

## PLACE IN LEISURE: A PERSPECTIVE OF REALITIES AND EXPERIENCES



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**Yhan Carlos Mourão dos Santos<sup>1</sup>, Fernanda Yully dos Santos Monteiro<sup>2</sup>, Letícia Antunes Melo<sup>3</sup> and Leon Claudio Pinheiro Leal<sup>4</sup>.**

### ABSTRACT

The article explores the relationship between the concepts of place and leisure, investigating how they influence the bodily practices and affective experiences of individuals. The research, part of a project at the Federal University of Pará, uses an action research methodology with students from Youth and Adult Education (EJA). Through practical activities, such as the construction of mind maps and games, the study analyzes how leisure practices connect to memories and affectivities, highlighting the importance of these concepts for the understanding of social and cultural interactions. The article concludes that Physical Education plays a crucial role in human development, valuing bodily practices and socialization.

**Keywords:** Affectivities, Leisure, Place, Body Practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Undergraduate in Physical Education  
Federal University of Pará (UFPA)  
E-mail: [yhan.santos@iced.ufpa.br](mailto:yhan.santos@iced.ufpa.br)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1619-1569>  
Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/7410071808509257>

<sup>2</sup> Master Teacher in Education  
School of Application of the Federal University of Pará (EAUFPA)  
E-mail: [fernandayully@ufpa.br](mailto:fernandayully@ufpa.br)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3107-6847>  
Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4788896363084189>

<sup>3</sup> Undergraduate student in Physical Education  
Federal University of Pará (UFPA)  
E-mail: [leticiaantunesdemelo@gmail.com](mailto:leticiaantunesdemelo@gmail.com)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4765-7206>  
Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3744774423496891>

<sup>4</sup> Master in Medicinal Chemistry and Molecular Modeling  
Federal University of Pará (UFPA)  
Email: [lealleon22@gmail.com](mailto:lealleon22@gmail.com)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7529-837X>  
Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3315213293079923>

## INTRODUCTION

This work is part of the investigations of the research project linked to the Institutional Program of Scientific Initiation Scholarships in Technological Development and Innovation of the Federal University of Pará (PIBIC/UFPA). The project, entitled "Recognition and Legitimacy of Physical Education: between the no more and the not yet", seeks to discuss in a broad way how we can advance in the search for recognition and legitimacy of Physical Education as an indispensable part of the cultural formation of individuals in society. For this, it is considered that educational practices are part of the legitimizing discourse of discipline within the school.

By reflecting on the social mode and the characteristics of the process of constructing an individual's body awareness, it is possible to perceive that the way human beings use their free time is closely linked to the bodily spaces and practices that are part of their daily lives. The bodily practices performed during free time allow us to reflect on what leisure means and how such practices are related to experiences and places that represent a zone of affectivity for individuals.

Leisure, broadly speaking, can be understood as "the set of occupations to which the individual can give himself of his own free will, either to rest, to have fun and entertain, or even to develop his disinterested information or training, his voluntary social participation or his free creative capacity, after freeing himself or getting rid of professional obligations, family and social" (Dumazedier, 1979, p. 12).

This classic definition of leisure allows us to understand fundamental characteristics of this concept, which include its libertarian, disinterested, hedonistic, and personal character. In other words, leisure is a set of activities carried out during a time when there are no professional obligations, is not linked to a specific purpose, whether social, political or financial/profitable, is intrinsically linked to pleasure and can be enjoyed with various functions, such as rest, fun or social need (Dumazedier, 1979).

Over time, it is possible to perceive new correlations between leisure and society. Among these, we can mention the reconfiguration of leisure as a space conducive to consumption. Taschner (2000, p. 39) points out that the link between leisure, culture and consumption is easily perceptible. The dimension of consumption has intensified and leisure, in many cases, is restricted to this marketing concept, such as "going to the shopping mall on Sundays and holidays, going to the movies, traveling for tourism, watching TV and talking on the internet are some examples".

However, there are other possibilities and correlations that can be established between leisure and society, such as leisure and nature preservation. Marinho (2001) and Tahara, Dias and Schwartz (2006) reveal that the intense search for nature as a leisure space allows us to discuss environmental education and the importance of green spaces and natural reserves, although this discussion coexists with the conflict of interests of the exploitation of nature for consumption purposes.

When analyzing leisure and its possible correlations, reflections arise on how leisure is closely linked to issues such as identification, feelings, and actions. Thus, when discussing leisure within the school, we begin to reflect on this concept as related to affectivity, identifying that the feeling of affection can be reflected in spaces and daily practices that represent pleasurable experiences and experiences.

When analyzing these points, we can notice that the characteristics of leisure can correlate with the concept of geographic place, as social relations with places that refer to identification, affectivities and other characteristics, such as spaces of interaction, reflect the concept of place, which is a center of meanings built by experience (Tuan, 2018).

From this point, would it be possible for different concepts from areas of science, such as place and leisure, to be related in order to help understand an individual's body practice? From this reflection, would it be possible to analyze a correlation of the concept of place from the perspective of Geography with spaces in which people build bonds based on affectivity and subjectivity (Tuan, 1975 apud Pólton, 2016) with the methods of bodily practices aimed at leisure?

Thus, through reflection on the correlation between these thematic aspects, this article seeks to analyze how the approach between these concepts from different areas are interrelated and allow reflection on the connection of individuals with spaces that provide affectivity and, at the same time, constitute spaces conducive to bodily practices from the perspective of leisure.

For this, we seek, through an action research and content analysis about the concepts of place and leisure, to carry out practical applications with students of the 1st and 2nd stages of Youth and Adult Education (EJA), observing how the students' body and sensory practices interact with spaces that are part of their experiences and that constitute part of their leisure activities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article used a methodology based on an exploratory research where, according to Gil (2002, p. 41), this research model seeks to propose a greater proximity to the problem, in order to make this object clearer or to build new hypotheses to be discussed, since this involves perspectives that encompass a reflective look obtained in the field during the action in the work plan carried out through the Institutional Research Program Scientific of the Federal University of Pará (PIBIC-UFGA), which, through this in works carried out in the field, obtained actions that helped in the threshold of construction of this research.

In addition, through a reflection on an interdisciplinary correlation between important concepts from different areas of knowledge, which encompass geographic science and physical education (Place and Leisure), actions of observation, action research, image collection, construction of mind maps and students' reports were carried out through questionnaires that were related to what they covered in the experimentation of the Tuan space (1977, p. 14) according to his recognition, because "experience is made up of feelings and thoughts" Tuan (1997, p.11).

And in this perspective of experiencing the place through bodily practices, we can obtain the reflection of leisure as a set of activities carried out in time when there are no professional obligations, it is not linked to a specific purpose, whether social, political or financial/profitable, it is intrinsically linked to pleasure and can be enjoyed with various functions, such as rest, entertainment or social need (Dumazedier, 1979).

To follow these data collection parameters, students from the 1st and 2nd stages of the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) program, offered by the UFGA School of Application (EAUFGA) were offered, where content about the concepts of place and leisure was offered in an expository class where we could, together with the students, foster debate and reflections on the proper concepts.

After that, we carried out with the students applications of practical activities observing how the students' body and sensory practices interact with spaces and actions that are part of their experiences and that constitute part of their leisure activities through the construction of mental maps, which in their maps each student specified their life routine and their routine construction with the spaces.

Then, we carried out practices of activities and games with the students based on what was described by them in the mind map during physical education classes, which we could correlate with the students' body practices aimed at leisure. These are the practice of

futsal, playful games of affective childhood memories, and electronic game activities aimed at fights through the use of Xbox 360.

After that, we made questionnaires with the students to analyze the perspectives and reflections built about the work observed and carried out by them in order to analyze the vision of each student in the relationship of their bodily practices in relation to the space and its recognition.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN "PLACE" AND THE MEANING OF "LEISURE"**

In analyses of social relations, to observe the characteristics of the usual circumstance of leisure is to identify the individual's mode of interaction in society. The space constituted by different forms of relations and interactivities with a place contributes to the process of the individual's bodily practices, because, according to Le Breton (2007, p. 8) "The body continuously produces meanings and thus actively inserts man within a given social and cultural space".

Thus, to think of place is to think first of space, because it is constructed through different characteristics of relationships constituted in society. In Geography, space has a great and important characteristic in the way social relations are made and analyzed. For Santos (apud CORRÊA, 2000) geographic space can be understood from some specific categories of analysis, which are form, function, structure and process.

At this moment, we are led to the reflection that space is not just a space, its characteristics, shapes, differentiations and relations build the notion of what space would be or how we can understand it by geographic space.

However, the space, because it presents many relationships and information, leads us to analyze how important these experiences add significantly to the construction of man as a society, according to Tuan (1977, p.11) "experience is made up of feelings and thoughts", thus, sentimentality, affectivity and materiality with a space is a characteristic that ends up becoming an extremely important tool to understand it, Through this, the author explains that "space can be experienced in various ways: as the relative location of objects or places, as well as the distances and extensions that separate or connect places" (1977, p. 14).

From this point, we can interpret leisure as one of the usual characteristics of the individual's social relations in society, of his body and his bodily practices. Through its

emergence and the process of industrialization and modernization, leisure becomes less and less present in people's daily lives, thus interfering in the activities of these individuals, because, according to Aquino (2007, p. 485) "Work and subjective time were difficult to be perceived separately, as both had intrinsic relationships".

And when we are faced with the loss (trivialization) of leisure in the face of the means of production and modernization, work, and the capitalist logic of consumption itself, ends up becoming primordial in people's lives and many end up not having the knowledge about leisure and its wide possibilities, interests and activities related to it.

By conceptualizing leisure, it is initially pointed out that this phenomenon is something essential in the life of the human being, having varied characteristics of each society and culture over the years with it. Dumazedier analyzes leisure as:

"[...]the set of occupations, to which the individual can give himself of his own free will, either to rest, or to have fun and entertain himself, or even to develop his disinterested information or training, his voluntary social participation or his free creative capacity after freeing himself or getting rid of professional, family and social obligations." (DUMAZEDIER, 1976 p. 34)

On the other hand, at what point does the perspective of the practice of leisure come up against the concept of place? Or, at what point do these distinct concepts become essential to understand the bodily practices that are part of an individual's life?

Understanding the concept of place is a key point to analyze how it contributes to the perspective of understanding what space is, and what leisure spaces people will enjoy, these places vary according to several determinants such as taste, social position within society, among other possibilities. According to Tuan (1976) apud Polon (2016), place has many meanings that are attributed by people and translate the spaces with which people have more affective and subjective than rational and objective bonds: a square or a street where people have played since childhood, the top of a hill from which they can observe the city.

The relationship of the individual with a space, his relations of belonging to it, characterize the meaning of the place, thus, we can understand the body building this relationship through its daily practices, its memories arising from affectivities and feelings, in its bodily practices carried out with a space. Therefore, place as one of the key concepts of geography has its very usual perspective on the concept of space, where it represents within itself a set of relationships, whether social, affective, material, among others.

From this, would it be possible to see the place as a tool of usual characteristic of leisure? This questioning starts from the point where the concept of leisure leads us to the analysis of space as a place where this practice is obtained, along with the affectivity of doing what represents non-work, or, precisely, fun through leisure.

If for Santos (1996) space and its spatial forms constitute a language of modes of production. Leisure, according to Matos (2014) represents "a space for cultural experiences of a "free" time, but relational with professional, religious, physiological, school, family and social obligations".

In this way, is it possible to reflect that leisure would become a form of non-work to aspects of the capitalist mode of production? This reflection starts from the point where Marcelino (1998, p.38) considers leisure as "[...] the time available for professional, school, family, social obligations, combining the aspects of time and attitude". Thus, the view of leisure as something inferior at times, thus making it a discriminated characteristic in the face of the relationships built in the socioeconomic environment.

Through this analysis, we understand leisure as something that, despite being inferior in the midst of the capitalist mode of production, its reflection refers to its importance in the life of society, so that the action mediated through leisure, is related to the importance of everyday life in relation to the mode of production.

Marcelino (1996) leads us to reflect on the analysis in which he seeks to establish the relationship between leisure and its values, where, resting, "recovering energy", being distracted, among other similar characteristics, rest and fun end up becoming the most common values associated with leisure, thus, "personal and social problems would be solved, as if by magic, or at least, "compensated", by the possibilities offered by leisure".

From this point, we can analyze the place as a key piece in the application of the concept of leisure in the face of its realization, because "fun", rest, "distraction" are characteristics that predominate in leisure, thus, they are applied in certain places, leading to different types of relationships, affectivities, among other characteristics that contribute to the process of construction of the concept of place. And, from this, we will observe the way in which, when applied through everyday life, place and leisure are concepts that collide with each other and are identified in the process of carrying out bodily practices.

## THE PLACE IN LEISURE: A PERSPECTIVE OF REALITIES AND EXPERIENCES

Analyzing how leisure is configured in conjunction with body practices are actions that seek to understand how the body responds to its stimuli in the face of reflections that it is subjected to perform, playing, talking, playing, are characteristics that usually fit into the thoughts of what becomes, roughly speaking, leisure features.

Based on this, we sought to analyze how leisure agrees with the expressions of the body, so that the characteristics of the concept of place could contribute to the understanding and importance of the body practices of individuals, where their memories, identifications, relationships and affectivities reflect on the process of their activities.

For this, interventions were made with students from the classes of the 1st and 2nd stage of the Youth and Adult Education – EJA project. From the School of Application of UFPA (EAUFGPA) through the research project linked to the Institutional Program of Scientific Initiation Scholarships for Technological Development and Innovation of the Federal University of Pará (PIBIC/UFPA).

At an initial moment, weekly interventions were made in the classroom with the students in a period of two (02) months, in order to bring to their reflection, what would be the concept of place and leisure, and what are their contributions to their reality, their practices and their importance for the individual.

After that, understanding their realities, their daily lives were of total importance to build the students' reflection process about the place in which they live, and how their interactions with these spaces contribute to their leisure practices.

Because, according to Tuan (1977, p. 9) "the place is security, and the space is freedom, [...], there is no place like home", in reflection on this, it is possible to analyze that the individual seeks through his security, what is liberating for him, the way in which his actions reflect on his body, and how he seeks to interact through his particularities, that is, of what is familiar to him.

In order for the students to have a better understanding of the themes worked, a workshop was started with the students where we could explain to them the basic concepts about what place and leisure are, so that soon after, we could do an activity in order to understand their realities, their leisure practices and how their daily lives influenced their practices.



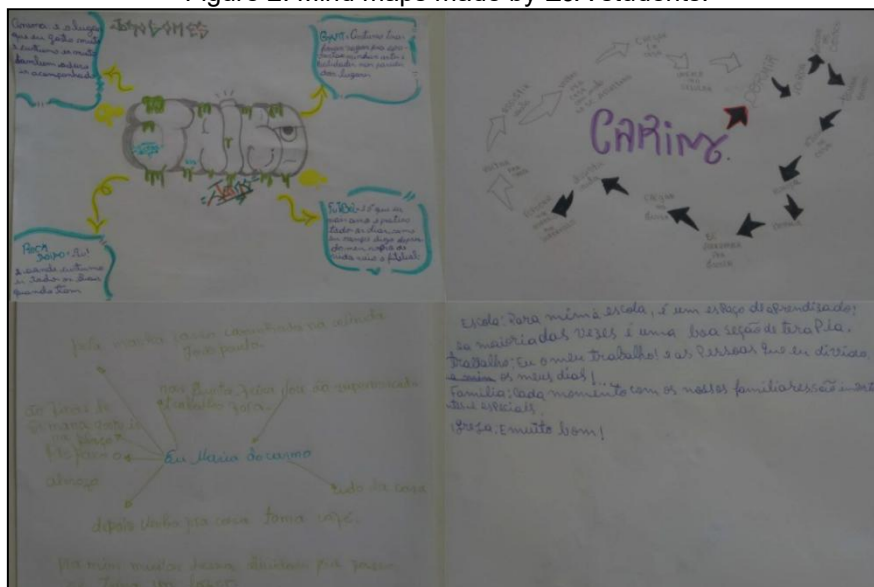
Starting from this, we began to understand the tool called "mind map", where, through these maps, the way in which students described their daily activities would influence the methods that would be used in the practical applications of the research.

At this point, the students were given several blank sheets of paper so that each one felt free to make their own map, where, on the back of the sheet, they would describe their points on the map and the importance of the experiences, spaces and/or places being listed.

Figure 1: Workshop and explanation model of a mind map.



Figure 2: Mind maps made by EJA students.



Then, we were able to analyze that different experiences were evidenced from the meaning of the importance of the situations experienced, the commitment to work and its

real perspectives, as well as the importance of leisure. For many, the connection with the school space was of great importance, because, according to the reports, Physical Education classes were practices that provided pleasure both in the realization and in the practice. In addition, other activities, such as going out with the family to squares, churches, parties and other places conducive to leisure, were also valued.

We can identify this in the report of one of the students, whom we will call M. C., who did the following on her map:

"For me, many of these activities I do become leisure, such as walking, going to the square, the beach, school." – M. C.

Another point of great relevance occurred with the following tasks carried out with the students. At a later time, the school coordination requested that we, from the Physical Education discipline, help build an integration action between the classes. This was the ideal time to propose an activity that would work on their experiences, bringing games that reflected moments that connected them to their affective memories. This would bring the perspective of bodily practice through its affectivities, because, according to Tuan (1976, p. 9), "intentional movement and perception, both visual and haptic, give human beings their familiar world."

Thus, we program the action with games that, at some point, could have been part of their affective memories, whether from childhood or adolescence. It is worth mentioning that, as it is an EJA class, there are students of different age groups and, consequently, different experiences. Three games were organized: "Job's Slaves", "My Master Sent It" and "Futsal". Upon arriving at the court, the students were invited to form a circle to play "Job's Slaves" and leave their shoes in front, which would be changed as the song was sung.

Initially, some students liked the idea, but were a little reluctant to participate, as it was a game they had only done in childhood. After that, we changed the dynamics to the game "My master sent it". This became the crux of the moment; At first, there was doubt about participation, but as the stimuli increased, most students decided to participate. According to them, "they were better than the others and wanted to win."

At this moment, it was possible to see how the students' bodies were stimulated to participate in the game. Their stimuli and reflexes referred to the experience of having participated in something similar before, that is, their memories stimulated them to play for

fun, becoming a momentary leisure practice. We can interpret this based on the term used by Marcelino (1996), who states that leisure can be generated "historically".

After that, at another time, according to the teacher's school planning, the understanding of leisure through body practice began, focusing on the content of fights, their importance and practice. Theoretical classes were held on the fights, addressing concepts, practices and teachings, so that we could then start the practical classes. Aiming at the characteristic of a practical class also aimed at the leisure of the students, we held an interactive class, where the students were able to experiment with practices with sandbags and participate in a fight simulation in an Xbox video game, belonging to EAUFPA. The students, in addition to being excited, participated in the class in a receptive way.

Figure 3: Practical class of the content of EJA struggles.



From this perspective, we can observe that leisure and its interests can be practiced in different places, according to the particular intentionality of each individual. Actions such as physical activities, playing an instrument, watching a soccer game in the stadium, among other practices, carried out over the years, have a relationship with affective memories and well-being, associated with places where these practices are carried out, school being one of them.

Thus, it was considered essential to start another part of our research: the application of a questionnaire with seven questions about the meaning of leisure and place/affectivity for the students, and which places they consider appropriate for the practice of these activities. The questions were as follows:

1. How do you understand leisure?

2. In your opinion, what would the place be and how do you see the relationship with leisure?
3. What is your favorite place to practice leisure?
4. What leisure activities do you like to do in this environment?
5. What does affectivity mean to you?
6. Does this leisure place bring you a feeling of affection? For what reason?
7. How often do you go to these places?

After data collection and observation in the school space, we identified that, according to the analyses and results obtained, the students were very participative in the proposed activities. In addition, we analyzed the teacher's teaching plan to verify the relationship of the contents with our theme of investigation and observation.

As EJA (Youth and Adult Education) students are returning to school after years and are often of an advanced age for the grade in which they are enrolled, with some being housewives or workers during the day and students at night, attracting their attention was essential for the execution of the work.

Consequently, we understand the most frequent activities in the daily lives of students. Among them, taking care of the house, working, walking, going to the square, playing soccer and, especially, attending school were mentioned as forms of leisure. Some of these activities could not be considered leisure because they are seen as "obligations". This was evident in the answers of some students, such as:

Student 1: "For me, school is a learning space and, most of the time, a good feeling of therapy."

Student 2: "I like to go out with my family and friends to the square, mall, tacky rehearsal, cinema, have girls' night at my house, make popcorn, chocolate, hot dog, etc."

Student 3: "It's good to study, learn English, work, go to the gym. Leisure time is very important for our body."

Student 4: "Near my house there is a leisure area where I participate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. There we do aerobic dance and walking. My favorite day is Physical Education with teacher Fernanda."

Student 5: "Graffiti: I often use my spare time to hone my arts and realities on the walls of places."

Student 6: "I run in the morning: Running is one of the activities I do the most, it helps with weight control and provides cardiovascular benefits. Work: It is my source of income and livelihood for my family. Gym: Where I relieve stress. Boxing: Where I look for my self-defense. Home: It is where I stay with my children, rest and recharge my energy. NPI: I seek knowledge."

Thus, educational praxis must be thought of in the procedural and integral development of the student, covering motor, cognitive, intellectual, creative and social aspects. The teacher prepares the student beyond school life, recognizing that each one has potential and skills to be worked on and developed. Physical Education plays a fundamental role in this process, using different resources such as courts, dance rooms, games, videos, drawings, mind maps and Xbox, making classes more dynamic and contributing to individual and collective growth. This values and legitimizes the discipline.

In addition, the use of the concepts of place and leisure reinforces the importance of considering Physical Education as a legitimate and essential discipline for the school community and for society, evidencing the importance of bodily practices in human development and in the socialization process.

## **CONCLUSION**

Reflections on the concepts of Place and Leisure help us understand how the individual performs his actions in order to enjoy moments of bodily practices, whether for rest, fun or other characteristics associated with unoccupied time.

Understanding these actions involves investigating how the body reacts to issues of affectivity related to space, how it perceives its actions and practices based on what it considers familiar or on the memories built through its experiences. By relating these essential concepts to Geography and Physical Education, it helps to understand how it is possible to understand the individual's bodily practices as a function of their experiments, experiences and cultural construction in their daily lives.

This makes it essential to understand Physical Education as an indisputably important discipline for the teaching and study of the body, its practices and, especially, in the individual's learning process. Incorporating the knowledge obtained from the experience of the body makes the teaching process more pleasurable for the student and enriches their understanding of their body practices.

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