59 - THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE: AREA RECREATION AND SOCIABILITY

MINÉIA CARVALHO RODRIGUES;
RODRIGO AMÂNCIO DE ASSIS;
WALLACE TURRA.
Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso, Pontal do Araguaia, MT, Brasil.
mineicr76@gmail.com

doi: 10.16887/85.a1.59

INTRODUCTION

This article is the result of a study on the configuration of leisure space in theUniversities of the Third Age (U3A).Leisure targeted the elderly emerges in a context where a set of widely publicized speeches by the Brazilian media insists on destabilization of expectations and images that resemble aging. Shows that the age dimension is not a relevant marker of behaviors and lifestyles and propagates a series of recipes: body-building techniques, healthy food, gymnastics, drugs, dances and other forms of leisure that seek to show how those who do not feel children should behave, regardless of age.

These new forms of behavior are in the media and create a new stereotype, the "heroes of aging." Featherstone (1995) calls the aging heroes of various images conveyed by the media, showing that people in the face of the aging process, seem to remain forever young in their work habits, body posture, facial expressions and general behavior. In view of Debert (1999), rejects the idea that old age itself, considering that age is not a marker defining the relevant experiences. If the elderly were previously homogenized by a vision disability, losses, today are based on the image of an old active, healthy, in search of leisure activities.

This leisure that brings a new active lifestyle becomes a fundamental element in the process of deconstruction of old age and construction of old age. In the first case, denies or excludes the dependent elderly, who do not interact socially, they do not develop new social roles, which do not seek leisure activities and, in the construction of "third age", highlights the elderly active, participatory with a dynamic lifestyle that seek to interact socially, that integrate into new social roles and participate in recreational activities. This process brings with it a new moral age, who is the elder involved in volunteer activities, physical activities, leisure and tourism.

This notion that the elderly should remain active is linked to the activist theory, which seeks to address the inadequacy of aging and was strongly influenced by the theory of disengagement (CUMMING, HENRY, 1961). Activity theory focuses on the decline in physical and mental activities, usually associated with old age is a determining factor of psychological disorders and social withdrawal in the elderly

According to activity theory the aging people in good condition is one that remains active and able to resist the social disengagement. For this theory, the greater involvement of older people in activities, greater satisfaction and therefore are the best physical and mental health, self-image and social acceptance.

There are several criticisms of the theory of activity, but a key is in relation to his basic proposition - that the "good aging" is to be active, resisting social disengagement, social roles, find replacements, maintain status and activities - which can today be considered a prospect "aging" (Siqueira, 2002). This theory ignores the heterogeneity and diversity of experiences of aging, denies its specific characteristics, not accepting any other model other than the active elderly.

This understanding that the elderly should keep busy with leisure activities carries an instrumental and functionalist use of leisure, characterizing it as a social right that all citizens - including the elderly - have in relation to meeting their needs. Thus the elderly is seen as the focus of educational, leisure and tourism, with the sole aim of which is a social group to be controlled and monitored, especially in his "spare time". The creation of these programs targeted to the elderly - University of Third Age (U3A), the Senior Open Schools, clubs and associations of the elderly - often are more focused on demands for restraint and social environment of elderly people than to ensure its right to spaces of sociability, education and leisure. Leisure, this perspective is seen as a possibility of maintaining the social equilibrium, diffusion of new forms of social behavior (innovative ways to live and behave in society, modes of dress, food, fun, socialize, socialize, consume, participate etc..), with clearly defined goals of social balance, legitimizing practices and behaviors to be followed in the construction of a new age.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Throughout the research conducted at the Universities of the Third Age (U3A) selected (U3A-1 and-2), we used different methods and techniques in order to complement, deepen and cruising information. The observation, interviews and field notes were used.

At first, there was what Magnani (1996) calls the "participation of recognition." During this period, I conducted systematic observations, all of which were recorded in field notebook.Concomitant to the observations, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the subjects selected according to criteria mentioned before.

Using data from interviews and observations in hand, began the analysis, trying to uncover the explicit and implicit messages in the interviews and diary notes from the field. Through content analysis, I tried to discover implicit and explicit messages in the present observations (forms of behavior, gestures, and emotions) and the expressions of the subjects interviewed

In this process of analyzing the Universities of the Third Age emerge as leisure space and sociability.

THE SPACE: SOCIABILITY AND LEISURE

People will not even U3A just to fill their time "free." The search for space that goes beyond that, or "mind your head" or to arrange an obligation. The observations indicate that this represents a landmark opportunity for contact, social interaction, and to establish close ties, against. And here the notion of piece, addressed by Magnani (1998), is present mainly in what concerns the social network locked.

In both institutions, the elderly seeking a form of sociability. The observations reveal that the area serves as a reference point, which shows the elderly in dress, language, gestures, body expression, posture - the bit where they belong. The U3A constitutes a spatiality in which people are identified by symbols, representations and mediations. Wherever it comes from, what they seek is an assemblage point for the construction and strengthening of bonds. When the elderly are absent from their homes and head for that her piece, do not just aiming to occupy the "free" time, to seek knowledge and update, but go there to find their mates, their peers, the "colleague" as referred Glorious (U3A -1): the "old known" the staff of the piece. "The most important thing for me is that, meeting with people ..." (Spring - U3A -2).

When there is more the feeling of belonging to a place and the working group, are other spaces, such as U3A, they do

have that feeling and create new social ties and values, structuring the identity of old age (Peixoto, 1997, p . 187). In the society we live in, the relationships are based on individualism, the impersonality, the formalism, thus reducing the possibilities of social contacts, to establish new friendships, which is precisely what the old search.

In the comments, I could see that in both institutions the elderly transformed that space into a venue. Do not go there just for the classes, so that some groups arrive before the time to chat, meet with friends and others remain there after it ends. The speeches of students at both institutions confirmed the comments: "I come before to the meeting of colleagues, right?" (Gardenia - U3A -1). "I come before you to chat, have a teller of anecdotes and stories ..." (Fleur-de-April - U3A -1). In U3A -1, some students before they arrive and head to the room of coordination. For some, chat before class with the secretary is essential. Also noticed at the same institution, many students around the hallway and missed a most appropriate place where they could meet. Already in the second-U3A, banks around the school are conducive to the meetings, exchange of ideas and recipes, chat before class.

According to Peixoto (1997, p. 86), "in the imagination of older people who attend programs for seniors, the U3A symbolizes a suspended territory between public and private, between the street and the house, or simply the ballroom of old. " Therefore we can say that U3A symbolizes the "piece".

The U3A seems to be a territory of the existence of a sense of belonging and common identity among members of U3A, allowing new social networks are woven.

Most authors means sociability as a way of establishing social relationships, living in social and collective interaction between people, ie links created by individuals in different social situations.

Although the exercise of sociability experienced in U3A not replace other practices, such as family life, neighborly relations and religious practices, it is growing appreciation of this experience in life of respondents. When speaking of the significance of space in their lives, U3A appears as a meeting place, of being together, sharing, "party on the block." Older people value highly the relationship face to face interaction with others, the ability to talk. The dialogue with the other was a form of "leisure" most cited.

Elderly people who go into space U3A I to verbalize feelings, emotions, ideas, knowledge, culture and recreation, may not realize, as I realized in my remarks, that their bodies also speak and reveal often lacking in an elderly " people, "seeking other through smiles, gestures, silence, the look, the sigh, the little touches and big hugs.

We can not deny that U3A, while institutional space, allows for sociability called by Willmott and Young (1960), secondary (formal). According to them, forms of sociability occurring in public or private institutional bodies such as clubs and seniors residences. These forms open up a limited network of relationships with respect to age, gender, cultural and social level. In that space of coexistence and interaction, there are rules of conduct guided to a certain formality, rules of being together, attitudes, feelings and gestures. However sociability woven from institutional intervention allows other non-institutional networks that can be classified according to Willmott and Young (1960), as primary (informal) practices that are spontaneous sociability. The interviews indicate that the network of sociability within U3A is extended outside the institutional space for leisure activities (playing cards, movies, shopping, snack bar ...). The meetings are intermediated by leisure activities outside the U3A allow the sociability network extends.

Smaller groups are formed around preferences for some cultural content of leisure. Thus, leisure is responsible for the social networks woven outside the institutional space and reinforces the idea of group closer relations.

These meetings outside the institutional space, mediated by the leisure, may open new opportunities to meet and bring up social networks.

Well worth considering, as Macedo (1986, p. 189) that, even pointing out that there is also a conservative size and reproductive social practices of leisure, such playful practices do not only mean conformity and alienation, but - like other things in life - are among "socially acceptable forms available from the world map and find the place in it." We can say that the party on "turf" still exists.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The theoretical framework shows that the sociocultural construction of old age - marked by various social, cultural and economic - has developed in recent decades, when individuals with advanced ages have become increasingly visible and began to occupy different spaces in social organization. Old age came from a situation of "invisible" to "identified" generating a new image about yourself, which contributed to the creation of the term elderly. There was, too, such as leisure emerges in this context, being a fundamental element in the process of deconstruction of old age and construction of the concept of old age, bringing a new set of behaviors and lifestyles, who identify more with the young than the elderly themselves.

This study allows us to assert that the experiments conducted, U3A, U3A -1 and-2, with regard to education for the elderly, have shown a dynamic opportunity, flexible and affordable to meet the desires and needs that have sought. These have contributed positively to the welfare to self-image and interpersonal relationships. There seems to be a strengthening of the group, which is related to a new social consciousness about aging. Thus, older people become agents of social change, contributing to a transformation of the image of the old society.

The observations revealed that U3A is a social space for leisure, depending on the activities, in general, be carried out collectively, allowing direct contact between individuals. Thus represents an opportunity for people to enjoy themselves, relax and develop themselves personally and socially, enjoying their values. It is the pleasure that made and makes these institutions bring together, every day, more of a loyal audience.

The U3A can still be a place of organization culture, which developed a training geared to the promotion of man, his conscience and emancipation for their access to cultural assets and production and (re) development of culture, ie , to the questioning and modification of the objective and subjective conditions that are set.I think it was possible within the limits of this research, raising the interesting aspects regarding the ownership of U3A as leisure space.

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Rua 17 n°522 Jardim Amazônia I
Barra do Garças – MT - CEP: 78600-000

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE: AREA RECREATION AND SOCIABILITY

ABSTRACT

The great challenge the one that this work proposed left the one of unmask the leisure in the institutional space of Universities of the Third Age. For such, we search for to verify which the leisure concept that sustains your proposals, the cultural contents of leisure predominant, the objectives of your proposals in relation to the leisure, the leisure activities developed and what is denominating leisure in your proposals. While methodology, the study was accomplished by the combination of bibliographical research with the documental researches and of field. In the search of understanding as the leisure is configured in the institutional space of Universities of the Third Age, it tried to juxtapose the data of the bibliographical research with the one of the documental research, of the observation and of the interview. With the accomplishment of this study, it was possible to affirm that the leisure is the essence of investigated Universities of the Third Age and it is configured in this institutional space through your contents social, physical-sporting, manuals, intellectuals, artistic and tourist. The study also revealed that Universities of the Third Age represents new manners of living the leisure in the age.

KEYWORDS: leisure; aging; Universities of the Third Age

L'UNIVERSITÉ DU TROISIÈME ÂGE: ESPACE DE LOISIRS ET SOCIALITÉ

RÉSUMÉ

Le grand défi auquel ce travail se propose est dévoiler le loisir dans l'espace institutionnel des universités du troisième âge. À cette fin, nous cherchons à vérifier quelle notion de loisir soutient votre propositions, le contenu culturel récréatif prédominant, les objectifs des propositions des loisirs, les activités de loisirs développées et ce qui est consideré come loisirs dans leurs propositions. A propos de la méthodologie, l'étude a été réalisée par la combinaison de recherche bibliographique avec recherche documentaire et sur le terrain.En cherchant à comprendre comment se configure le loisir dans l'espace institutionnel des universités du troisième âge, les données des recherches bibliographiques ont été juxtaposés avec ceux des recherche documentaire, observation et entretien.Avec l'achèvement de cette étude, il était possible d'affirmer que le loisir est l'essence des universités du troisième âge étudiées et configure cet espace institutionnel, par le biais de son contenu social, sportif, physique, manuelle, intellectuelle, artistique et turistique.L'étude a également révélé qu'universités du troisième âge représentent de nouvelles façons de découvrir les loisirs dans la vieillesse.

MOTS-CLÉS: Loisirs ; Vieillissement ; Universités du troisième âge.

LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LA MEJOR EDAD: ESPACIO DE OCIO Y SOCIABILIDAD

RESUMEN

El grande desafío a que este trabajo se propuso fue el de desvendar el ocio en espacio institucional de las Universidades de tercera Edad. Para tanto, buscamos verificar cual el concepto de ocio que sostiene sus propuestas, los contenidos culturales de ocio predominantes, los objetivos de sus propuestas con relación al ocio, las actividades de ocio desarrolladas y que están denominando de ocio en sus propuestas. En cuanto metodología, el estudio ha sido realizado mediante la combinación de investigación bibliográfica co investigación documental y de campo. En la búsqueda para comprender como se configura el ocio en el espacio institucional de las Universidades de la Tercera Edad, se ha procurado yuxtaponer los datos de la investigación bibliográfica con los de la investigación documental, de la observación y de la entrevista. Con la realización de este estudio, fue posible afirmar que el ocio es la esencia de las universidades de tercera edad investigadas y configurase en este espacio institucional, por medio de sus contenidos sociales, físico deportivos, manuales, intelectuales, artísticos y turísticos. El estudio también reveló que las Universidades de Tercera Edad representan nuevos modos de verificar el ocio en la mayoridad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Ocio, envejecimiento, universidades de tercera edad.

A UNIVERSIDADE DA TERCEIRA IDADE: ESPAÇO DE LAZER E SOCIABILIDADE

RESUMO

O grande desafio a que este trabalho se propôs foi o de desvendar o lazer no espaço institucional das Universidades da Terceira Idade. Para tal, buscamos verificar qual o conceito de lazer que sustenta suas propostas, os conteúdos culturais de lazer predominantes, os objetivos de suas propostas em relação ao lazer, as atividades de lazer desenvolvidas e o que estão denominando lazer em suas propostas. Enquanto metodologia, o estudo foi realizado mediante a combinação de pesquisa bibliográfica com as pesquisas documental e de campo. Na busca de compreender como se configura o lazer no espaço institucional das Universidades da Terceira Idade, procurou-se justapor os dados da pesquisa bibliográfica com os da pesquisa documental, da observação e da entrevista. Com a realização deste estudo, foi possível afirmar que o lazer é a essência das Universidades da Terceira Idade investigadas e configura-se, neste espaço institucional, por meio dos seus conteúdos sociais, físico-esportivos, manuais, intelectuais, artísticos e turísticos. O estudo também revelou que as Universidades da Terceira Idade representam novos modos de vivenciar o lazer na velhice.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Lazer; envelhecimento; Universidades da Terceira Idade.