

THE POWER OF LEISURE AS A TRANSFORMING PRACTICE: THE CASE OF KAZOKU DOJÔ

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ABSTRACT: University extensions, such as instruction and research, are the base of Brazilian universities. The Fighting Project - Judo is one of the extensions developed in the Physical Education, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy School (EEFFTO) of Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). This paper has as objective to identify and to describe the participants' perception about Kazoku Dojô, name given to the Project's mat. A descriptive analysis has been made, based on the theory of leisure and human occupation. Results showed that the participants started Judo practice with expectations of learning a martial art, however during their standing, noticed that Kazoku Dojô was a place of user embracement and self-belonging feeling.

KEYWORDS: Leisure Activities. Martial Arts. User Embracement.

A POTÊNCIA DO LAZER COMO PRÁTICA TRANSFORMADORA: O CASO DO KAZOKU DOJÔ

RESUMO: A extensão universitária, junto com o ensino e a pesquisa, são pilares da universidade. O Projeto de Extensão em Lutas - Judo é uma das ações de extensão desenvolvidas na Escola de Educação Física, Fisioterapia e Terapia Ocupacional (EEFFTO) da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. Este estudo de campo teve como objetivo identificar e descrever a percepção dos praticantes de judô em relação ao Kazoku Dojô, nome atribuído ao espaço de treinamento. A análise foi descritiva a partir do referencial teórico da ocupação e do lazer. Os resultados mostraram que os participantes iniciaram as atividades no projeto com a expectativa de aprender uma nova luta, mas, ao longo de sua permanência, ressignificaram aquele espaço como local de acolhimento e pertença.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Atividades de Lazer. Artes Marciais. Acolhimento.

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Introduction

Extension is one of the pillars of the university, along with teaching and research. It is responsible for expanding the university's relationship with the community (UFMG, 2018). Here, we understand that the university's relationship with the community can be understood from two different perspectives: the community outside the institution, and its internal community. In this regard, the Physical Education, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy School (EEFFTO) of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), according to the Extension Center (CENEX EEFFTO), has 22 open extension activities registered on its website for different audiences, in addition to a physical activity project, including Judo, a scenario in which this study was developed.

We shall take the liberty of using the first person in the construction of this article, considering two central elements: the first, and the most important, relates to the history of the Kazoku Dojo, of which we were the first participants and, until now, active and frequent and second, for the affections we created both with the space and with the participants who, from judokas, became friends.

Aiming to situate the reader, the reference period of this study is between April 2017 and December 2019, during the stay of sensei Leandro Martins, who stopped participating in the project in this role due to his graduation in Physical Education course, although he continued in the project as a member of the community outside UFMG. We highlight this period, as it was precisely at some point in this project that we began to realize that participation in the activities seemed to go far beyond the practice of judo: at a certain point, it seemed to us that the participants started to include that space as a necessary part of their daily lives.

This perception came from the observation that, increasingly, the participants' dialogues stopped being superficial conversations to issues that involved, in some level, intimacy. The group's games became something increasingly habitual, with more 'liberties', which allowed us to concluding that: that grouping of people was gradually becoming a group: we had common goals, we wanted the same purpose (judo). But, in addition to that, we noticed that the group became more intimate and, with that, the feeling of belonging in that group was also an increasingly present factor.

It is worth noting that not only that group was made of happiness. Certainly, conflicts, misunderstandings, partnerships, were all part of the daily training (which, although we hadn't realized it yet, was much more than training or learning to fight). The relations in the *Dojô* (space where martial arts are trained). Although the original meaning is regarding life learning, in the sense of following an honorable life, we will treat herein as a training space), previously restricted to this space, they were extended to places outside the university itself. Friendships were created, secrets began to be confided, personal conflicts began to be divided.

Another characteristic that started to call our attention was the number of people who had some difficulty, physical, cognitive (attention deficit and visual problems, for example) and mental disorders (situations of depression were noticeable and frequently reported). This point is particularly important, as these difficulties appeared at different times in the judo learning process and were constantly accepted by the group. By expressing their difficulties, each member moved to contribute to the establishment of an inclusive process, which resulted in a feeling of mutual trust. It is worth to note that no one had the usual practice of 'letting someone win' or 'taking it easy' during training. Welcoming always followed in the sense of respecting the other's difficulty and, as far as possible, adapting the activities, building different methods of

explanation, making the time needed to perform a given exercise more flexible. It was, therefore, an ethical, aesthetic and political exercise.

This receptioning process, for a broader understanding, is not just about listening. The Brazilian Ministry of Health defines reception as an action of inclusion, in which an actor is willing to be with another. Thus, it has an ethical dimension, as it recognizes individuality and subjectivity, difficulties, differences, joys and sorrows in the other; an aesthetic dimension, insofar as it contributes to the construction of life-dignifying strategies and, thus, of humanity itself and; political, as there is a commitment to engage with the other, building individual and collective protagonists during the meetings (BRASIL, 2010).

Thus, by establishing the *Dojô* as a welcoming space, we realized that the group started to re-define that space: from a place for training and learning judo, it also became a meeting place, a setting of trust and certainty that the individuality of each would be respected. This perception took place from the moment the project participants started to arrange meetings before the time of activities, just talking (serious issues or not) and socializing. The *sensei* himself, when he had the possibility, attended these moments and cherished talking about the most different topics that arose. Furthermore, it was possible to observe that pairs and trios formed and mutually enjoyed the companies of their peers in celebrations that went beyond the *Dojô* at parties, bars, university restaurants, in university corridors or even by going to homes.

In this scenario, in the middle of the second school period of 2017, the group, already established as such, felt the need to have a name that would represent us. Maximino (2001) defines a group as not only an agglomeration of people, but a certain set and, therefore, a cutout, which gives characteristics to that agglomeration, based on an implicit or explicit set of rules, rituals, affections, habits, language. According the

author, these characteristics allow the group to recognize itself as such and also to plan as such. In this regard, we talked, in pairs and in the group, and we came to an understanding that we saw ourselves as a family, precisely because of the moments of welcoming and conflicts, the format of coexistence and the roles played. Then, after a brief debate, the name *Kazoku*, a translation of family in Japanese language.

Considering, then, the perceptions presented so far, below we present theoretical elements that contributed to the data analysis. This reference, in the sense of advancing information, is not based on a specific concept of leisure. In this regard, we intend to point out leisure not as a concept, but as a phenomenon, central to the daily existence of subjects, structuring routine, decisions, and the subject's historical construction. Thus, we will seek elements to establish this beginning of debate in the core of knowledge of Occupational Therapy, a profession seeking to understand the occupational life of individuals and communities. Certainly, we will not exhaust this theme throughout this article, as it is not the purpose herein. We hope to contribute, however, towards expanding the range of discussions, both theoretically and in practical possibilities in the field of leisure.

The Phenomenon of Leisure

Leisure is an occupation and, as such, it has a set of conditions for it to be considered as it is: initially, it must be considered that occupation is a form of action. However, this action is not simply performed. It is not something that is 'done just for the sake of it'. It is complex, composed of different facets (social, historical, cultural, individual, collective), influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors to the performing subject.

Tomasi (2018), from the perspective of praxis pointed out by Vázquez (1977), points out that leisure, as an occupation, is an essentially human activity. This is because leisure is teleological, that is, it has a purpose, determined by a set of perceptions directly related to the individual (his/her culture, contemporaneity, social class, abilities and difficulties, for example).

The occupation is, then, experienced. It is considered, therefore, that it is a teleological action, planned and executed based on desires, senses and assigned meanings, and that it necessarily produces a sense of competence and productivity. Still, occupation (and therefore leisure), is a central element part of a socio-historical process, which encompasses both the subject who experiences it and the communities and spaces in which these actors are inserted, building and being built by these same subjects. (KIELHOFNER, 2006; HAGEDORN, 2007).

Through this set of prerogatives, it is also possible to affirm that leisure, in addition to occupation, is a phenomenon. In our view, leisure happens. And when it happens, it cannot be reduced to a definition, linked to some exclusive element, as leisure time, the environment in which the action takes place, or even a specific activity, for example. In this regard, it is possible to consider that leisure can happen at any time, in any place and, being linked to a set of determinants of individual and collective perception, it can manifest itself in any activity.

Based on the premises of occupation, we also infer that leisure contributes in different ways to the daily constructions of subjects, whether in the practical sphere (as the organization or reorganization of routine) or in a more theoretical context (as, for example, to rethink opinions and positions regarding their own existence and the existence of the other). Within this line, leisure is a powerful element for the construction of a process of being and being in the world, aligning subjects'

relationships with themselves and with others. In the same extent, a producer of a sense of competence by providing perceptions that we are (in) capable; provoking the feeling of belonging or exclusion, when experienced in communities; relieving worries and increasing happiness, when playfulness is present.

These experiences and possibilities, in turn, are inserted in an important and central context in the subjects' lives: daily routine. When we deal with daily routine herein, we are not just referring to the set of tasks and activities throughout the day. Daily routine is also this set, but experienced in different scenarios that make up the history of each one. Therefore, daily routine cannot be treated outside the cultural, social and historical nexus of each subject. It would be frivolous, therefore, not to consider individuality, even in the collective, which builds the meaning of leisure practices.

So, if leisure is identified from objective and subjective meanings, in an individual and/or collective scope, necessarily linked to an experience with meaning attributed by subjects and communities, culturally constructed in and by everyday life (practical or not), linked to the society in which the subject is inserted, it is possible to consider that absolutely any activity that fits the perspective presented so far is leisure. It is, then, from this initial set of information that we developed this study, which had the purpose to identify and describe the perception of judo practitioners in the EEFFTO Judo Extension Project with regard to *Kazoku Dojô*.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study. This type of study, as a guide for research in social sciences, is concerned with subjectivity in human relations and representations, based on individual and/or collective representations. It can be used to unravel social

processes, from the perspective of collectivities (MINAYO, 2010). For its operationalization, with regard to the data collection method, it can be classified as field research and, in relation to the purposes, as exploratory and descriptive.

Field study is used when the researcher wants to achieve greater depth in relation to the object of investigation. In this type of study, a specific community or group is usually highlighted. For that, the researcher can use as data collection tools both the observation of the studied group and interviews with the research subjects. For this reason, conducting field studies requires the direct presence of the researcher in the research field, increasing the reliability of the data collected (MARCONI; LAKATOS, 2010).

Gil (2007, p.42) states that exploratory research aims to increase familiarity with the topic studied, or preparing hypotheses. In exploratory research, “the main purpose is related to the improvement of ideas or the discovery of intuitions”. Exploratory research may involve: bibliographic survey, interviews and analysis of examples to broaden the understanding of the subject.

Descriptive research, in turn, has as its basic presupposition the description of phenomena and the establishment of a relationship between variables and the establishment of relationships between the variables observed in the process. In this regard, research findings may indicate new perspectives for the studied reality (GIL, 2007).

After approval of the project by the Research Ethics Committee of UFMG (opinion No. 3412.424), data collection was started through semi-structured interviews, recorded and transcribed in full to ensure the preservation of information, and the texts stored in electronic documents. The interviews were conducted with six participants enrolled in the Project during the study period, during the period

mentioned at the beginning of the text. To maintain data confidentiality, each participant received a code: the letter 'J', followed by a number that followed the sequence of interviews (J1, J2... J6). Interviews were suspended when data saturation was observed.

Following, an exhaustive reading of the collected data was carried out, in order to identify empirical categories, which we will call here units of meaning, since the theoretical framework for analysis was selected *a posteriori*. According to Minayo (2010), these categories facilitate the understanding of specific relationships in the research context, from the perspective of the researcher. In short, empirical categories allow the researcher to know the investigated reality.

Thus, the data were categorized into the following units of meaning, which depict the chronology of the participants' meaning-making process in relation to the *Dojô: start and expectations*, which cover perceptions about the beginning of activities in the Project; perceptions *about the Dojô*, which portrays the participants' perception of the judo developed in the Project and; meanings *attributed to Kazoku*, which deals with the relationship of each of the subjects with the group of participants. To make this analysis easier, speech excerpts illustrating representations of the units of meaning were selected and systematically allocated in an electronic spreadsheet. Data analysis was descriptive and theoretical relationships, as indicated, were based on the knowledge of leisure and occupational therapy, both areas of training for researchers. We present the research findings below.

Results and Discussion

In this section, we will present the results found with the application of the interviews. The organization of information follows the same order as the meaning categories presented in the previous topic.

Start and Expectations

As previously presented, this category deals specifically with the moment when the participants started to attend the project's judo classes, as well as the expectations they had in relation to these classes. University extension is a central element for student education, as it is closely associated with teaching and research. Thus, by promoting extension, the university also promotes exchanges of knowledge and practices, which add and contribute to the construction of knowledge (UFMG, 2020).

In this regard, it is possible to infer that an extension action (whether it is a project, program or course) must be accessible in relation to infrastructure, knowledge offered, financial aspects, ease of access for internal and external audiences. Insofar as the extension action is developed, it must involve the participants in order to make the experience of this action an integral part of the routine, as it seeks to encourage the encouragement of knowledge and development, whether scientific or professional personnel.

Below we present excerpts from the interviews illustrating the statements presented.

J1: I think convenience, practice maybe. Because I was..., I was a student at UFMG, so it was close, and generally cheaper than in schools far away. So, for convenience, I decided to do it here.

J5: I came here to study in Minas Gerais, and I wanted to train Karatê, but I couldn't find a place to train. Then, I learned about judo at *Atlética* [College Athletics] and then I met here at the Physical Education School [...] a friend who recommended it. He knew the project and indicated it. [...] and how I live near here.

Thus, regarding the process of entering the project, it is possible to see that the interviewees recognized this process from three specific points: 1) the ease of access to judo practice; 2) the curiosity to learn more about the sport and 3) for the resumption of judo. From these perceptions it is possible to infer, then, that at least initially the project meets what is recommended for university extension.

By providing an action making it easier the access both in terms of location, as the activities are offered at the EEEFTO on the Pampulha campus, which although not located in a central area of Belo Horizonte, has vast access via public transport, and in financial terms, if compared to gyms and dojos in the city that cost this amount with activities twice a week, it becomes an activity with inclusive potential for the community inside and outside the university.

By privileging the *sensei* to be a student at UFMG, a policy of the extension project, it is possible to notice that there is an increase in the affective bonds of the judo group, considering that most of the participants are also students of the institution. In this regard, we initially infer that communication is easier, the group's language, values, culture, are elements that can make it easier the approximation between professor and students.

Within this perspective, we do not claim that being a professor or administrative technician reduces the inclusive process in the group. As a personal experience of one of the authors of this text, a professor at UFMG, it is possible to state with knowledge of the facts that there was no feeling of exclusion or even different treatment (with regard, for example, to aspects of coexistence) for this reason. On the contrary, we realize that the professor-student relationship was demystified with regard to the hierarchies built throughout the institutional relationship, with the possibility of even more open and

respectful exchange of knowledge, precisely because of the creation of bonds that surpassed the institutional relationship itself.

It was possible to notice, to the same extent, that the project's student participants began to constantly seek information and guidance on issues related to the institution, the relationship with the course professors and even external references (as an indication of professionals for personal issues). Likewise, dialogues relating to personal issues have also become more frequent, with the possibility of building these moments in the corridors of EEEFTO.

This set, then, contributes to clarifying clearly that university extension goes far beyond the return that the university provides to the population or the presentation of practical knowledge developed at the institution. Extension is also a possibility for the construction of spaces providing new meaning to the institution and its relationships, which are sometimes so sickening and immobilized.

From these elements presented, we then infer that some change in the meaning of space was already taking place in that scenario. From the moment that paradigms began to be replaced (as the hierarchical teacher-student relationship, for example), the space itself had possibly been re-defined and was gradually changing from being exclusively for the practice of sports to becoming, on the other hand, in a coexistence setting.

Regarding expectations about the practice of judo, the interviewees unanimously indicated that they would like to learn more about the practice. In this regard, the Judo Extension proposal meets the expectations of the participants, as it does not intend to train high-performance athletes. On the contrary, the Project intends to present the fundamentals of judo, encompassing aspects related to techniques (strike) and teachings widely spread by its maker.

J2: I really want to know it. To learn it. She (the friend) also said that it was very good here... I came to see how it is. [...] now, I know how to apply the strikes... of course I still have a lot to learn, right... but I think I'm also understanding what judo is about fighting itself, right?. Because the fight, I have few experience in judo and I still have a lot to learn, but I think its philosophy has helped me a lot.

J3: I wanted to keep practicing. I expected, I thought it would be the same way, as it was there (referring to the practice in another Dojô). However, with a different *sensei*. I thought it wouldn't change that much. I thought the punch would be no different. Then, I got here and saw it was something else entirely.

It is noteworthy that, although the expectation of participating in the Project was related to learning the techniques and practicing sports itself, the interviewees also realized that there was something different in the process, as illustrated in the lines above.

At the risk of advancing information, at this point it is already possible to see that the *Kazoku Dojô* was constituted as a differentiated space for the practice of judo, not necessarily related to the teaching of fighting, although the combination of the sensei's experience in practice and his training in physical education is fundamental to the learning process. When considering the differences present in the group, however, by fostering the construction of group cohesion and a sense of belonging, by creating a welcoming space in which individuals felt comfortable to live a part of their leisure routine and by encouraging that the experience of judo went beyond the mat, this same space also started to have other meanings attributed.

It is not possible to categorically state that this significance was true when the activities in the Project started. The fact is that, however, it has become increasingly noticeable in the day-to-day of training and meetings. We present, below, the perceptions in relation to the *Dojô*, expressed by the interviewees.

Perceptions about the Dojô

At first, it is possible to highlight in the answers that the subjects noticed the *Dojô* as a place that provided something beyond the practice of judo: they saw a space in which it was possible to reflect on their own daily life, in which they could overcome scenarios they perceived as uncomfortable or as uncomfortable.

J2: I have classes from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and after that there's still a league, tutoring, so I spend the whole day at college. The moment when I can leave this... the classroom for a while is when I'm here. So, I think the time I dedicate here makes a big difference. [...]. To chill. Sometimes I'm sad, so I get here and come back to class even more excited.

J1: I got into judo at a difficult time. I was halfway through my Ph.D., a moment of tension, work, stress, ahhh... it was really good for me that, because it was a time not to... in the physiological sense of wasting energy, but in the mental sense, of sitting here and thinking about the who are doing, training and making it a practice that, at the end of the day, many days, was the best thing that had happened to me that day. It was practicing judo. And leaving here thinking that I've learned a little bit more, that I improved a little bit more than I was before. So, this moment of improving myself helped me a lot during the years I've been training. And... it helped me through tough times. For so many different reasons, but it helped me in a lot of different ways... coming here to train, gave me the feeling of being like a family. Like a Kazoku.

Tomasi (2018), in a study carried out with brewers in Belo Horizonte and the metropolitan region, found that the experience of leisure for that population was seen as necessary in the sense of re-defining everyday practices. In the study, the brewers pointed out that one of the main perceptions in relation to the production of beer was the possibility of reinventing oneself during the execution of the activity, which made it a central practice in their daily lives, both with regard to brewing itself and the context surrounding it.

In this regard, *Dojô* provided judokas with a favorable context for the redefinition of sports practice, that is, even though it was initially considered a space for sports practice, it was gradually transformed into a liberating leisure space, in which subjects could overcome the estrangement and, consequently, the alienation in relation to their daily lives. In this sense, the findings of this study corroborate the

findings that leisure can provide a reinventing situation in everyday life, which increases its power as a transforming element of reality, both for itself and for others.

Thus, from this perspective, we can calmly state that: that space, as it was built, was a leisure space, which can be corroborated by the interview excerpt below:

J5: The project is very important to me. For me, it's very important... you are in a routine of academic life and you have moments like those of the project, with what it offers, which is teaching judo without focusing on competition, it's more for the sport itself... for... the moment of leisure is a moment of relaxing, of escaping from the pressure that is important for the person. For me, in this case, this escape was through judo. The project here offered that.

Based on the above, it is possible to consider that the *Kazoku Dojô* was gradually transformed into a space in which the subjects were able to reframe their daily existence based on a leisure practice, based on the following elements: 1) attribution of a historical sense to the practice of judo and to that environment, not necessarily to a history already lived, but to a history that was being built; 2) that leisure had a teleological character, either for learning judo or as a way of reinterpreting daily life; 3) praxis, or human doing, was an element present in *Kazoku* as it allowed the subjects to build an appropriate, conscious and critical leisure practice.

In this regard, returning to the concept of occupation previously presented, it is possible to affirm with some tranquility that the experience of a leisure occupation was present on those mats and, as an occupation, it contributed to the structuring of the routine of those subjects, providing unique senses and meanings to this space. Following, we present these meanings as reported by the interviewees.

Senses Attributed to Kazoku

Among the terminologies used by the interviewees, we highlight family, community and friendship. All study participants, at some point, indicated, for different

reasons, that they feel that *Kazoku Dojô* has a representation of approximation of relationships, a feeling of belonging. This perception is clear in the statement of J6:

J6: Ahhh.... It's an extension of the family too, right. We start to live together, right. It's like... the feeling, we are from the countryside, it's more or less like the street gang, you know? That thing... that good thing... of living together daily and such...[...]. It's the street gang.

This excerpt clearly illustrates the attribution of meaning that was built over time by the group of participants. Also, when assigning the status of 'Street Gang' to the *dojô* colleagues, it is clear that the relationships in that space, both with the other participants and with the *sensei*, went far beyond what was, perhaps, expected when the judo started.

As mentioned before, one of the attributes of the group is the cohesion that exists between the subjects that comprise it, the construction of a certain culture that permeates the whole and, in this way, can provide a unique experience in the leisure experience. When considering, then, that the 'Street Gang' was there, it is possible to say that there was, in the same way, a set of attributes that allowed those subjects to experience their praxis, as they did not feel the need, for example, to fit into a context that is foreign to themselves, or even to overcome these contexts, as can be seen in the speech below.

J4: [...] in other spaces, technique is highly prioritized and other things are left out. For instance: the well-being in that space. And, here, I feel that no, here we have a much closer relationship and there is no demand on performance in relation to competitions, etc. It makes me... it makes me feel good... a much better feeling, compared to other places. [...] in a way, it is an escape from the space we are living here inside the university. At the university, as in other fight training spaces, we have a very strong demand for results [...] the university follows the same aspect that I don't have a demand in relation to myself, I have a demand in relative to the standard. Of course, it has its place in society and I feel that, in some ways, it may be a necessary evil. But... it turns out that this also weighs on the psychological, on mental health and I feel that having this 'break' moment with this segment, with this pressure, is very essential for us. And here, with some factors such as living with colleagues, regular physical exercise, an environment where we feel good about it, right... it makes a big difference. The *Dojô* here was the first moment of learning for work, which ended up becoming an escape from this moment of pressure, and today it is already a place to socialize, it is already a place where I learn more about myself, I manage to overcome the difficulties I have, I can evolve this philosophical issue too. Today, here, is a place where I learn a lot about myself, about others as well... the coexistence... The fact that it is a coexistence, how can I say it, a relaxed environment, right? Because, in many other places, we have the coexistence, simply out of

politeness, we say “have a good day” and everything else and start training. There isn’t that... that moment of breaking seriousness, there isn’t that moment of more open relationship. People with the possibility of chatting, playing sometimes. And this relaxed environment, being able to have this relationship, getting to know people better, knowing a little more about the lives of others, having this relationship more developed, makes a big difference in the well-being here inside the Dojô. Wellbeing.

Another possible reflection, based on the speech excerpt presented, refers to the construction of leisure as a cultural element, as presented by Gomes (2004). In a research with women who smoke marijuana recreationally, Sousa (2020) discusses the need to establish more in-depth dialogues with other leisure formats, which overcome the idea that this activity is simply a replacement for the time of obligations or work. When applying this idea to the case of sport, for example, it is necessary to overcome the association of the idea of healthy living with pure and simple sport, as if this relationship were direct or beneficial in itself.

In this regard, the very concept of health, if considered from the idea of well-being or even the absence of disease, must be overcome by a dynamic concept, as proposed by Canguilhem at the beginning of the 20th century. In this case, health would be the movement to overcome adversity in life (CAPONI, 1997).

Now, this understanding applied to the field of leisure can propose new pointers for the construction of practices including the thought of establishing new parameters for the field itself, expanding its action beyond the leisure practices themselves, insofar as they would allow the construction of spaces in which subjects develop tools that help them to live their daily lives in a more practical, creative, teleological way, in any area of life.

Final Considerations

The role of extension is to bring the university closer to the internal and external community of the Institution. Among the several existing projects at UFMG, Judo at EEFFTO stands out for the welcoming environment it provides to participants.

The Extension Project in Fighting - Judo from EEFFTO, was not intended to train high-performance athletes, but to address theoretical, philosophical and practical aspects of the sport. Thus, the activities were directed towards learning the fundamental principles of judo, much more than maximizing fighting techniques: principles of respect, companionship, dedication to judo and its extension to everyday practical life.

Thus, in the environment of the *Dojô*, peaceful coexistence was constantly encouraged both between the sensei and the students and among the students themselves. The activities and training focused on the development of the body and the intellect and, as the techniques and fundamentals were learned, their daily applications were also encouraged. In the same extent, lessons of solidarity, companionship and humility were constantly encouraged, always aiming at development inside and outside the *Dojô*.

In this scenario, the extension and the practice of judo gained new horizons: what initially provided for the learning of a sport was transformed into a welcoming environment, in which all subjects felt included and belonging; the participants, unknown at first, formed a cohesive group; relations with the university, to a large extent, were re-signified; sports practice, perceived from the positivist perspective of increasing quality of life, gained a dynamic contour in the construction of possibilities to overcome the different adversities that affect university life.

These considerations, associated with the perspective of leisure and human occupation, place the Project in a privileged place to think about leisure spaces that

focus on the construction of the subjects' praxis. By placing subjective elements in the process of experiencing the practice of sports, a cultural element was immediately attributed - the human relationship - in this practice, which is fundamental for the redefinition of the sport.

Finally, we observe that leisure as an occupational phenomenon has a transforming character, if not in life, at least in some everyday aspect present in it. Finally, we leave the perception that leisure is, in fact, a privileged element in the production of change. Maybe and only maybe, this perception can contribute in the future to the interdisciplinary character of Leisure Studies, as the experience reported herein can sensitize professionals from different knowledge centers in the construction of humanized practices in the most different contexts and environments of life.

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