



# From counting minutes to considering the context: moving paradigms to foster physical activity

Da contagem de minutos ao contexto: mudando paradigmas para promover a atividade física

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** This analytical essay invites the physical activity community to move beyond counting minutes and explore the context in which physical activity occurs. **Objective:** To advocate for a recontextualization of research frameworks and guidelines. Current frameworks - habitual, ecological, and structural - often reinforce North-centric assumptions and insufficiently address oppressions such as racism, patriarchy, and homophobia. **Development:** This essay advocates for the need to confront systemic power structures in the pursuit of a more nuanced understanding of physical activity within frameworks and guidelines, particularly by incorporating knowledge from the Global South and addressing the domain issue. **Final considerations:** Ultimately, this essay calls for an equity approach to physical activity and health, one that addresses the systemic barriers that have historically excluded marginalized groups from engaging in physical activity that is safe, enjoyable, and dignified.

**Keywords:** Diversity; Equity; Inclusion; Exercise; Health promotion.

## RESUMO

**Introdução:** O ensaio analítico convida a comunidade da atividade física a ir além da contagem de minutos e a explorar o contexto no qual o movimento ocorre. **Objetivo:** Advogar por uma recontextualização dos modelos de pesquisa e das diretrizes vigentes. Os modelos atuais — habitual, ecológico e estrutural — frequentemente reforçam parâmetros norte-cêntricos e abordam de forma insuficiente opressões como o racismo, o patriarcado e a homofobia. **Desenvolvimento:** O presente ensaio enfatiza a necessidade de confrontar estruturas de poder em busca de uma compreensão mais contextualizada da atividade física, particularmente ao incorporar conhecimentos do Sul Global e ao considerar a questão dos domínios. **Considerações finais:** Por fim, o ensaio clama por uma abordagem de equidade na atividade física e na saúde, que contemple as barreiras sistemáticas que historicamente excluíram grupos sociais do acesso a práticas de atividade física seguras, prazerosas e dignas.

**Palavras-chave:** Diversidade; Equidade; Inclusão; Exercício físico; Promoção da saúde.

## Introduction

In this analytical essay, we invite the physical activity community to move beyond the conventional focus on “counting minutes” and instead consider the broader context surrounding physical activity. We aim to advocate for a recontextualization of research frameworks and guidelines. By “context”, we refer not only to the

immediate social and physical environments where physical activity takes place, but also to the larger structural forces – the systems of power and oppression, such as racism, patriarchy, and homophobia - that impact people’s experiences, access to resources, and opportunities<sup>1,2</sup>. These systems not only affect participation but also shape the potential to benefit from

physical activity, particularly among socially disadvantaged groups<sup>1-4</sup>.

Existing guidelines predominantly emphasize the amount of physical activity - how many minutes of physical activity should be undertaken<sup>5-7</sup>. We argue this approach is problematic, as it assumes equality of life chances and overlooks the environmental and social factors that shape access and opportunities for participation in different physical activity domains. Most existing conceptual frameworks rely on the promotion of any physical activity, regardless of the domains in which it takes place, including leisure, domestic activities, work, and commuting. In this essay, we emphasize the importance of the context of movement by highlighting the social markers that intersect within each domain<sup>2,3,8-11</sup>. Most crucially, the recommendations overlook the systemic oppression affecting how people experience and benefit from the different domains of physical activity. Persistent patterns of inequality in physical activity and health worldwide cannot be effectively addressed without considering the social, historical, and political contexts in which physical activity occurs. Recent studies have debated the health consequences of physical activity by considering different domains rather than total physical activity alone. For instance, concerning mental health outcomes, studies have revealed that distinct domains of physical activity are linked to different mental health outcomes<sup>9,10</sup>. This has political implications when it comes to deciding which types of physical activity to promote, as well as biological implications, as physical activities practiced in a certain domain might not have the same beneficial effects as compared to activities practiced in other domains.

To highlight the limitations of existing guidelines on total physical activity, consider the photos used by the World Health Organization (WHO) to illustrate physical activity (Figure 1). While all individuals pictured have “access” to physical activity, the health benefits derived from these diverse practices are doubtful<sup>8</sup>. If the context in which physical activity occurs is considered (rather than the number of minutes spent being active), it becomes clear that individuals in panels A and B are engaging in physical activity out of necessity (for work) rather than as a voluntary choice. Some of the work activities depicted in the panels may also involve the violation of basic human rights or reflect forms of oppression and inequities that are known to affect health negatively<sup>2-4</sup>. Thus, simply counting minutes of physical activity cannot be assumed to produce

A



B



**Figure 1** – Presents a selection of images sourced from the WHO website. Panel A (above) shows people engaging in vigorous intensity activities. Panel B (below) shows people engaging in moderate intensity activities.

Source: [Physical activity](#)

the same health outcomes for all. Recommendations based solely on this metric are too superficial to incorporate the issue of context.

## Research frameworks in physical activity: a call to diversity

Scholars have drawn on various models to explain why some individuals are more physically active than others. In this piece, we discuss three such models: the habitual, structural, and ecological models. First, the habitual model views physical activity as a habitual behavior that people develop over time and perform regularly under stable circumstances<sup>12,13</sup>. From this perspective, physical activity is perceived as being regulated by individual differences, including motivations, attitudes toward physical activity, and lifestyle preferences. For example, scholars adopting the habitual model suggest that women's lower participation in physical activity is often due to their view of sports as "tiresome" and "masculine," leading to a greater preference for non-sport activities<sup>14,15</sup>. Similarly, scholars focusing on the racial minorities and immigrants in Western countries suggest that their lower participation in physical activity is often linked to factors such as self-efficacy and individual motivation<sup>16,17</sup>. In line with the habitual models, public policies and interventions promoting physical activity tend to focus on individual motivations and self-regulatory behaviors. The Public Health Agency of Canada<sup>18</sup>, for example, advises people to make healthier choices, including getting and staying physically active, with a campaign message that "Being active doesn't have to be difficult. Getting started is easier than you think."

Alternatively, the structural model suggests that whether people can stay physically active or not is often out of their control. Structural factors such as socioeconomic inequality, racism, neighborhood disorder, and institutional arrangements often affect equitable access to physical activity participation<sup>19,20</sup>. In this perspective, differences in physical activity reflect structural inequalities. Explaining women's lower physical activity levels, for example, scholars adopting the structural perspective argue that gender norms and expectations and gender-based violence often affect women's access, time, or sense of safety for engaging in physical activity<sup>21</sup>. Similarly, racialized minorities and immigrants are often less likely to be physically active than their counterparts as they are more likely to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods<sup>22</sup>, work in precarious, low-waged

jobs that lack economic security<sup>23</sup>, and experience discrimination that can affect their social and economic participation, or their capacity to use public spaces for activity such as exercising outdoors<sup>24</sup>. Following the structural model, public policies and interventions promoting physical activity tend to address structural factors such as providing safe, accessible, affordable, and appropriate spaces and places<sup>25</sup>.

A third widely used model is the ecological model, which explores interrelationships between individuals and their social and physical environments<sup>26</sup>. Several studies using the socio-ecological model draw on both habitual and structural frameworks in explaining physical activity patterns<sup>27,28</sup>. For example, examining the effect of race on physical activity, Koshoedo et al<sup>27</sup> identify four major barriers to physical activity among black and minority ethnic groups in the United Kingdom (UK), including individuals' perceptions, cultural expectations, personal barriers, and limited access to facilities. Similarly, a systematic review by Joseph et al<sup>28</sup> shows that the most common barriers to physical activity among African American women across the United States of America (USA) include both habitual factors (e.g., lack of motivation and concern with physical appearance) and structural factors (e.g., family responsibilities, cost, neighborhood safety, and lack of facilities).

All three models (habitual, structural, and ecological) share a striking similarity: their assumptions are predominantly north-centric<sup>29-32</sup>, not only because they are published from countries in the Global North, but also because they don't take into account the diversity of knowledge, geopolitics, and sociocultural issues in other parts of the world. There is an abstract universalism in knowledge, a kind of particularism that establishes itself as hegemonic due to the longstanding tradition of scientificism (based on Global North knowledge), a particular way of doing science rooted in neutrality, and initially shaped by the Eurocentrism<sup>29,32-35</sup>. The Global North frameworks set the direction of research and guidelines for physical activity worldwide; however, the systems of oppression, such as racism, neoliberalism, homophobia, and patriarchy, are rarely addressed in these models.

Indeed, the growing literature from the Global South emphasizes the importance of decolonizing the field of physical activity<sup>2,34</sup>. The repositioning of physical activity would bring diverse local knowledge from the Global South into dialogue with hegemonic knowledge, thereby moving the research agenda and

guidelines. Confronting oppression would also be included in this agenda.

Latin American scholars have proposed a lens of epistemic, theoretical, and political decoloniality to understand and act in the world in the face of the permanence of global coloniality at different levels<sup>29,32-35</sup>. One of the central issues of decoloniality is knowledge, as colonization in the field of expertise is a product of a long process of coloniality<sup>29</sup>. However, it also acts complexly in terms of being and power, both in its warlike and economic forms, but above all in its racial form. Decoloniality critically reflects on scientific assumptions of time, space, knowledge, and subjectivity as key areas of human experience<sup>29</sup>. Maldonado-Torres<sup>35</sup> argues that (colonial) worldviews are not only sustained by power, such as military power, but also trigger various forms of agreement and consent, because subjectivity is common to the dimensions of knowledge, being, and power.

Decoloniality does not propose a new universalism; instead, it assumes the need for the body-geopolitical affirmation of thought<sup>29,33</sup>, that all knowledge comes from somewhere, from certain bodies, with a history and a context, indicating the presences, whether Indigenous, black, African, Asian, Latin American, or other, in power structures. This requires horizontal relations and dialogues; the European perspective, for example, would be positioned as particular, not universal. For Bernardino-Costa et al<sup>29</sup>, race is a structuring dimension of modernity and coloniality. By proposing to avoid the production of 'disembodied' knowledge, decoloniality affirms the relevance of knowledge produced from lived experiences. The framework for physical activity may need this look, rather than a "global" model, which is merely replicated.

Another valuable tool that is coherent with the production of knowledge and positions, and recognizes lived experience, is intersectionality. Collins and Bilge<sup>1</sup> explain that intersectionality examines how overlapping power relations shape social structures and influence individual experiences in everyday life. It considers how social categories, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and ethnicity, interact in complex and often mutually reinforcing ways. This perspective is particularly valuable in understanding how social backgrounds influence individuals' opportunities, barriers, and experiences related to physical activity participation. Intersectionality has increasingly informed inequity-focused analyses in physical activity

research<sup>30,36-38</sup>. A recent Canadian study<sup>39</sup>, for instance, finds that immigrants are not uniformly less physically active than non-immigrants; instead, physical activity is only lower among immigrants who are also non-white.

These views on decolonizing and intersectionality offer valuable perspectives to enhance our understanding of physical activity frameworks in diverse contexts. Cida Bento, a Brazilian scholar, developed the concept of the narcissistic pact of whiteness<sup>40</sup>. An unspoken pact that keeps the same segment of people, usually white males, in positions of power in institutions, whether in corporations, public organizations, or civil society. Without acknowledging the global and local ways in which race, gender, colonial relationships, and other structures of power shape the possibilities for knowledge and action, we cannot fully understand why physical activity patterns differ across social categories.

### **Guidelines of physical activity: the problem with "every movement counts"**

The established recommendation for physical activity is based on the statement that "every move counts towards better health"<sup>5</sup>. The WHO document acknowledges that there is less evidence from low- and middle-income countries and economically disadvantaged communities, although it addresses the recommendations to a global community. The physical activity recommendation is based on the total minutes spent in four domains: leisure, transportation, work, and household.

Although the WHO minute guideline is often viewed as a universal benchmark for the global community, it should be approached with caution, as it lacks contextual sensitivity. For instance, the domain of occupational physical activity may not offer the same health benefits as leisure-time physical activity. Prolonged occupational physical activity under physically demanding conditions can have adverse health effects. The current one-size-fits-all minute recommendation may unfairly harm certain social groups and inadvertently contribute to widening health disparities. This is particularly concerning given that occupational physical activity is more prevalent among lower-income populations, while leisure-time physical activity is more accessible to those with higher socioeconomic status<sup>38</sup>. In contemporary times, access to work occurs in very different ways. Some countries have high unemployment rates. In others, although employment rates have increased considerably, employment is often

insecure, with few labor rights<sup>2</sup>. This is an urgent social issue that inevitably affects physical activity, whether for work or leisure. For many populations, there is a lack of leisure time, as social groups accumulate working hours in different positions. This working context does not constitute an environment conducive to the promotion of health-promoting physical activity, and these individuals will continue to experience a lack of time and suitable conditions for leisure activities. For families living with social vulnerability, access to work and adequate food will take precedence over physical activity. These are just a few of the contextual factors that influence the promotion of physical activity in relation to human rights and health.

Therefore, the guidelines should include not only the total number of minutes, but also the context, such as the domain of the movement, which is essential in this discussion. In Brazil, leisure-time physical activity is low among poor and black populations but high during work or transportation<sup>2,30,36</sup>. A dilemma arises if the recommendations and research only assume overall physical activity, because pleasant, safe, and worthwhile physical activity is only available to a few privileged individuals.

In our view, one way to adequately encompass the context of physical activity is to pursue a recommendation that seeks a purpose in itself, rather than viewing physical activity as just a means to other productive activities, such as doing household chores and the expenditure of energy associated with work. Leisure-time physical activity is related to diverse, willful, and emancipatory activities. Salvo et al<sup>3</sup> presented the necessity-versus choice-based model and avoided dealing with physical activity at work and home. For the transport domain, they emphasized that promotion efforts must focus on improving the safety, aesthetics, efficiency, and dignity conditions<sup>3</sup>. Knuth et al<sup>2</sup> point out that, in Brazil, worthwhile physical activity in transportation is practically a mirage and also carries racialized attributes to the detriment of the country's poorest population<sup>2</sup>. Transport-related physical activity is the most complex domain, and the issue of context is indispensable.

The transport sector has been a key target for physical activity interventions, particularly in urban areas of high-income countries, despite the limited robust evidence for the health benefits of such interventions<sup>41,42</sup>. The rationale is that much motorized everyday travel, including commuting and local leisure activities, can

be easily replaced with 'active travel,' essentially walking and cycling. In theory, successful interventions to encourage active travel present a triple-win for public health: maximizing opportunities for physical activity has potential co-benefits of reducing air pollution and addressing the community severance often associated with car-based transport systems. However, one reason for the limited evidence of success so far might well be the methodological, social, and political limitations of over-emphasizing minutes of movement as both an outcome and a mechanism. This has, to date, risked exacerbating transport and health inequalities, and shifting attention and resources away from interventions that might have a more equitable impact on health and wellbeing.

First, in many settings, transport mode choice is intricately tied to material, social, and cultural factors, meaning that neither the opportunity to choose nor the attractiveness of active modes is equitably distributed. In urban centers of high income countries where the majority of cyclists are the more advantaged citizens, for instance, investing resources in more cycle routes does not necessarily widen the appeal of cycling: it can gentrify neighborhoods, further excluding racialized populations, as Sheller<sup>43</sup> documented in Philadelphia, USA; or foster greater mobility for those already advantaged by their social position, as documented in London, UK, by Steinbach et al<sup>44</sup> where cycling was disproportionately a mode choice for affluent, white, men. The spread of bike-sharing systems in high-income urban settings tends to benefit the already privileged, doing little for those excluded from other modes of transport<sup>45</sup>. There is also evidence that infrastructure for cycling may make other modes, such as walking, which is more likely to be undertaken by less advantaged citizens, more dangerous<sup>46</sup>.

There is insufficient evidence on whether such effects are short-lived, and how prioritization of modes used (currently) by a minority of citizens shifts the system as a whole and the meaning of travel modes, but at least in the short and medium term, increasing the average minutes spent by urban elites cycling may have a limited impact on broader public health goals.

Second, a focus on 'active' travel modes and minutes in the guidelines of physical activity underplays the significant public health inequalities that still exist in transport access. In many low and middle-income country settings, car transport remains a goal for the poorest, who struggle with inadequate transport infra-

structure<sup>47</sup>, limited public transport access, and increasingly motorized transport systems. The car remains positioned as desirable, signifying safety, accessibility, and prestige. In middle- and low-income countries, the poorest and women remain systematically excluded from equitable access to transport<sup>48</sup>, and development needs, often framed by colonial modernity, may be tied to new motorized transport infrastructure, rather than a more pleasant urban environment for walking and cycling<sup>49</sup>. Without considerable investment in making public transport accessible and efficient, private motorized transport will remain a goal for many. In such contexts, the long distances that may need to be walked are not health-promoting – they are likely to be exhausting, dangerous, and health-damaging, particularly for those who are most likely to be excluded from other transportation options.

Thirdly, the context of physical activity means that the health impact of the same activity may differ for individuals in different circumstances. Thus, for example, Chaufan et al<sup>50</sup> discuss the continued focus on walking to school programs in the USA to address the effects of child poverty on obesity, despite the evidence that associations often went in unexpected directions (that is, for poor children, higher rates of active travel were associated with higher Body Mass Index). There is, they note, typically a blind spot in public health, whereby the causal effects of poverty itself are forgotten: more biking and walking is unlikely to improve the health of the poorest. Where walking is a leisure choice, it fosters mental and physical health; where it is a necessity for transportation due to the lack of other options, it can erode health<sup>51</sup>. A recent analysis advocated walking and cycling as means of transport in Brazil. The authors acknowledge that transport costs remain high and unequal, and recommend cross-sectional and long-term studies to inform public policy<sup>11</sup>.

Therefore, the guidelines should highlight the differences in context between physical activity domains<sup>2,4,52</sup> and reconsider the logic behind encouraging “every movement counts,” promoting a critical and socially conscious perspective. In this regard, findings from the Middle East and North Africa regions are relevant<sup>53</sup>, where a lack of suitable sports facilities, time, social support, and motivation, as well as gender and cultural norms, harsh weather, and a hot climate, are commonly reported barriers to physical activity. Cities in transitioning environments in India provide insights into how people perceive the need for interventions to

improve the diets and physical activity levels of adolescents<sup>54</sup>. Although this study is grounded in a Brazilian context, it calls for reflection and investment in research across the Global South.

## Final considerations

To promote physical activity and health, shifting from minutes to contexts would involve guidelines that establish a sense of social justice concerning movement, recognizing that physical activity in different domains has distinct implications for social groups. The context we refer to includes the need for models of physical activity that identify and confront oppression that limits access to meaningful physical activity for historically excluded groups. Who is willing to trade places with people who can only access activities through commuting, housework, and work?

It is essential to remember that a family’s priorities may include addressing food insecurity, finding a job, or working double or triple shifts to make ends meet. Travel to and from work or other responsibilities may be long, tiring, unhealthy, and violent. Available public spaces may be scarce or dilapidated. Violence may be a constant variable, ranging from urban violence to war-like conflicts. Housing may be in precarious conditions with no sanitation. Formal education may be far away, even in the early stages of life. These factors are at stake for various social groups; therefore, it is imperative to consider physical activity in this context.

Models that seek to understand physical activity fluctuate between three perspectives: habitual, structural, and ecological. We have suggested that currently, all three fail to acknowledge these contextual impacts on access to, and benefits from, physical activity across multiple domains. It is necessary to acknowledge other theoretical perspectives, especially with the assumptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as decoloniality and intersectionality backgrounds. Research and guidelines that emphasize access to physical activity would benefit from more input from the Global South, which has not been the case to date.

An agenda committed to recognizing the Global South would involve supporting its particularities. Recommendations and research should prioritize global and local issues ranging from inequality and urban development to labor organization, safety conditions, and cultural norms. One of the fundamental aspects of redressing unequal power relationships is to fund research originating in the Global South, based

on diverse rationales, rather than merely reproducing established models. This commitment should be both academic and political, but fundamentally collective. In this sense, rationality brought about by decoloniality, intersectionality, and other approaches can facilitate spaces for criticism, reflection, and change.

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### Author's contributions

Knuth AG: Conceptualization; Investigation; Project administration; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing; Approval of the final version. Hallal PC: Conceptualization; Project administration; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing; Approval of the final version. Nunes BC: Investigation; Writing – review & editing; Approval of the final version. Sher C and Green J: Conceptualization; Investigation; Writing – original draft; Approval of the final version.

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The authors did not use artificial intelligence tools for the preparation of the manuscript.

### Availability of research data and other materials

The contents underlying the research text are contained in the manuscript.

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# Reviewers' assessment

The reviews of this article were originally conducted in Portuguese. This version has been translated using ChatGPT and subsequently reviewed by the Chief Editors.

## Reviewer A

Anonymous

### Format

- Does the article comply with the manuscript preparation rules for submission to the Revista Brasileira de Atividade Física e Saúde?  
Partially
- Regarding formal aspects, is the manuscript well structured, containing the sections: introduction, methods, results, and discussion (with the conclusion as part of the discussion)?  
Yes
- Is the language appropriate, and is the text clear, precise, and objective?  
Yes
- Were any indications of plagiarism observed in the manuscript?  
No

#### Suggestions/comments:

- Regarding the format, the manuscript preparation guidelines recommend that pages be numbered in the upper right corner starting from the "title page", with 2.5 cm margins (bottom, top, left, and right); Times New Roman font, size 12; double spacing; and line numbering (page layout), restarting on each page. These recommendations were not identified in the manuscript. In addition, the full title should contain a maximum of 100 characters, including spaces.

### Abstract

- Are the abstract and abstract in English appropriate (including: objective, information about the study participants, variables studied, main results, and a conclusion) and do they reflect the manuscript content?  
Yes
- According to the manuscript preparation guidelines, the abstract should be prepared in a structured format, suggesting the use of the following sections: introduction, objective, development, and final considerations, for the type of manuscript presented.

### Introduction

- Was the research problem clearly stated and delimited?  
Yes
- Is the research problem adequately contextualized in relation to the existing knowledge, moving from the general to the specific?  
Yes
- Are the reasons that justify the study (including the authors' assumptions about the problem) well established in the text?  
Yes
- Are the references used to support the presentation of the research problem current and relevant to the topic?  
Yes
- Was the objective clearly presented?  
Yes

#### Suggestions/comments:

- The introduction is well grounded and well contextualized. The study objective is clear.

### Methods

- Are the methodological procedures generally appropriate for studying the research problem?  
Not applicable
- Are the methodological procedures adopted to conduct the study sufficiently detailed?  
Not applicable
- Was the procedure adopted for selecting or recruiting participants appropriate for the problem studied and described in a sufficient, clear, and objective manner?  
Not applicable
- Were information provided on the instruments used for data collection, their psychometric properties (e.g., reproducibility, internal consistency, and validity), and, when relevant, the operational definition of variables?  
Not applicable
- Is the data analysis plan appropriate and adequately described?  
Not applicable
- Were the inclusion and/or exclusion criteria for sample participants described and appropriate for the study?

Not applicable

- Did the authors provide clarification on the ethical procedures adopted for conducting the research?

Not applicable

**Suggestions/comments:**

- The analysis of the methods does not apply to this type of study.

## Results

- Is the use of tables and figures appropriate and does it facilitate the proper presentation of the study results?

Not applicable

- Is the number of illustrations in the article in accordance with the journal's submission guidelines?

Yes

- Is the number of participants at each stage of the study, as well as the number and reasons for losses and refusals, presented in the manuscript?

Not applicable

- Are the characteristics of the participants presented and sufficient?

Not applicable

- Are the results presented appropriately, highlighting the main findings and avoiding unnecessary repetitions?

Not applicable

**Suggestions/comments:**

- The analysis of the results does not apply to this type of study.

## Discussion

- Are the main findings of the study presented?

Yes

- Are the study limitations and strengths presented and discussed?

Not applicable

- Are the results discussed in light of the study limitations and the existing knowledge on the subject?

Not applicable

- Are the potential contributions of the main findings to scientific development, innovation, or intervention in reality discussed by the authors?

Yes

**Suggestions/comments:**

- Given the type of study presented, the evidence was discussed from a different perspective, not based on results produced in the study itself, but on evidence from the literature that supports the study objective.

## Conclusion

- Was the study conclusion presented appropriately and is it consistent with the study objective?

Yes

- Is the study conclusion original?

Yes

**Suggestions/comments:**

- The conclusions are consistent with the objective of the study.

## References

- Are the references updated and sufficient?

Yes

- Are most of them composed of original articles?

Yes

- Do the references comply with the journal guidelines [quantity and format]?

Yes

- Is the in-text citation appropriate, i.e., do the statements in the text cite references that actually substantiate such statements?

Yes

**Suggestions/comments:**

- No comments.

## Comments to the author

- The study addresses an important topic for physical activity from the perspective of public and collective health. It is well grounded and well contextualized. The study objective is clear and was achieved through the discussion, which is detailed and appropriate to the objective. The conclusions are consistent with what was discussed in the study and reinforce the need to consider context in recommendations for physical activity for health. The only reservations concern compliance with the journal's formatting guidelines, which are minor issues and can be easily adjusted.

## Final decision

- Accepted for publication in its current format.

## Reviewer B

Danilo Rodrigues Pereira da Silva 

Federal University of Sergipe, São Cristóvão, Sergipe, Brazil

## Format

- Does the article comply with the manuscript preparation rules for submission to the *Revista Brasileira*

*de Atividade Física e Saúde?*

Yes

- Regarding formal aspects, is the manuscript well structured, containing the sections: introduction, methods, results, and discussion (with the conclusion as part of the discussion)?

Not applicable

- Is the language appropriate, and is the text clear, precise, and objective?

Partially

- Were any indications of plagiarism observed in the manuscript?

No

**Suggestions/comments:**

- No comments.

**Abstract**

- Are the abstract and the abstract in English appropriate (including: objective, information about the study participants, variables studied, main results, and a conclusion) and do they reflect the content of the manuscript?

Yes

**Suggestions/comments:**

- No comments.

**Introduction**

- Was the research problem clearly stated and delimited?

Yes

- Is the research problem adequately contextualized in relation to the existing knowledge, moving from the general to the specific?

Yes

- Are the reasons that justify the study (including the authors' assumptions about the problem) well established in the text?

Yes

- Are the references used to support the presentation of the research problem current and relevant to the topic?

Partially

- Was the objective clearly presented?

Yes

**Suggestions/comments:**

- No comments.

**Methods**

- Are the methodological procedures generally ap-

propriate for studying the research problem?

Not applicable

- Are the methodological procedures adopted to conduct the study sufficiently detailed?

Not applicable

- Was the procedure adopted for selecting or recruiting participants appropriate for the problem studied and described in a sufficient, clear, and objective manner?

Not applicable

- Were information provided on the instruments used for data collection, their psychometric qualities (for example, reproducibility, internal consistency, and validity) and, when applicable, on the operational definition of variables?

Not applicable

- Is the data analysis plan appropriate and adequately described?

Not applicable

- Were the inclusion and/or exclusion criteria for sample participants described and appropriate for the study?

Not applicable

- Did the authors provide clarification on the ethical procedures adopted to conduct the research?

Not applicable

**Suggestions/comments:**

- No comments.

**Results**

- Is the use of tables and figures appropriate and does it facilitate the proper presentation of the study results?

Not applicable

- Is the number of illustrations in the article in accordance with the journal's submission guidelines?

Not applicable

- Is the number of participants at each stage of the study, as well as the number and reasons for losses and refusals, presented in the manuscript?

Not applicable

- Are the characteristics of the participants presented and sufficient?

Not applicable

- Are the results presented appropriately, highlighting the main findings and avoiding unnecessary repetition?

Not applicable

**Suggestions/comments:**

- No comments.

## Discussion

- Are the main findings of the study presented?  
Not applicable
- Are the study limitations and strengths presented and discussed?  
Not applicable
- Are the results discussed in light of the study limitations and the existing knowledge on the topic?  
Not applicable
- Are the potential contributions of the main findings to scientific development, innovation, or intervention in real-world contexts discussed by the authors?  
Not applicable

### Suggestions/comments:

- No comments.

## Conclusion

- Was the study conclusion presented appropriately and is it consistent with the study objective?  
Yes
- Is the study conclusion original?  
Partially

### Suggestions/comments:

- No comments.

## References

- Are the references updated and sufficient?  
Partially
- Are most of them composed of references from original articles?  
Yes
- Do the references comply with the journal guidelines [number and format]?  
Yes
- Are the in-text citations appropriate, that is, do the statements in the text cite references that actually support such statements?  
Yes

### Suggestions/comments:

- No comments.

## Comments

- The manuscript addresses a highly relevant and timely topic and proposes an important conceptual shift in physical activity research. The authors raise critical questions regarding how movement is con-

ceptualized, measured, and promoted, particularly within the realities of the Global South. The topic is pertinent and has the potential to contribute meaningfully to ongoing discussions in the field.

- Below, I provide specific comments intended to strengthen the manuscript.
- 1. While the manuscript convincingly argues for a paradigm shift, it would benefit from a more explicit engagement with the existing empirical literature. Although research examining contextual dimensions of physical activity is relatively recent, there is already a growing body of evidence demonstrating that different domains and manifestations of physical activity present distinct associations with various health indicators. A more systematic incorporation and critical discussion of this evidence would help to anchor the theoretical proposal in empirical findings and strengthen the manuscript's argumentative coherence. Furthermore, I encourage the authors to include a broader range of empirical studies conducted in Global South contexts. If the manuscript aims to advance paradigmatic thinking relevant to these settings, it is important that the supporting literature does not rely predominantly on evidence from high-income countries. Including research from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and other underrepresented regions would enhance the manuscript's epistemological consistency and contextual relevance.
- 2. I suggest that the authors clearly define and delimit the main domains of physical activity at an early stage of the manuscript. Establishing these domains as a conceptual framework would provide greater structure to the discussion. Since each domain is shaped by distinct social determinants and may have different health implications, this clarification would improve clarity and internal coherence. At present, the discussion occasionally shifts across domains without explicit differentiation, which may weaken the organizational structure of the argument.
- 3. Physical activity patterns are influenced by national, regional, and municipal priorities, as well as by competing collective and individual demands. The manuscript would benefit from a more explicit examination of how public policies, labor market conditions, urban planning, educational systems, and welfare structures shape opportunities for movement. A deeper engagement with the role of

economic systems and contemporary capitalist dynamics in structuring opportunities and constraints for physical activity would further strengthen the analysis. In many Global South contexts, both governments and families face urgent and competing priorities, including food security, access to basic sanitation, housing, employment, and personal safety. Under such conditions, the promotion of physical activity may not occupy a central position in public agendas or household decision-making. Therefore, understanding physical activity requires consideration of productivity pressures, precarious employment, spatial inequality, time scarcity, and the broader struggle to meet basic needs.

- 4. Although transport-related physical activity receives substantial attention in the manuscript, a more balanced discussion across domains is recommended.
- 5. Advancing a context-sensitive research paradigm will require sustained investment in research grounded in Global South realities. The manuscript could emphasize more strongly the need for dedicated funding to investigate these complex and context-dependent relationships. It is also important to acknowledge that the Global South is highly heterogeneous. Significant differences exist both across and within countries with respect to inequality, urban development, labor organization, safety conditions, and cultural norms. Recognizing this diversity is essential to avoid overgeneralization and to ensure that proposed theoretical advances are responsive to varied social realities.

### Final decision

- Minor revision