

The Cognitively Shared Dimensions of Basketball: An Example From Ute Culture

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Members of the same cultural groups are commonly seen to engage in the same behavioral patterns, in the same situations. However, a pertinent question for cultural studies is: How do those members know when to enact appropriate patterns of behavior? The question is also pertinent for the professional field of physical education, because its answer provides some insights into the dynamics of the educational process involved in the use of organized sports and games for enculturation and acculturation.

The data presented are derived from a field study among the Ute Indian Tribe of Utah. Projective techniques, participant observations, and interviews were used as research methods, principally among Ute high school students.

These data suggest that the reason for enacting appropriate behavioral patterns in appropriate situations is *not* extensive sharing of cognitive mappings. The data reported suggest that members of this cultural group share neither cognitive mappings of the descriptors of the same basketball situation, nor do they share cognitive mappings of value configurations associated with basketball; and neither sharing is of any great substance.

The conclusions for these data are that one of two principles must be adopted with respect to cognitive sharing as a basis for shared behavioral patterns: either (1) the methods employed were insufficient to obtain accurate mappings of the participants' cognitions, or (2) that we must look to other phenomena to provide the answer to the above stated question. In the second regard it may be that proxemic or kinesic communication patterns provide the basis for the manifestation of similar patterns, and not shared cognitive maps.



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