

# Leisure from International Voices



**Karla A. Henderson**

**Atara Sivan**

*Editors*

**SAGAMORE  VENTURE**

## Dedicated to

Cor Westland,  
for his inspiring commitment to  
world leisure and recreation

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# Preface

This book began as a result of a conversation between Atara Sivan and Karla Henderson on a long walk along a beach in Durban, South Africa, in September 2013. We were both invited speakers to the Leisure and Recreation Association of South Africa (LARASA) Conference. We had known each other for almost two decades as a result of our shared commitments to the World Leisure Organization (WLO). We have been involved on the WLO Board of Directors and had worked together on the World Leisure Journal, which Atara has edited since 2012.

Karla had long had the desire to edit a book about international leisure, but many other professional commitments took priority. When Peter Bannon asked Karla to consider writing a book for Sagamore, the one idea she had not pursued prior to her retirement in 2014 was a book about international leisure perspectives. No one else was better qualified to co-edit than Atara. Atara's Israeli heritage, interest in leisure education, and her decades of living in Hong Kong provided a complementary viewpoint to Karla's American background related to diversity and gender.

This book is a labor of love. It is our way of highlighting how important we believe leisure is in the lives of people throughout the world and how it is universal in its value. Yet, leisure is also imagined and practiced in various ways based on geographic areas and their associated cultures. We wanted to add a personal approach to how individual scholars understand leisure and its meanings.

Since chapters are presented from six continents, we provide a broad perspective. We did not seek to have a definitive chapter with a generalized view from each country, but wanted to highlight particular perspectives from individuals who have given considerable thought to leisure and leisure activities from their sociocultural perspectives. We also wanted to assure that each voice was equal, so we only invited one offering from each country. Therefore, the chapter from the United States is given the same space as the one from Sierra Leone. Further, the chapters are presented in alphabetical order by country/region so no chapter is prioritized over another.

We recognize that generalizing in any one country is impossible since all countries have a diversity of people. However, we wanted to provide a sense of the essence of leisure and how it perceived, practiced, and studied in particular countries/regions. We also wanted to highlight the challenges associated with advocating for leisure from diverse standpoints. We saw many similarities as noted in the epilogue of this book. At the same time, we also saw how sociocultural perspectives provide a rich range of interests and understandings of leisure.

Our desire for this book is that it gives readers new ideas to think about beyond their own cultural or country of origin outlooks. Globalization is changing the ways we view the world and has both positive and negative implications for the enjoyment of leisure in the ways it is manifested. We recognize that viewing each of these countries/

regions as a discrete chapter is not always possible, but the geographic divisions provide a starting point for examining a collective leisure in the past, present, and future. We hope you will find these chapters interesting and that they will help to emphasize the importance of leisure to individuals and communities throughout the world.

Karla and Atara

# Contributors

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# Leisure in Brazil: Trends and Perspectives in a Contemporary Society

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University of Sao Paulo

Common sense in Brazil finds leisure as having a kind of escape valve in society that also includes functionalist approaches. Leisure persists in society as something superfluous before other needs. Within this mistaken understanding, people should first have aspects such as health, food, and housing satisfied, and only then can issues related leisure be addressed

Linking leisure to functionalist concepts with various nuances is a tool to help people coexist with alienation and injustices in Brazilian society. The functionalist

approaches collaborate to maintain the status quo. Unlike this perspective, we, as authors of this chapter, consider leisure as a privileged time for the experience of values that contribute to the moral and cultural changes.

This chapter addresses elements associated with leisure in Brazil in its interface with social and cultural aspects, thematic policies, and the academic and professional experience in this field. In contrast to its low value and commercial aspects, leisure will be defended as a key sphere for the affirmation of values and identities, and as a potential element for social change and the redistribution of power and privilege in society.

### **Leisure as Culture and its Characteristics in Brazilian Society**

The reforms that have occurred in Brazilian society have reflected changes in leisure habits, work, economy, education, culture, and art. Because these elements are related, it is possible to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the importance and the meaning that each area represents to society. In this sense, to understand leisure in Brazil, discussing its relationship with the other spheres of social life and the historical period in which it is inserted is necessary. Changes in society have resulted in various transformations of leisure.

Leisure was proclaimed in Brazil as a right of all people only in the 1980s when the country experienced the restoration of democracy in a process marked by broad participation of society, which culminated in a new Constitution in 1988. In 2003, the popular democratic government created a specific ministry in the area of sport. Integrated within this body was a secretariat to address leisure. This event marked definitively a new moment in Brazilian public sector policies. At this juncture, reflecting on the relationships and paradoxes experienced in the Brazilian context is necessary. On one hand, leisure was seen as a modern phenomenon arising from urbanization in large cities and, on the other hand, the diversity and demands of the population from the country side, indigenous, quilombolas, riparian, and others living in different realities of large cities were also noted (Rodrigues, 2011).

As a controversial issue in today's society, leisure at the personal and community levels and in academic circles is marked by misunderstandings in its discussions and resulting actions. Therefore, defining the concept is important.

From a common perspective, leisure is often understood through simple associations with individual experiences associated with opportunities for rest and fun. Even within the public bodies, leisure's scope is not clear. Leisure is associated with varied names such as "Culture and Leisure," "Recreation and Leisure," and "Sports and Leisure."

In academic circles, the controversy is indirect when analyzed as opposition to work, which usually happens due to the mystification of work. Other academics, due to the consequences of technological advances and time available for leisure, praise leisure as the ideal of happiness (e.g. Marcellino, 2004).

In Brazil, a consensus among the academics who study leisure associate it with the Industrial Revolution and technological advances that have led to the division of labor and the alienation of workers. As a result, leisure is a response to social demands, the struggle for a better distribution of the workers' free time, and recovery for the labor force. In the particular case of Brazil, this process was consolidated a few decades ago with the

acceleration of urbanization into new areas and increasing population density in areas already urbanized.

According to Melo (2001), concerns about leisure for the population can be found in the speeches of the managers responsible for the ongoing changes in Brazilian cities since the 19th century. The need to study leisure more systematically can be found in the first decades of the 20th century with the writings of Frederico Guilherme Gaezler, in the 1930s with other examples of public policies implemented by the government to tackle the issue, and through actions based on research and systematic studies on the subject such as through the Department of Culture and Recreation of the City of São Paulo. Melo also pointed out another significant focus in the 1940s including the work of Arnaldo Lopes Sussekind in Rio de Janeiro, the former Federal Capital. Sussekind's concerns addressed the importance of the healthy use of leisure time as he advocated for Recreation Service Workers in the Ministry of Labor.

Although Brazilians have written about leisure since the beginning of the 20th century, only since the 1970s has leisure been studied systematically in the country. Gomes and Melo (2003) documented the development of multidisciplinary, collective, and institutional research, projects, and actions. The volume *Recreation Worker* by José Acácio Ferreira (1959) is considered the first book to address specific leisure issues. The work is subtitled: *A Study of the Social Organization of Cities*.

Among the scholars dedicated to leisure study in Brazil today, two lines of reasoning are evident. These lines are characterized by the aspect of attitude (i.e., leisure as lifestyle) and an emphasis on time, free from the obligations of work or free from other obligations. The controversy over the characteristics of leisure relates to these aspects of attitude and time.

In Brazil, one of the most used definitions is postulated by the French sociologist Joffre Dumazedier (2000) who considered leisure as:

...a set of occupations to which the individuals can give themselves voluntarily, either to rest or to have fun, recreate and entertain, or to develop their disinterested training, their social participation voluntary or their free creative ability after shaking off or getting rid of professional, family and social obligations. (p. 34)

In addition, Dumazedier (1980a) classified cultural leisure contents into five areas: artistic, intellectual, physical-sports, practical, and social. It is important to note that the contents in this classification are interconnected and placed separately only to facilitate leisure activities planning and conducting research. Their distinction addresses what activities prevail in each of the categories.

In addition, leisure can be experienced as non-activity or idleness. People choose what to do with the time available. In our society, however, non-activity or idleness has little value since people usually prioritize performance, the final product, and not the process of creation that results in the development of individuals. This devaluing of idleness relates to losing time and from a restricted understanding of what leisure is. Leisure is more than the practice of some activity; it has many other possibilities.

To achieve the full meanings of leisure, it is necessary that leisure is understood by the people, which can encourage participation in the various areas mentioned above. Participation is directly linked to information and it is important to remember when

thinking about involvement. Satisfying and creative leisure is sought through partaking in activities.

Demo (1996) noted that participation cannot be forced or imposed. It exists when it is sought and seized because, after all, it is process and not a final product. Until the necessary environment for leisure is established by individuals, it may result in alienation and imposition in people's everyday life.

The cultural content expressed through predominant leisure interests, genres, and levels as discussed by Dumazedier (1980b) complements how leisure can be understood. Genres can be classified as practice, knowledge, and assistance. Practice happens when individuals seek to develop a leisure activity. Knowledge is characterized by the search for information on leisure activities, and assistance occurs with how the leisure activity is undertaken and where it takes place.

Related to these discussions, issues involving activity and passivity are usually associated with practice and consumption, respectively, causing major misconceptions. Thus, to do is associated with activity, while to watch is related to passivity. Nevertheless, what would determine whether individuals are active or passive would not be in their activities, but in the way people participate in leisure activities. Therefore, the classification active/passive could be associated with practice, knowledge, and assistance.

Consequently, this classification of active/passive would be determined by the levels of participation, which according to Dumazedier (1980b) can be classified into elementary or conformist, middle or critical, and higher or creative. As a result, people are expected to realize recreational experiences in their available time in a critical and creative nonconformist way. Conversely, most often this leisure involvement does not occur spontaneously. Therefore, it is necessary to have opportunities developed by leisure professionals who will guide and encourage the participation of people within the five cultural interests of leisure related to the three genres by helping people to exceed the levels, possibly from conformist to critical and creative.

In addition, these actions must show leisure not only as rest and fun but as an important issue in Brazilian society. These actions can result in educational aspects—education through and for leisure and the relationship of leisure to education as a way to improve personal and social development of individuals. This development is not from a functionalist perspective, but as an outcome of social demand and recovery of citizenship through cultural participation.

However, a feeling that leisure is something superfluous before other needs persists in Brazilian society. Examples of this restricted form of understanding are strongly rooted not only in everyday life where leisure often is associated with vagrancy and people who have nothing to do, but even in the public sector, where this kind of thinking prevails in cities across the country. Instead of being understood as a social right, leisure is usually seen as an excuse or attention grabber to perform actions merely to provide assistance to remedy the problems that some regions of the city suffer regarding social areas.

### **Leisure Policies in Brazil and their Impact on Social Life**

Historically in Brazil, vocational training processes in the leisure area have been characterized as preparing professionals for their daily work in the marketplace. The

characteristics required by the market are marked by an abstract idea of leisure simply as goods to be consumed by people.

For the actions of professionals to be developed for cultural participation values, it is vital to discuss the process of formation, and to develop contexts for action regarding public recreational policies. Further, those policies can address mistaken expectations about the role of professionals in the leisure area. Developing specific actions is necessary through public policies that seek to achieve explicit objectives related to the implementations of leisure programs. The development of public policies in the leisure area is essential to stimulate opportunities and creativity so that people can overcome the various barriers encountered in daily life related to not only leisure experiences, but society in general.

Thus, the importance of effective participation by people and different sectors of civil society in the definition of social policies is evident and should be based on the desires and needs of the public involved. Leisure, by its own features, can be understood as a useful tool for the development of participation, creating opportunities for people to experience new values.

In relation to the broader understanding of leisure, it is necessary to consider it in its multiple possibilities according to the content proposed by Dumazedier (1980a). Interrelating them requires the search for interface with various departments within the public authorities where leisure policy is made and upheld. To that matter, professionals must understand the interfaces with other public social policies such as education, health, and transportation (Marcellino, 2008).

More broadly than the departments or offices that interface with leisure is the importance of coordination of leisure departments with other departments of government and civil society institutions. Action policies are needed to contribute to achieving the objectives proposed by both leisure services as well as other social areas.

Therefore, leisure public policies should be based on cooperation and intersectional efforts, which encompass social areas providing a broad theoretical approach to leisure. Public leisure managers must be representatives in project development that focuses on citizen welfare.

In the private and the third sector institutions that develop policies related to leisure, the same considerations must be taken. The understanding of the problems should be the same within different sectors that interface with the way that leisure contributes to discussions and actions to enhance the desired results.

With regard to sociocultural barriers to leisure, characteristics such as gender, age group, stereotypes, and access to facilities must be considered. Socioeconomic status can limit both qualitatively and quantitatively the appropriation of leisure by a portions of the population. To address these issues, establishing priorities is necessary for the groups of people not normally served by the public authorities and private institutions promoting leisure to minimize the undesirable effects caused by the existing barriers.

Complementing the question related to a leisure policy in Brazil, Requiza (1980) commented that the guidelines cannot be restricted only to activities policy and should also involve issues of training and preparation of staff for the operation of facilities and equipment. Public authorities and institutions need to set priorities based on the situation analysis, and try to answer questions such as: Is there a coordination framework for the specific leisure opportunities? How are the opportunities distributed throughout the city?

Is equipment underutilized? Is it possible to adapt resources and equipment for leisure activities? In training people for leisure jobs, leisure professionals should be involved in the development of public policies since it is through these actions that the values of popular participation and the contribution to active citizenship can be carried out.

It is also important to note that we are talking about sectoral leisure policies, and in this sense, one cannot lose sight of the social context in which they are developed. This context leads to the need to understand governmental programs in general, as well as the different public policies linked to leisure and social areas.

Thus, the question of leisure in Brazilian society addresses increasingly the importance of participation as a channel for the experience of new values, which makes leisure an educational endeavor. Leisure raises the possibility of questioning the exclusionary society in which people live, and seeks openings to address problems faced in everyday life. The lack of action, or at least the few actions by the government committed to the values of social change, has resulted in a number of social movements in recent years, which have shown that leisure staff participation is a way to discuss and solve social problems.

Leisure and its effective cultural participation open the possibility for citizenship in the actions related to community groups. The contesting and response to public policies that have been highly conservative and exclusionary have been evident from the Brazilian population. We believe that leisure offers a means for the consolidation of a more just society.

### Academic Formation and Professional Activities in Brazil: Trends and Challenges

Professionals are using scientific knowledge related to leisure to explain people's reality (Edgington, Hudson, Dieser, & Edgington, 2004). Thus, we argue that our professional actions must be guided by data and information scientifically proven by research as we deal with programs and policies aimed at personal and social stimulation for leisure. It is our responsibility as leisure professionals, educators, and academics to understand the rigor, as an interdisciplinary area may suggest a weakness in research methods despite the social recognition of the relevance of the research by professionals in the labor market.

In 1998, the 5th World Leisure Congress was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. For one week, the leisure community was mobilized to explore the theme, "Leisure in Globalized Society: Inclusion or Exclusion," to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the United Nation Declaration of Human Rights, and to enrich an understanding of the Latin American experience. An important feature of the Congress was the adoption of the *Sao Paulo Declaration on Leisure and Globalization*, which established the importance of leisure diversity (Uvinha, 2010).

The assumptions of this World Congress held in Brazil in 1998 embodied the idea that leisure in Brazil is characterized as interdisciplinary and enables the participation of professionals from various fields (e.g., physical education, education, tourism, art education, psychologists, architects). Today, with the growth of the leisure services sector, the number of jobs offered for professionals who wish to work in the area has increased considerably. Professionals work with differentiated training in various public and private institutions as well as organizations linked to the third sector of non-government organizations. This

work includes a wide range of functions undertaken by professionals such as planning, organizing, managing, coordinating, and evaluating leisure activities (Stoppa et al., 2012).

The need for professional training in leisure is directly related to the various other professional fields of activity in academics as well as the different public, private, and third sectors. The role of different educational institutions that enable professionals in the leisure area stands out as important. One specific case is the University of São Paulo with the Undergraduate program in Leisure and Tourism and the Graduate program in Tourism and Physical Activity Sciences.

As emphasized by Marcellino (2001), the institutions with recognized performance in leisure services must necessarily emphasize research studies, which can be addressed in all areas. The production of new knowledge related to leisure can lead to addition new work in conjunction with other disciplines that dialogue about leisure.

Another area to be developed more effectively is the exchanging of knowledge and experiences among researchers and professionals to ensure that such information can move quickly with quality communication patterns to other researchers and users linked to leisure. Support for the development of discussion forums and knowledge distribution is fundamental shaping and offering consistency in the leisure field. The knowledge produced by the academy must reach different sectors that work with leisure.

Intensifying more constant exchanges with international researchers by expanding communication networks and fostering discussions in South America, and by dialoguing with other researchers studying leisure from different approaches is necessary. The exchange of experiences through critical analysis based on different realities can be the stimulus for new proposals appropriate to the social, cultural, and economic situation of Brazil. Encouraging the production and dissemination of new knowledge by Masters and PhD students related to the leisure area is also needed. This sharing could be done through research groups for specific events and by publishing new research related to the leisure through various outlets.

Henderson (2011) argued that leisure studies should be articulated to professional specialties of the area and that such a relationship involves a wide scope of carefully identified intersections and interdependencies. She challenged academics in their research centers and through their recognized postgraduate programs to disassemble this supposed separation between leisure theory produced in academic centers and the practice of leisure carried out daily by leisure professionals. With this approach, research centers and graduate programs should gain more strength within society in general where the academic findings can echo applicability on the professional level and become palatable to common sense.

Godbey (2000) suggested that leisure needs an interdisciplinary focus in research. He advocated that the debate about leisure at the highest academic level could be promoted by the integration of research centers carried out by associations and opportunities for networking.

Professional associations related to leisure in its broadest sense play an important role in the academic and scientific development of leisure studies. They are responsible for gathering researchers from different institutions and fields of activity, usually engaged to develop interdisciplinary approaches, to acknowledge leisure with all its transformative potential. By promoting local/regional discussions on leisure, these associations extend

their scope to be recognized for their conferences and publications aimed to address actions around the world.

It is worth noting that Latin America has advanced considerably in leisure studies and its efforts in articulating related research groups, a fact highlighted by Gomes, Osorio, Pinto, and Elizalde (2009). Moreover, the creation in 2013 of Brazilian Association for Leisure Research and Postgraduate Studies–ANPEL [Associação Brasileira de Pesquisa e Pós-graduação em Estudos do Lazer] deserves a special consideration in this Latin American context from our point of view. ANPEL has scientific society status with Brazilian origins, and congregates Latin American researchers from different backgrounds of knowledge dedicated to researching leisure and related topics from the most different theoretical and disciplinary points of view. The main activities include the biennial organization of the Brazilian Congress of Leisure Studies (CBEL; Congresso Brasileiro de Estudos do Lazer) and the publication of the Journal of Leisure Studies (JBEL; Revista Brasileira de Estudos do Lazer; ANPEL, 2016).

Currently more than 250 research groups claim to be studying leisure academically in Brazil. Such groups represent diverse areas of knowledge and all are certified by The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq, 2016). One of these groups is the Interdisciplinary Group of Leisure Studies (GIEL; Grupo Interdisciplinar de Estudos do Lazer), which has its base in the School of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities at the University of Sao Paulo and is led, since its foundation in 2008, by the two of us who are authors of this chapter.

### Concluding Remarks

From the ideas presented in this chapter, some challenges for leisure advancement in Brazil are reflected for this field of study and professional interventions. We argue that leisure is a fundamental human right as highlighted in Article 24 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights dated in 1948. Such social status allows the search of satisfaction and expression, whether at the individual or collective levels. Its benefits include social welfare, cultural affirmation, preservation and environmental conservation, and sustainable economic development (Edgington & Uvinha, 2008).

Leisure also promotes the opportunity to improve and expand the freedom of choices in the daily decisions of Brazilians. Thus, leisure is a powerful vehicle that has the potential to influence individuals in their journeys through life.

We also argue that current initiatives are equally important to stimulate Latin American research and postgraduate study in leisure such as the creation and strengthening of ANPEL in Brazil. The exchange between our Brazilian/Latin American activities with international ones would bring bilateral gains to various players including experienced researchers leading research groups as well as graduate students in their early stages of academic development.

We expect that in the near future, the research association board and graduate programs in leisure in Brazil will expand considerably given the growing importance that this area has achieved in academia. Such development should, in our view, be guided by quality in the creation and maintenance of related associations and by a corresponding reflection on scientific evidence gathered from diverse research centers and through encouraging academic studies in leisure around the world.

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