

## **Liquid Modernity and Teaching Planning in the Practice of Physical Activityf Elderly PEOPLE: in the search for approximations**

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**Abstract:** The study is an approximation between the concepts of Liquid Modernity in Zigmunt Bauman and planning of teaching physical activity practice for elderly people. The objective of this research was to analyze the concepts of liquid modernity and its relations with the teaching planning of the practice of physical activity for the elderly offered in Brazilian public universities. The study was a qualitative research, with exploratory and descriptive characteristics. The results showed that there are few studies that make these approximations between such different concepts within the field of Brazilian Physical Education. However, it is concluded that studies of this nature are necessary to open debates on this theme so that studies in the area can advance in depth and discussions on important issues for the training of Physical Education teachers from a look at the modernity and the advancement of information that the world has passed.

**Keywords:** Physical activity. Liquid modernity. Old people.

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### **1. Introduction**

In Brazil, public universities through their extension activities have played an important role in offering physical activity programs for the elderly. These practices began in a historical period known in Brazil as the New Republic, marked with the end of the military dictatorship and the beginning of the presidential period, characterized by the broad political democratization in the country (OLIVEIRA, 2018).

In order to complement this line of thought, we sought to carry out an exercise of approximation between the concepts of solid and liquid modernity defended by Bauman (2001) and the planning of physical activities for the elderly offered in Brazilian public universities.

Thus, Bauman (2001) highlights that it is necessary to understand three interrelated elements that he believes are essential for the understanding of these concepts: the melting process as a modern task; the passage from the work ethic to the aesthetics of consumption and the emergence of a condition of impossibility of forming real communities (SANTOS; SILVA, 2012).

Gomes' studies; Bracht; Almeida (2013) also provide good theoretical support to understand the relationship between the concepts of Liquid Modernity and the field of physical activity, since the authors seek support for their discussions in the work category, as they consider work as the main educational value. , the axis from which practices should be organized.

Within the field of studies of solid modernity, the body is functional, a machine, an object of the domain of nature, which can be perfected, improved, strengthened in its robustness, in its physical capacity. From there, solid modernity is characterized by understanding a society of producers who have their self-awareness in the Fordist factory, based on production, the target body is the productive, efficient, disciplined and shaped body for work (GOMES; BRACHT; ALMEIDA, 2013).

In liquid modernity, contemporary liquidity assails the durability that was fundamental to modern solidity. In this context, the State, intellectuals and work must be reinterpreted in the light of this new condition (GOMES; BRACHT; ALMEIDA, 2013).

From these initial discussions, the present study aims to carry out an analysis of the concepts of liquid modernity and planning of teaching physical activity practice for elderly people in Brazilian public universities.

And the research question that guides this study: what are the approximations and tensions between the concepts of liquid modernity and physical activity planning for elderly people in Brazilian public universities?

## **2. Materials and Method**

The study is a cross-sectional investigation of a qualitative nature and of an exploratory and descriptive nature (ANDRADE, 2014; MARCONI and LAKATOS, 2017), in which approximations were sought between the concepts of liquid modernity (BAUMAN, 2001) and information regarding planning the practice of physical activity for elderly people in projects and extension programs offered in Brazilian public universities.

This study met the criteria of Resolution 510 of April 2016, of the National Health Council - CNS and was approved by the Ethics Committee in Research with Human Beings (CEP) of the Faculty of Health Sciences (FS) of the University of Brasília (UnB) by opinion 3,148,984.

As an eligibility criterion for participation in the study, the projects/programs should offer physical activity to the elderly, and these programs should be institutionalized in the form of teaching, research or extension.

After identifying the program coordinators, contact with them was carried out in four stages: 1 Electronic means (e-mail); 2 phone call; 3 signing the Free and Informed Consent Term (ICF) and 4 sending the data collection instrument.

The study sample was characterized as accessibility and was composed of 54 coordinators of physical activity programs for the elderly at Brazilian public universities.

All Brazilian public universities were identified by consulting the Ministry of Education (MEC) websites, in order to obtain a list of all of them, in addition to consulting Google and Wikipedia so that none were left out of the research. At the end of these consultations, we identified 109 public universities in Brazil.

Then we searched the websites of each identified university, the projects/programs existing in each one of them and the telephone contacts and e-mails of the coordinators, we searched for information in the deans/pro-rectories of extension and in the Physical Education courses and in the courses that we identified the existence of some physical activity program with elderly people.

To collect information about the projects, an online instrument was built on the Google form platform, previously submitted to specialists in the area of physical activity for the elderly for evaluation.

After approval of the instrument by the experts with the adjustments suggested by them and suggestions for changes in the questions that they believed were not in accordance with what was intended to be researched, it was sent to the coordinators by electronic means (e-mail) with a link that gave access to it.

The coordinators' reports were analyzed using Bardin's (2011) content analysis. This stage of the study took place in three phases: categorization, interpretation and computerization (BARDIN, 2011). In the categorization (step 1), the registration units were identified: Operation of projects/programs; Teaching planning and Net Modernity and physical activity practice for the elderly. In the interpretation (step 2), the registration units were interpreted, analyzed in a descriptive way and in the computerization (step 3) all information was discussed based on the scientific literature.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Operation of projects and programs**

The activities offered in the projects/programs were organized into five blocks: 1- Gymnastics: weight training, functional training, water aerobics, pilates, yoga, balance training; aquatic jogging; exergames. 2- Rhythmic activities: activities related to dance. 3- Recreational activities: recreational activities and games. 4- Walking and running: walking, athletics and running. 5- Sports: all collective, individual and water sports. There is a diversity with regard to the offer of physical activities. The physical activities offered are at the discretion of the programs, which, in turn, make the offer of activities considering, among other things, the structure of physical space available.

As for the teaching of physical activity for the elderly, the methodology adopted and the loads of activities offered, there was divergence between the investigated programs, each program adopts its way of working according to the expertise of its coordinators with their work teams.

Activities such as: walking, gymnastics, weight training, sports, dance and water aerobics were common in many investigated programs and activities such as: Yoga, aquatic jogging and running appeared in a few.

What we noticed in this research was that the activities offered in the programs go according to the structural and personnel conditions that the different Brazilian public universities have.

This data reveals that there is still a need for an appropriate location, specific materials for practice and qualified human resources to deliver the activities, in addition to incentives for continuing education and incentives for teachers (MAZO, 2018).

The types of physical activities recommended for the elderly are aerobic and muscle strengthening activities, which aim to improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone and functional health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, depression and cognitive decline. The strongest evidence for benefits exists with programs that include strength training, and high-intensity training is more beneficial and safer than low-intensity training. (MAZO, 2018).

Regarding the coordination of the programs, there was a similarity regarding the permanence in the direction of the same. The coordinators of the oldest programs are professors from their own institutions, performing other functions within the University.

In the study by Martins; Gonçalves (2018) the authors found that most groups are coordinated by a professor from the institution itself, but one of the groups investigated by her did not make this issue clear, with the Extension Coordinator responsible.

As for the professionals involved in the projects/programs, there was diversification, in 48 of them there were only Physical Education teachers, in the others there was the presence of this professional accompanied by others, such as: nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, doctors, psychologists, nutritionists, social workers and in only one program it was found that there was no presence of Physical Education teachers.

This diversification of professionals involved corroborates the findings of the study by Martins; Gonçalves (2018), in which the authors stated in their study that the work team was composed of teachers, academics, technical servers, Physical Education teachers; and multidisciplinary teams, which involve professors from other areas.

### **3.2 Teaching Planning**

As for the periodicity of planning, there was a similarity in 28 programs that carry out it every six months; thirteen (13) monthly; another seven (07) annually and six (06) every 15 days.

Planning is important because it facilitates the distribution, description, prediction and pedagogical sequence of activities, enabling correction and revision throughout the semester with the aim of making them safer (CACHIONI et al., 2015). It is configured, therefore, as an instrument of organization, of decision to give more efficiency to the human action, it serves as an important instrument to guide the pedagogical intervention, foreseeing objectives, contents and methods linked to the demands of the social reality and to the sociocultural and individual conditions. of students (NUNES et al., 2017).

Regarding the didactic-methodological organization of activities, all the investigated programs have, revealing that they have had this concern with the teaching strategies for the development of their activities and present similarities regarding this item.

In the recommendations for the practice of physical activity, 48 programs follow some and six (06) do not follow any recommendations. Of those who follow some recommendation, 17 follow the recommendations of the American College of Sport Medicine (ACSM), 14 follow the recommendations of the Brazilian literature on physical activity with the elderly, 12 follow the international consensus for the practice of physical activity and 11 programs follow other recommendations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) which recommends a minimum of two, but preferably three, times a week, with two or three sets of each exercise performed on each training day.

As for the use of a program model existing in Brazil or abroad for the practice of physical activity with the elderly, there was a similarity in 44 programs that do not follow any model and in ten (10) there was divergence. Among those that diverged: one (01) follows the Sweet Challenge Methodology, others (02) follow actions aimed at balance training, another (01) develops their own methodology and six (06) follow a model, but they did not specify which one.

Our study revealed that in Brazil, most programs do not follow a model of physical activity practice with the elderly, but their organization happens according to the work teams and their experiences in this area.

Regarding the frequency of physical evaluations, six (06) do not perform, nine (09) perform annually, 32 perform every six months and seven (07) quarterly. The evaluations are important because they will provide subsidies and parameters for the prescription of activities during the semester in the physical activity program.

As for the objective of the physical evaluations carried out, in six (06) programs this question does not apply, since they do not perform physical evaluations, in 26 the main objective is to improve the quality of life and biopsychosocial aspects, in 20 the objective was to improvement of performance and physical fitness elements, and in two (02) of them improvement of biopsychosocial aspects and health promotion.

Some of the main objectives of evaluation with the elderly are: diagnosing and verifying the efficiency of programs in terms of physical fitness, psychosocial aspects and the level of physical activity; verify the evolution of physical fitness and functional capacity; determine the variables that should be prioritized in the elaboration of the programs (MARTINS; GONÇALVES, 2018).

Regarding the scientific research carried out with the participants of the programs, 51 have already carried it out and (03) three have never carried it out, revealing a similarity in the concern of most of them with this item. What we perceive in this item is that university extension programs have served as the basis for conducting a lot of research at universities, even if one is not linked to the other.

Research has been the basis for the production of knowledge in Universities and carrying out studies with the elderly has been a necessity, in the search for improved production, discussion and knowledge in the area of physical activity for this population (SOARES, 2018).

In addition to physical activities, we sought to find out if there are other actions in the programs, in 39 of them there was a similarity in this item and in 15 there was not. Among the actions developed are: lectures and educational meetings; debates about the benefits of physical activity; subjects such as: informatics, law for the elderly, foreign language, Portuguese; memory and learning; choral singing; activities on commemorative dates; tours; year-end trips; visits to places agreed with the class; fraternization parties; medical advice; organization of academic events; film cycle; Multidisciplinary Assessment Program (Broad Geriatric Assessment).

We found similarities regarding teaching strategies for elderly people according to what the scientific literature prescribes (GALLOZA; CASTILLO; MICHEO, 2017), such as: step-by-step description of the exercise; demonstration of the exercises by the teacher; attention to students to know what happens to each one, without losing the notion of the whole; stimulation (reinforcement) during performance, with sincere remarks and praise; these strategies provide the student with better learning and quality in carrying out the exercises.

In a study carried out on the pedagogical didactic organization of university extension projects with elderly people with 10 coordinators from the southern region of Brazil, it was noticed that the characteristics of the projects are similar, as well as the reasons that originated the extension actions: demand institutional; community demand and mixed demand, university and community (MARTINS; GONÇALVES, 2018). In our study, we did not obtain data on this issue, even though we believe that the reasons that led to extension actions in many public universities would be the demands highlighted in the study by Martins; Goncalves (2018).

### **3.3 Net Modernity and physical activity for the elderly**

In the search for approximations with the concepts of Liquid Modernity defended by Bauman (2001) within the field of physical activity practice for the elderly, we understand that the contributions of this author are fundamental to understand the current configuration that permeates the offer of physical activity practice for this population.

The author initially emphasizes that there is a concept of solid modernity, from a time when, in social terms, there was the task of order. However, the main focus of his work focuses, mainly, not on this modernity, but the one we live today, called liquid modernity.

Other fundamental authors in these approaches to the concepts of Liquid Modernity, mainly in the field of Physical Education, are the discussions and contributions of Gomes; Bracht; Almeida (2013).

For Santos e Silva (2012) Bauman understands Modernity as a historical period that began in Western Europe in the 17th century with a series of profound socio-structural and intellectual transformations and reached its maturity first as a cultural project, with the advance of the Enlightenment and later as a cultural project. socially consummated way of life, with the development of industrial society (capitalist and later also communist).

The authors indicate that Bauman (2001) purposely uses formal (encyclopedic) concepts, saying that, currently, the terms “fluidity”, “liquidity” and “lightness” (to describe the current society) must be considered in counterpart to the characters of “fixity”, “solidity” and “weight”. The latter terms refer to the beginning of the Modern Era, which he called “solid modernity”, and the former refer to the present phase of Modernity, which he called “liquid modernity”.

In the field of physical activity for the elderly, the discourses that justify it, rather than argue in favor of acquiring physical capacity to improve health, project physical activity as a space for awareness for the construction of healthy lifestyles by this population. . The reconfiguration of the practice of physical activity, discussed here, does not demand the formation of strong bodies, but rather, individuals able to adapt to the demands of a flexible world.

This fluidity generates constantly re-elaborated body and health models. The machinic body of solid modernity gives way to a body that is a space for the construction of subjectivities arising from this contemporary experience as a consumer. This affects the practice of physical activity with elderly people as it

calls into question a body that, in addition to the traditionally cultivated discipline, aims to be raised to a greater role in this space.

Gomes; Bracht; Almeida (2013) argue that we must learn the art of living in a world saturated with information about the body and health. The possibilities announced in this new contemporary condition seem, as we have tried to demonstrate, to be thought-provoking, but the challenges to be faced so that the discourses in the area do not boil down to the exacerbated relativism of individual choices and responsibilities typical of the privatization of ambivalences seem to be even greater.

The practice of physical activity with elderly people has not been, in this perspective, a place to be sought by students and as the authors defend, the melting of solids (SANTOS E SILVA, 2012), of the traditional methods that need to be overcome, means, above all, , the dethronement of the past and tradition, in addition to the radical melting of the shackles and shackles that limit freedom.

According to Almeida; Wiggers; Jubé (2014) to make sense of the body today, especially in the modern project of western society, which is constituted through the establishment of networks and a continuous fluidity (BAUMAN, 2001), they believe it is fruitful to establish relationships with science and The technology.

Bodies situated in the context of fluidity become projects of socio-individual constructions as they seek to follow social standards or even anchor themselves in the model of perfection or performance, based on performance. The body can be considered a draft and is susceptible to continuous changes, being able to reinvent itself and resignify itself due to its experiences and even define other identities for the subjects (ALMEIDA; WIGGERS; JUBÉ, 2014).

As long as there are unquestionable forms of action and practices crystallized from the point of view of authority and excessive discipline that do not even allow them to be criticized, pedagogical practice will always be deficient, as it will prevent the existence of precisely what allows a practice to become something important.

#### 4. Conclusion

The depth and breadth of educational issues in liquid modernity, in relation to the field of physical activity for the elderly, pose the challenge of rethinking our educational practices, in the sense of overcoming the constant crises that education and the practice of institutionalized physical activity come passing.

We urgently need new concepts to accommodate and organize our experiences in the field of physical activity for older people. Hope is a possible attitude in the face of such crises. Therefore, it is imperative to initiate a dialogue and an intercultural translation between the different knowledge and practices: southcentric and northcentric, multicentric, popular and scientific, feminine and masculine, urban and rural, among others, as defended by some of the theorists consulted here.

We still need to instigate thought and practice in a perspective that overcomes the current contradictions of educational systems, in the hope and conviction that change is possible and that the struggle for a genuine cultural revolution needs to be built on the basis of an understanding of plurality and diversity of the world and its inhabitants, overcoming social exclusions, inequalities and dystopias.

However, studies on issues related to discussions about current times in the field of physical activity for the elderly are still shy and have not been the target of studies, research in the area has been much more concerned with replicating issues already resolved, the need now it is to continue the studies in order to accompany the current desires and dictates of society for a better understanding of what we think is the practice of physical activity for the elderly in modernity.

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