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To cite this article: Ricardo Ricci Uvinha, Cinthia Casimiro Pedrão, Edmur Antonio Stoppa, Helder Ferreira Isayama & Nara Rejane Cruz de Oliveira (2017): Leisure practices in Brazil: a national survey on education, income, and social class, World Leisure Journal, DOI: [10.1080/16078055.2017.1343747](https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2017.1343747)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2017.1343747>



Published online: 22 Jun 2017.



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Leisure practices in Brazil: a national survey on education, income, and social class

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ABSTRACT

This study is part of an extensive research project entitled “The Brazilian’s Leisure”. The aim of this paper is to identify in a broad manner how Brazilians’ use their leisure time based on their education, income and social class. The work was accomplished through empirical research and, whilst using broad reasoning procedures, comparisons were drawn between the representation of leisure and its actual activities. This paper specifically discusses the variables relating to education, income and social classes present from the data collected. It was identified that such variables have a distinct influence on the manner in which Brazilians spend their leisure time, and that it contributes to the rise of inequality when it comes to leisure.

RESUMO

Este estudo é parte de um grande projeto de pesquisa intitulado “O Lazer do Brasileiro”. O objetivo deste artigo é identificar de forma ampla como os brasileiros utilizam seu tempo de lazer de acordo com sua escolaridade, renda e classe social. O trabalho foi realizado por meio de uma pesquisa empírica e, com base em procedimentos de raciocínio amplo, foram feitas comparações entre a representação do lazer e seu real exercício. Este artigo discute especificamente as variáveis relacionadas à escolaridade, renda e classes sociais apresentadas a partir dos dados coletados. Foi identificado que tais variáveis exercem diversas influências na maneira com que os brasileiros usam seu tempo de lazer, e isso contribui para o crescimento da desigualdade quando tem-se como tema o lazer.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 November 2016
Accepted 9 May 2017

KEYWORDS



Brazil; leisure; schooling;
income; social classes

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Brasil; Lazer; Escolaridade;
Renda; Classes Sociais

Introduction

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 (Brazil, 1988) declared leisure as a social right, a situation also assured in all State Laws and municipal organs of Brazil. However, unlike other rights, the Federal Constitution does not define principles, guidelines, objectives and institutional rules that should guide the implementation of leisure in the life of the Brazilian

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population. In addition, problems such as the prevalence of a prioritization of needs policy, the precarious diffusion and systematization of research and the few resources available, this area still lacks actions that effectively cover the Municipalities, State and the Federal spheres.

The training of researchers, publications of new studies and influences of government policies has changed the leisure field of study. Discussions among public organizations and forums have contributed to the exchange of ideas and experiences, resulting in more research in this subject area. However, very little research has been done on the representation and implementation of leisure among Brazilians.

In order to breach this research gap, the research project titled “The Brazilian’s Leisure” was initiated, which involved researchers and students from seven universities in Brazil, collecting information in this national survey. The study was carried out between 2012 and 2014, during this period, methodological steps were taken in order to collect and analyse data, after which articles were written from the information obtained.

In the late 1980s, Requixa and Camargo (1989) conducted a study on free time in the Brazilian society, pointing out different elements related to the development of free time in society and their relationships with leisure time. The current study is conducted nationwide, which is largely different from Requixa and Camargo’s study that did not have coverage to such extent. The same authors referred to a single survey conducted in Brazil in 1973, with internationally accepted parameters, published by De Souza (1975), but covering only the city of Rio de Janeiro and its metropolitan area.

More recently, Fisher and Robinson (2010) reported findings of daily routine survey that took place in 22 countries, including Brazil. They used a time-use survey with 376 households in Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais, one of the 26 Brazilian states, investigating the average time that this sample dedicated to some leisure activities.

It is also highlighted that Cushman, Veal, and Zuzanek (2007) offered a great contribution in a research in 15 countries, reaching the conclusion that leisure is present in various activities in all cultures and factors of economic development. The current study has a similar purpose in terms of analysing leisure, but more applicable to a larger country such as Brazil.

In this context, the research project entitled “The Brazilian’s Leisure” may provide a new contribution to understanding the issue in a broader manner. Thus, this paper aimed to identify the leisure time of the Brazilians in terms of their representation and accomplishment on education, income and social class aspects.

The uniqueness and significance of this study, is that it encompasses a representative sample of the whole country taking into consideration different categories of leisure. The main research questions were: What do the Brazilians actually do with their leisure time? What would they like to do with their leisure time, but are unable to do so? And what are the obstacles preventing them to do what they want to do?

The results from the original research project was shared among the researchers and resulted in seven articles. The final report will be concluded by the research. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the main research findings, with regards to the different variables, were written up individually by each researcher. This paper specifically discusses the following variables: schooling; income and social classes, thus the other themes aren’t explained here.

These variables represent main dimensions of the social economic development barriers to leisure enjoyment and quality of life all important indicators in terms of planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies in leisure.

In conclusion, we suggest that such variables are important to consider in order to make sense of contemporary leisure practice, and how leisure has developed in the past years in Brazil. Current policies do not speak to all the requirements of the population, and the challenges that the country face are diverse in nature, even more so due to the fact that leisure is not treated as an important aspect of life. So, how do the Brazilians use their free time? What do they do and what can't they do? And why didn't they do what they wanted to do? These are some questions that we used as guidelines to reach the results.

Concepts and approaches

Considering the close connection with other aspects of human life, we can understand leisure as a culture lived in its broadest sense (practiced or enjoyed) in the "free time". It is also important to remember that the understanding of leisure is not made "in itself", but as one historically situated in the human spheres (Marcellino, 2012).

As a quest to understand the cultural contents of leisure expressed in the Brazilian free time, we applied the work of Dumazedier (1980a), which is widely used in Brazil. This author proposes a classification based on the distinction between the interests checked at leisure and on the aspirations prevailing in different activities. His study distinguishes five areas of interest: artistic, intellectual, manual, social and physical.

Based on this classification, Camargo (1986) adds to this the tourist interests. The growth of tourism is part of the globalization process and involves markets around the world, affecting labour relations and cultural aspects held as part of a broad global movement (Uvinha, 2014).

The Québec Declaration, "Leisure, Essential to Community Development", statement promulgated by the World Leisure Organization (Québec, 2008) highlights in Article 1: "The quality of life of groups and communities rests on common values of association, accessibility, diversity, safety, information and freedom of speech".

In this sense, leisure may have fundamental importance in people's lives, since effective participation depends on the knowledge of the different options that leisure can offer (Marcellino, 2012). However, for lack of knowledge of diverse possibilities, people always perform the same activities. According to Dumazedier (1980b), the quality of leisure experiences is directly related to the levels of participation that the person has in different activities.

With reference to this particular document, it is suggested that schooling, income and social classes are barriers to leisure enjoyment and quality of life. Concerning the theme of schooling, we highlighted the importance of education in population development, not only reduced to preparation for professional life, but also as an influential factor for the expansion in the capacity of personal and social understanding.

The Federal Constitution recognized the right to education in Brazil in 1988, when public education was no longer thought of by a paternalistic vision and became the formal duty of the State. Such a document has ensured that:

Education is a right of all and a duty of the State and of the family; it will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, his preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his qualification for work. (Brazil, 1988, art. 205)

However, despite being a right, the number of Brazilians without access to a school environment is still significant. The last census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2010 pointed out that 50.24% of the Brazilian population has no schooling or has only incomplete elementary school education (IBGE, 2010).

The schooling of a country's inhabitants directly influences the development and construction of knowledge. In this context, the intentions of the educational process are a parameter for the development of educational activities and for knowledge about leisure (Pacheco, 2010; Pinto, 2008).

In this context, the relationship between leisure and education is taken as:

A human formation process, requiring not only a total specific knowledge of leisure but also requiring competence and the appropriate skills training/performance, politics, ethics and aesthetics involved in the experiences made. (Pinto, 2008, p. 48)

Another issue to be considered is that low levels of schooling lead to greater inequalities faced by the Brazilian population, with income disparities acting as a barrier for leisure. In Brazil, more than 80% of the population belongs to the poorest social classes; 4.4% of households have no income; 14.7% have income of up to one minimum wage; and 21.5% between one and two minimum wages (IBGE, 2010).

The main factors that exclude the lower classes from engaging in certain leisure practices are the lack of money, limited space, little state investment and the mass culture industry advancement (Almeida & Gutierrez, 2011).

According to Marcellino (2012), in a country where most of the leisure attractions belong to private enterprises, families that have smaller budgets prioritize health, food and education, among other social spheres, leaving leisure in the background.

There is then, a current paradox: on the one hand, leisure is given as a right and thus should be equally available to the entire population and, on the other hand, the variety of factors that limit leisure practices such as differences in income, which added to the high values charged for many of the equipment and activities, increase the access barriers of such practices (Souza, 2008).

In addition to this notion, income is a primary factor in determining another important access barrier to leisure: social classes.

In this research, we classify the social classes in the country by the Economic Classification criteria of Brazil, proposed by the Brazilian Association of Research Companies (ABEP), which estimates the purchasing power of the Brazilian population. This classification is the market division in economic classes defined as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D and E, through the sum of points including possession of items and education levels of the head of household (ABEP, 2008).

In this system, points are accumulated depending variables such as the number of bathrooms, household employees, automobiles, microcomputer, dishwasher, refrigerator, freezer, lava linen, DVD, microwave, motorcycle, clothes dryer, and the degree of education of the head of family. The score between 42 and 46 points would mark the economy class A1, between 35 and 41 points would be class A2, between 29 and 34

points class B1, between 23 and 28 points class B2, between 18 and 22 points Class C1, between 14 and 17 points Class C2, between 08 and 13 points class D and between 0 and 7 points would be the classes E, according to the APEB, in the criteria of Economic Classification of Brazil (ABEP, 2008).

The social situation of the Brazilian population is due to disparities which are produced mainly by poor income distribution through the country. This has placed the Brazilian population in one of the worst global ranking position.

According to Brazil (2015), the Brazilian population is very heterogeneous and, in the last decades, has undergone great demographic, economic and social changes. These questions can be verified in different IBGE publications, from 2003 to 2015, which summarize the social indicators of the Brazilian population in the different regions of the country and some examples include the following.

The latest synthesis of people's income in 2015 points to a progressive decrease in inequality among people of the country aged 15 years or over, but with differentiated values among the different regions, since the Centre-West and the Northeast remain the regions with the greatest inequalities.

One example is the significant changes can also be seen in demographical issues, such as the increase in the elderly population in the country. Data from Brazil (2015), suggest that the projection of the population by gender and age, carried out by the IBGE, indicates a trend which suggest an increase of the elderly population, as a result demographic transition process. The trend pointed out that in 2030, this proportion would be 18.6% and, in 2060, 33.7% of the Brazilian population. In other words, one in every three people in the population will be at least 60 years old. In 2014, this indicator was higher for the South (15.2%) and Southeast (15.1%) and lower for the Northern region (9.1%). In addition, a large proportion of the population aged 60 and over was women (55.7%).

Thus, although demographic, economic and social changes point to an improvement in the living conditions of the Brazilian population, such changes do not occur equally in the different regions of the country. This also applies to leisure, where equal access is impaired, since many cannot pay for certain activities, and is also linked to insufficient schooling. This situation is also fuelled by the level of education, as those with lower levels of education in general, have less access to leisure activities.

According to Pimentel (2003), leisure programmes usually made to underprivileged social classes offer "leisure to the poor" (p. 90), which worsens the poverty situation in this layer of the population, instead of collaborating to eliminate economic and political poverty. Such factor triggers what Santos (2000, p. 34) calls this "controlled, regimented, regulated, monitored and mediocritized leisure".

Material and methods

Descriptive research of quantitative and qualitative character was adopted. This survey is developed from considering the principles of the "activity-based leisure participation survey", proposed by Cushman et al. (2007), who have used questionnaires to investigate the participation of the population in leisure activities during a period of time. Dumazedier (1980a) highlighted the relevance of analysing the experience of practical activities and related interests of the activities.

The Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Minas Gerais approved the study.

Participants, data procedure and collection

The research sample was composed of 2400 individuals residing in Brazil, proportionally divided into five macro regions of the country, which consisted of 26 states of the Federation and the Federal District.

The study was carried out between 2012 and 2014. The interviews were individually conducted for a sample survey, face to face, and at points in the specific cities pre-assigned to the research sample. To assess the effectiveness of the instrument in achieving the objectives of this research, 50 interviews were conducted in pre-test form in some units of the Federation.

The research team was formed by making use of interviewers and coordinators. The interviewers conducted individual interviews according to predefined quotas. To ensure the quality of the data collected, random telephone checks were performed on 10% of the sample by the interviewers.

Research instrument and data analysis

The instrument was defined based on the analysis categories identified through the theoretical frameworks used in the literature. The main research questions were: What do the Brazilians actually do with their leisure time? What do they like to do with their leisure time but they can't? And why don't they do what they wanted to?

After checking and validation, the data were tabulated by the statistical company hired to assist in issues related to the collection of instrument and the tabulation of data. They were inserted into the database that was developed exclusively for this purpose by an IT company hired, containing validation rules that prevented the entry of foreign data. Moreover, a consistency test was carried out in 100% of the data, ensuring correct and complete typing.

The questions of interviews were combined with the variables on education, income and social class, so that they could point out subsidies to rethink leisure public policy.

Results

The data collected in the survey showed that 77.9% of Brazilians population associated the word leisure with fun, while 20.5% related it with rest and among other options, only 0.3% viewed the term from the perspective of personal development, as shown below (Table 1).

The combination of leisure, mainly, with the functions of rest and fun, has already been pointed out by Isayama, Silva, and Lacerda (2011), was confirmed by the interviews, revealing that only a small portion of the population associates leisure to the possibility of personal and social development.

This result might be related to the limited understanding of the term leisure and/or idleness and what it means in our daily lives. Another aspect to consider is that leisure programmes which are offered by public and private institution, are very limited, and makes it difficult for people to choose between different options. Marcellino (2006) emphasizes this

Table 1. Leisure concept.

Leisure concept	Percentage
Rest	20.5
Fun	77.9
Development	0.3
Time	0.0
Idleness	1.5
Tourism	6.0
Physical/Sports	1.7
Artistic	0.0
Social	0.3
Intellectual	0.0
Others	1.0
Don't know/No answer	4.2

by stating that people do the same things during their leisure time and their daily lives, thus not really realizing the difference.

Moreover, a common belief is that leisure activities are seen as educational elements and therefore they need formal education processes in order to be implemented for the development of people. The discourse in cultural activities is educational in nature, and is in contrast to the discourse of leisure, which is associated with fun and rest.

Contrary to this understanding and as noted earlier in the article, leisure may have fundamental importance in peoples' lives, as it question future generations' value in societies while at the same time also influencing current social structure. Therefore, effective participation in leisure is not just critical and creative, but is also a critical time to experience values that contribute to moral and cultural order in society (Dumazedier, 1980a; Marcelino, 2006).

Among the 2400 respondents, only 39.1% had only finished elementary schooling. The survey highlighted that Brazilians with lower levels of schooling, reported their leisure activities during the week, consisted of activities that were social in nature (such as being with family, going to parties and places of social interaction, meetings, events, going to church, visiting friends etc.) and higher percentages was reported in leisure activities that were physical/sport in nature (such as sports, games, swimming, etc.).

Meanwhile, as education levels increase, the responses were not just in the previously mentioned activities, although still significant, but also include, activities of more artistic value (such as theatre, movies, concerts, hobbies, museums, listen to music, etc.) as well as intellectual activities (such as reading, lectures, crossword, book fairs, puzzles, etc).

Thus, when it comes to education, it was noted that low levels of schooling may influence the formation of this critical conscience taken by respondents, as pointed out by Pacheco (2010), and as reported by the data, the higher the education level of Brazilian respondents, the greater is the diversity of leisure options described as their preferences. Pinto (2008) also supports this finding by describing that access to education provides people with the opportunity of experiencing other activities and, at the same time, consider them very important.

Another factor to be considered is that, when asked about what they would do in their free time, tourist activities (such as camping, travel, tours, parks, malls, zoos, etc.) were reported as the main interest, irrespective of schooling levels.

Interestingly, this response identifies elements that are related to tourist and other experiences. The different leisure interests would mean that public policy would need

further review in order to increase the effective participation of the population and further development of these activities. The data highlighted the importance of the tourist experiences for the population and the various activities mentioned can be classified under this topic.

At the end of the 1970s, Requiça's (1977) reported that the leisure of shopkeeper class in São Paulo was characterized by not much travel, despite the increasing trend. Holiday time was mostly spent performing other services or even stays at home, mainly due to the low income of these workers.

The data highlighted the need for constant revaluation of actions related to tourism, and whether their relationships with leisure (spaces, equipment, human resources training, cultural and socio-cultural animation processes, etc.) (Camargo, 1985; Dumazedier, 1980b; Marcellino, 2001; Marcellino, Barbosa, & Mariano, 2008 Requiça & Camargo, 1989), or in particularly with the tourism area (lodging facilities, food, transportation, agency services, among others) (Beni, 2007; Panosso Netto & Trigo, 2009). In other words, local, state and federal tourism policies should pay special attention to this, seeing that tourism activities can have a great representation in leisure time-space of the population.

The responses when asked why they did not engage in tourist activities, was that people from lower educational levels did not have the financial resources to do so, while those from higher educational levels cited a lack of time. This response (57%) was significantly higher, among respondents with graduate degrees (Table 2).

The data related to income and what they did during their free time in the week, reported a higher percentage (23.7%) in physical/sports interests, while activities that were social in nature were only 17.1%. In addition, the preference for engaging in activities related to tourism during same time was an unanimous choice, found subjects with lower levels of income claimed a lack of financial resources, and those with higher wages stated a lack time as being the main barrier, a phenomenon similar to the level of education as previously mentioned.

This was also reported by Almeida and Gutierrez (2011), that the lack of money is one of the biggest barriers to leisure because it generates few alternatives beyond the physical and social activities. In addition, as pointed out by Marcellino (2012), we can relate this result to the fact that income influences, on a large scale, the available time of individuals who are forced to worry first, about their own survival and therefore putting leisure as a privilege.

This also explains the fact that respondents with lower incomes use their vacation for idleness, and those with higher income use it for tourism, which is in agreement with Souza (2008) that poor and rich people attend to different leisure facilities and take possession of their free time in different ways.

Table 2. Survey question: why don't you engage in tourist activities in your free time during the week? (Respondents who are graduates).

Reasons	Percentage
Time	57.0
Locality	2.8
Health	2.8
Money/Financial resources	22.7
Others	11.4
Nothing, I do all I want	14.2

When asked about what they did during their vacation time, most people with lower income indicated that they occupy their vacation time with idleness (in this case, taken as rest, sleep, stay home, sunbathing or simply not performing any activity). Between those who are unemployed and those who receive 5–10 times the minimum monthly salary, the higher salaries individuals cited participation in tourist activities. The Brazilians who receive up to 20 times the minimum salary, 50.9% of the respondents engaged in tourism, which is the activity that saw the highest percentage of engagement among Brazilians in this group (Table 3).

The question above allows us to see differences between what people really do during vacation and what they would like to do in this available time. The first finding is that they would like to spend less time in idleness than they actually do. Among those with no income, 43.2% engaged in idleness during their vacation and 40.2% of those with incomes 3–4 times the minimum wage also engaged in idleness. However, when asked if idleness was an activity they would like to engage in if given a choice, less than 4% responded in of both groups.

A similar situation was observed in relation to tourism. While 50.9% of those with income above 20 times that of the minimum wage actually engaged in tourist activities, a significant 81.8% of them stated it as something they would like to do during their vacation. This emphasizes the significantly differences between the things people want to do and things people are really able to do. Looking at the data of people with lower income levels it is possible to find a similar relation with more critical difference between wanting and actually engaging in tourist activities. For people with lower income levels, less than 31% of respondents actually engaged in tourist activities, while almost 86.5% of people pointed out tourist activities as a wish for their leisure time on vacation.

Among the various social classes, with regards to leisure activities practiced during the week, the A1 class chose equally (25% chosen in each activity) among practices with a physical content, sports and tourism. The classes A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 and D chose physical contact sports as the main interest. While Class E had the most leisure choice related activities (21.4% of the sample), followed with only a small difference by the activities with a social content (21.3%), as shown in the Table 4.

While classes A1, A2 and B1 indicated tourist activities with a greater predominance during their holiday periods (75%, 49% and 37% respectively), classes B2, C1, C2 and D indicated idleness as their main leisure activity (34.4%, 38.4%, 41.5% and 35.8% respectively).

The influence of the social class in leisure is also evident, showing several limitations and discrepancies of options, keeping the inequality of consumption and opportunities in leisure and creating the “leisure to the poor people”, despite the trend of customs homogenization proposed by the culture industry, according to Pimentel (2003). The data also

Table 3. Survey question: what do you do during vacation? (Respondents with salaries up to 20 times the minimum salary).

Activity	Percentage
Idleness	12.7
Tourism	50.9
Physical/sports	5.4
Don't know/No answer	30.9

Table 4. Survey question: what do you do in the free time during the week? (Respondents from E class).

Activity	Percentage
Idleness	21.4
Artistic	7.1
Social	21.3
Manual	7.1
Intellectual	14.2
Others	42.8

make Melo's approach (2008) very important, as it underscores the need to overcome this scenario providing quality leisure activities accessible for all.

Conclusions

We noted that the variables related to schooling, income and social class present in the collected data exerted a decisive influence in the way Brazilians use their leisure time. People with lower education and income levels were more limited in the activities that they carried participated while those with higher levels may have access to and are able to experience a greater number of activities of a more diverse content/nature.

In addition, we identified that social class is linked to the above-mentioned factors, in such a way contributing to rise of inequalities in Brazilian's leisure engagements, causing a majority to not be able to do all that they wish to do in their available time.

Therefore, the data presented in the survey "The Brazilian's Leisure" research project, in its relation to schooling, income and social classes, highlights the necessity of specific interventions to develop leisure activities to ensure more engagement by Brazilians. This has to be done, taking into consideration, various factors such as governmental policies and how leisure activities were historically developed in different areas of our country, while expanding leisure opportunities to people in their daily lives.

The challenge facing the different leisure policies is the development of actions that are intended to increase participation among people – critical and creatively – and to seek the formation of new values that can collaborate in improving cultural participation. The improvement in cultural participation will allow the rights of citizens in a social environment to flourish.

Thus, the imbalances that exist between the representations and achievements of the Brazilian leisure should be the objective of specific actions in the area that aims to discuss and implement activities related to the different elements of a leisure policy. Policies that relate to the construction, and administration of leisure spaces as well as access to these spaces, need to be improved in order to facilitate socio-cultural development.

In this scenario, the society would not only be conscious of the leisure options that are available, but would also have educational, financial and social means to enjoy them (Santos, 2000). These policies can be linked to the social sector, such as the policies of transportation, health, housing, and education, in order to reduce inequalities – a factor that could contribute to reducing the disparity of income distribution in the country, thus minimizing the gap between different social classes.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was supported by Brazilian Ministry of Sports.

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