

Spare time: understandings enunciated by Master candidates in Latin American *lazer* (leisure) and *recreación* (recreation) programs

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Abstract: This article is part of a more comprehensive and objective research examining the views on spare time of teachers, practitioners and students of five master's degree programs in Leisure/Spare Time/Recreation in four Latin American countries: Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico. The text also seeks to identify and discuss the fundamentals used by respondents to support their views. The methodology includes a literature survey and interviews with 25 volunteers from five institutions studied. The results showed that the so-called spare time, and also the understanding of leisure and recreation often associated with it, usually appear as spheres opposite to work. Although not unanimous, the prevailing view on spare time is as time remaining after the completion of professional activities, obligations and other engagements, that is, free time to do whatever one likes and wishes. Some respondents expressed their choice not to use the concept of spare time,

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highlighting the tensions and contradictions that permeate the term.

Key words: Leisure Activities. Recreation. Students.

1 RESEARCH TOPIC, GOAL AND METHODOLOGY:

CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY

The term *spare time* emerges as a socio-historical category within Western capitalist societies primarily as a result of changes caused by capitalist industrial revolutions triggered in 18th-England. According to Dumazedier (1979) – one of the authors whose theoretical thinking has strong influence on leisure studies in Latin America – the process was observed not only in urban-industrial capitalist societies, but also in the former USSR.

In this context, so-called spare time was taken as something apart from working time, devoid of utilitarian or productive purposes and considered as non-mandatory. Given this understanding, we ask: is that the prevailing understanding of spare time among Latin American scholars studying leisure and recreation?

That was the central question guiding discussions undertaken in this article, which is the result of a more comprehensive study and aims at examining the views on spare time by teachers, professionals and students linked to five Master's Degree programs in Leisure/Spare time/Recreation in four Latin American countries: Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico. The text also seeks to identify and discuss the fundamentals used by respondents to support their views.

As for methodology, the investigation took a qualitative approach (LAVILLE; DIONNE, 1999). In order to substantiate it, a literature review was conducted by studying books and other publications related to the topics investigated. The research was enriched by interviews with 25 volunteers linked to five institutions that agreed to participate in the study: (a) Universidad Regional

Miguel Hidalgo (URMH), Mexico, which has offered as Master's Degree Program in Recreation and Spare Time Management since 1997; (b) Universidad YMCA, Mexico, which created a Master's Degree Program in Recreation in 2004; (c) Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), with its Professional Master's Degree in recreation, whose first class graduated in 2005; (d) Escuela Politécnica del Ejército (ESPE), Ecuador, which has offered a Master's Degree Program in Spare Time and Recreation since 2006, and (e) Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil, where the current Master's Degree in Leisure Studies had its first class enrolled in 2007.

Five people were interviewed under each proposal: the program's coordinator, two professors, a student and a graduate. Respondents were suggested by coordinators and interviews followed a semistructured script. All interviews were conducted individually and statements were recorded after respondents' formal agreement (expressed in the Statement of Free and Informed Consent). They were later transcribed in full in respondents' mother tongues.

The following strategy was adopted to preserve anonymity of each respondent: after excerpts of statements, a designation code was used that began with the letter E (interview's initial in Portuguese), followed by that person's involvement with the Masters' Program, including the options C. (coordinators), P1. or P2. (professors), E. (students' initial in Portuguese) or EG. (graduates' initials in Portuguese). Then the program's country was indicated by B for Brazil, E for Ecuador, CR for Costa Rica, M1 for Mexico/URMH and M2 for Mexico/YMCA.

Comparative study was used as a mode of inquiry in order to overcome particularity and to find regularities, to try to analyze similarities and differences within each master's program after indications by Bruyne, Herman and Schoutheete (1977). Information was organized and analyzed by iterative construction that integrates the content analysis strategy outlined by Laville and

Dionne (1999). Thus, the analysis was built on a step-by-step basis, including reflection on and interpretation of information collected throughout the whole process, as will be discussed in the next section.

2 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON SPARE TIME

In this article, respondents' views on spare time are examined according to master's program and country, enabling us to see possible similarities and differences that mark each context.

As discussed previously, it is common to conceive spare time as a non-working time, allegedly free of obligations and allowing free choice, as suggested by Dumazedier (1979). These ideas were expressed by some respondents from the two Mexican universities studied here, as can be seen below:

Spare time as that number of hours, in the division of time we humans all have. Well, part of it refers to that spare time, but we're talking more in quantitative terms. (E.C.M2.)

So, for example, I have spare time after doing all my activities. It is the time I have left. (E.P1.M2.)

Spare time is a way to calculate free time ... leisure time. I have to give it to myself. I hardly speak of spare time. (E.P2.M2.)

Leisure and recreation have to be given some spare time, free from the tensions of the formality of a job, from the formality of being home with the children, just doing what one wants to do. (E.E.M1.)

[...] Spare time is the time in question day or night, a day's natural time we have left after all obligations, to do some activity and that is when recreation comes. (E.P2.M1.)

The statements above reveal that spare time is conceived by respondents linked the two Mexican masters' programs as that time

left after one has fulfilled mandatory activities, i.e. free time. To define spare time, they underline the temporal division and place it as time remaining after obligations, including formal work and all the tension involved. Such understanding coincides with Padilha's words (2004, p.220):

Most authors studying leisure see spare time as time when nothing is done out of obligation; therefore, it is time freed from obligations, when one can choose to do some pleasurable activity, to rest or simply to do nothing.

However, other interviewees in Mexico pointed out distinct elements to show their views on spare time, placing it beyond residual time and linking it with leisure (*ocio*) and recreation (*recreación*).

I identify leisure with a space, a situation in which one can take part in recreation. But not under a residual concept as we might have in everyday life; spare time I have left after fulfilling other obligations. I want to see it and would like to contribute for any individual to identify it as a time devoted to oneself, which is reserved to be occupied at first as that person wants, based on his or her free determination, with autonomy and not depending on other circumstances rather than one's own decision. (E.E.M2.)

[...] Spare time to me is exactly that, and it is a personal perception, it is how I focus on reading my book, on listening to my music, on sitting and watching the sunset, on talking with my partner. (E.EG.M2.)

These views stress spare time as non-residual time, time dedicated to oneself, with autonomy, seen as a result of the subject's own decision and free self-determination. Such perception qualifies the usual meaning of *spare time* and can be supplemented by the following statements:

And in the case of spare time, today, with this fast life we live, many people tell me "I have no

spare time”. I think we all have some. We have to make those spaces. It depends on personal time management in the first place. We must be clear that work is not everything; we need to have some space for ourselves, for the family; and all that is based on managing our own time. And maybe if some have more spare time than others, that’s true, but the question is how they live that time, if they’re committed to themselves to create those spaces. (E.EG.M1.)

And spare time is related to the issue of this time and social space in which [...] not everything done in spare time is positive and will lead you to recreation. That’s a question, that many of the things you do in your spare time are also negative. (E.C.M1.)

These accounts raise several intriguing issues, including people’s perceived lack of time to devote themselves to what they like as well as their need to expand the possibilities of having more time for themselves and their families. It was also commented that it is essential to be clear about how one experiences spare time, which could be a moment of leisure and recreation (*ocio* and *recreación*) or be used to perform some sort of activity outside obligations. For some, these issues are directly associated with the importance of properly managing their time.

However, managing time under the linear logic that characterizes urban, industrial and capitalist societies can hinder the understanding of time as a historical-social construction. According to Elias (1998), time is not a natural object and does not exist on its own. It is rather the symbol of a social institution and the result of a long process of learning, coercion and self-discipline. It thus symbolizes habitus and representations embedded in a society. Such representations are also expressed in the so-called spare time, which, as a rule, is not always conceived as a historical-social construction.

Some of these views were also found in Ecuador. As can

be seen in the statements that follow, respondents focus on the temporal dimension by opposing spare time and working time. This understanding is quite common when we take into account the most common meanings to elucidate the term.

Spare time is time left for us to enjoy ourselves as human beings after having fulfilled all our working times or our family, social times; that is, it is something that is oneself; something that is for oneself. Because there are plenty of times, if we look carefully, so the time one has to do things that one would like to do. (E.EG.E.)

By spare time I tend more to the view taken by a Mexican, Gonzalo Llacas, from other foreign authors; he said that spare time was the container and leisure was the content. (E.P2.E.)

According to several authors, spare time is under the scope, say, of work. And one can also find leisure in work activities. But spare time, however, is seen from the other side as the end of working hours, hours at work, study hours, so now is spare time. [...] But for us, we take it a little more philosophically, from the point of view that man at all times has spare time to feel that he is growing, to feel that he exists, to feel that he is a man who is capable in all aspects, and therefore we say that we are like ... in order to separate, something like that, a little. (E.C.E.)

As indicated by the comments by respondents from the Master's Program in Ecuador, spare time is seen as a time of "non-work". In some cases, it extends the idea of spare time as that time after work obligations and other family or social commitments, representing a moment to do what one likes. Therefore, the understanding of spare time is directly linked with leisure and recreation (*ocio* and *recreación*).

Understanding spare time as a particular fraction of time is also common in the context of the master's program in Costa Rica – an aspect mentioned by five respondents:

Spare time, then, [is] the portion of time that is not devoted to work or to study or to family or social or personal obligations. (E.EG.CR.)

And spare time, with the division of time. There is a time for physiological needs, a time for work, study and everything, and the remaining time, when I have to do nothing as an obligation – that would be like the time I devote to myself. Spare time includes recreation but they are different. (E.E.CR.)

[...] Spare time is all that time I have available in which I am not doing any activity that is mandatory [...]. That would be my spare time. And it's in that sense that I relate leisure as spare time. Although there is a concept out there that sees leisure time as spare time well spent. (E.P2.CR.)

[...] as you say, spare time is free from all sorts of commitments – work, study, social. So it is the time when I decide what I might do, which activities I want to do – whether recreational or non-recreational, because it can be an activity of a different sort. But in the end it is time free from any commitment you might have. (E.P1.CR.)

Spare time is the time left to the person after work, after family activities, after everything. [...] People have to understand that spare time is the use I make of that time – proper, healthy, positive – to be better. But after all obligations to family, work, etc. [...] So we tell people always to use their spare time positively to their own well-being. If we treat it negatively, it all goes wrong. [...] You see negative spare time at bars, with all those people drinking every day of the week. They say they are happy, because they did an inquiry: Are you happy drinking like that? Well, I'm very happy. He is causing physical damage to himself, he goes home and beats his wife, etc. What is the purpose of that? (E.C.CR.)

These statements reveal that respondents from Costa Rica also view spare time as a portion of time that is not dedicated to

work, study, family or social obligations, or to take care of one's own life (including physiological needs such as sleeping, eating, etc.). In such terms, spare time is assimilated as a residual time from work, which is in accordance with Dumazedier (1979). It is also understood as the time one dedicates to oneself. According to that interpretation, recreation might contribute for spare time to be used positively.

In this aspect lies a difference of views articulated by respondents from Costa Rica compared to Mexicans and Ecuadorians mentioned above. After all, the view on spare time emphasizes the importance of their correct and proper use in order for it to be sane and positive. E.C.CR. highlights three types of spare time: negative, neutral and positive, showing some of the moral aspects that can be ascribed to time.

The positive/negative binomial is quite common in academic works on leisure and recreation (*lazer/ocio* and *recreação/recreación*, respective in Portuguese and Spanish), asserting the existence of two opposing fields that inevitably end up reinforcing a dichotomous interpretation. The fact that any polarized classification involves value judgments cannot be overlooked, and these value judgments often vary according to the context. What is seen as positive by some people or in some contexts may be harmful to others, and that relative character must also be taken into consideration.

Aspects harmful to people and society can be easily identified in self-destructive addictions, prostitution and vandalism, for instance. However, in many social practices, they can be masked and not appear as such. Furthermore, the process of classifying certain human actions is not always clear, causing some to be naturalized and accepted while others generate perplexity and rejection.

Rojek (2011) is an author criticized for addressing controversial issues, which he called abnormal or deviant forms of leisure. The author argues that it is in spare time that people – freed from many of

the restrictions that govern behavior – enjoy greater autonomy and flexibility to act according to their choices. So, they often engage in leisure practices labeled as negative because such activities are related to transgression of rules and social conventions.

Based on research discussing drugs and alcohol use, for instance, the author explains that people who seek that path are vulnerable to developing “cultures of dependence” but they have a variety of elements that justify their subjective motivation to do so. All this often relates to the need for release from restrictive aspects of everyday life, which expresses the subject’s strong sense of being different and detached from society (ROJEK, 2011).

In this article, we recognize that people’s involvement with illegal practices can be motivated by the search for new experiences, excitement, adrenaline, etc, and that they are often aware of the risks. In some cases, this may represent an evasion strategy, but in others, it may be a transgressive attitude towards the prevailing social order. Therefore, we consider that different human actions are complex and do not necessarily have a single cause, and not all of them are alienated and self-destructive attitudes.

Themes like these are controversial and created contradictions, but one cannot adopt a simplistic approach towards them; they demand thicker analyzes in studies on the subject. Thus, the thoughts presented here are not intended to exhaust the debate or to be an apology of practices commonly considered harmful to people or society, such as drug use (whether legal or not) and vandalism, for instance. The aim is to show that the issue is much more complex than assumed and therefore requires an analysis of its root causes. That certainly escapes the positive/negative binomial – a view that needs to be discussed because it might be masking those stakes hidden in so-called spare time, thus silencing experiences and power relations.

The meanings of spare time were also discussed by Brazilian respondents and they instigate other reflections that, at some points, contrast sharply with the views of respondents from Costa Rica,

Ecuador and Mexico. First, uncertainties and limitations can be found in the use of the term, as indicated in the following statement.

[...] to tell you the truth, I can't even tell what spare time is, because it is hard for me to speak about spare time because you are always connected to so many things. If spare time is that time off working time, you'll not always use it as pleasure [...]. So I think it's hard to tell the difference. (E.E.B.)

It should be noted that in each context, collective life is often organized as “social times”, i.e., at specified moments to perform activities related to work, family, education, rest, etc. Social life is governed by the interconnection of those moments (PADILHA, 2004). However, everyday life in today's urbanized cities differs from some contexts in which social times are governed by other logics, often connected to the cycles of nature rather than the artificial time set by the clock. That is how the main meaning of spare time today is mainly non-working time (GOMES, ELIZALDE, 2009).

Another Brazilian respondent pointed out some aspects that are not always considered when using the term spare time, and chose not to use the concept.

[Free time] is a concept that I simply do not recognize. I usually joke with people: free from what and free from whom? So for me, this is a concept that doesn't exist, I even joke like this: every time we want to qualify things it's because we are not really getting what they mean, so free time is a concept that I try not work with; I prefer the notion of time than free time. [...] So this is a concept that I find slippery, if I have to drop a concept, that's the concept I chose to drop. (E.P2.B.)

Such view may be related to Padilha's (2004) interpretation. She points out that most authors studying leisure link spare time to the idea of a time when nothing is done out of obligation. Following this logic, leisure “would be a sphere of that spare time – or freed time – that would imply performing activities” (PADILHA, 2004,

p.220). With that, it is as if spare time were a time freed from obligations when one can choose to do any pleasurable activity, to rest or even to do nothing.

In this line of discussion, the contradictions that pervade so-called “spare time” were also highlighted by another Brazilian respondent:

I see spare time as a time of dispute, a time that is demarcated by control and interconnections all the time [...]. But people also resist. There are people who live, for example, in villages and outskirt suburbs and seek greater knowledge of those other leisure interests, who seek to have enriching experiences in their spare time. They pursue these other contents, they seek to go deeper, they seek to have other leisure experiences. (E.EG.B.)

Respondents E.P2.B. and E.EG.B. seek to understand the category of spare time beyond quantitative terms, prompting critical rethinking of views that reduce it to residual time freed from work and other obligations.

As already pointed out, time out of work will not always be fully available for leisure, since several non-professional activities are performed daily – such as domestic work, dedication to children and adults who require support, travelling, physiological needs and personal care, political or religious participation, among others. Thus, even when considering that spare time is a time that can be allocated to pleasurable activities, such a perspective can strengthen the belief that it is a neutral, empty, abstract period disconnected from a broader context.

One of the interviews in the Brazilian Master’s Program sought to broaden the understanding of spare time by stressing it as time available and as time earned:

[...] there surely is a spare time that we free for leisure, it’s time available, because it all really happens as a function of norms for socializing and it is earned time, because there are actually two points: it’s personally earned and it was earned by

organized workers throughout history, from the labors of society. (E.C.B.)

In fact, the terms “time available” and “time earned” are used alternatively by some Brazilian scholars due to constraints generally associated with the concept of spare time. When one chooses the term time earned, one is usually considering the possibility of personal choice or earning, or associations are made with social gains in the field of labor that ended up allowing, in several countries, the adoption of institutionalized times for leisure: weekends, vacations and retirement, and also civil or religious holidays. The problem is that institutionalized times do not guarantee that these periods will necessarily be intended for leisure, which underscores the importance of expanding the possibilities to experience them. (GOMES, 2008)

When considering *time available*, the aim is often to highlight the existence of time established out of obligations, which could be devoted exclusively to leisure. On this, Dumazedier (1979) believes that leisure time is granted by society to individuals when they are freed from multiple obligations, according to the social norms of the moment. To paraphrase the author, it is time made available by the reduction of working hours and diminishing family, social and spiritual obligations as well as “release from socio-political obligations. [...] Such available time is not the result of a decision made by the individual; it is primarily the result of an evolution of the economy and society”. (DUMAZEDIER, 1979, p.92)

Even if the terms *time available* and *time earned* seek to overcome the limits that surround the concept of spare time, they are also characterized as time off work and other obligations. Therefore, all these views (free, available or earned time) risk to keep the fragmentation of the very notion of time in social dynamics. In order not to strengthen an abstract view of time (ELIAS, 1998), such interpretations need to be discussed as symbols of a social institution. It is also necessary to consider the reality of today’s contexts that are not governed by the stopwatch and by the notion of linear time. Different logics may show different facets of time as

a social-historical construction and, therefore, each unique reality has its own contemporaneity.

These considerations are also valid for contexts deeply marked by new technologies, which challenge traditional understandings of working time/spare time and substantially alter our perceptions of time and space. According to Lipovetsky (2004), in the 1980s-1990s, certain presentism settled in, underlying neoliberal globalization and the information revolution, which combined and then compressed space-time, strongly emphasizing the logic of brevity. Thus, “electronic and computer-based media allows ‘real-time’ information and exchanges, creating a sense of simultaneity and immediacy” (LIPOVETSKY, 2004 pp. 62-63). Thus, the author states that “never before has humanity launched such a challenge to man and space-time” (LIPOVETSKY, 2004, p.68).

Such considerations underscore the importance of questioning abstract representations of time and space. Based on Lefebvre and Santos, Gomes (2011) argues that it is not possible to define historical and spatial events out of their determinations or without considering the totality from which they come and which they reproduce. This perspective indicates partiality in views of leisure that overlook territoriality and emphasize the aspect of time, mainly focusing on the time that is residual from productive or school work. Thus, social time cannot be explained without social space and vice versa, since these dimensions are inseparable.

Therefore, time/space consists of objective, subjective, symbolic, concrete and material aspects. These reflections reveal conflicts, contradictions and power relations, and therefore challenge the different views on spare time that circulate in different contexts, especially in the Latin American context.

3 DISCUSSION AND FINAL REMARKS

In the varied understandings enunciated by professors, practitioners and graduate students interviewed in this research,

the prevailing idea was mainly that of spare time as time remaining after mandatory activities have been performed. Following this interpretation, spare time is a time of “non-work” which comes after professional activities, obligations and other commitments (family, social, etc.), being a time freed for whatever one likes and wishes to do. While this understanding was not unanimous and each Master’s Program had its peculiar approach to the topic, it can be said that the views enunciated by respondents from Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico confirmed the core question guiding this article: spare time was mostly conceived as a temporal fraction out of working time, non-mandatory and devoid of utilitarian or productive purposes.

It is noteworthy, however, that not all Latin-American respondents understand spare time as being residual from working time. Thus, it was set as time that – being linked to recreation and leisure – can be devoted to oneself, with autonomy, as a result of the subject’s own decision and free determination as was pointed out mainly by Mexican and Ecuadorian respondents.

Another finding was the idea that spare time needs to be managed or controlled to maximize its use and even to avoid social problems and the occurrence of addictions, fighting the risk of unproductiveness, laziness, dawdling, inactivity and idleness. These were mentioned by some Latin American respondents, especially from Costa Rica, who pointed out the need to positively employ spare time, which would depend on its “correct” and “proper” use. However, as discussed in this article, what might be considered positive by some people or in some contexts might be harmful in other realities, demanding future discussions and analyses.

Some respondents manifested their choice not to use the concept of spare time because of the contradictions pervading the term. This understanding was mentioned only in the context of Brazil, where the importance of critically rethinking the understanding that reduces spare time to residual time was suggested. For those subjects, time off work is not fully freed and

available for leisure and other obligations and responsibilities must be taken into account in addition to those related to productive work.

These results show that so-called spare time – and also the views of leisure and recreation often associated with it – usually appear as spheres supposedly contrary to work, which are paradoxically essential for the maintenance of the productive force and complement it.

However, as Adorno (2002, p.64) stated, this logic that distinguishes work from spare time and vice versa is riddled with contradictions:

[...] The difference between work and free time has been branded as a norm in the minds of people, at both the conscious and unconscious level. Because, in accordance with the predominant work ethic, the time free of work should be utilized for the recreation of expended labour power, the workless time – precisely because it is a mere appendage to work – is severed from the latter with puritanical zeal.

The author continues:

On the one hand, one should pay attention at work and not be distracted or lark about; wage labor is predicated on this assumption and its laws have been internalized. On the other hand free time must not resemble work in any way whatsoever, in order, presumably that one can work all the more effectively afterwards. Hence the inanity of many leisure activities. And yet, in secret as it were, the contraband of modes of behavior proper to the domain of work, which will not let people out of its power, its being smuggled into the realm of free time (ADORNO, 2002, p.64)

Such points are important because they challenge traditional views on spare time identified in this research. Therefore, the issue needs to be further discussed during professional training in leisure and related areas as a whole, and not only in the context of the five

Latin American Master's Programs studied, given the challenge of creating new knowledge in this field of studies and interventions. After all, reality is much more complex than traditional ways of understanding it, especially as the boundaries between work and so-called spare time are becoming more blurred. All that requires new perspectives on the social time space that constitutes us as individuals and groups, and also on the supposed dimension of freedom that the term *spare time* ends up suggesting.

Souza Júnior (2000) explains that the category of *spare time* is far from meaning a person's total freedom or promoting autonomy from the several forms of oppression and social alienation. Subjects may consider themselves free even if momentarily, but only in a limited and apparent condition.

About the supposed freedom announced by the term *spare time*, Marcuse (1981) explains that it is not related to the prerogatives of societies governed by the logic of profit, exploitation and social degradation, but rather to the proper fulfillment of human needs by means of social emancipation. According to the author:

Man is free only where he is free from constraint, external and internal, physical or moral – when he is constrained neither by law nor by need. But such constraint is the reality: man is free when the reality loses its seriousness and when its necessity becomes light (MARCUSE, 1981, p.171)

Padilha (2004, p. 221) also questions the value of freedom assigned to spare time and emphasizes that under a critical approach to society, “it is perceived as contradictory, which makes spare time, as a social phenomenon, also full of contradictions”. Therefore, it can be a time for alienation and consumerism or, conversely, a time for reflection and praxis that enables us to challenge and change the social order in order to achieve a fairer and fraternal existence.

Considerations such as these stress the importance of remembering the struggles to reduce working hours and extension

of so-called spare time. That is true especially for societies that follow the capitalist and/or of high-productivity logic (such as China and other non-capitalist countries, especially in Asia), where workdays reach or even exceed 15 or 17 hours. The 8-hour workday and the 48-hour workweek, with one day off per week, was implemented in several countries after the 1st Convention held in 1919 by the International Labor Organization (ILO), but those labor rights are being gradually lost (ELIZALDE, 2008).

Thus, despite advances, in many cases, we are losing gains resulting from major worker, labor and trade union struggles, which decisively marked many countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore, claims and achievements resulting from many struggles have been damaged and lost due to precarization of work, which is one of the consequences of the much-praised neoliberal economic globalization. In contexts of labor flexibility, the stability desired by millions of workers no longer exists and, in many cases, there is uncertainty about the possibility of holding a job in the future (WERNECK, STOPPA, ISAYAMA, 2001; GOMES; ELIZALDE, 2009, 2012).

It is essential to recognize that the debate on so-called spare time in the context of leisure studies highlights such important debates. However, recognizing that importance does not mean that so-called spare time has to be limited to residual time from work; that the dichotomic view on work and leisure has to be reinforced, or that leisure has to be discussed exclusively in the context of work.

After all, the context of work is one of the possibilities to analyze leisure, but it is not the only one. Numerous other approaches that consider multiple dimensions and multiple other fields of social life are relevant and equally important.

In short, even if the term *spare time* is partial and insufficient to express the contradictions, tensions and the blurred, multidimensional and complex realities in today's social life, this research showed that it is still employed in the context of five Latin

American Master's Degree Programs in Leisure and Recreation. Therefore, one of the challenges to scholars studying the topic is to understand spare time as a social institution, as indicated by Elias (1998). That is, understanding spare time as a social construction resulting from a long process of coercion, self-discipline and learning linked to productive work, which symbolizes some of the contradictory representations socially incorporated into everyday life.

Therefore, tensions and contradictions pervading so-called spare time are recurring, but questioning and rethinking the different aspects of its discussion are essential in the context of leisure studies as well as the possibilities and impossibilities for its implementation in Latin America and other realities.

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