



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Green Spaces and the Activation of Recreational Sports Activities**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 2, 2024 Accepted: Aug 18, 2024	Green spaces scattered across various regions of the country provide an important space and outlet for individuals and groups of all ages and levels to engage in numerous sports and recreational activities. These activities significantly contribute to creating a suitable environment for relaxation, play, and entertainment, which in turn helps renew energy, restore vitality, and avoid various social problems caused by idleness and lack of facilities. From this standpoint, the Algerian state has focused on building sports facilities and equipping green spaces. However, the question remains: Are these green spaces sufficient to accommodate the large numbers of various segments of society? And are there adequate legal frameworks in place to establish a well-crafted national strategy for the care, development, and management of these green spaces?
<b>Keywords</b> Green spaces Recreational sports activities	
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**INTRODUCTION****Definition of Concepts****Green Spaces:**

Green spaces are defined as areas located either within or outside the city, with the majority of their surface covered by vegetation (lawns, trees, shrubs, etc.). These spaces are used as parks and places for relaxation, containing areas designated for play, outdoor facilities such as pools and sports fields. They help in cooling and purifying the air, provide a pleasant aesthetic, and also have significant health and climatic benefits<sup>1</sup>.

Green spaces constitute areas or parts of urban areas that are undeveloped and are either fully or partially covered with vegetation, located within urban areas or areas intended for development<sup>2</sup>. They are defined as spaces or areas within a residential community, urban area, or geographic region where vegetation or natural cover generally dominates, whether in its primary state (farms, forests, agricultural areas, lakes, etc.)<sup>3</sup>. It can also be said that green spaces are areas planted with vegetation

and designated for purposes of environmental landscaping and beautification, or for relaxation, recreation, wellness, and sports activities<sup>4</sup>.

### **Recreational Sports Activity:**

#### **Recreation:**

Recreation is an activity undertaken by an individual, whether it is a mental, social, or physical activity. The level of effort involved in this activity varies; some activities require minimal effort, such as listening to music, while others demand significant effort, such as boxing, tennis, and running. Recreation, therefore, is a voluntary activity that an individual engages in freely without compulsion and is typically practiced during leisure time<sup>5</sup>.

### **Recreational Sports Activity:**

It refers to any sports activity practiced during leisure time for enjoyment and recreation. Recreational sports are among the most popular leisure activities for participants, whether they are young or old, male or female. This is because these activities contribute to both physical and functional development, provide comprehensive enjoyment, and constructively utilize excess energy<sup>6</sup>.

### **Types of Green Spaces:**

Green spaces can be divided as follows:

**Public Parks:** These attract the largest number of individuals and groups who visit and enjoy the natural environment provided, often for an entrance fee. These parks are suitable for both children and adults, offering happiness and joy through the observation of various types of birds, reptiles, and both domestic and wild animals, as well as the enjoyment of the diverse landscapes and the many colors of plants, trees, and flowers<sup>7</sup>.

**Urban and Suburban Parks:** These are designated and sometimes fenced green spaces that serve as areas for relaxation and recreation. They may include facilities for rest, play, entertainment, sports, and dining. Additionally, they might feature water surfaces, walking paths, and bike trails<sup>8</sup>. They may also include sports clubs that aim to promote social and cultural education, elevate standards, foster a sense of national spirit among members, and provide means to utilize leisure time in ways that bring enjoyment and benefit both to the individuals and the community<sup>9</sup>.

**Specialized Gardens:** These include botanical gardens and ornamental gardens (such as communal and private gardens).

**Urban Forests:** These contain groups of trees and encompass any urban wooded area, including green belts.

**Tree-Lined Avenues:** These include all tree formations along highways and other types of roads within and near urban areas<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, these green spaces may include some sports facilities.

### **Functions and Roles of Green Spaces:**

#### **Environmental Role of Green Spaces:**

Green spaces perform several functions, including:

**Chemical Filtration:** Plants in green areas play a role in filtering carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere. With the increase in various waste (household, industrial, vehicle emissions, etc.), the chlorophyll function of plants helps reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

**Dust Fixation:** Plants help in trapping dust, thanks to the secretion of substances that act as antibiotics, which in turn reduce microbial presence in the air<sup>11</sup>.

**Climatic Role of Green Spaces:**

Green spaces contribute to improving air quality and also help in thermal regulation by lowering temperatures and increasing relative humidity in the air<sup>12</sup>.

**Health Role of Green Spaces:**

In urban areas, people are exposed to various diseases caused by pollution (toxic gases, vehicle exhaust, dust, etc.), such as cancer, asthma, and respiratory issues. Green spaces and trees play a crucial role in absorbing dust; for example, a single tree can absorb 6 kg of dust, 3 kg of carbon dioxide, and 4 kg of nitrogen dioxide, while providing 0.005 m<sup>3</sup> of oxygen to the atmosphere annually<sup>13</sup>.

**The Psychological and Social Role of Green Spaces:**

Green spaces provide a sense of joy and psychological comfort to individuals, where their eyes and bodies find peace in a calm place filled with fragrant scents. The dominant green color, mixed with the diverse colors of flowers, arranged in geometric shapes, and the reflection of the blue waters in ponds, contributes to this atmosphere. Additionally, green spaces, beyond offering relaxation and recreation, serve as venues for children to meet and play in designated areas, and for adults to interact and exchange ideas. Their social role is evident as they become a meeting point for community members, thereby strengthening social bonds<sup>14</sup>.

**Green Spaces and Sports for All:**

Green spaces are ideal locations for practicing various types of sports, commonly referred to as "sports for all," with complete freedom and spontaneity. As Al-Hammami states, "sports for all" is one of the contemporary social phenomena that focuses on individual health and physical condition, their lifestyle, and self-defense against the changes of a technological society. It involves providing everyone with the opportunity to engage in various physical activities freely, according to their inclinations, motivations, readiness, and abilities, without any considerations of age, gender, race, religion, or social and economic status, with the aim of achieving a better life for the individual<sup>15</sup>.

As Amin Anwar Al-Khouli points out, most activities related to "sports for all" are conducted with a significant degree of freedom and simplicity, outside official sports venues with their strict rules, and away from fanatical crowds. Even when these activities take on a competitive nature, they do so through matches that are simplified in their rules, resembling preliminary or small games, where the rules are relaxed and adjusted to suit the diverse abilities and genders of participants. The environment of "sports for all" promotes cooperation over competition, with a growing desire to assist the weaker or less skilled participants, allowing everyone to engage in sports without fear of ridicule or criticism<sup>16</sup>.

**Recreational Physical Activity:**

Recreational or leisure physical activity refers to those games or sports practiced during free time, characterized by the absence of intense competition. In other words, these are sports practiced outside of federated and organized frameworks. Recreational physical activity serves as a means to occupy leisure time, aiming to bring enjoyment, happiness, and pleasure.

**Purposes of Recreational Physical Activity:**

The philosophy of recreation, as a natural and spontaneous expression of some of an individual's interests and needs, changes and evolves through practice. The need for recreation drives individuals to seek a life rich in meaning, joy, and happiness—a life balanced between work and leisure. Therefore, the purposes of recreation can be summarized according to the interests and desires that can be considered motivations for engaging in recreational activities:

**Physical Purpose:**

The drive for movement and activity is a fundamental motivation for all individuals, and it becomes even more important for children and young people. The physical purpose is the foundation of physical activity in recreational programs.

**Creative and Artistic Purpose:**

The desire for innovation and artistic creativity influences feelings, emotions, and reactions. The urge to create beauty is shaped by what the individual perceives as a beautiful experience in terms of form, color, sound, or movement. Through these activities, individuals express their feelings and emotions, explore their potential, and attempt to convey these emotions, feelings, and ideas to others.

**Educational Purpose:**

The desire to learn about anything within an individual's sphere of interest drives them to explore new interests, paving the way for knowledge and understanding of what was previously unknown.

**Social Purpose:**

The desire to be with others is one of the strongest human impulses, as humans are inherently social beings. A significant portion of both organized and unorganized physical activity is based on fulfilling the need for belonging.

**Communication Purpose:**

The characteristic of attempting to communicate with others, whether through written or spoken words, is a trait shared by all humans. Recreational physical activity satisfies the desire to connect with others and exchange opinions and ideas.

**Characteristics of Recreational Physical Activity:****Voluntariness:**

Individuals choose the activity they wish to engage in without interference from others.

**Spontaneity:**

Participants engage in activities spontaneously, selecting those that align with their interests and desires.

**Motivation:**

Participation in these activities is driven by the individual's own desires, and involvement is voluntary.

**Purposefulness:**

Recreational sports activities are purposeful, contributing to the physical, psychological, and social development of the individual. They can be considered an aspect of education, providing skills, values, experiences, and knowledge that contribute to personal growth.

**Conducted in Leisure Time:**

Recreational sports activities are carried out during individuals' free time<sup>17</sup>.

**Psychological Balance:**

Engagement in recreational sports activities provides a sense of relaxation and psychological satisfaction, fulfilling individual psychological needs and contributing to overall emotional balance.

### **Objectives of Recreational Physical Activity:**

The central focus of recreation is happiness. There are certain feelings and emotions that an individual gains through engaging in recreational physical activities, such as fraternity, achievement, innovation, creativity, a sense of fulfillment from physical, mental, and emotional capabilities, appreciation of beauty, relaxation, and the joy of helping others. Based on this, the objectives of recreational physical activity are numerous, including:

1. The joy of innovation and creativity.
2. The joy of belonging and experiencing camaraderie, brotherhood, and friendship.
3. The joy of taking risks and engaging in new experiences.
4. The joy of achievement.
5. The joy of good health.
6. The joy of utilizing mental abilities.
7. The joy of emotional experiences.
8. The joy of appreciating beauty.
9. The joy of helping others.
10. The joy of relaxation.

### **The Importance of Recreation:**

According to Mohamed Al-Hamahmi and Kamal Darwish, the importance of recreation lies in:

1. Achieving happiness and freedom for the individual.
2. Developing and enhancing a well-rounded personality.
3. Enriching individual and family life.
4. Satisfying interests and motivations related to recreation.
5. Renewing the individual's energy and vitality.
6. Discovering life with an optimistic outlook.
7. Reducing or eliminating anxiety and psychological depression.
8. Fulfilling human needs associated with leisure time.
9. Self-realization and expression.
10. Developing a positive self-concept.
11. Achieving psychological balance.
12. Breaking away from the routine of life.
13. Relieving stress and work-related burdens.

### **Green Spaces and Sports Practice in Algeria:**

After regaining national sovereignty, Algeria immediately embarked on a process of construction and development. The first step was to build a strong state, beginning with the enactment of laws and regulations governing every field. Concerning the sports sector and the attention given to green spaces and sports facilities, the development can be divided into four phases:

### **The First Phase: 1962-1976**

This phase began with the restoration of national sovereignty on July 5, 1962, following over 130 years of brutal colonialism that had caused massive destruction to everything symbolizing human civilization. As a result, independent Algeria had to reclaim its leading role in the region and the Arab and Islamic world. Algeria became a large workshop focused on rebuilding its people through education and the spread of cultural and religious awareness, as well as the construction of schools, institutes, and factories. In the sports sector, the emphasis was on forming sports teams and clubs, some of which had played a national role during the colonial period. There was also a focus on building sports facilities and creating some green spaces for various sports activities and recreation. However, these efforts were not sufficient to meet the needs of society, as the primary focus during this period was on rebuilding the national economy's infrastructure and prioritizing education.

### **The Second Phase: 1976-1989**

During this period, the Physical Education and Sports Law was enacted through Ordinance No. 76-81, dated 29 Shawwal 1396, corresponding to October 23, 1976.

Regarding the Designation of Play and Recreation Areas, the Following Provisions Were Established by This Law:

1. All national activity sectors must contribute with their resources to strengthen the state's policy in the field of equipment and infrastructure.
2. All new school or university facilities must include appropriate sports equipment.
3. Municipal and provincial popular assemblies, as well as the People's National Army, must organize campaigns using their own resources to construct school sports facilities to implement a broad program of physical education and sports.
4. Every newly constructed residential complex must include a designated area specifically for games and physical and sports recreation.
5. All educational institutions with sports facilities must allow practitioners from other sectors to use these facilities based on an agreement. The same method can be applied to facilities belonging to the military sector.

### **Additionally, Article 57 states:**

Any construction of large economic, administrative, urban, or rural residential complexes must include play areas and sports facilities that are diverse and adapted to local conditions<sup>18</sup>.

### **The Third Phase: (1989-2004)**

This phase was marked by the issuance of Law No. 89-03, dated 8 Rajab 1409, corresponding to February 14, 1989, concerning the organization and development of the national system of physical education and sports.

Article 3 outlined the objectives of the national system of physical education and sports, specifically aiming to:

- Develop the physical and intellectual character of citizens.
- Educate the youth.
- Maintain health and develop productive skills among workers.
- Mobilize citizens and support defensive capabilities.
- Enriching the national culture by producing cultural and moral values.
- Achieving ideals of rapprochement, solidarity, friendship, and peace among peoples.

- Continuously improving the level of the elite to ensure honorable representation of the country on the international sports stage<sup>19</sup>.

Regarding the importance of participation in mass educational practice and its benefits for the individual and society, Article 6 states the following: Mass educational practice forms the necessary foundation for developing physical and sports activities. It consists of physical exercises aimed at developing, protecting, correcting, and improving the psychological and motor skills of workers, children, and especially youth.

As for the objectives of recreational practice, Article 9 defines this practice and outlines its goals as follows: Mass recreational practice is an effective, free, or organized activity aimed at the physical and cultural development of the individual's personality. It also aims to strengthen and develop traditional games and sports derived from the national cultural heritage. This practice is directed towards all population groups, without discrimination based on age or gender, and for this purpose, motivational programs are prepared and implemented by the relevant institutions and organizations<sup>20</sup>.

Regarding the aspect of spaces and facilities designated for play, this law addresses them in Article 64 and Article 65:

Article 64 states that the state, in collaboration with local communities, ensures the encouragement, promotion, and development of physical and sports practices by preparing sports facilities that are diverse and adapted to the requirements of various forms of sports practice, in accordance with the national development plan.

Article 65 mentions that residential areas, educational institutions, and training centers must include sports facilities and play areas constructed according to technical and safety specifications. Additionally, any economic or administrative group may also establish sports facilities under the same conditions and requirements.

#### **The Fourth Phase: From 2004 to the Present**

The significant development that Algeria has experienced on all levels is characterized by the prudent policies implemented, as well as the establishment of stability and security across the country. This has allowed Algeria to undergo major transformations in various fields, with a focus on large-scale projects, human development, and keeping pace with scientific advancements.

As for the sports sector, Law No. 04-10, dated 27 Jumada al-Thani 1425 (August 14, 2004), was issued concerning physical education and sports. This law was introduced to amend and complement the 1976 and 1989 laws. It provided a comprehensive overview of the development of physical education and sports, as well as regulations concerning the sports sector in general, emphasizing the importance of play areas, sports facilities, and encouraging sports practice for all members of society.

Article 16 states that sports for all is an important factor in:

- Promoting public health.
- Socially integrating youth and combating social issues, especially through incentive programs at the neighborhood and municipal levels for the benefit of young people, such as organizing sports competitions between neighborhoods and municipalities.

In this regard, the state and local associations are required to ensure the establishment, maintenance, and development of local sports complexes<sup>21</sup>.

Regarding play and recreational areas, Article 82 states the following: Natural and legal persons subject to public or private law, within the framework of applicable legislation, may establish and operate basic, sports, or recreational facilities with the aim of intensifying various forms of sports

practice and developing the national sports infrastructure network. Private investment in this field benefits from incentive measures in accordance with the applicable legislation<sup>22</sup>.

Article 87: Urban planning schemes and land use plans must include areas designated for the establishment of basic sports facilities. The allocation of these areas for other purposes is prohibited<sup>23</sup>.

With the issuance of Law No. 07-06, dated 25 Rabi' al-Thani 1428 (May 13, 2007), concerning the management, protection, and development of green spaces, a new incentive dimension was introduced for the creation and enhancement of green spaces. Article 02 stipulates the mandatory inclusion of green spaces in every construction project, to be managed by both public and private urban and architectural studies.

Article 04 further states that urban and suburban parks, composed of defined and, where necessary, fenced green spaces, serve as areas for rest and recreation. These parks may contain facilities for relaxation, play (or entertainment), sports, dining, and may also include water features, walking paths, and bicycle trails<sup>24</sup>.

## COMMENTARY AND DISCUSSION

From the presentation of the four stages that Algerian sports have undergone, we can observe and note the following:

Firstly, there has been a development in the laws and legislative texts related to the organization of sports practice in Algeria, as well as the establishment of suitable conditions that encourage individuals to engage in sports in general.

Secondly, regarding the focus on green spaces and the development of urban and rural areas for the creation of play areas and the construction and equipping of sports facilities, it is evident that, immediately after independence, there was not much emphasis on building green spaces and sports facilities as seen in the 1976 law. This was due to the priority given to education, the construction of factories, and the infrastructure for the national economy. However, with the emergence of the 1976 and 1989 laws, this aspect saw a radical shift due to the policies adopted at that time, which focused on creating an organized plan for sports sector regulations, encouraging sports practice across all segments of society, and increasing the number of legislative texts that promote the creation of play areas and sports facilities, especially in the 1989 law, particularly in Articles 06, 64, and 65, which emphasized that residential areas, educational institutions, and training facilities must include sports facilities and play areas.

As for the 2004 law, it placed great importance on the sports sector by establishing the foundations and rules governing physical education and sports in Algeria, and it emphasized sports for all and recreation, particularly as stated in Article 16. Specifically, Article 87 emphasized that urban planning schemes and land use plans must include areas designated for the establishment of basic sports facilities.

Finally, the issuance of Law No. 07-06, dated 25 Rabi' al-Thani 1428 (May 13, 2007), concerning the management, protection, and development of green spaces, established a legal framework that regulates the management tools for green spaces, as well as the conditions for classifying green spaces and the standards applied to them. Notably, this law strongly supported the provision of green spaces for citizens and facilitated the use of these spaces for play, recreation, and entertainment, in accordance with the specified conditions for managing these green spaces.

However, given the significant development in Algeria, the increasing population, and the lack of awareness and education about the protection and development of these green spaces, it is essential for all of us to create a well-organized plan to focus on preserving these spaces, increasing green



spaces in all urban and rural areas, and encouraging all members of society to engage in sports while also preserving these spaces, as they are public property.

## CONCLUSION

From all that has been presented, it is clear that green spaces play a very important and significant role in the lives of all people. Undoubtedly, the relationship between green spaces and the practice of recreational sports activities is strengthening day by day, as recreational sports are among the most beloved activities for individuals of all ages and genders, contributing to physical and functional development, providing comprehensive enjoyment, and constructively utilizing excess energy.

### Suggestions and Recommendations:

From this brief overview of the current state of green spaces, their management, and the areas of benefit, we can draw the following suggestions:

1. It is necessary to adhere to the internal rules and regulations when visiting green spaces for sports or leisure activities.
2. Visitors should respect the staff managing these spaces and follow their instructions.
3. Respect all visitors to these spaces, considering them as meeting places for families and all segments of society, including children, youth, the elderly, men, and women.
4. The existing environmental design should be maintained according to the original plans during the construction phase.
5. Consider the nature of each area when designing green spaces and the needs of their users.
6. Pay attention to sports activities when designing green spaces by allocating areas for children's play and even for adults, where applicable.
7. Implement a cost-use policy by managing some spaces in a way that generates income to cover their maintenance and development costs.
8. Establish a structured management system for green spaces, especially those containing play equipment that requires regular care and maintenance.
9. Increase the creation and design of green spaces across all areas of the country, both urban and rural, to provide every member of society with the right to recreation, entertainment, and renewal of energy, and to keep youth away from social ills.
10. Involve stakeholders, including environmental experts, health professionals, architects, and specialists in physical education and sports, in the design of green spaces.
11. Ensure that play and recreational areas are designated for all segments of society when developing these spaces.
12. Ensure the safety of visitors to these green spaces, both inside and outside.
13. Enact security laws to deter offenders and those violating public morals in various parks and green spaces, aiming to protect visitors and the areas themselves.

### FOOTNOTES:

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