

"THE SWEET AND SOUR TASTE OF AGING": **DISCOURSES, BODY PRACTICES AND** GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES

"O DOCE AMARGO SABOR DO ENVELHECIMENTO": DISCURSOS, PRÁTICAS CORPORAIS E EXPERIÊNCIAS GERACIONAIS

"EL DULCE /AMARGO SABOR DEL ENVEJECIMIENTO": DISCURSOS, PRÁCTICAS CORPORALES Y EXPERIENCIAS GENERACIONALES

João Paulo Fernandes Soares*, Ludmila Mourão*, Edmundo de Drummond Alves Júnior**

Keywords:

Aging. Women. Physical Activity. Cross-generation relations.

Abstract: This study aims to understand generational experiences and modes of subjectivity of a group of elderly women who experience corporal practices in a recreational social project in Ubá, Minas Gerais. It is an anthropological study with field observation and interviews with seven women. Narratives show the symbolic complexity of generational relations established in this context, in which sharing and conflicts are striking. Such experiences expose the multiple meanings of the ways of aging in contemporary society and the need to reflect on the limitations of educational activities developed in those educational contexts.

Palavras chave: Envelhecimento. Mulheres. Atividade Física. Relação entre

gerações.

Resumo: Este estudo tem como objetivo compreender as experiências geracionais e os modos de subjetivação de um grupo de mulheres idosas que vivenciam práticas corporais em um projeto social de lazer em Ubá, interior de Minas Gerais. Foi realizada uma pesquisa antropológica com observação no campo e entrevistas em profundidade com sete mulheres. As narrativas evidenciam a complexidade simbólica das relações geracionais estabelecidas nesse contexto, no qual partilhas e conflitos são marcantes. Tais experiências expõem a polissemia dos modos de envelhecer na contemporaneidade e a necessidade de reflexões sobre as limitações das ações pedagógicas desenvolvidas nesses contextos educacionais.

Palabras clave: Envejecimiento. Mujeres. Actividad Física. Relaciones.

Resumen: Este estudio tiene como objetivo comprender las experiencias generacionales y los modos de subjetivación de un grupo de mujeres de edad avanzada, que experimentan prácticas corporales en un proyecto social de recreación en Ubá, Minas Gerais. Se llevó a cabo una investigación antropológica, con observación de campo y entrevistas con siete mujeres. Los relatos muestran la complejidad simbólica de las relaciones generacionales establecidas en este contexto, donde el compartir y los conflictos son intensos. Tales experiencias exponen la polisemia de los modos de envejecer en la contemporaneidad y la necesidad de reflexionar sobre las limitaciones de las acciones pedagógicas desarrolladas en estos contextos educativos.

*Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora. Juiz de Fora, MG, Brasil. E-mail: joaopaulosoaresufjf@gmail.com; mouraoln@gmail.com.

**Universidade Federal Fluminense. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil. E-mail: edmundodrummond@uol.com.br

Received on: 02.26. 2015 Approved on: 06.07.2015



1 INTRODUCION¹

Bodies are culturally constructed from the intersection of numerous discourses that materialize them and become socially intelligible. We can say that "discourses inhabit bodies. They settle in bodies; in fact, bodies carry discourses as if they were part of their own blood" (BUTLER, 2002, p. 163).

Thus we understand discourses as meaning systems and codes that make up the set of statements in certain fields of knowledge, historically built on power relations² (FOUCAULT, 2011b).

Therefore, today there is an intense process of chronologization of subjects' lives, where age references determine rights, duties, possibilities and prohibitions on those subjects' social experiences (BOURDIEU, 1983). That process coexists with its opposite, where age groups are extended, flexibilized and even "erased". Such redefinition of the course of life promises to extend youth in association with values and cultural goods that can be acquired, maintained and expanded based on the quality of subjects' experiences during their aging process (BARROS, 2011).

The ways of representing the aging process are built by a variety of institutions and academic fields responsible for spreading numerous discourses with clear idealized models of aging. They include the fields of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology as protagonists in developing assumptions, habits, values and meanings about subjects' aging (DEBERT, 2012; 1997).

Current understandings and representations on subjects' course of life built by the academic field of Gerontology seek to emphasize "positive" aspects of old age, considering that time of life as conducive to expansion of leisure time and hence experiences of group sociability.

However, reflections about leisure in old age bring out heterogeneity of those social groups, in which a minority is able to increase their leisure time after retirement, while a significant portion of the elderly remain working for different reasons.

Concurrently, such discursive strand seeks to break historical "silences" imposed on the topic of old age, pointing out stereotypes and social stigma experienced in social relations as a result of diffuse derogatory representations in society about the aging process.

Therefore, aging experiences³ in contemporary societies present themselves as multifaceted and plural cultural processes as well as a thought-provoking object of study by offering ways of understanding the modes of social organization, hierarchies, stereotypes and social stigmas disseminated about age categories.

Based on that context, this article aims at reflecting on the modes of subjectivation4 built by elderly women in a social leisure project – Project Active Life (PVA) in the city of Ubá, Minas Gerais – motivated by some questions: How are those women constituted as subjects in their group bodily experiences? How do generational relations and intersections occur in that social space? How do those women appropriate, re-interpret and build discourses on old age and their generational experience?

¹ This article is part of a dissertation defended at the Graduate Program in Physical Education, association of Federal University of Viçosa/ Federal University of Juiz de For a, under the same title.

² The concept of power used in this study is based on Michel Foucault (1992), which sees power as inherent to subjects' social relations. They are diffuse micropowers, constantly subverted and alternate. Thus, no power exerts so high a degree of coercion as to not allow everyday subversions and alternations.

³ The concept of experience used in this study concerns the ways in which subjects are constituted, subjectified and de-subjectified in a particular culture and historical time (DELEUZE, 2005; FERRARI, 2012).

⁴ Modes of subjectivation are mechanisms by which, through incorporation of power relations, human beings become subjects (FOUCAULT, 1992; FERRARI, 2012).

2 INVESTIGATIVE PATHWAYS

The act of remembering is not restricted to individual memories; it also includes social ones. In most cases, remembering is not reviving, but "remaking, rebuilding, rethinking past experiences with today's image and ideas" (BOSI, 1994, p. 55).

Based on this premise, this is an ethnographic anthropological study whose theoretical and methodological framework is social and urban anthropology studies (GEERTZ, 1997 1989; MAGNANI, 2009, 1997; VELHO, 2013, 2004). It seeks to approach and understand participants' worldviews⁵ through participant observation.

Field research was conducted in Ubá,6 Minas Gerais, for nine months, in March-November 2013. We observed pedagogical actions of Project Active Life (Projeto Vida Ativa, PVA), promoted by the municipal government, comprising gymnastics classes, dance and stretching exercise sessions focused on elderly groups.

Interventions, led by a Physical Education teacher and an intern, took place three times a week, in the mornings, in a local amateur football club.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a group of seven women – five PVA participants, the teacher and the intern. Participants were intentionally chosen for the study, since those women were pioneers at the PVA, which made them special informants for achieving the study's aims; they had been in the project for about five years and lived in the neighborhood where field research took place. Ages ranged from 20 to 76. PVA members participating in the study included four housewives and a retired teacher.

Interviews took place at the site where the interventions were carried out, in a private room and after classes, and were recorded on a digital recorder⁷ and transcribed in full.

All participants signed informed consent forms; names used in this article are fictitious in order to preserve them.

The interviews were categorized using the technique of identification of native categories (MAGNANI, 2009), which are relevant to capture meanings spontaneously ascribed by the group to their generational experiences and their modes of subjectivation built in that specific cultural context. Discourses from the interviews were triangulated with field records and the theoretical framework.

As a theoretical and methodological choice, the analytical process focused on the identity marker "generation", despite the relevance and intersection of other identity aspects of participants, such as gender, social class and ethnicity.

3 KNOWLEDGES AND FLAVORS OF AGING: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE **CONCEPT OF THIRD AGE**

Discourse is not only that which translates struggle or systems of domination, but what we fight for, the power we want to seize (FOUCAULT, 2011b, p. 10).

⁵ The concept of worldview is related to the symbolic framework that subjects of a certain culture build of things as they really are, their concepts of themselves from identity, gender, generational, ethnic markers, among others, of values, habits and customs of the society in which they live. (GEERTZ, 1989).

⁶ The city of Ubá is located 297 km from Minas Gerais's state capital Belo Horizonte. It has 101,519 inhabitants. The population aged 60 or more is 11,063, including 4,953 men and 6,110 women (INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA, 2010).

⁷ The interviews were recorded on a Sony ICD-PX 240 digital recorder, with prior consent by participants.

According to Michel Foucault (2011b), there is a scenario of disputes and power correlations present in institutions of knowledge-power in contemporary times.

Taking a leading position and accumulating "autonomy" in the discursive pronunciation process places a symbolic field in advantage over others. By taking over and accumulating power, the subjects of a specific institutional field acquire the possibility of boosting social demands, directing and reframing modes of subjectivation, and opening representations of various groups and social processes.

When reflecting on institutions and discursive practices built on subjects' aging process, Medicine and Gerontology discourses are a privileged locus, which, insofar as they are constantly linked with media discourses and common sense, boost subjects' political demands (DEBERT, 1997).

This process of incorporating the gerontology discourse is evident in Teacher Ana Paula's narrative recalling the history of PVA and its pedagogical actions:

> When the PVA started, its schedule already included activities for the "best age". Since I started college, for me, the best age has always been the apple of my eye. I already started with that huge desire to develop this work with them and then I met Renato, who used to teach dance for the best age. So this partnership worked. It was me working with stretching and gymnastics and him with dance. (Ana Paula, PVA teacher, 42)

The category "best age" emerged and exposed a worldview that praises old age as a privileged stage in life for pleasurable body experiences. Below, the teacher points out her motivations for continuing the experiences with the group.

> It's like I told you, the apple of my eye is the best age and because I always realized that, just like my grandmother, older people reached a certain age, retired and were alone in their homes watching TV or expecting their children or a relative to come to take them out. I've always found it sad, because people get older, but it doesn't mean they can't move, and these classes encourage not only that moment but others, because they also start having groups, they make plans with each other, if only to go to mass. (Ana Paula, PVA teacher, 42).

The teacher's discourse evokes her family and generational experiences and homogeneously idealizes elderly subjects as deprived of social relationships in old age. However, from her experiences with an "active lifestyle" in the PVA, the teacher believes that such social networks can be re-established.

Thus, concepts such as old age, aging, elderly, old, third age, or even "best age" [velhice, envelhecimento, idoso, velho, terceira idade, melhor idade] emerge and are treated as synonyms – some identify processes while others identify individuals and groups – without, however, a thorough theoretical discussion about them (CAMARANO, 2004). Note that concepts like "youth", "childhood", "old age", among others, are arbitrarily constructed by associating subjects to chronological age, in a process of chronologization of social life (BOURDIEU, 1983).

In the PVA context, the categories used for addressing and relating to participants of this study are: "elderly", to determine subjects' social status, and "third age", to identify their stage in life. Therefore, we refuse to use the terms "old" and "old age" because they carry negative representations linked to aspects such as degeneration, weakening and inactivity of aging bodies.

On the historical process of re-interpreting those terms, we note that until the late 1960s in Brazil, "old" (velho) carried negative or derogatory connotation when describing subjects. In institutional documents, that description was replaced by "elderly" (idoso) in the following decade, marking a historical context of social mobilization for rights related to old age in the country (PEIXOTO, 2006).

"Old age" and "old" are concomitantly and gradually associated with decrepitude and senescence, referring mainly to subjects from popular classes who cannot afford options for their aging process. Thus, the association between age and decadence reaches spheres of Brazilian society.

In contrast, "elderly" marks a more "respectful" treatment for old subjects: "it symbolizes especially older people, the 'respected old people', while third age mainly refers to 'young old people', dynamic retirees" (PEIXOTO, 2006, p. 81).

In this context, Gerontology takes on a central role in the process of questioning the category elderly and implementing the concept of third age, built by intersecting postulates from several expert systems (GIDDENS, 1991), based on the paradigm of "active aging" (ALVES JÚNIOR, 2011).

> And it is not by chance that a new market for the third age emerges: tourism, beauty products and food, as well as new professional specialties, gerontologists, geriatricians, etc. Third age thus becomes the expression for classifying a very heterogeneous social category. (PEIXOTO, 2006, p. 81).

Thus, discourses are produced that expose aging experiences as a universal, homogeneous and homogenizing process where identity differences based on social class, ethnicity, generation and gender are minimized while biological, psychological and social universal aspects of aging become central (DEBERT, 1994; PEIXOTO, 2006).

As a major result, there is a process of re-privatization of old age, which considers "good management" of that time in subjects' lives as individual responsibility, ultimately creating a process of blaming subjects for deviations from the proposed standard (DEBERT, 2012; 1997).

This broad historical process has important influences on subjects' experiences, whether they are Physical Education professionals or participants in numerous pedagogical actions in the field of body practices (FREITAS et al., 2014, SILVA; LUDORF, 2012).

Thus, we understand Project Active Life (PVA) as a component of that broad process of aging management in which discourses are produced and spread among the subjects involved in that context, re-interpreting their modes of subjectivation and their generational experiences in that sociability space.

4 INTERSECTING PROJECTS: "ACTIVE LIFE" AND MODES OF AGING MANAGEMENT

Based on participants' discourses, experiences with body practices in the PVA started after medical guidance. It could be seen that numerous knowledges about the process of health and disease and the benefits of exercise in that process had been appropriated throughout their lives, which is evidenced in the following narratives:

> What motivated me was that sometimes I would become discouraged at home. I was a depressed for a while. So doctors told me to do stretching, which improves our minds. And it was really good. (Renata, PVA student, 56).

> I was feeling a lot of pain. Then I went to the doctor and he told me to do water aerobics. Then I started coming (to PVA). My relationship with people improved. We become more popular. (Adriana, PVA student, 67).

The reports are similar to the representation of health that opposed disease, which is a constant threat in old age and should be avoided or mitigated in subjects' life projects.

Moulin (2008, p. 15) highlights the process of medicalization of bodies and describes how medical discourse becomes central for interfering in subjects' social lives in contemporary society: Medicine defines rules of behavior, censors pleasures, captures daily life in a network of recommendations justified by the progress of its knowledge about functioning of the body and the unprecedented victory it claims over diseases, shown by the steady increase in longevity.

Accordingly, health and disease begin to be seen as sides of the same coin. "If the buzzword was happiness in the eighteenth century and freedom in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century it is health" (VIGARELO, 2008, p. 18).

These historical changes are seen in the increased use of prescription drugs, changes in diets, performing physical exercises and in strategies to prevent disease and alleviate the marks of aging on bodies.

At the same time, the narratives bring other aspects that make up the health category, i. e. pleasurable group experiences and expansion of social networks. Thus, for those women, the search for health in old age resides in group body practices; they are the locus for promoting relations and strengthening reciprocal ties.

In this sense, participants' worldviews bring meanings and significances about the aging process, which is crossed by desires and concerns.

> Aging, I think we can't surrender to it. We have to be always looking for something to do, because if we surrender and stay quiet at home, we're the ones who will be lonely. And I already feel like that, lonelier. We get older and feel that we're becoming more alone. (Bruna, PVA student, 70).

> I think we get older, we no longer feel excited to do things, for example, gymnastics. Some days it's difficult to come, and I think younger people are stronger; we older ones are powerless. Some days I would come to gymnastics and when I tried to do the housework, I was aching all over. I think when one gets old, it changes everything. In old age we usually feel a lot of fatigue. (Adriana, PVA student, 67)

Reports indicate the polysemy of subjectivation processes in old age, which point out different ways of experiencing aging. That process is often associated with physical changes in body strength, evidenced in their bodies' lower power and disposition in daily life and in body practices in old age.

These retrospective views in their discourses recall moments from their youth when physical strength and disposition to work, usually at home, were satisfactory compared to old age. These "loss" processes result in more reclusive and solitary behavior.

But not only losses and body changes increase the feeling of loneliness; study participants have a similar family structure where their children no longer live at home and maintain "intimacy at a distance" (DEBERT, 2012). Their partners, even those who are retired, remain connected to the world of labor, and it is in that setting that loneliness is subjectivized in those women's daily lives.

Concern about loneliness and its evils is constantly monitored. Humans are the only living beings that know they will die, and that perspective on finitude brings the experience of loneliness to social subjects that are closer to this process. Thus, the protection against that finitude is a target of numerous techniques throughout history (ELIAS, 2001).

Therefore, there is need for self-care (FOUCAULT, 2011a); for this group, they include actions to prevent social loneliness, such as the construction of new social networks, mitigating the marks and conditions of aging.

When we look at investments in those women's bodies, most participants in this study have used artificial dyeing – a technique usually used to cover gray hair – to change the color of their hair, which is a mark of aging that usually shows subjects' approximate chronological age.

Real and virtual social identities are part of the interests and definitions of others regarding the individual whose identity is in question. Techniques to conceal symbols of stigma occur simultaneously to a related process: the use of de-identifiers. "Stigma then, is really a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype [...] and the effort to conceal it, cover it or mitigate it is fixed as part of subjects' identity" (GOFFMAN, 1988: p. 76).

Thus, the study's participants manipulate their real social identities by adopting strategies, distancing themselves from the old woman's virtual identity, which appears as a stigma. Adequacy or refusal to adhere to that process of concealment expose different ways of dealing with bodily marks of aging. Accepting such changes and/or seeking to hide them is a dilemma in the daily lives of those women.

Another point that demonstrates incorporation of self-care is the use of clothing for the experiences of body practices, such as colorful shorts and shirts made of synthetic fabrics that shape their bodies, demonstrating that they share symbolic aspects of belonging to a generational unit that permanently exercisers and "takes care" of their bodies.

Therefore, moments of experiences in group body practices are opportunities to incorporate new meanings about the limits of their bodies, to revisit individual projects and to build a collective aging project (VELHO, 1994).

5 GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND MODES OF SUBJECTIVATION IN OLD AGE

The category "generation" exposes the relational, dynamic, unstable and permanent aspects of generational changes in contemporary times, pointing out that being born in the same time is not enough: what exposes a common generational position is the ability to experience and signify the experiences of particular historical time in a similar way (MANNHEIM, 1982).

From this concept, the connections between generations require a concrete link between subjects belonging to the same or different generational positions.

> Generational connections are constituted through participation of individuals belonging to the same generational position, or to distinct generational positions in a common collective destiny, as well as sharing content that are related in some way. (MANNHEIM, 1982, p. 87).

The associative experiences of participants in this study at the PVA show generational differences and similarities. Such experiences relate to the ways in which every woman, from their generational positions and relationships she built, shares, converges, conflicts with and is subjectivized in those experiences.

The ethnographic material makes it clear that tastes and disputes for rhythms and music during classes were important in the field of research, identified in the narratives of a PVA participant and the intern:

> That intern also gives dance lessons. Her dance is not good for us. She is very young, we are very old, so we don't have her rhythm ... Then it's difficult. We can't keep up with her in dance class. (Leandra, PVA student, 71).

PVA intern Camila also faced difficulties in class:

It was very difficult at first, a very young teacher is awkward for everyone. Then they said, 'she's too young, it won't work', then time passed and I was looking for new styles of music to teach dance. (Camila, PVA intern, 20)

Chronological age seems to have an important symbolic effect in relations between the elderly woman and the intern, giving rise to numerous generational conflicts.

There was this big fight, because I wanted to show other types of dance rather than only *forró*, and they fought with me, they said I should not change anything because they were used to the other teacher who only worked with *forró*. He focused more on *forró*. I don't, I'm looking for other styles of music, not only *forró*, because they already know *forró*, other styles of music that they don't know, without excluding *forró*. I don't exclude it. Here I always give classes with the same songs so I can work on the same motor skills until I see that they have improved; then I change the songs and I will add other styles to work with other styles; I always plan it like that. (Camila, PVA intern, 20).

Leandra recalls another historical moment at PVA, when a teacher worked with "our songs", or "the songs of our time", which would be *forró* and traditional Brazilian country music. Such nostalgic narrative, striking in that participant's worldview, differs from other members of the group who, despite experiencing dance classes with so-called "modern" rhythms and "new people", maintain *forró* as the group's favorite rhythm.

If there's dance, I'll stay ... Without dancing, it's hard for me to stay until the end. I really like dancing. I say: "Let's put on a *forró* to cheer up these women because people leave when there are only those new songs..." So, I'll talk to her (the intern): "Let's play some *forrós*, I'll bring a *forró* CD to cheer them up, so they stay". Few people stay for dance class, because it has no *forró*. It's *forró* music that we older... we are older because we are passed fifty (years of age) – we no longer like this new music that they play at parties. (Renata, PVA student, 56)

As a significant body practice for the group, dance is a constitutive element of their generational positions, and the symbolic aspects of identification related to it are shared (MORAES, 2011; ALVES, 2004).

However, participants in this study have different stances towards incorporating so-called "modern" rhythms. Despite her preference for "old songs", Renata participates and shares the experience of the "new" or "youth" rhythms with the intern and with those students who remain in class.

Some students' refusal to participate in class is an expression of differences in sharing symbolic aspects with subjects of other generational position. About those conflicts, the intern presents a strategy used in another PVA group compared to the industrial group – the focus of this field research.

I choose the songs myself. There at CRAS I have one type of lesson plan and here I have a different one. There are both third age and middle age in there. Then I distinguish: the first group is third age and the second group is middle age. Then what happens is: with third age I focus a lot on *forró* because they always ask for it, and middle-aged people does aerobics, *ax*é. It's always like that, a more lively class. Because they say they like to sweat. Here it's more repetitive movements. There I can vary the movements, because they like to move. Here it's more repetitive movements. (Camila, PVA intern, 20)

This strategy exposes and differentiates methods of working with groups from a previous classification based on chronological age, in which subjects are grouped as "middle age" and "third age" categories, and interventions are distinguished based on subjects' alleged physical "potentials" and "limitations". This disagreement regarding pedagogical action is pointed out by teacher Ana Paula as a problem in PVA.

> In some neighborhoods, interns arrived and began to teach a very strong stretching and gymnastic lesson, too heavy for the class. They have to think of everyone. So you can't go beyond that. Even if you have a student in better shape, you have to keep the class focused on the best age. So I had to give them some exercises and ask them to exclude others in order to really respect their individuality, but focusing more on best age. (Ana Paula, PVA teacher, 42).

Note that the group of interns and the teacher, belonging to different generations regarding that of PVA participants, organize pedagogical work based on their cultural references. Cultural distance between worldviews and preferences exposes the centrality and limitations of generational relations at PVA.

This social space of connective generational experiences (MANNHEIM, 1984) is a place where four distinct generational units relate, which share, refuse, re-interpret and appropriate the symbolic universe constructed from those generational connections.

The narratives reveal limitations in planning and in pedagogical actions with different generational groups, since the symbolic aspects of those generations are considered secondary and the classification of subjects based on their chronological ages guides actions in those spaces.

In this sense, the process of decentering the eye (MAGNANI, 2009) in an attempt to understand individuals' aspirations, in a continuous exercise of otherness, is necessary in the training of Physical Education teachers to work with elderly groups. This approach to generational experiences can be used as a locus for symbolic sharing and exchange between individuals of different generational units.

6 FINAL REMARKS

This study allowed participants to conduct joint reflections on their bodies and generational experiences, and modes of subjectivation built in old age.

We conclude that the context of the social leisure project Active Life is a privileged space for generational experiences by subjects of different generational units.

In relations built between participants and teachers, we observed striking sociability and reciprocity ties mediated by subjects' body experiences. Such experiences also revealed conflicts, sharing and mutual symbolic appropriation by distinct generations.

The process of experiencing body practices such as dance, gymnastics and stretching contributed to reconstruct individual projects and construct a collective project of aging, mediated by otherness characteristic of the group.

On the discursive constructions, the categories "third age" and "best age", present in institutional discourse through teachers' narratives, are based on a gerontological view of active aging, which underlies pedagogical actions in the context of the PVA.

Therefore, we reflect on aspects of teacher training to work with groups of different generational units, as in the case of our study's participants. One of the challenges in this

process is to provide broad, interdisciplinary training aimed at deepening and sensitizing those subjects for pedagogical work based on socio-anthropological aspects of aging, in which the concept of otherness is central in the constant search for appropriating others' worldviews, tastes, desires, wishes, fears and expectations in old age.

These developments are limited in the PVA, which is clear in the reductionist view of aging that permeates pedagogical actions in this context – a driver of generational conflicts of mutual discontent.

Regarding self-care, there was commitment to and investment in body practices, with the promise of maintenance and increase in health, body strength and some interest in mitigating some bodily marks of aging; however, despite the symbolic power of this discursive construction, the study's participants re-interpret these concepts and experience expectations, pleasures, fears (including loneliness) of their old age in their own and collective way.

Finally, the symbolic arrangements present in those women's memories and life trajectories allowed us to share their feelings and their representations about that moment of aging as well as the diversity and polysemy of ways of aging in contemporary times.

REFERENCES

ALVES, Andréa Moraes. Diferenças geracionais, gênero e sexualidade. In: STREY, Marlene Neves et al. (Eds.) Gênero e ciclos vitais: desafios, problematizações e perspectivas. Porto Alegre: Edipucrs, 2012. p. 267-285.

ALVES, Andréa Moraes. A dama e o cavalheiro: um estudo antropológico sobre envelhecimento, gênero e sociabilidade. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2004.

ALVES JÚNIOR, Edmundo de Drummond. A pastoral do envelhecimento ativo. Rio de Janeiro: Apicuri, 2011.

BARROS, Myriam Moraes Lins de. A velhice na pesquisa socioantropológica brasileira. In. GOLDENBERG, Mirian. (Ed.) Corpo, envelhecimento e felicidade. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2011. p. 45-64.

BOSI, Ecléa. Memória e sociedade: lembranças de velhos. 3. ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. A juventude é apenas uma palavra. *In:* BOURDIEU, P. **Questões de** sociologia. Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1983. p. 112-121.

BUTLER, Judith. Como os corpos se tornam matéria. Entrevista a Baukje Prins e Irene Costera Meijer. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, Florianópolis, v. 10, no. 1, p. 155-167, Jan. 2002.

CAMARANO, Ana Amélia. Os novos idosos brasileiros: muito além dos 60? Rio de Janeiro: IPEA, 2004.

DEBERT, Guita Grin. Gênero e terceira idade. Revista Estudos Feministas, Florianópolis, v. 2, no. 3, p. 33-51, 1994.

DEBERT, Guita Grin. A invenção da terceira idade e a articulação de formas de consumo e



demandas políticas. Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, São Paulo, v. 12, no. 34, p. 52-74, 1997. Available at: http://www.anpocs.org.br/portal/publicacoes>. Accessed on: May 15, 2014.

DEBERT, Guita Grin. A reinvenção da velhice: socialização e processos de reprivatização do envelhecimento. São Paulo: Edusp, 2012.

DELEUZE, Gilles. Foucault. 6. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2005.

ELIAS, Norbert. A solidão dos moribundos. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2001.

FERRARI, Anderson. (Ed.). A potencialidade do conceito de experiência para a educação. Juiz de Fora: Editora UFJF, 2012.

FOUCAULT, Michel. História da sexualidade 3: o cuidado de si. 11. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 2011a.

FOUCAULT, Michel. A ordem do discurso: aula inaugural no Collège de France, pronunciada em 2 de dezembro de 1970. 21 ed. São Paulo: Loyola, 2011b.

FOUCAULT, Michel. Microfísica do poder. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1992.

FREITAS, Diego Costa et al. O envelhecer na visão do profissional de educação física atuante em academia de ginástica: corpo e profissão. **Movimento**, Porto Alegre, v. 20, no. 4, p. 1523-1541, Oct./Dec. 2014.

GEERTZ, Clifford, A interpretação das culturas. Rio de Janeiro: LTC, 1989.

GEERTZ, Clifford. O saber local: novos ensaios em antropologia interpretativa. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1997.

GIDDENS, Anthony. As consequências da modernidade. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 1991.

GOFFMAN, Erving. Estigma: notas sobre a manipulação da identidade deteriorada. 4. ed. Rio de Janeiro: LTC, 1988.

INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA. Censo demográfico 2010. Available at: http://www.ibge.gov.br/cidades>. Accessed on: Oct. 15, 2014.

MAGNANI, José Guilherme Cantor. Etnografia como prática e experiência. Horizontes **Antropológicos**, Porto Alegre, v. 15, no. 32, p. 129-156, 2009.

MAGNANI, José Guilherme Cantor. O (velho e bom) caderno de campo. Revista Sexta Feira, São Paulo, n. 1, p. 1-6, May 1997.

MANNHEIM, Karl. O problema sociológico das gerações. *In:* FORACHI, Marialice M. Sociologia. São Paulo: Ática, 1982. p. 67-95.

MOULIN, Anne Marie. O corpo diante da medicina. *In:* CORBIN, Alain *et al.* **História do corpo:** as mutações do olhar. O século XX. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2008. p. 15-82.

MORAES, Andrea. O corpo no tempo: velhos e envelhecimento. *In:* PRIORE, Mary Del: AMANTINO, Marcia. História do corpo no Brasil. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2011. p. 427-452.

ORGANIZAÇÃO MUNDIAL DA SAÚDE. Envelhecimento ativo: uma política de saúde. Brasília:

Organização Pan Americana de Saúde, 2005.

PEIXOTO, Clarice. Entre estigmas e a compaixão e os termos classificatórios: velho, velhote, idoso, terceira idade. In: BARROS, Myriam Moraes Lins de. Velhice ou terceira idade? Estudos antropológicos sobre identidade, memória e política. 4. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2006. p. 69-84.

SILVA, Alan Camargo; LÜDORF, Sílvia Maria Agartti. Possíveis relações entre corpo, saúde e envelhecimento do professor de educação física. Movimento, Porto Alegre, v. 18, no. 2, p. 187-204, Apr./Jun. 2012.

VELHO, Gilberto. Individualismo e cultura: notas para uma antropologia da sociedade contemporânea. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2004.

VELHO, Gilberto. Projeto e metamorfose: antropologia das sociedades complexas. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1994.

VELHO, Gilberto. Um antropólogo na cidade: ensaios de antropologia urbana. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2013.

VIGARELO, Georges. Treinar. In: CORBIN, Alain. et al. História do corpo: as mutações do olhar. O século XX. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2008. p. 197-254.

Note: Essa pesquisa foi aprovada pelo Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa da UFJF, número: 10497413.7.0000.5147.