which dance was incorporated into school practices. These arrangements highlight different possibilities for bodily organization and interaction among participants, suggesting that dance was not limited to a single pedagogical

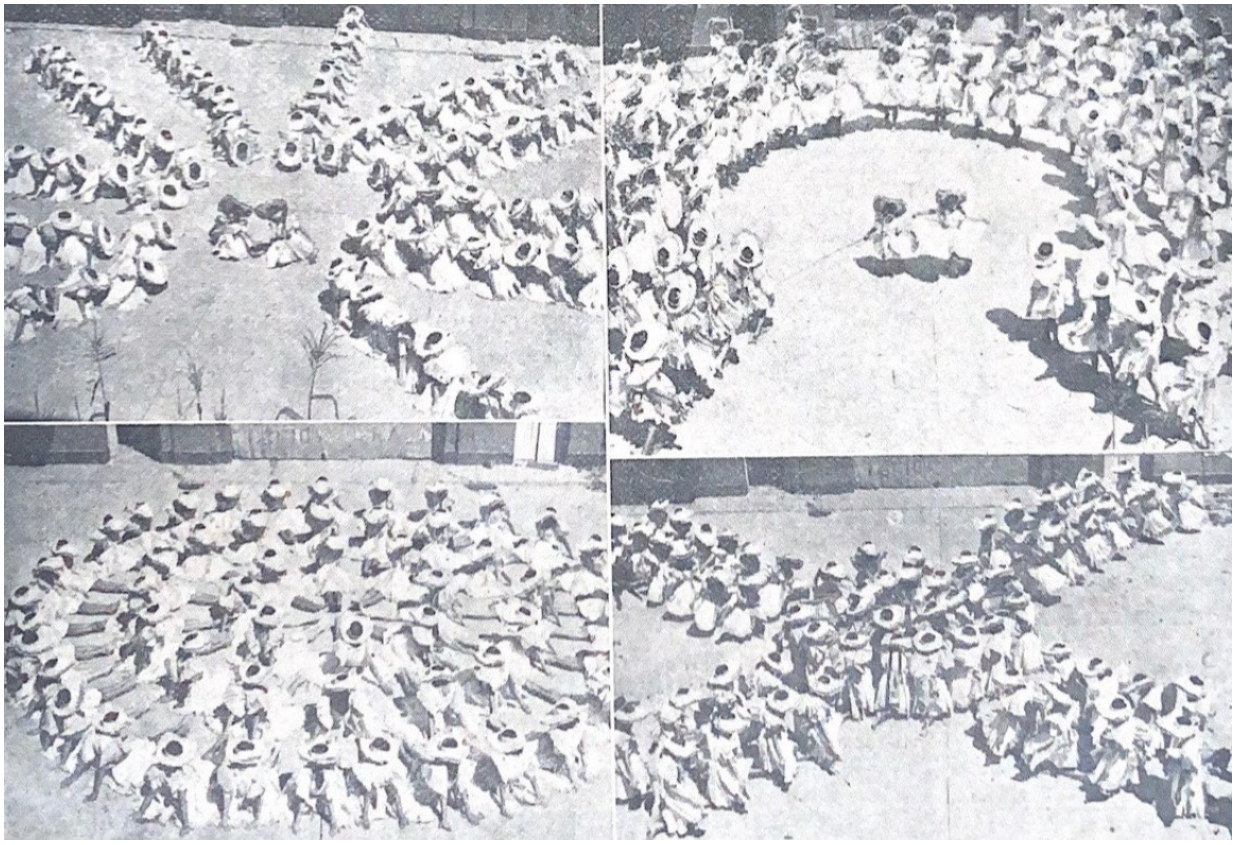


Figure 3 – Dances, gymnastics and games

Source: Revista Brasileira de Educação Física (1948).

configuration. The recurrence of open, circular formations and small groups points to an approach aligned with games and playful activities, in which bodily movement was connected to socialization and creativity. In this sense, these images function as clues (Ginzburg, 1999) that dance occupied a flexible and adaptable place in school culture, being appropriated as a pedagogical resource for the realization of bodily experiences.

Similarly to Blanco (1947) and Stahl (1948), the Brazilian PE teacher Manoel Monteiro Soares, in an article (1948) published in RBEF, highlighted the importance of regional and folk dances, as well as games and circle dances, as recreational activities for children. Soares explained that when children were well guided in performing these activities, they could benefit physically and intellectually, in addition to developing "[...] moral and social values that would make them efficient, endowed with the ability to face situations and dedicate themselves to work, not as a hard and tedious task, but with interest and satisfaction" (Soares, 1948, p. 36, authors' translation). This perspective reinforces the understanding of dance and playful practices as central pedagogical instruments in the integral formation of the child, in line with the educational project discussed in this study.

The textual analysis of the sung lyrics of the proposed activities related to dance indicates that these practices aimed to introduce children to adult tasks and social behavior norms. Elements such as repetition, simple musicality, and the use of everyday vocabulary bring the content closer to the children's world, while also naturalizing certain social functions and work roles. Thus, the songs not only accompanied bodily movement but also acted as pedagogical instruments of socialization.

The following excerpt from Blanco (1947), for example, uses rhythm and repetition characteristic of a children's song, offering positive representations of a task that, in another context, could be perceived as unattractive:

> The bucket goes up and down
> Oh! the water is so good
> Glug! Glug! Glug! Glug! Glug! Glug!
> For the poor who are thirsty.
> The bucket goes down empty,
> rises full of clarity
> Glug! Glug! Glug! Glug! Glug! Glug!
> The good song of the water goes.
> (Blanco, 1947, p. 31, authors' tanslation).

While some songs dealt with the idealized performance of work tasks, others directly addressed the construction of gender roles from childhood. In these compositions, there is an association between the female universe and functions of support, care, and encouragement of male work, reinforcing specific social expectations for girls.

When incorporated into dance and singing activities, such songs seemed to aim at contributing to the naturalization of these representations within the school context. Another song presented by Blanco (1947), for example, encouraged girls to support their future working husbands:

> The girls form a circle holding hands and marching to the left side, they sing the following verse:
> 'Work is the law of honor
> That guides and directs the fighter
> Come on! Wake up, fighter!
> [...] 'Joy, good peasant,
> That destiny calls you to work.
> Joy, good farmer,
> That the sweat of your brow will give you bread'.
> (Blanco, 1947, p. 31, authors' translation).

A third activity in Blanco (1947) called *¡Querida pátria mía!* (My dear homeland!) highlights nationalism as yet another theme connected with dance propositions in the Brazilian periodical press.

> My dear homeland
> From the ever blue sky
> Argentine Republic
> There is no other like you.
> [...] The one with the brave shield
> bordered by laurel,
> that squeezes the brother,
> the faithful frank hand.
> (Blanco, 1947, p. 32, authors' tanslation).

The analysis of these three examples from Blanco (1947) suggests that the songs associated with regional and folk dances were not selected neutrally but were part of a pedagogical project aimed at the moral, social, and civic formation of children. By thematizing daily work, gender roles, and national sentiment, these lyrics functioned as socialization devices through which behaviors, values, and expectations were intended to be guided from childhood.

In this context, dance and singing were not limited to bodily or recreational practices but operated as instruments for educating the body and character, contributing to the construction of an ideal disciplined and productive child, shaped according to the values of the nation. Thus, the analysis of these proposals highlights how dance, as it circulated in the PE periodical press, was presented and legitimized as part of a broader pedagogical project of social and civic formation.

Brazilian PE journals offered prospective guidance around the use of dance at a critical point in Brazilian history when ideas about modernization and nationalism were in flux, and teachers had little knowledge, let alone mastery, of dance as teaching content. This lack of knowledge might account for why dance instructions sometimes had rich descriptions. Overall, these descriptions were not written in a manner to suggest that there was any sort of planned progression that children should follow to become technically proficient at dancing.

To illustrate, the following excerpt from an article entitled *Dansa para as festas escolares: bailado dos índios* (Dance for school parties: indigenous dances) by an anonymous source, published by EPHy in 1940, contains a brief depiction of an indigenous dance, in tandem to a musical score, that most likely was intended for inexperienced teachers:

> [...] The music, very soft, begins the beat and, after the first eight bars, the participating students enter the room from all corners. They keep their school uniforms and, as the only ornament for the dance, they place on their heads a headdress of feathers of various colors. Their entrance is solemn, they have their arms crossed and their heads held high; with slow and majestic steps they form, in each corner, a circle. At the ninth bar, they skip around (one step forward and one jump on the same foot, alternately) [...] (Dansa, 1940, p. 38, authors' tanslation).

This purportedly indigenous dance is one of eight published in the article. Notably, all of the dances were intended to be performed in a circle, with costumed dancers executing the same movements. The publication of these dances supports the theory that the Brazilian contributors of dance texts valued dances that embodied particular attributes and themes that aligned with modern education ideals, regardless of the dances' real or supposed origin.

The organization of dance in a circular formation can also be understood as a pedagogical device that favored the surveillance, guidance, and correction of bodies in large groups. This spatial arrangement likely not only facilitated pedagogical control but also contributed to the production of ordered, synchronized bodies adjusted to the norms proposed by the activities. Thus, the circular formation went beyond a merely practical function, fitting into the logic of bodily ordering and regulation characteristic of modern school practices (Foucault, 1987; Soares, 1998; Vigarello, 1995). Teachers could even do this from a focal point at the center of the circle, as suggested in the following excerpt from an anonymous article published in 1942 in EPHy:

> FORMATION: Simple circles with a monitor in the centre.
>
> A— 1 — 8 — With hands joined, everyone skips to the left (one step per bar).
>
> I B — 9 — 16 — A high jump, repeating the jump to the right.
>
> C — 17 — The hands are loose and placed on the hips, and the right knee is raised at a right angle.
>
> 18 — The foot returns to the ground, remaining firm.
>
> II 1 — 16 — Repetition of the dance.
>
> 17 — 18 — Identical to the previous step.
>
> 17 — 18 — The elevation is now of the left knee.
>
> III 1 — 16 — Repetition of the dance.
>
> 17 — 18
>
> 17 — 18 — Kneel on your right knee and maintain the position until the first note of the 1st bar [...].
>
> (Dansa, 1942, p. 33, authors' tanslation).

The circular formation was not only strategic from a pedagogical point of view but also inspired a sense of unity among the participating children. In dialogue with Friedrich Froebel's (2001) propositions regarding children's games, in which collective play is conceived as a central element for the physical, social, and expressive development of the child, the circular arrangement reinforced the relational and formative dimension of these bodily practices.

The idea of using dance in PE was still widely debated in the Brazilian periodical press during the 1930s and 1940s (Carneiro; Bruschi; Schneider, 2024), but regional and folk dances as educational content faced little contestation or resistance, since they were associated with accessible, collective practices compatible with the proposals of games and organized playful activities that comprised the modern school culture being consolidated in Brazil. Moreover, these dances were perceived as suitable for the children's universe, as they encouraged participation, socialization, and the pedagogical adaptation of movements, as discussed by Saviani (2008). However, this is also due to the fact that foreign educators, especially in the USA, had already recognized and published on the positive effects of dance for children's PE, as will be discussed below.

DEVELOPMENT OF FOLK DANCING FOR PE IN THE USA

This section describes the development of the educational folk dance movement in the USA under the leadership of Gulick and Burchenal in the early twentieth century, based on three main sources: the Playground Association of America (1909), Gulick (1910), and Bancroft (1910). Additionally, it examines the then-popular theories that supported the adoption of folk dance in New York City public schools and beyond, according to historians Nielsen (2011), Friedland (2004), and Tomko (1999).

The efforts to uncover clues and signs of dance in the four Brazilian PE periodicals drew attention to the importance of three thought leaders in shaping an educational culture of dance in Brazil: Luther H. Gulick Jr., Elizabeth Burchenal, and G. Stanley Hall. These authors, frequently cited or referenced, helped shape the discourse on dance as an educational practice, highlighting its value for the physical, social, and expressive development of children.

In 1903, Luther H. Gulick Jr., as the head physical training for New York City public schools, established the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) for boys. A Girls' Branch of the PSAL followed in 1905, for which Gulick recruited schoolteacher Elizabeth Burchenal to develop a folk dancing initiative for the League's after-school clubs (Gulick, 1910). Then, in 1906, Gulick also co-founded the Playground Association of America (PAA), which soon spawned a folk dancing committee, chaired by Burchenal, tasked with analyzing the results of the after-school folk dancing efforts for athletics (PAA, 1909).

In order to determine which folk dances were best suited for children's PE, the committee considered the type of dance surface, the age and sex of the dancers, and the characteristics of the dances (PAA, 1909). Selection criteria stipulated that the dances had to be simple and vigorous, and embody a "wholesome, natural, out-of-door spirit" (PAA, 1909, p. 297-98). As a result of these efforts, the Board of Education in New York City adopted folk dancing into its public schools in the winter of 1907-1908 (Gulick, 1910).

In 1909, Gulick spoke about these educational dance efforts at the Playground Association of America's third annual congress (PAA, 1909). A report by the Folk Dancing Committee was published in the proceedings (PAA, 1909) and in Gulick's *The Healthful Art of Dancing* (1910). From this report, the Girls' Branch of the PSAL then published a revised list of folk dances for use in public schools in The *Official Handbook of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League of the City of New York, 1910-1911*, edited in 1910 by Jessie Bancroft, a cofounder of the Girls' Branch of the PSAL and Assistant Director of Physical Education of the Schools of Greater New York City.

Bancroft (1910) clarified that all dances to be used in New York City public schools for the purpose of PE first had to be approved by the officers of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League. Bancroft (1910) also explained why folk dances fit with athletics:

> The League favors for athletic purposes distinctive national and folk-dances of traditional origin, selected for their vigor and national characteristics. It deprecates invented dances made by putting together scraps of original dances, largely because the tendency of such inventions is to weaken the values of a dance. It also strongly deprecates for school use the type of imitative or spectacular dance associated with stage performances, such as imitations of a nation's characteristics in some so-called Japanese or Spanish dances, or imitations of other activities. The League has thus far regarded classic, aesthetic, and social dances, as related to physical training procedure rather than to athletics. (Bancroft, 1910, p. 52).

The League-approved folk dances were attributed to Bohemia, Denmark, England, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Russia, Scotland, and Sweden (Bancroft, 1910). This multinational emphasis supports the idea that the USA educational folk dance model informed early Brazilian ideas about the use of dance for PE.

Nielsen (2011) summarizes different late nineteenth century to early twentieth century trends that facilitated the educational folk dance movement in the USA: a physical training movement focused on health and morality; an Arts and Crafts movement; the spread of youth-related clubs such as YMCAs; increased interest in folklore collection, efforts to document folk dances, and the spread of folklore and folk dance societies with their own publications; the establishment of other kinds of institutions such as settlement houses that adopted folk dancing; and an organized play movement. Beyond these influences, Gulick also was a proponent of a nineteenth century philosophy known as *muscular Christianity*, which linked good morals to strong bodies and graceful movements (Nielsen, 2011).

The idea to classify a dance as a *folk dance*, a term often akin to *national dance*, arose in the 1890s as part of a European wave of Romantic Nationalism. At this time, folklore was perceived as a pure representation of groups of peasants, people who were thought to be in tune with nature, untouched by the negative pressures of modernization and industrialization. In other words, folklore represented the "vestiges of a grander past" (Friedland, 2004, p. 30).

Friedland (2004) points out that nineteenth century cultural evolution theory, particularly from English theorists Herbert Spencer and Edward Burnett Tyler, generally positioned dancing as a residual form of expression from primitive times. Unilineal cultural evolution theory from this era, which posited that all humans evolved along the same path from savagery to civilization, established precedent for G. Stanley Hall's recapitulation theory about human development.

According to Hall, all people repeated or "recapitulated" the stages of unilineal evolution within themselves, from infancy to adulthood. Recapitulation theory, consequently, likened American schoolchildren to peasants (the people associated with folk dances), and thus provided a theoretical basis upon which Gulick, Burchenal, and other educationists were able to justify the integration of folk dancing into schools. Hall was not directly involved in the educational folk dance movement's development, but he had endorsed dancing as "one of the best expressions of pure play" (Hall, 1908, p. 88). In response to the success of folk dancing in New York City schools, Hall "heaped praise on folk and national dancing" (Tomko, 1999, p. 190).

Brazilian PE journals of the 1930s and 1940s not only referred to Gulick and Burchenal, as leading exponents of the educational folk dance movement in the USA, but also acknowledged Hall. For example, Pinheiro (1933) relayed:

> For the modern educator, dance should not only be a social form of discipline in intellectual decoration. Modern psychology verifies that excitement is the driving force of life and its euphoria. Dance should open the school — says Dr. Hall — it would be to begin daily life with dexterity, grace, movement and joy (Pinheiro, 1933, n. p, authors' tanslation).

More than two decades had passed by the time that the first-known Brazilian PE dance text (Pinheiro, 1933) quoted Hall, but there had been strong continuity in the USA because Burchenal had retained influence over the movement and even authored several folk dance manuals that had become widely used in the USA. By the time that Brazilian intellectuals were considering Dance as potential PE, a plethora of folk dance manuals and records had been produced by Burchenal and others in alignment with the New York-based educational folk dance model.

EVIDENCE OF THE USA FOLK DANCE MODEL IN BRAZIL

The previous section described the significance of Luther H. Gulick Jr., Elizabeth Burchenal, and G. Stanley Hall in the development of an educational folk dance movement in the USA. Now, drawing specific examples from the Brazilian PE texts, this section explores how the Burchenal-led folk dance movement was congruent with Brazilian plans and aspirations around modern education in the 1930s-40s.

The clues indicating a connection between the United States and Brazil emerge from references made by Brazilian authors and editors to North American authorities in the field of education through dance, whose ideas were adapted to cultural objectives. For example, Pinheiro (1933, s. p.) reported that Gulick "conducted a survey in the United States on the following grounds: 1st — whether popular dances made children happy; 2nd — whether popular dances were healthy. And the answers were affirmative." This clue is fundamental to demonstrating how Gulick's ideas about the physical and emotional benefits of folk dances were incorporated and valued in the Brazilian PE press, showing the cultural circulation and adaptation of foreign concepts within the national context.

It is interesting to note that Pinheiro chose to translate Gulick's original terminology, *folk dance*, as *popular dance*. This cultural translation, rather than a purely linguistic one, was likely intended to position folk dance as an activity aligned with modern conceptions of health, morality, and education in Brazil. This is because cultural translation involves the re-signification of concepts so that they engage with local sociocultural values and contexts, going beyond simple literal translation (Bassnett, 2018).

The precise source cited by Pinheiro was as follows:

> Dear Friend:
>
> In connection with a publication that I hope to issue soon, I wish to have a brief series of statements of the actual results that have been achieved through folk dancing. I do not mean a discussion of the importance of recreation, or of anything on the theoretical side. What I need is a statement of what the effect has been upon the girls who did the dancing:
>
> 1. Did it make them more healthy?
> 2. Did they become happier?
> 3. What dances did they perform?
> 4. How many girls took part in them?
> 5. In what way did the social effect of these dances show itself?
>
> (Gulick, 1910, p. 56).

It is worth noting that Pinheiro did not mention the last three questions of Gulick's questionnaire, which points to a selective use of information as a tactic to strengthen the argument about the credibility of dance as PE content in Brazil. This omission may reflect an intention to focus the discourse on the social and pedagogical acceptance of dance, avoiding aspects that could provoke controversy or hinder its legitimization in the field of PE, especially in a context where the construction of scientific knowledge sought to consolidate practices aligned with national priorities of health, morality, and educational modernization. Thus, the selection of data was not neutral but part of a discursive process aimed at shaping educational perceptions and policies.

That Pinheiro plausibly had access to Gulick's *The Healthful Art of Dancing* (1910) provides additional support for the similarities between the folk dance content base for New York City (and American) PE and the proposed Dance content base for Brazilian PE. These similarities included dances that: 1) required constant body movement, emphasizing aerobic and cardiovascular development; 2) could be performed by a large number of people in unison, even in a small space, and on different types of surfaces; 3) encouraged graceful movement and upright postures; 4) were simple for the children to learn, and for teachers to teach; 5) and conveyed ideas, emotions, morals, and manners that were deemed socially appropriate and beneficial for children.

Furthermore, both the USA folk dance model and the Brazilian proposals for Dance in PE were about social reform. The USA model developed in the midst of heavy migration from Europe to the USA. Folk dances from many nations were used in schools as well as youth clubs and settlement houses, social centres run by volunteers, as a way to teach people, especially new European immigrants, about American values and way of life (Tomko, 1999; Herzogenrath, 2009). In the USA, folk dancing was recognized as a democratizing force, with an inherent ability to break down barriers (Gulick, 1910). In Brazil, in a similar way, folk dancing was proposed as part of a broader cultural project to modernize and unify a nation during an era of political strife.

Recognition of dance as a means to promote social unity in Brazil is further illustrated in a 1947 article by Barbara Page, an assistant professor of PE, published in Educação Physica. In this text, Page cites Hall and Burchenal when advocating for the use of *typical* dances in educational contexts:

> The so-called 'typical' dances are the heritage of the people, and, according to Stanley Hall, are 'expressions of the soul of a people'. Barchenal [sic] calls them 'the wild flowers of dances'. They are simple, energetic, and extremely popular among the working classes. They express the interests and ideals of a people, and are adapted to all modes of life, political conditions, and climate (Page, 1937, p. 74, authors' tanslation).
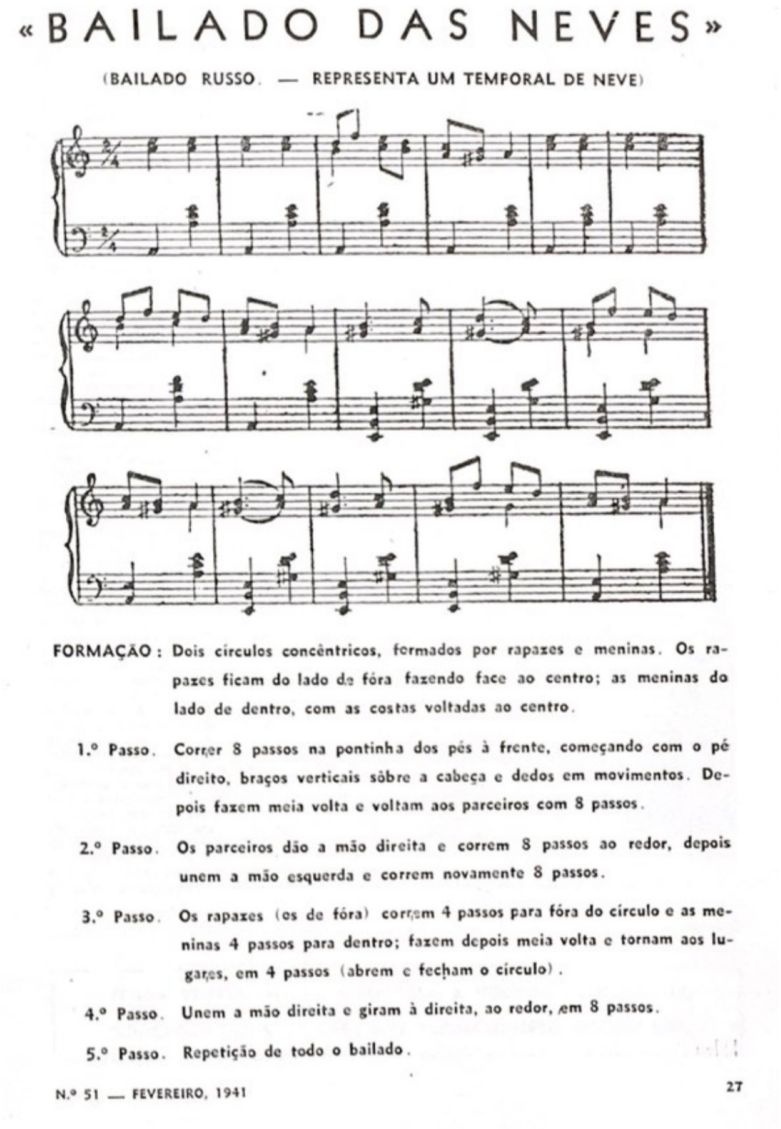
Just as Gulick cited Hall's theories about child development in order to give educational folk dancing, in its early years, "the additional imprimatur of science" (Tomko, 1999, p. 190), Page (1937) tactically cited known authorities to lend credibility to her argument. An indication of this is that she inserted them into her article without introduction, suggesting that she expected readers to recognize them. Other journal contributors who referred to Burchenal, Hall, and Gulick also provided little to no information about these individuals. As Chartier (1990) points out, every text is full of its author's intentions; it is necessary to consider both what is shown and what is not.

Another connection in the USA and Brazil Dance transmission story is in how the content was relayed to educators. Whereas some early folk dance manuals separated the choreographic instructions and musical scores into separate books, the single-book format quickly became the standard in the USA. Nielsen (2011, p. 51) explains, "Early folk dance manuals generally described dances, step by step, on one page, with the corresponding tune arranged for piano on the next page". The regional and folk dance notations published in the Brazilian PE journals employed a similar format as described by Nielsen, as exemplified by Figure 4.

The figure contains the piano score and choreographic depiction in the same visual sphere. Below the musical notation is the pupils' formation followed by an enumeration of the dance in five parts. The similarity between the USA folk dance notations and the Brazilian preference for publishing Dance notations illustrates Ginzburg's (1999) premise that clues and signs may seem insignificant until interpreted within a broader contex[16].

The analysis of the Brazilian PE press from the 1930s and 1940s revealed that Brazilian intellectuals shared various ideas about dance content and methods that were characteristic of the North American folk dance model pioneered by Gulick and Burchenal. This transmission is demonstrated through the citation by periodical contributors of American authorities on education through dance and the adaptation of their ideas to Brazilian circumstances, as well as by the choreological similarities in the dance content bases, a shared idea of using dance for social reform/progress, and similarities in notation. Considering the notion of cultural

16 Although similar notational formats were implemented in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, there is no evidence to suggest that European folk dance manuals were used in any significant way as primary source material for dance proposals in Brazilian PE.



«BAILADO DAS NEVES»

(BAILADO RUSSO. — REPRESENTA UM TEMPORAL DE NEVE)

FORMAÇÃO: Dois circulos concêntricos, formados por rapazes e meninas. Os rapazes ficam do lado de fóra fazendo face ao centro; as meninas do lado de dentro, com as costas voltadas ao centro.

1.º Passo. Correr 8 passos na pontinha dos pés à frente, começando com o pé direito, braços verticais sôbre a cabeça e dedos em movimentos. Depois fazem meia volta e voltam aos parceiros com 8 passos.

2.º Passo. Os parceiros dão a mão direita e correm 8 passos ao redor, depois unem a mão esquerda e correm novamente 8 passos.

3.º Passo. Os rapazes (os de fóra) correm 4 passos para fóra do circulo e as meninas 4 passos para dentro; fazem depois meia volta e tornam aos lugares, em 4 passos (abrem e fecham o circulo).

4.º Passo. Unem a mão direita e giram à direita, ao redor, em 8 passos.

5.º Passo. Repetição de todo o bailado.

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Figure 4 – "Dance of the Snows"

Source: Educação Physica (1941).

circularity, it is observed that such propositions were not simply transferred to the Brazilian context but appropriated, reinterpreted, and re-signified in the periodical press, evidencing the movements of circulation and adaptation of these references in the process of dance schooling.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this article was to examine how the theme of dance circulated in the Physical Education periodical press in Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s. Textual analysis of journal articles from this era identified a strong transnational connection between the USA

and Brazil, revealing that dance-related ideas crossed geographical, temporal, and cultural boundaries and became part of ideological debates related to modernization, national identity, and social reform in Brazil.

In this context, the actions of the periodical contributors reveal how their choices, including the decision to write about dance, the selection of certain works, and the insertion of ideas about dance into a field dominated by military and medical discourses, were interconnected and positioned them on distinct paths of negotiation, appropriation, or subtle resistance to normative frameworks, or, in the words of Certeau (1994, p. 15), along the "variable trajectories of practitioners."

The authors and editors who cited Gulick, Burchenal, and Hall in the periodical press recognized them as thought leaders in education and relied on their authority to argue for the adoption of Dance into Brazilian PE. Their selective appropriation of content (especially regional and folk dances) and methods indicates a strategic effort to legitimize specific discourses as foundational knowledge for PE teacher-training.

Examination of clues and signs embedded within the Brazilian PE periodical press was juxtaposed with an historical overview of the Burchenal-led educational folk dance movement to demonstrate that the latter resonated with approaches to modern Brazilian educational reform. In both the USA and Brazil, folk dances were recognized for their joyous simplicity, similar to the rhythmic games already being used in schools. Froebellian and Hallian ideologies supported a belief across both geographies that such types of activities, grounded in the distant past, would help children to recognize themselves as national citizens.

Discourses and themes in the Brazilian PE journals may be perceived either as strategies, when implemented by editors or authors aligned with institutional power and national agendas, or as tactics, when employed by contributors working within the constraints of the journal space to promote alternative perspectives. Thus, the actors involved with the publications left evidence of their interests and negotiations in how they linked dance discourses to larger projects around modernization and promoting nationalism.

The selection of foreign texts that prescribed national dances in light of nationalistic objectives represented one such strategy. On the other hand, some authors may have tactically used the spaces granted by PE journals to negotiate and valorize dance while addressing national interests, cultural goals, and prevailing PE discourses especially related to the French Method.

In this regard, establishing dance as part of school culture highlighted the perceived sociocultural relevance of regional and folk dances as school content that had to be legitimized, selected, and pedagogized prior to formal adoption. The basis for dance as part of Brazilian PE was not simply about exercise; it was part of a broader cultural project about cultivating a modern national consciousness.

A longstanding Western cultural bias that dance is trivial to education, or that the main purpose of dance education is for pupils to develop technical and creative skills for choreographic proficiency, has distracted from developing knowledge around dancing in schools as a culturally and historically informed practice. This study illustrates how sociocultural analysis of dance, even as ideological discourse rather than practice, offers a unique and valuable historiographic approach to exploring the history of education. The actual practice of dance education in Brazilian schools, however, was beyond the scope of this study and remains a topic for future investigation.

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