

**THE WRITTEN, THE SAID, AND THE DONE IN THE SPORTS POLICY OF
SÃO LUÍS – MA: PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, AND INVOLVED
PROFESSIONALS¹****Received on:** August 13, 2024**Passed on:** December 09, 2024License: *Efraim Lopes Soares²*

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ABSTRACT: This article aimed to analyze the programs, projects, and professionals involved in the public sports spaces and facilities under the responsibility of the Municipal Department of Sports and Leisure (SEMDEL) in São Luís/MA, with the objective of identifying whether there is an institutionalized policy directed towards the democratization of these public spaces (2014-2022). The study adopts a quantitative-qualitative approach and is characterized as exploratory in terms of its objectives. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and systematic observation. The findings reveal a limited involvement of the government in the management of these spaces and facilities, exacerbated by the lack of recognition of SEMDEL as the responsible body for managing more than 85% of these public spaces.

KEYWORDS: Public policies. Sports spaces and facilities. SEMDEL.

O ESCRITO, O DITO E O FEITO NA POLÍTICA ESPORTIVA DE SÃO LUÍS - MA: PROGRAMAS, PROJETOS E PROFISSIONAIS ENVOLVIDOS

RESUMO: Este artigo teve como objetivo analisar os programas, projetos e profissionais envolvidos nos espaços e equipamentos públicos esportivos sob a responsabilidade da Secretaria Municipal de Desporto e Lazer (SEMDEL) da cidade de São Luís/MA, no intuito de identificar se há uma política institucionalizada direcionada para a democratização desses logradouros (2014 a 2022). O estudo é de natureza quanti-qualitativa e se caracteriza como exploratório quanto aos objetivos. Para a sua operacionalização, adotou-se como técnica de coleta de dados a entrevista semiestruturada, os formulários e a observação sistemática. Constatou-se que há uma tímida atuação do poder público no gerenciamento dos espaços e equipamentos, agravada face ao não reconhecimento da SEMDEL como órgão responsável pela gestão de mais de 85% dos logradouros.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Políticas públicas. Espaços e equipamentos esportivos. SEMDEL.

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Introduction

This study is the result of the research *Sports and Leisure Facilities in São Luís - MA: An Analysis of the Action of the Municipal and State Public Authorities*, which is part of the research line Public Policies of the Group for Pedagogical Studies and Research in Physical Education (GEPPEF), linked to the Department of Physical Education of Universidade Federal do Maranhão [Federal University of Maranhão] (UFMA).

From this perspective, the focus of this article was defined as analyzing the programs, projects, and professionals involved within the scope of sports and leisure facilities under the responsibility of the Municipal Department of Sports and Leisure (SEMDEL), in the period from 2014 to 2022. The axis of analysis was structured based on activity reports, a semi-structured interview, a form, and an observation script.

It is assumed that there is a lack of action on the part of the public authorities regarding the formulation and implementation of actions aimed at developing a policy of programs, projects and professionals involved that provides the democratization of access to these spaces.

In this context, it is established that the study of public sports policies in contemporary Brazil has as its historical milestone the Federal Constitution of 1988 (CF/1988), which determines the duty of the Brazilian State to promote formal and non-formal sports practices as a right of every citizen, assigning responsibility to the different states and their respective municipalities.

Even after the recognition of sport as a social right by the CF/1988, however, the enforcement of this legislation has not been achieved through the implementation of public policies for the sector, thus distancing itself from the understanding of sport as a

social practice that is part of humanity's cultural heritage. Not to mention that it was only in 2003 that the Ministry of Sports was created as a specific managing body for the area, indicating progress from the standpoint of the need to implement a public policy for the sector.

It should be emphasized that, in addition to the importance of having a managing body, there are several other aspects that make up a public sports policy — from its conception, legal frameworks, funding, human resources, programs, and projects developed to the spaces, facilities, and materials necessary for the actions of the Executive Branch, in its different spheres (municipal, state, and federal), to be configured as an effective public policy in the area.

In this regard, the National Sports Policy, approved in 2005, as well as the National Sports Conferences (CNE), held in 2004, 2006, and 2010, also pointed to the characterization of these elements as essential for guaranteeing the right to sport for every Brazilian citizen, having as a central aspect the creation of a National Sports System.

It is noteworthy that, at the III CNE, in 2010, the Ten-Year Plan for Sport and Leisure was approved, containing the strategic line related to sports infrastructure and Action No. 05, which indicates the execution of diagnostics of public sports facilities in all municipalities in Brazil. The recommendation is to map the conditions of distribution, accessibility, construction, maintenance, qualification or reactivation, and modernization of public spaces, with a view to implementing a policy for the management and use of sports facilities in Brazilian cities.

Indeed, the existence of public sports facilities and spaces is one of the ways in which the State ensures that the population has the opportunity to experience diverse

activities. However, such spaces and facilities may exist without being properly utilized, due to factors such as the lack of programs, projects, events, and professionals.

Thus, this paper is justified by the need for academic and scientific contribution within this context, especially with regard to the possibility of analyzing the effective existence—or lack thereof—of a policy of programs, projects, and involved professionals in the municipality of São Luís, capital of the State of Maranhão.

Methodological Approach

Outlining the methodological path to address a research problem is an eminently complex exercise, as it involves various theoretical approaches, methods, and procedures. In the case herein, as this paper analyzes state action in the implementation of a sectoral policy, the development of analytical tools to answer what role SEMDEL plays in promoting actions aimed at the practice of sports and leisure in the spaces and facilities under its responsibility further highlights this complexity.

To this end, this research employs a quantitative-qualitative approach, carried out through a combination of bibliographic research, document analysis, and field research, representing both the data collection procedures and the data sources.

Regarding its purposes, the research is characterized as exploratory because, in addition to providing a better understanding of the problem—making it more explicit and/or conducive to the formulation of investigative questions based on the refinement of the issue—it allows for the study of the topic from different angles and aspects, given the lower degree of rigidity in its planning (Gil, 2007).

The bibliographic review, which supported the understanding of the phenomenon under study, sought in Brazilian theoretical production the literature

related to public policy, particularly in the areas of sports and leisure, as well as studies on sports spaces and facilities. The materials consulted included books, theses, dissertations, and articles, among others. Likewise, the development of the documentary research consisted of exploring data from various sources, such as SEMDEL's activity reports, internal regulations, Official Letter No. 006/2022 – GS/SEMDEL, multi-year plans (PPAs), and the Organic Law of the Municipality of São Luís.

For the operationalization of the study, semi-structured interviews, forms, and systematic observation were adopted as data collection techniques. Since the methodological procedures involved the use of data obtained directly from participants, it is noted that the research received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Maranhão (CEP/UFMA), which issued a favorable opinion through the substantiated report No. 4.300.151 and CAAE No. 35246920.1.0000.5086. Thus, the research form included information about the objectives of this paper, as well as the Informed Consent Form (ICF), so that participants who wished to take part in the study were properly informed.

The interview was conducted with the department head and followed a script containing both closed and open-ended questions based on basic inquiries supported by theories and hypotheses, which, as Triviños (1987) points out, provided a broad field of questions vis-à-vis new hypotheses that emerged as responses were received from the interviewee.

The form, being one of the essential instruments for social investigation (Marconi; Lakatos, 2010), was prepared as a multiple-choice questionnaire and aimed to obtain information directly from administrators and users of sports spaces and facilities. Structured observation of the public spaces, in turn, sought to address pre-established

purposes, focusing primarily on collecting data related to programs, projects, and professionals involved in such actions.

To map the sports spaces and facilities under the responsibility of SEMDEL, Google Maps Pro geolocation, on-site visits, and coordinate tracking were used, based on a document provided by the department that describes each facility's name, neighborhood, and type.

As inclusion and exclusion criteria, spaces unavailable for observation and/or questionnaire application were excluded from the research—these included unlocated/inconsistent sites, those under renovation, or those without users (aged 18 or older) and/or an administrator available to participate. In this context, out of the thirty-four (34) spaces listed by SEMDEL, eleven (11) were not observed.

Regarding the organization of the analysis, the procedures went through different phases or “chronological poles” (Bardin, 2016), which served as the basis for this study, namely: pre-analysis; material exploration and data processing; inferences and interpretation.

The pre-analysis corresponded to the organization of initial ideas and the development of indicators for interpreting the collected documents. Thus, this phase aimed to “make operational and systematize initial ideas in order to lead to a precise framework for the development of successive operations within an analysis plan” (Bardin, 2016, p. 125).

Accordingly, a general reading of the activity reports, PPAs, Official Letter No. 006/2022 – GS/SEMDEL, and internal regulations was first carried out to assess and identify the main points presented in these documents. After a full reading of this corpus, a table was created containing the following elements: “period”, “PPA

guidelines”, “chief executive”, “sports and leisure secretary”, “department purpose”, “management plan”, “sports dimension” (educational, performance, and/or participatory), “involved professionals”, “developed activities”, “priority actions”, and “spaces/facilities”.

Based on these data, the material exploration phase began, operationalized through the description of all information in Excel spreadsheets. This phase also included the transcription of interviews and tabulation of forms, representing the totality of the analytical indicators/axes previously selected for this study (distribution, programs, projects, and involved professionals).

With the three datasets structured, their processing began through content analysis. The purpose at this stage, as Bardin (2016) states, was to shape and reproduce the information contained in the documents, interviews, and forms in a different way through transformation procedures, characterized as an operation or set of operations aimed at representing the content of a document in a different form from the original.

In view of this, the analysis was structured based on an analytical model that allowed for the convergence and visualization of the three datasets (documents, interviews, and forms, as well as the observation guide), given the diversity of information provided in a table, to facilitate dialogue among these dimensions.

In this regard, the analytical dimensions “written”, “spoken”, and “performed” were defined to clarify the congruence or lack thereof between what was stated in official documents and activity reports (written); what was affirmed by the manager in the interview and by administrators through the forms (spoken); and what was verified through direct observation and the perceptions of users of the spaces and facilities (performed) for all previously listed analytical indicators/axes.

The analysis of the aforementioned model made it possible to consistently elucidate the objective previously set in this research, which can be seen through the inferences and interpretations generated from the figure, charts, and tables. Thus, the following text is structured to detail and specify such characteristics.

Results and Discussion

One of the elements that make up urban spaces is the infrastructure for sports and leisure activities, which is generally related to spaces and facilities. Marcellino *et al.* (2007, p. 15) show that “space is understood as the support for facilities. And the facilities are understood as the objects that organize the space according to a specific activity”. In cities, public parks, squares, cultural/sports centers, and schools are privileged spaces for sports practices (Rechia, 2017).

In this line, Ungheri and Isayama (2019) emphasize that the provision of public spaces and facilities for sports and leisure experiences is one of the ways to promote citizens’ access to such practices and, for this reason, constitutes a possible field of intervention by the government. According to Marcellino, Barbosa, and Mariano (2006, p. 55), “spaces and facilities are dynamic components of a sports and leisure policy and are in constant transformation”. Thus, sports spaces and facilities occupy an important place in public policies for social interaction (Silva, Silva, and Amorin, 2012).

Not by chance, the way these spaces and facilities are distributed in cities is a sine qua non condition for implementing policies that seek to ensure the right to sports and leisure, as well as to enable greater appropriation of these spaces by various segments of society.

In this paper, the identification of public spaces was carried out through official documentation provided by SEMDEL, which included the following key information: the name of the space, its type, and its neighborhood. In the end, of the 34 sports spaces reported by the Department, 29 were visited, and of these, 23 are part of the analytical sample, as described in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Sports and leisure spaces and facilities analyzed by type and management

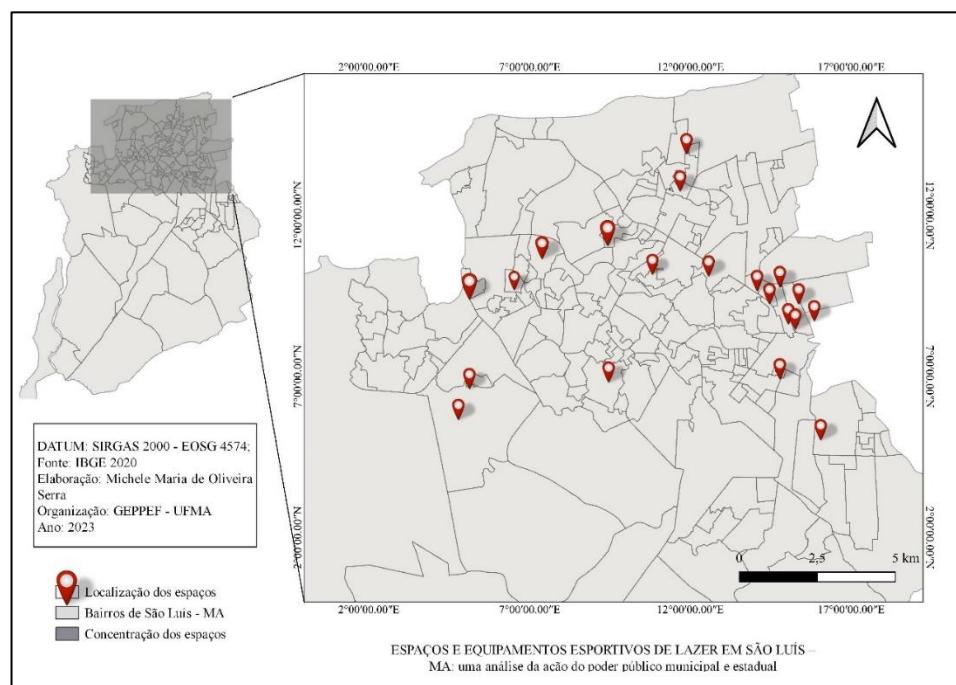
N	SPACE AND FACILITIES	TYPE	MANAGEMENT
1	Praça das Mercês [Square of Mercês]	Multi-sport court	Public Authority
2	Praça do Babaçu [Square of Babaçu]	Multi-sport court	Community
3	Multi-Sports Court Parque dos Sabiás	Covered Multi-sport Court	Community
4	União Square	Open court	Community
5	Cardozão Stadium	Football stadium	Public Authority
6	VôleiSquare	Square	Public Authority
7	Bacurizeiro Square	Multi-sport court	Public Authority
8	Boa Vizinhança Square	Multi-sport court	Unidentified
9	Othelino Filho Square	Multi-sport court	Community
10	Honorina Braga Square	Basketball court	Community
11	Sonhos Square	Multi-sport court	Public authority, community
12	Flores Square	Multi-sport court	Public authority, community
13	Antônio Araújo Melo Square	Multi-sport court	Public authority, community
14	Margaridas Square	Football field	Public Authority
15	Mães Square	Multi-sport court	Public authority, community
16	Sabará Court	Sabará Court	Public Authority
17	Maria Pinho Square	Multi-sport court	Community
18	Doze de Outubro Square	Multi-sport court	Public Authority
19	Vitória Square	Square	Public authority, community
20	Ednor Soares Square	Basketball court	Public authority, community
21	Tião Gymnasium	Covered Multi-sport Court	Outsourced company
22	Liberdade Multi-Sports Court	Covered Multi-sport Court	Iziane Institute
23	Nossa Senhora do Carmo Square	Open court and field	Public authority, community

Source: prepared by the authors based on data from SEMDEL and field research.

It is worth noting that there is a delay in the survey of these spaces by the managing body itself, since, in addition to the quantitative difference, the addresses provided did not coincide with reality. Such inconsistencies limited, above all, the field research – from observation to the application of questionnaires –, as did the difficulty in identifying the respective administrators of the streets.

When analyzing the distribution of spaces and equipment that are under the responsibility of the Secretariat, Figure 1 indicates the existence of a concentration of these public spaces, that is, a non-democratic distribution, although it is possible to infer a timid growth towards neighborhoods further away from the city center, taking as a reference the part of the map where there is a greater concentration of spaces.

Figure 1: Map of the distribution of sports and leisure spaces under the responsibility of SEMDEL⁹



Source: prepared by the authors based on data from IBGE (2020) and field research.

This reveals an intentional action by the municipal government in planning policies aimed at the sector, considering that, in São Luís, there are neighborhoods without any spaces and equipment, as, from those mapped, a concentration was evidenced in the North and Northeast regions of the municipality, with a predominance of them in the urban area to the detriment of the rural area, reinforcing the social inequality in the distribution of these public spaces.

⁹ Due to the smaller scale of the map, 3 (three) spaces were superimposed on others.

Regarding the indicators that cover the programs, projects and professionals involved in sports spaces and equipment, Table 2 describes the main characteristics related to what is written, said and done.

Table 2: Description of indicators related to programs, projects and professionals involved in sports and leisure spaces – SEMDEL/São Luís

IND.	DESCRIPTORS		
	WRITTEN	SAID	DONE
Programs and Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a predominance of sporting events (cups, festivals, races, games, tournaments, championships and circuits). - The implementation of the “Leisure in the Neighborhoods” project is highlighted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are 57 sports initiation “schools” (Resgate Movement Program), 35 of which are football schools. - Healthy São Luís Project, which targets the elderly. ● Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 02 more systematic programs: Rescue Movement (schools) and Healthy São Luís (elderly). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a predominance of physical-sporting and social/associative activity projects. - Activities carried out: dance, gymnastics, functional training, sports schools and sports training. ● User Perception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sports development, walking/running, zumba, leisure/walks/picnics and functional training.
Professionals Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laws no. 4.902/2007 and no. 5.183/2009 establishes 22 commissioned positions in the SEMDEL structure. - Almost 90% of the staff are service providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the “Rescue Movement” and “Healthy São Luís” programs, all are “services provided” ● Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are service providers to carry out activities in the spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most spaces and equipment do not have guidance from physical education professionals.

Source: prepared by the authors based on activity reports, interviews and forms.

Legend: Ind. = indicators

For the “writing”, it is noted that the structuring of the analysis was based on the following official documents: the PPAs for the periods 2014-2017 and 2018-2021, the Circumstantial Expositions of the SEMDEL Management for the years 2017 and 2018, as well as the 2022 Sports Calendar, Official Letter no. 006/2022 – GS/SEMDEL and the “Sports Movement and Rescue Project” /2022.

When consulting the PPAs 2014-2017 and 2018-2021, the objectives, actions and goals planned for the years foreseen in the study were identified. The data collected guaranteed content for analysis of the dimensions and categories, namely: political configuration (actions and programs) and scope/structure (reach of programs and projects).

For the four-year period 2014 to 2017, the PPA inaugurated the organization of different programs circumscribed in groups called “Result Areas”, which are “[...] strategic axes to enable the realization of investments and the improvement of the quality in the provision of services [...]” (São Luís, 2013, p. 42). According to the document, this new organization is cited as a way to encourage integration between agencies and transversality with the aim of ensuring greater efficiency of actions.

It is observed that sports and leisure policies appear associated with the tourism sector, although developed by different bodies, forming the “Tourism, Sports and Leisure Results Area”, which has described as main activities the “[...] development and encouragement of tourism, with initiatives for promotion and qualification, and support and encouragement of sports, with initiatives aimed at children and adolescents” (São Luís, 2013, p. 44).

At first glance, this innovation seems interesting, as it aims to bring different sectoral policies closer together – something quite positive, especially when one highlights the fact that tourism is one of the leisure interests. However, in the PPA itself, it can be observed that this stated transversality is not materialized in the details of the actions of the two Secretariats – Tourism and Sports and Leisure. Intersectorality does not appear detailed in programs, projects and actions of these sectors in the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 PPAs.

When analyzing the Program and Action Statements by Physical and Financial Body or Unit of SEMDEL, contained in the two PPAs, it is clear that the sports and leisure actions are located in the “Promotion and support for sports” program, with the objective of guaranteeing and expanding access to sports and leisure as social and constitutional rights (São Luís, 2013, p. 229), explaining that they will be used as a “tool to reduce the risks of social exclusion” (p. 306).

Even though sport and leisure are considered social rights, the objective described for the program reveals traces of a salvationist vision of the sector's actions, giving these areas the “mission” of working to resolve social ills.

In this sense, Athayde (2011) draws attention to the risk of the “Savior of the Nation Syndrome”, when attributing this purpose to the phenomenon of sport, because “in this mythical scenario, sport alone would be capable of guaranteeing social ascension and inclusion; combating crime and drug addiction; and promoting improvements in the quality of life and health of the population” (Athayde, 2011, p. 200).

In turn, the statements have the same actions planned for the two four-year periods, as shown in Table 1: 1) holding educational sports events (Capital Games); 2) equipment for practicing sports to ensure quality infrastructure for sports and leisure; 3) sports for children and adolescents; 4) sports and social inclusion and 5) support for athletes.

Table 1: Statement of SEMDEL actions described in the PPA 2014-2017 and 2018-2021

PROGRAM FOR PROMOTION AND SUPPORT OF SPORTS				
ACTION	OBJECTIVE	TARGET AUDIENCE	INDICATOR	PHYSICAL/EXERCISE GOAL
				2017-2018

PROGRAM FOR PROMOTION AND SUPPORT OF SPORTS					
ACTION	OBJECTIVE	TARGET AUDIENCE	INDICATOR	PHYSICAL/EXERCISE GOAL	
				2017-2018	
Holding educational sports events (capital games)	Hold competitions in various modalities among schools in the municipal public network	Students from municipal public schools	Types of competitions held	01	01
Sports equipment to ensure quality infrastructure for sports and leisure	Ensure quality infrastructure for sports and leisure	Citizens	Sports and leisure facilities built, renovated and maintained	12	10
Sports for children and teenagers	Ensure access for children and adolescents to sports activities by increasing and expanding sports schools.	Children and adolescents	People in social vulnerability assisted	5000	3000
Sport and social inclusion	-	Citizens	People served by sports and leisure activities	2500	2000
Athlete support	Support athletes and teams, providing participation in local, regional, national and international championships	Athletes and teams	Supported athletes	60	50

Source: prepared by the authors based on the PPA 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 available on the São Luís City Hall website. Available at: <https://transparencia.saoluis.ma.gov.br/pagina/1573/>. Accessed on: August 08, 2023.

In other words, the holding of educational sports events (Capital Games) when analyzed from the perspective of the activities carried out, in the detailing of the actions in the Circumstantial Exhibitions of the SEMDEL Management, in 2017, it was found that the Secretariat acted in the planning and execution of the municipal stage of the Maranhão School Games and in the holding of a Sports Festival of the Schools of the Project “Movimento e Resgate Esportivo” (SEMDEL, 2018).

In 2018, for this same action, in addition to once again participating in the municipal stage of the Maranhão School Games, a Sports Festival was held, offered to students at municipal schools (SEMDEL, 2019).

When describing the activities carried out in 2017 and 2018, in “Sport for children and adolescents”, the following are cited as achievements: training of sports agents, classroom activities at sixty-nine (69) sports schools¹⁰, distribution of sports equipment and educational lectures.

In the detailed actions of “Sport and Social Inclusion”, the implementation of the projects “Healthy São Luís”, “Fan of the Future”, “Playing in the Neighborhoods” and “Living Well” were presented in 2017. Meanwhile, in 2018, the following projects stood out: “Healthy São Luís”, “Fan of the Future”, “Well-being on the Beach”, “Dancing in the Neighborhoods” and “Swings, Rings and Tatamis”.

Within this action, it is possible to find the greatest variety of content and target audience of the Program, involving sports and leisure activities, with emphasis on the projects “Dancing in the Neighborhoods” and “Well-being on the Beach”, which introduce dance content into the list of SEMDEL activities. The “Healthy São Luís” project is aimed at the elderly, while “Gingados, Rings and Tatames” records the participation of people with disabilities.

Finally, in the “Athlete Support” action, in the Reports for the years 2017 and 2018, assistance was recorded for the participation of amateur athletes in competitions, national and international sports exchanges, in addition to encouraging sporting events in various neighborhoods of São Luís.

¹⁰ The Sports Schools are activities of the “Movement and Rescue” project, and offer various sports such as handball, basketball, judo, volleyball, karate, athletics, capoeira, futsal and soccer.

Based on the assessment of the statements contained in the PPAs, it is possible to highlight that, even with the purpose of the body pointing to the promotion of sports and leisure rights, the documents approved a list of actions fundamentally focused on sports, with leisure being restricted to access to equipment and infrastructure.

Only when the analysis moves to the details of the actions, within the Circumstantial Management Exhibitions (SEMDEL, 2018; 2019) was the presence of other leisure activities focused on physical interest identified.

Thus, although there is the possibility of promoting leisure through sport, as Bracht (2005) theorizes when explaining the dual scheme of the phenomenon¹¹, reducing the offer of activities to just one leisure content is to move away from what is advocated in the objectives of the National Sports Policy, which portrays the need to “democratize and universalize access to sport and leisure, with a view to improving the quality of life of the Brazilian population” (Brasil, 2009, p. 44).

When we examine the scope of the municipal sports and leisure policy implemented by SEMDEL in 2017 and 2018, considering the data contained in the PPAs – which use as an indicator the number of people benefiting from the programs, projects and actions implemented – we are faced with an alarming result.

In 2017, the number of residents to benefit from the actions implemented by SEMDEL was forecast at 7,560 (seven thousand five hundred and sixty) services, which represents 0.64% of the population of São Luís. In 2018, the previous year's data was reduced to a forecast of 5,050 (five thousand and fifty) attendances (0.49% of the city's population), further limiting access to the right to sports leisure, without any

¹¹ According to Bracht (2005), sport can be understood from a dual scheme, being taken both as a high-performance practice (or spectacle) and as a leisure activity.

explanation of the reasons for the reduction in numbers being included in the documents evaluated.

These data, when compared with the absolute number of the city's population, show that the majority of the population still does not have access to sport through municipal policies. Mascarenhas (2006) highlights that, when policies take place in a focalist logic, it is commonplace “[...] to introduce specific compensations aimed at the functioning of the system and the conservation of the institutional order” (Mascarenhas, 2006, p. 10).

Perhaps, if there were other official devices capable of revealing data on the number of users of sports leisure spaces and equipment or the number of participants in educational sports events, this disparity could be mitigated, but it certainly would not bridge the gigantic gap that exists in guaranteeing the universalization of the right to sport at the municipal level.

Considerations are also added regarding the “Sports Calendar/2022”, as well as the “Movement Project” and “Sports Rescue/2022”. It was found that most of the actions described in the calendar do not differ from those related to previous years, however, there was a predominance of sporting events (cups, festivals, races, games, tournaments, championships and circuits) offered monthly on commemorative dates, covering different sports modalities to serve a diverse target audience.

This document highlights the implementation of the “Leisure in Neighborhoods” project, which is carried out with some regularity, but without further details about locations, target audiences and activities carried out, which leads to the assumption that these are specific recreational activities.

Another aspect that draws attention are the activities aimed at specific audiences, such as: the elderly, children/adolescents, women and people with disabilities, as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Events for specific audiences - SEMDEL

EVENTS	MONTH	TARGET AUDIENCE
Event alluding to International Women's Day	March	Women
Event in allusion to the day to combat sexual violence against children and adolescents	May	Children/teenagers
Paralympic Festival	September	People with Disabilities
80th Birthday Ball (National Senior Citizens Day)	September	Elderly
HITBOX Pink October	October	Women
AUTINIC (picnic for autistic people)	December	People with Disabilities

Source: prepared by the authors based on the 2022 Sports Calendar.

The data indicate a concern of the municipal administration in offering, even if only in the “events” modality, activities aimed at audiences historically excluded or in conditions of vulnerability in the actions of the Municipal Power, which reveals a positive aspect in the sectoral policy. However, it is recommended that this be expanded to include systematic activities such as programs, projects and actions aimed at this population, rather than just isolated events.

Regarding the “São Luís Movimento e Resgate” Project, it is inferred to be SEMDEL’s longest-running action, since, according to Dominici and Silva (2008), since 2003 – at the still Municipal Sports and Leisure Foundation (FUMDEL) –, this activity has been carried out systematically, characterizing itself as a permanent project.

Furthermore, the “Healthy São Luís” Project, developed by SEMDEL with some regularity, stands out. According to official information, sent by the Secretariat (2022),

there are 06 (six) centers of the “Healthy São Luís Program” executed by the managing body and 01 (one) in partnership with the Health Secretariat. The same document attests to the existence of 57 (fifty-seven) sports initiation schools, covering various modalities with a predominance of football/futsal.

From the analysis of the planning document of the Sports Movement and Rescue Program – SEMDEL/Sport and Inclusion Schools (2022), it is highlighted that the project was resized, acquiring program status, encompassing an umbrella action called “Sports School Project”.

Also referred to in the document as the “Educational Sports Initiation Program”, it is described as being composed of 15 (fifteen) projects. However, only the following sports are listed: athletics, football, volleyball, futsal, judo, capoeira, basketball and handball, which does not match the total indicated.

In turn, the text foresees intersectoral actions with the Secretariats of Education, Urban Cleaning, Health and Social Action, with the aim of serving a total of 3,600 (three thousand and six hundred) children and adolescents in a period of 02 (two) years of effective development outside of school hours, which, for Marcellino (2008), “[...] requires, in the municipal government public sphere, observing the interfaces with the other departments of the Secretariat itself or body where the action related to leisure policy is centralized” (Marcellino, 2008, p. 14).

In this sense, a similarity was noted between the new version of the SEMDEL “Movimento e Resgate Esportivo” program and the “Segundo Tempo” program, offered by the Federal Government. However, the municipal program prioritizes “little schools” for sports initiation, reducing the possibilities of activities that include other Physical Education and Leisure content.

Regarding the “writing” on the “professionals involved” indicator, it is noted that SEMDEL is a small Secretariat in terms of its staff, as Municipal Laws no. 4,902/2007 and 5,183/2009 establish 22 (twenty-two) commission positions for the structure of the management body.

Thus, when observing the Transparency Portal of the City of São Luís (São Luís, 2023), it is identified that, of the total of 160 (one hundred and sixty) employees, only 2.4% make up the effective staff of SEMDEL, with 86.2% being “service providers”, highlighting the high number of employees who only have a temporary contract, as described in Table 2.

Table 2: Server positions

POSITION OF ORIGIN	AMOUNT	%
Administrative agent	06	3.75
Legal analyst	01	0.62
Mid-level technical assistant	01	0.62
Higher level technical assistant	02	1.25
General services assistant	01	0.62
Head of technical advisory	01	0.62
Chief of Staff	01	0.62
Coordinator	03	1.87
Driver	01	0.62
Higher education teacher	01	0.62
Deputy Secretary for Administration and Finance	01	0.62
Deputy Secretary	01	0.62
Service provided	138	86.2
Area Superintendent	01	0.62
Administrative and Financial Superintendent	01	0.62

Source: prepared by the authors based on data available on the São Luís City Hall website.
Available at: <https://transparencia.saoluis.ma.gov.br/>. Accessed on: August 08, 2023.

It is emphasized that, with each municipal administration, more than 90% of those who are part of the structure of the aforementioned Secretariat may lose their link. Therefore, with regard to the “human resources” category, having a high turnover in the agency's staff is possibly one of the key points to justify the discontinuation of its public policies, because, if the administrative memory acquired through career civil servants is

absent, the consequence is precariousness in the provision of public services offered. Furthermore, it is worth noting that none of them have a direct link with the main activity, that is, they are in the area of Physical Education/Sport/Leisure.

Regarding what was said about the programs, projects and their professionals, it is worth highlighting, preliminarily, that the current mayor of the city of São Luís (2020-2024), in less than 02 years, replaced the municipal manager of the sports department. This possibly answers or justifies part of the contradictions identified between the manager's speech and the official documents made available by the Secretariat.

Thus, the current representative of the body reports that SEMDEL recognizes only 03 (three) spaces as its responsibility, however, it has 57 (fifty-seven) "little schools" for sports initiation, of which 35 (thirty-five) are football schools and the others are futsal, basketball, karate, capoeira, judo, volleyball and handball integrated into the "Resgate Movement Program". Another action emphasized was the "Healthy São Luís Project", which targets the elderly. These two were pointed out by the interviewee as the most systematic.

It is assumed, therefore, that the contradiction regarding the responsibility of the sports spaces declared by the manager with what is documented may indicate that SEMDEL has carried out sports activities in community spaces, paying the professionals, however, without assuming their administration. Furthermore, this context denotes the presence of a policy disconnected from its specificities, with public authority action taking place in the absence of a management plan.

The data present in the documents regarding the professionals involved in SEMDEL programs and projects were confirmed by the current manager as follows:

Here at SEMDEL we have a history within the structure: commissioned positions, few employees and the so-called services provided (SP's), which is a major problem that the municipality itself carries "on its shoulders". We have here the municipal secretary and two deputies: one for Administrative Finance, one for Sports, Leisure and Mobilization and, below that, we have the Sports Superintendence [...] and two more coordinators: the one for Social Mobilization, who is in charge of the "Rescue Movement" projects, leisure and the one for Sports, who acts as "midfielder" with the entities that promote sports. Today, within the organization, these are the ones. [...] In the "Rescue Movement" and "Healthy São Luís" Programs, everyone is SP's. Many are qualified and many are not. This is the reality, because they are from the community (SEMDEL Manager).

This confirms the inefficiency of municipal management in relation to human resources, as it appears that it is not only in the sports area that policy implementation is carried out through services provided. Therefore, the question arises: what justifies the implementation of the largest – and longest-running – program of the managing body being developed predominantly by employees with temporary ties? It can be inferred that, from an administrative legal point of view, this Secretariat would not even exist, given the limited nature of the structure of its positions. In a complementary manner, the manager recovers:

[...] a history of how "Sports Agents" came about [...]. This "Movimento Resgate" program has existed since the Secretariat was a Foundation [...] and had a very strong field soccer project. The manager at the time, when he created the project, was very involved with football, so they created these "little schools" and placed many former football players [...]. **They made a lot of politics out of it**, that's the reality that happened. Today, the profile of these professionals is people in their 60s. There are teachers working for 70 years (SEMDEL Manager, authors' emphasis).

On the other hand, the interview highlighted the hegemony of football and the "political use" of sports initiation schools as a criterion for selecting and hiring professionals who would work on the "Movement and Rescue" project. It was noted that the current management has difficulty breaking with such practice, revealing, in a way, a conduct that has perpetuated this situation, as the manager justified that:

[...] this is the case for all the teachers, because they have been teachers from the beginning until today in the Rescue Movement. They work directly with the community. These teachers are also heroes, they are fathers and mothers,

they work with the entire reality of the community, with the lack of equipment structure and everything (SEMDEL Manager).

Regarding the training and qualification/updating of professionals involved in the Secretariat's programs and projects, it was understood from the manager's speech that the majority of the employees of the “São Luís Saudável” project are Physical Education teachers, however, there is no systematic training policy, only specific courses.

In summary, it is believed that SEMDEL needs to follow the guidelines defined in the II CNE, in order to get closer to macro policy, that is, thought of at the national level, as explained below:

The National Sports and Leisure System, based on a diagnosis of human resources, must develop a policy for initial and continuing education, at basic, higher and postgraduate levels, at a distance, respecting economic and geographical criteria, and in person, under the guidance of Higher Education Institutions and involving management, training, scientific and community institutions, expanding and guaranteeing access to and permanence in free, quality public education (Brazil, 2007, p. 26).

In view of the need to establish a connection between what is recorded in the documents and what is announced in the interview, a brief analysis is presented on the dimension of the “done” in the 23 (twenty-three) sports spaces and equipment, based on the observation script and the perception of the 270 (two hundred and seventy) users participating in this research. To this end, activities carried out autonomously, leisure interests and the main programs and projects were considered as thematic axes of analysis to weigh up the observation of spaces and equipment.

It is anticipated that it was not possible to identify, during the period of observation and application of the forms with the users, the implementation of a regular entertainment policy in the different spaces visited. Of the few recognized, it was found

that there is a predominance of projects, followed by events.¹² Regarding leisure interests, physical-sporting and social/associative activities stood out.

In fact, sports policy in São Luís has been limited to the execution of a few projects and, in some cases, it has not even been identified as being carried out in the spaces and facilities visited. Thus, as noted in the managers' statements, there is a gap in the political configuration for the effective implementation of its scope, as the municipality lacks more programs and projects that are regularly developed by the public authorities to guarantee sport.

Regarding the activities developed autonomously, the observation itinerary allowed the choice of more than one option, thus highlighting the practice of sports, physical activities, contemplation and social interaction.

Regarding the data indicated by users about their knowledge of the activities offered in the spaces and equipment, they were presented in order of importance, highlighting: classes (dance, gymnastics and functional training), sports initiation schools and sports training. Among them, attendees stated that they specifically practice: sports, walking/running, zumba, leisure/walks/picnics and functional training.

Therefore, it was learned that the sports leisure spaces in the city of São Luís, in a certain way, are diverse, as the community uses them as an alternative for practicing multiple activities. Incidentally, the actions mentioned coincide with the data relating to the “Movement and Rescue” and “Healthy São Luís” projects. Although these are just two main management activities, both are configured as possibilities that serve diverse audiences (children, adolescents and the elderly), in a decentralized manner, with free and regular provision.

¹²An event is understood as a one-off action, which involves a cultural, sporting and/or scientific presentation. May or may not integrate programs or projects.

In terms of motivation for using spaces and equipment, users initially stated a preference for leisure/fun/well-being and, subsequently, rest/contemplation/health.

Additionally, visitors indicated that they visit the spaces and equipment, for the most part, once or twice a week, or three to four times, with the evening period receiving the largest number of people, followed by the afternoon and morning shifts. Regarding other data, most users indicated regular practice in these places for approximately 02 (two) years.

With reference to the professionals involved, observations revealed their prevalence in activities carried out autonomously by the community (classes, sports training, tournaments/competitions and cultural activities). It should be noted, however, that in a significant percentage of spaces, it was not possible to verify the participation of SEMDEL professionals offering any type of assistance.

We also sought to identify the presence of Physical Education teachers who were responsible for carrying out the respective activities. In this regard, it was noted that in 60.8% of the 23 (twenty-three) sports venues visited, there was no presence of graduates fulfilling the role of guidance.

As for the link, it is clear that of the 39.1% of locations with the presence of professionals, the majority are characterized as service providers. This coincides with what was reported by the manager and what was described in the documents, that is, the fact that the municipal government is carrying out its activities with employees with precarious employment relationships.

Added to this is the inaction of the public authorities in managing these public spaces, considering that approximately 80% of their users stated that there was no type of guidance offered by the Municipal Executive in the different spaces. This implies

that, as 81% claim not to pay a private professional to guide their sports practices, it is understood that people are using these places randomly, without any qualified supervision, which represents, as mentioned, an omission by the managing body.

Otherwise, such data highlights a contradiction, as the 138 (one hundred and thirty-eight) employees who provide services to SEMDEL are only linked to sports initiation schools, to the detriment of services that include the general public.

In summary, it is argued that “[...] the general guidelines of a municipal leisure policy cannot be restricted to just an activities policy, but must include issues related to the training and development of staff for action, spaces and equipment and criteria for reordering time” (Marcellino, 2008, p. 15). This would certainly mean expanding the right to sport and leisure for the population of São Luís.

Final Considerations

The analysis of the programs, projects and professionals involved in the scope of sports spaces and equipment under the responsibility of SEMDEL in the city of São Luís/MA, in the period from 2014 to 2021, through writing, sayings and deeds, revealed that there was a timid performance of the public power in the management of a State policy, aggravated by the lack of recognition of the Secretariat as the body responsible for the management of more than 85% of the public spaces.

This implies a lack of purpose, both in terms of developing a management plan that describes the reality and main needs of the locations that do or do not have such spaces, and in the allocation of financial resources capable of permanently meeting the various programs that are developed within the scope of public spaces.

Furthermore, when comparing the information contained in the Transparency Portal with that described in the document sent by the secretariat via Official Letter No. 006/2022 (SEMDEL, 2022), which indicate the names of 57 (fifty-seven) “Sports Agents” as responsible for sports schools, it was observed that the body has developed its actions with professionals with precarious and temporary contracts, confirming the amateurism of the Municipal Public Management in the management of sports and leisure. Furthermore, of the total of 160 employees, less than 3% are part of SEMDEL's permanent staff, with almost 90% being “service providers”.

It is important to note that, above all, there is the institutionalization of a policy of convenience, which, operating in favor of certain predilections, welcomes programs and projects that can accommodate their values and serve personal interests, to the detriment of general benefits. Thus, it is clear that managers shape their decisions based on political-partisan criteria in current sports policy, behaving in accordance with the actors operating the State at a given time.

Otherwise, if there is a possible explanation for the lack of importance given by political agents to the management of their sports leisure spaces and equipment, based on what is written, said and done, it leads to a conclusion that seems close to the truth: many of them lack the preparation and expertise to operate on issues related to public sports policy, especially with regard to overcoming the situation of insufficient public funding and the absence of qualified professionals in the SEMDEL structure to implement actions in the field of sports.

In summary, it was proven that, within the geographical administrative limits of the city of São Luís, there are neighborhoods without any sports and leisure spaces, while in others, there is a visible concentration, revealing an inequality of access due to

the absence of public power. Therefore, there appears to be a sectoral public policy more susceptible to serving electoral interests than concerned with sporting citizenship, conceived through the guarantee of rights.

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