

Recreation and urbanization in Brazil: notes on a recent history (the 1950s/1970s)

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to discuss the relationship between the accelerated pace of urbanization in Brazil as observed as of the 1950s, which intensified in the 1960s and 1970, and the new arrangements of the recreation phenomenon in our society. The intent of this study is to analyze the possible correlation between a given aspect of the recreation culture and its assumed or idealized forms assumed or idealized for a territory. A mainstream large weekly magazine with Brazil wide circulation, penetration and influence launched in the 1960s – *Revista Veja* – was used as the main reference source to attain this objective.

Keywords: Recreation activities. Urbanization. Nature. Cities.

1 INTRODUCTION

There is a school of thought shared by a great number of scholars dedicated to the investigation of the “recreation” social phenomenon that identifies it as one of the consequences ensued from a series of changes typical of modernity, especially those observed in the late eighteenth century. In this case, it is a set of interdependent circumstances generated by industrialization, by the ascension of bourgeoisie to power, by the new organization of working hours (due to the onset of the new production model), by the new way of trading and configuration of cities (MELO; PERES, 2005), all of which are matters of interest to this

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study.

Given that the relationship between the development of cities and recreation seems to be a recurring theme throughout history (CORBIN, 2001), the purpose of this article is to discuss the relationship between the accelerated pace of urbanization in Brazil, observed as of the 1950s, and its intensification during the 1960s and 1970s, and the new arrangements of the recreation phenomenon in our society.

The intent of this study is to analyze the possible correlation between a given aspect of the recreation culture (practices and meaning) and its assumed or idealized forms for a territory. A mainstream large weekly magazine with Brazil wide circulation, penetration and influence launched in the 1960s – *Revista Veja* - was used as the main reference source to attain this objective. It is important to note that currently the approach undertaken by this magazine on treating its articles would be highly debatable, unlike the differentiated profile it had in the period at hand. Despite taking into account that there is no such thing as a completely unbiased publication targeted to an idealized specific target, which at that time was the middle class that was growing in number and stronger, *Veja* adopted an editorial line that sought veracity, impartiality and independence. Given this profile, its Brazil wide reach and the nature of articles, it was considered adequate for this study.

The analysis concentrated basically on two aspects. The first is related to the relationship between the spatial reorganization and the physiognomy of some of the largest Brazilian cities at that time (notably Rio de Janeiro, which underwent a time of transition when the federal capital was transferred to Brasília) and the incorporation of new urban life styles, also characterized by the greater possibility of consumption of new products.

It is argued that these styles also materialized in the development and consolidation of recreation habits, such as travelling, shopping and practicing sports and physical activities, among which the possibility of identifying those that

became more popular, involving contact with nature as a means to compensate for the problems ensuing from the “gray urban world”. As some cities grew and the way of life was considered chaotic, inhumane, oppressing or evil, a group of new practices was presented as a balm for the ever-growing over-urbanization.

The second aspect, which is related to the first, is the increased market initiatives and government concerns with the use of free time by metropolitan populations. Changes to the configuration of cities gave rise to a collective feeling that was interpreted both by businesses and government agencies, which intensified diverse proposals and implementations.

Hence, the purpose is to observe the possibility of a twofold articulation between recreation and cities, identifying how they influenced one another, weaving an intricate and complicated social web that involves territory and space.

2 INDUSTRIALIZATION, URBANIZATION, CONSUMPTION AND RECREATION

According to Eric Hobsbawm (1998), on the eve of World War II, the population of every country – except for England and Belgium – comprised at least one-fourth rural workers. Even in countries that were strongly urbanized, e.g. France and Sweden, farmers accounted for at least 35% of the total population.

In the period following the end of WWII this profile would quickly change. In Latin America, rural population declined 50% over only twenty years. In 1940, only four Latin American cities had populations greater than one million inhabitants (Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro e São Paulo) and five more than 500,000 (Lima, Rosario, Havana, Montevideo and Santiago of Chile). In the next decade, the number of overpopulated municipalities would have an

exponential growth throughout the continent (ROMERO, 2004).

In Brazil, this type of dynamics started in the 1950s, which was a time of great changes to the domestic economy. The industrialization process was already well defined since the 1930s, and by the late 1940s Brazil was already self-sufficient in the production of manufactured non-durable goods (food and beverages, textiles and clothes) (FURTADO, 1983); by the early 1950s “industrial production could already be considered the ‘flagship’ of development” (MOREIRA, 2003, p. 178).

This process was intensified during the administration of President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961), notably with the increased production of durable goods for the domestic market.¹ Steel produced by steel mills Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional, Acesita, Cosipa and Usiminas, and oil byproducts (gasoline, asphalt and plastic, to mention but a few), produced by Petrobras and its subsidiaries were used to produce certain goods that until then were only available via importing. The automobile industry is an emblematic example of this new dynamics. By the late 1950s, eleven automakers were already operating in Brazil.²

Starting in the mid-1960s, policies implemented by military dictatorship administrations helped to consolidate the model of economic organization that privileged foreign capital (PRADO; EARP, 2003). Setting up certain types of industries, i.e. electrical power, chemical, pharmaceutical and even automotive, required a great amount of sophisticated equipment and complex technology. Therefore, it required

¹ If, in 1949, the food and textile industries accounted for some 50% of all the domestic industrial production, ten years later, in 1959, it was only 36%. Technologically advanced segments took over and grew in that same period annually by 15.2%, twice the rate of manufacture based production (FURTADO, 1983).

² Fábrica Nacional de Motores (heavy trucks and automobiles), Ford and General Motors (light and medium trucks), Internacional Harvester (medium trucks), Mercedes-Benz (medium and heavy trucks and buses), Scania Vabis (heavy trucks), Simca (automobiles), Toyota (jeeps), Vemag (light trucks, automobiles and jeeps), Volkswagen (light trucks and automobiles), Willis (jeeps, light trucks and automobiles, Aero-Willis and Dauphine-Renault automobiles).

large initial investment that was more accessible to multinational companies or state companies.

Rural production became strongly based on technology, which was required to trade in international markets. At this time, large food manufacturers, such as Perdigão and Sadia, expanded their agro industrial facilities.

The mechanization of farming reduced the number of rural jobs, forcing a great number of people to move to the cities. At the same time, job opportunities in big cities were more attractive thanks to the implementation of new industries, the growth of the construction sector, the growing number of civil servants and public jobs, and the growth of commerce and the service sector in general. Romero states that (2004, p. 360):

The big city had a tertiary activity, the bright city lights, different types of services, countless small and large businesses, many people in the higher walks of life who might require household workforce or different services typical of the urban life; it was even more attractive when the city was starting its great leap into industrialization [...] There the immigrant could find “urban work”: services, commerce or different industrial sectors.

Hence, during the 1950s, 8 million people migrated to Brazilian cities, where some 24% came from rural areas; in the 1960s, 14 million Brazilians migrated; in the 1970s, the figures for migration were 17 million.

Therefore, in only three decades 39 million people left the fields (MELLO; NOVAIS, 1998). In the 1970s, the population of the São Paulo metro region exceeded 10 million inhabitants: five times what is used to be in only 20 years. Greater Rio de Janeiro already had over 8 million inhabitants: four times the number of inhabitants compared to the 1950s. The population of Belo Horizonte and surrounding area exceeded 2 million inhabitants. A similar trend was observed

in Porto Alegre, Recife and Salvador (MELLO; NOVAIS, 1998).

This process left visible marks in many cities. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, this trend triggered a series of changes that continued and accentuated a process that was already ongoing since the transition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the form of urban reforms carried out by Pereira Passos (1902-1906).³

Industrial parks were built, requiring the reconfiguration of the urban structure in order to equip it with the right conditions to meet the needs for productions. Some neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro owe their major occupation influx to the plants that were set up there, which was also related to the development of new transportation possibilities:

In the '40s and '50s, over 220 medium size industries set up their business along the railways. Maria da Graça developed with the implementation of General Electric; Bonsucesso with Cerâmica Klabin; Del Castilho with Companhia Nacional de Tecidos Nova América; Benfica with Gillete do Brasil; Irajá with Cimento Branco; Honório Gurgel with different chemical companies; Bangu with Companhia Progresso Industria; Inhomirim with Fábrica Estrela; Xerém with Fábrica Nacional de Motores, etc.[...] The combination of higher income from train fares when Avenue Brasil was inaugurated in 1940 boosted the growth of the municipalities located in the Baixada region. But the most significant factor was the dislocation of industrial sectors (LESSA, 2000, p. 252).

³ According to Abreu (2006), since the actions undertaken by Passos, the aim was to align the urban network of Rio to the need of the new economic standards: capitalism was encouraged with the changes made to the cities façade. Likewise, the "Remodeling, Extension and Beautification Plan" signed by French Alfred Agache during the administration of Mayor Antonio Prado Junior (1926-1930) also intended to respond to the industrial sector that came to be after World War I" (REZENDE, 2002, p. 260).

Living in the city meant being able to have easier access to the new products from the domestic industrial sectors. Acquiring them meant to possess something that represented the archetype of modernity. Cities became venues where the “most modern” occurred. Social standards were then marked by valuing products of the “technological civilization”, the greatest iconic symbol of which is the automobile.

Cities needed to adapt to the growing presence of cars. Houses and buildings had to make room for the “new family member”. In the early 1960s, construction laws were amended prohibiting the construction of buildings that had no garages. Avenues were avidly built, encroaching and neglecting the old city and celebrating – practically and symbolically, the “definitive arrival of progress”.

Under the auspices of this new urban scheme, certain recreation practices arise and/or are consolidated. For example, having a car or even being able to take a bus in a country that heavily invests on the road system encourages the habit of travelling. During the 1960s, this possibility became more accessible, as per *Veja* of 17 December 1969, p. 74: “Travelling in Brazil is no longer a privilege [...] In 1969, 4 million Brazilians were travelling”.

In the 1960s, the traditional travel magazine *Guia 4 Rodas* was launched and the number of travel agencies started to grow and significantly change the Brazilian hotel industry. The opening of Motel Clube do Brasil that operated under the membership system enable access to good hotel at compatible rates.

Greater stimulus and the possibility of travelling was another expression of the dissemination of services and products that had been until then considered an inaccessible luxury item; they were gradually becoming the standard of aspired comfort for a wider spectrum of the population. This was also the case in the international scenario:

Goods and services that used to be restricted to a minority were now produced for the

mass market, such as by the travel sector and sunny beaches. Before WWII, not more than 150 thousand North Americans travelled to Central America or the Caribbean in one year, but in 1950 and 1970 this figure increased from 300 thousand to 7 million. It was not surprising that figures for Europe were more astonishing. Spain that had practically no mass tourism industry, until the 1950s was welcoming over 44 million foreigners per year by the late '80s, slightly outnumbered by Italy with 45 million (HOBSBAWM, 1998, p. 259).

Changes to the production system were also transferred to the different forms of trading: supermarkets were opened and fundamentally shopping malls. In Rio de Janeiro, supermarket Disco was outstanding for exceeding sales figures compared to the old dry good and grocery stores and butchers. In São Paulo, the first shopping mall of Brazil, the Iguatemi, was inaugurated in 1966, "it became a true temple of consumption and recreation" (MELLO; NOVAIS, 1998, p. 566).

Veja of 30 January 1974, p. 40 stated: "Definitely, the era of shopping malls has arrived in Brazil. They are veritable cities, with their own life style and laws that are invading major Brazilian cities." Hence, it is not surprising that going to the shopping mall became one of the most common pastimes. An analysis about the use of free time in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, carried out by the Metropolis Study Center(2005) confirms this trend, the result of which is applicable to other major cities.

As a group, all evidence reinforces the notion that this was a new political-economic-cultural structural scenario that emulated the United States:

When World War II ecloded, Brazil was still influenced by French culture in all its forms. Paris, romantically perceived as a tender *belle époque*, was the world center of literature, arts and enjoyment. The military

catastrophe, isolating us from Europe and bringing us closer to the United States, brought the defining circumstances to change the our role model (CUNHA, 1968, p. 9).

This dynamics points out to the shift of the identity formation process, where possessions and the acquisition of goods were strongly valued. According to Néstor García Canclini (2005, p. 26), “[...] with Europe we learned how to be citizens; with the United States we learned how to be consumers”.

If it is true that the notion of recreation and consumption as a form of status and distinction can be observed since modern society was constituted (MELO; PERES, 2005), it is also a fact that over the years this perception has changed in many ways. One such perception is the growing preponderance of “conspicuous consumption” in detriment of “conspicuous idleness” as a more efficient method for exhibitionism, Veblen (1987, p. 42) explains:

The media and the mobility of the population expose the individual to the observation of other people that have no other means of judging their good reputation, except by displaying their assets [...] the only practical way to impress these onlookers that are unsympathetic with our daily life is to display uninterrupted our ability to pay. In the modern community there were also a greater number of large meetings with people that do not know about our life style in venues like the church, the ballroom, hotel, parks, shops and similar places. In order to impress these onlookers and to keep their self-satisfaction in face of their observation, the power of the person’s wealth must be engraved in a writing that can be read even on the run.

It is clear that a similar situation occurred in Brazilian society: to a large extent, the growth and consolidation of new ways to enjoy free time were also associated with the desire to display distinct consumerism standards.

In short, within the scenario of the Brazilian scenario of the 1950s-1970s, especially in major cities, there is a boost in the market for new recreation practices. Services abound in sectors such as restaurants, travel agencies, discos, hotels and fitness center, to mention but a few. These factors symptomatically point to new ways of having fun, as published on *Veja* of 12 December 1973, p. 82: “Modern vacation is no longer the privilege of a wealthy minority, especially in the case of a population that is going through an auspicious stage of growth on all statistical fronts”.

3 RECREATION AND URBANIZATION: CONCERNS WITH THE BODY AND THE VALUING OF NATURE

The emergence and/or consolidation of recreation related habits we real so closely associated with the “mental effects” triggered by the new way in which cities were organized. As the population grew, the initial euphoria was replaced with harsh criticism of the urbanized environment. Cities were then portrayed as “the nightmare of multitudes”, where “daily life is fraught with torment”. Urban life is then deemed as unhealthy, infected and compromised by the unclean and polluted air. In the 1970s, the term “urbicity” is coined to define the pathological and harmful environment.

It was quite common to talk about the weekend as a time of “the uncontrollable and disquieting impulse to flee the city”, a time where “the adventure of fleeing prevailed”: “Sociologists, psychologists and urbanists would try to explain the reasons that drove hoards of individuals to flee the city as if getting rid of a heavy burden” (VEJA, 15 November 1978, p. 55).

Within this context, the concern with “taking care of the body and the soul” gained momentum. Meditation classes and other spiritual treatments became very trendy with the Brazilian middle class. Likewise, exercising as a pastime also became popular. The need and desire to “un warp the body” is growingly displayed. *Veja* of 2 December 1974, p. 50:

Exercising that until now was only undertaking as a compliment to dieting is now a common practice both by the fat and the thin, especially as a means of moving the body that is warped from the vicious circle imposed by urban life.

Sweating was trendy. According to an article in *Veja* of 3 October 1979, p. 51, it was estimated that the number of “gyms and fitness centers” increased from a dozen to over 50 in just four years: “The boom of sports and fitness is becoming also a mass phenomenon [...] In other words, hundreds of thousands of Brazilians are finding out that one of their greatest concerns – if not the greatest – is related to their own body”

The idea of nature also becomes greatly valued, where the sun, the sea and the mountains are adored. This “cult” was also reflected in the new trends that emerged, such as gardening as a hobby, the new importance of health and macrobiotic food restaurants and the growing popularity of certain practices carried out in nature.

In 1966, Camping Clube do Brazil is launched with the goal of setting up a network of camping sites throughout Brazil. Four years later, there were over 120 camping clubs in the country. Camping became a popular recreation habit. This is how *Veja* of 8 January 1969, p. 49 defined these sites:

[...] a green venue conducive to recreation, rest and tourism with all the perks of your own home [...] a place where both adults and kids are free from the cloistering lack of space of apartments, or the annoying concrete landscape, the neurosis-inducing hurry, the noise and polluted air.

In order to meet the fast-paced growth for a new urban demand, e.g. the strong desire to reconnect with nature in their “vacationing in the countryside”, the number of farm hotels also is boosted (VEJA, 19 January 1977).

Within this scenario, it becomes clear why *Empresa Brasileira de Turismo* creates in the late 1970s “a groundbreaking planned recreation center with the purpose of halting the degradation of wilderness by the increasing the number of tourists that are attracted to living closer to nature” (VEJA, 26 October 1977, p. 63).

Nature sports become more popular. In less than a decade, surfing was taken up by a great number of middle-class youngsters from the Southern Zone of Rio de Janeiro. When the V Surf Festival was held in Saquarema, an aficionado explained the large crowd in his own words: “just the fact of leaving behind all the pollution and the hustle-and-bustle is very cool (VEJA, 2 June 1976, p. 82).

Mountain climbing, also called excursionism, took on a similar meaning. The excerpt below shows how Raul Pontual, member of the Brazilian Excursionism Center perceived this activity, published in the entity’s bulletin:

Blessed be excursionism for permitting modern human beings, encroached by sedentary life and urban pollution, to return to the purifying bosom of nature [...] On the top of a mountain, being close to nature is the best balm for modern life tensions (1971, p. 15).⁴

Hence, the following article of *Veja* of 10 January 1975, p. 10 summarizes well this mindset:

The idea of recreation as presented nowadays suggests the need to escape from work, which is crushing humankind [...] It seems that a weekend in the countryside or on the beach, or yet and even better, a vacation, are

⁴ For more information about surfing and mountaineering in that historic moment, see *Studies of Days* (2008).

the right remedy for those who have depleted their strength in carrying out absolutely boring and repetitious actions both in the office and in production plants.

The quest for being closer to nature was not limited to weekend out-of-town activities. Initiatives to bring it into the homestead increased, such as the “green mania”, as describe by no *Veja* of 18 August 1976, p. 75: “potted plants in the apartments helped attenuating the concrete urban landscape”.

If the new urban configuration was able to influence the new recreation habits, the opposite situation was also observed: the expectations and representations of how free time was used influenced their destiny. Gradually, the creation of adequate recreation venues was perceived as a problem typical of metropolitan centers. The expansion of the urban road network had to take into account the new desires for fun time and contact with nature.

Middle-class condos and gated communities had to include in their project recreation areas, parks and gardens, which became a Strong added-value to the enterprise and that stand as such to the present day.

In Rio de Janeiro, the Southern Zone (where the upscale neighborhoods are located) ran out of real estate options; urban expansion was geared towards the West Zone - Barra da Tijuca – pioneering in condos for “new life styles”, such as Nova Ipanema and Novo Leblon.

In São Paulo, the Chácara Flora neighborhood was advertised as “a piece of paradise within the capital city – in other words, it was located some 20 minutes from Praça da Sé (in the heart of downtown) [...] The region offers many amenities and recreation options for all who live there” (PONCIANO, 2001, p. 45). Likewise, Granja Viana was described as “a neighborhood with upscale houses and malls [...] offering green spaces and peace and quiet in some seven thousand hectares in the Horto Florestal (botanical garden) reserve” (REVISTA DA ADEMI *apud* LEITÃO, 1999, p. 85).

Recife also grew, where amenities were located by the coast and close to nature (VEJA, 17 February 1976). In 1975, architect Válder Gordilho made the following comments on a similar phenomenon that occurred in Salvador:

[...] the more privileged are seeking new natural environments, where vegetation and improved environmental condition are conducive to new options; hence the new subdivisions, such as Horto Florestal, Jardim das Bolandeiras and Caminho das Árvores (REVISTA DA ADEMI *apud* LEITÃO, 1999, p. 85).

Hence, this trend was reaching the national level:

Nowadays, there is nothing more advertised in major Brazilian cities on the real estate ads section than subdivisions located kilometers far from downtown, where urban Brazilians will be able to discover very old novelties like the sun (“the sunset, remember what it’s like?”, promises an add posted by a realtor in São Paulo) (VEJA, 28 August 1974, p. 52).

In the 1950s-1970s, the growth of Brazilian cities triggered a new awareness in relation to nature, which in turn walked hand-in-hand with other ways of enjoying free time; both influenced how cities were to expand.

However, this does not mean that these trends did not already exist. It is a fact that the genesis of these dynamics could be observed as far back as the mid-eighteenth century, when the “illumination movement” and the dissemination of a romantic ethics were the trend. The “panic of idleness” and valuing nature as a scenic and landscape artifact were always part of the modern urbanization process and the creation of symbols related to modernity.

In Brazil, similar events can be clearly observed in the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. In Rio de Janeiro for example, the Brazilian sports milieu underwent a new configuration (embracing the novelty of celebrating physical activities and body cult) via the urban reforms

implemented under the guidance of Pereira Passos. The valuing of the sea and the beach as a social venue was evident, as well as the new parks and the encouragement for new recreational practices (MELO, 2001).

In the second half of the twentieth century, the aforementioned processes gained momentum.

4 RECREATION AND URBANIZATION: GOVERNMENTAL CONCERNS

Within this context, new governmental measures were implemented in order to intervene in the urban organization. Of the many initiatives, the most outstanding were those that valued green areas, most of which were earmarked for recreation purposes. Furthermore, these new venues were associated with urban aesthetical concerns. Public agencies had to deal with that fact that:

The big city is pulling Brazilians out from the house – to jog, ride a bike, exercise [...] In five years, parks, beaches, gardens and avenues of major avenues of major Brazilian cities were overtaken by hordes of athletes of all ages, growing in number and more adventurous (VEJA, 3 October 1979, p. 51).

Initiatives were implemented in many Brazilian States. In Rio de Janeiro, in 1961, the justification to implement the National Tijuca Park was twofold, e.g. to offer the natural environment to the public and to preserve it. In 1965, a large area lined with trees and recreational equipment was informally inaugurated with the same purpose, which was called the Flamengo Park (OLIVEIRA, 1995).

Also in Rio de Janeiro, in the late '60s, the "Urbanization Plan for Barra da Tijuca and Baixada de Jacarepaguá" was created by Lúcio Costa, an outstanding architect and urbanist, clearly expressing the trend to value the natural environment: "The master plan for Barra da Tijuca is

exciting in that it abounds in the artist's love of nature, which will be molded like clay in the divine hands of a man called Lúcio Costa". (PLANO, 1969, p. 3). In the words of the creator of the plan: "The game of bringing the bucolic factor into the city is fundamental" (O RIO, 1969, p. 11).

In São Paulo, in 1954, a large green area earmarked for recreation was inaugurated: the Ibirapuera Park. In 1969, city administration spread billboards in the city with flowers and the invitation to people to engage in recreational activities; the idea behind the publicity was to create a mellower landscape in the metropolis: "Let's turn São Paulo into a pleasant city", where it was estimated that 21,000 trees were to be planted (VEJA, 1 July 1974).

In Minas Gerais, in the early 1970s, Gil César, Superintendent Director of the State Government Capital (SUDECAP) was concerned with mass recreation, thus announcing that a manmade beach would be built on the banks of the Pampulha Lagoon (VEJA, 14 October 1971). In 1974, the Parks and Gardens Department planted over 400,000 tree saplings throughout the city, and Burle Marx was commissioned three projects for the three main parks (VEJA, 26 June 1974).

In 1975, the city administration of Salvador followed the example given by Curitiba that was already acknowledged as "the model city" (also for the fact that it created large public green areas) launching the project "Expanding venues for the population", where pedestrian streets were created. In 1977, as part of the initiatives under the Project called "Porto Alegre Urgent", the capital city of Rio Grande do Sul implemented some 200,000 square meters of pedestrian streets in order to "make the city more humane" (VEJA, 11 June 1977).

In terms of the Federal Government, in 1973 the II National Development Plan focused on urban planning. As a consequence, new specialized departments, commission and agencies were created to deal with "city issues" of nine cities:

Belém, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and São Paulo.

Following this action, in June 1973 the “I Meeting of Metropolitan Regions” was held in Rio de Janeiro (VEJA, 20 June 1973). In June 1974, the “National Commission for Metropolitan Regions” was set up, with its own budget of 240 million cruzeiros, the objective of which was to “to make life in the cities feasible” (VEJA, 12 June 1974, p. 69). Also in 1974, the “Urban Policy National Symposium” was held in São Paulo (VEJA, 20 November 1974, p. 58).

Public health initiatives were suggested, expressing concern with “development related illnesses”. On August 1978, the São Paulo University held the “Seminar on the status quo of public health in metropolitan regions”, with the purpose of creating a diagnostics of urban clusters. The effects of pollution and violence, traffic and depression were just starting to be treated as epidemic.

In the 1970s, activities like bicycle riding and closing roads from traffic on weekends intensified, which were called ‘recreation streets’. Following the “Get moving” campaign, federal government launches the program “Sports for Everyone”. Part of the media referred to these initiatives as “the proof of love of recreation”, highlighting the fact that individuals “are still open to the growing official initiative in this areas” (VEJA, of 5 October 1977, p. 72).

Recreation emerges as an important “re-humanizing” instrument, finding its niche in public agendas. The “National Recreation Seminar” held in Curitiba on November 1974 was pointed out as the initiative responsible for transferring the “life quality issue in a large city to the concrete sphere of official concerns” (VEJA, of 4 December 1974, p. 54). Architects, urbanists, sociologists, economists and social assistants attended the event that was considered a “crusade for the new, more humane concept and attracted physiognomy for the large metropolis against boredom, cultural frustration

and despair that encroaches upon the people who live in them” (VEJA, of 4 December 1974, p. 54).

In 1975, a new congress was held in Rio de Janeiro: the 1st Meeting on Recreation, Culture, Leisure and Physical Education. Books by French scholar Joffre Dumazedier were translated into Portuguese, who was an important influence during the early days of systemized studies on recreation in Brazil. In the 1970s, another important book is: “*Lazer no planejamento urbano*” (Recreation in urban planning) by Ethel Bauzer Medeiros. Soon, this theme would also be discussed and treated as an academic subject; its relationship with urban issues would remain as a study subject.

A serious discussion arose in the twentieth century, when the first departments fully dedicated to recreation were created. This discussion will not be addressed in depth under this study, as the theme and the focus on the timeline are not part of the purpose of this article.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Robert Park (1973, p. 26) said “[...] the city is not merely a geographical unit”. It is more than streets, buildings and railroads. It is more than a hoard of individuals and social conveniences. It is more than the mere constellation of administrative institutions and provisions. The city is also a state of mind, a body of customs, feelings and behaviors. Thus, “[...] to think about the city means to think or the network or urban and territorial roads, perceiving it as an observatory of the relationship between human beings” (LEPETIT, 2001, p. 15).

Hence, structuring urban venues should also be understood in the light of different social mechanisms that were part of the construction and assimilation of new habits. The way how the urbanization process is carried out bears a strong relationship with the population’s life styles and forms

of living. Both respond to the same condition of possibilities, where cultural habits and the cities physical appearance are cross-influencing, dramatizing and materializing a body of changes. In the words of Gilberto Velho (1995, p. 228):

Parallel to reorganizing space, changes to the economy and contemporary political life, its constitution and nature are indissociably associated to specific ways of perceiving and building reality. It is the consequence and the simultaneous cause of a new world vision with specific conceptions related to time, space and the individual.

These interfaces show how the structuring of cities can influence to a certain extent the expectations of their population in terms of how they spend their free time. Likewise, it is also possible to observe how new desires and expectations of enjoying free time can help to consolidate a complex system of representations that gradually demand of new venues and the materialization of a new city, all of which can meet the requirements that arise from new habits.

From this perspective, the study of the relationship between space and culture can expand the heuristic understanding of the urban phenomenon and the recreation phenomenon. In order to think about the city in all its complexity, it is necessary to consider simultaneously the venue and the people, the space and its actors.

In this sense, it is highly recommended that a further study on the relationship between the urbanization process and the formation of certain recreation habits be carried out. A city is made up of the way in which each of its structures is used on a daily basis, which goes beyond planning schemes and other political projections.

And surely, as presented under this study, the way men and women that occupy these venues and use them to enjoy their free time is an important element conducive to changes and to the different forms of reappropriation of this complex called city.

Lazer e urbanização no Brasil: notas de uma história recente (décadas de 1950/1970)

Resumo: Este artigo objetiva discutir a relação entre a aceleração do processo de urbanização do Brasil, observável a partir dos anos 1950, e de forma ainda mais intensa ao longo dos anos 1960 e 1970, e os novos arranjos do fenômeno lazer em nossa sociedade. O intuito é analisar as possíveis correspondências entre um certo aspecto da cultura (o lazer) e as formas assumidas ou idealizadas para um território. Para alcançar esse objetivo, além de uma revisão da bibliografia, utiliza-se como fonte principal um periódico semanal de grande circulação, penetrabilidade e influência, lançado nos anos 1960: a revista *Veja*.

Palavras-chave: Atividade de lazer. Urbanização. Natureza. Cidades.

Ocio y urbanización en Brasil: notas de una historia reciente (décadas de 1950/1970)

Resumen: Ese artículo intenta discutir la relación entre la aceleración del proceso de urbanización en Brasil, observable desde los años 1950 y aún más intensamente durante los años 1960 y 1970, y los nuevos arreglos del fenómeno ocio en nuestra sociedad. El objetivo es examinar las posibles conexiones entre un aspecto de la cultura (el ocio/entretenimiento) y las formas asumidas o idealizadas para un territorio. Para alcanzar nuestro objetivo, hicimos inicialmente una revisión de la literatura y posteriormente utilizamos como fuente principal un periódico semanal principal de gran circulación, lanzado en los años 1960: la revista *Veja*.

Palabras clave: Actividades recreativas. Urbanización. Naturaleza. Ciudades.

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