

THE GRAJAHÚ TENNIS CLUB IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE URBAN SPACE OF GRAJAHÚ, THE “MODERN COPACABANA” (1925 – 1937)**Received on:** January 28, 2025**Passed on:** May 23, 2025License: *Bruno Adriano Rodrigues Silva¹*

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ABSTRACT: the article starts from a current problem, the loss of social space by neighborhood clubs, and aims to examine the Grajahú Tennis Club, located in Grajaú, in the northern part of the city of Rio de Janeiro, taking into account its sports and social practices, as well as those related to its Installation between 1925 and 1937. We start from the assumption that space conditions human action to examine serially periodicals available in the Digital Newspaper Library of the National Library. We conclude that it was the material conditions, the people who developed their practices in the urban space that led Grajahú to become a prominent club in the city, which reinforces the role of the elites in the historical and social construction of sports clubs.

KEYWORDS: City. Sports club. Urban space.

GRAJAHÚ TENNIS CLUB NA PRODUÇÃO DO ESPAÇO URBANO DO GRAJAHÚ, A “COPACABANA MODERNA” (1925 – 1937)

RESUMO: o artigo parte de um problema atual, a perda do espaço social por clubes de bairro e tem como objetivo examinar o Grajahú Tennis Club, localizado no Grajaú, zona norte da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, tendo em conta a suas práticas esportivas, sociais e as que diziam respeito a sua instalação entre os anos de 1925 e 1937. Partimos do pressuposto de que o espaço condiciona a ação humana para examinar de modo serial periódicos disponíveis na Hemeroteca Digital da Biblioteca Nacional. Concluímos que foram as condições materiais, as pessoas que desenvolviam as suas práticas no espaço urbano que levaram o Grajahú a ser um destacado club na cidade, o que reforça o papel das elites na construção histórico social dos clubes esportivos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cidade. Clube esportivo. Espaço urbano.

Introduction

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“Neighborhood clubs are facing a difficult situation, and solutions need to be found so they can recover”. All branches of government should participate in this recovery process”, said city councilman Rafael Aloizio de Freitas, a resident of the Grajaú neighborhood in the city's northern zone, regarding the situation faced by the Grajaú Tennis Club in 2019, when it turned 94 years old, burdened by a labor debt that nearly led to its auctioning off, requiring municipal intervention which initially decreed (n. 37,528 of 2013) the listing of its headquarters as a historical landmark and then expropriated it, so that the municipal public authorities would have priority in acquiring the property.²

This has been a recurring problem in the city of Rio de Janeiro, especially in urban areas where there are greater opportunities for real estate speculation. More recently, other associations that once functioned as important spaces for social interaction have closed their doors, such as the Associação Atlética Vila Isabel³ and the Esporte Clube Maxwell⁴, both in Vila Isabel, and even in other neighborhoods of the city⁵.

With a view to constructing the history of sports associations in Rio de Janeiro and even to understanding them within the spectrum of urban development, this article aims to examine the trajectory of the Grajahú Tennis Club, located in the Grajaú neighborhood, in the northern zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, taking into account its sporting and social practices, as well as those related to its establishment in the

² Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2019/06/19/prefeitura-decreta-desapropriacao-e-estabelece-que-clube-no-grajau-rio-e-de-utilidade-publica.ghtml>. Accessed on January 27, 2025.

³ Available at: <https://historiadoesporte.wordpress.com/2020/09/10/associacao-atletica-vila-isabel-70-anos-de-historia-adeus-ou-ate-logo/>. Accessed on January 27, 2025.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.meiahora.com.br/geral/2023/07/6672609-apos-fechamento-em-2017-predio-do-esporte-clube-maxwell-em-vila-isabel-esta-abandonado.html#foto=1> Accessed on January 27, 2025.

⁵ Available at: <https://diariodorio.com/a-decadencia-dos-clubes-de-bairro-nos-suburbios-da-cidade-dorio/>. Accessed on January 27, 2025.

neighborhood between the years of its founding in 1925 and 1937, when it definitively acquired the space to house its headquarters.

We start from the premise that space conditions human action. The (philosophical) idea of totality is what guides interpretations about changes in the functions of society, whose realizations occur “where the conditions for installation present themselves as best,” fulfilling an “exclusively functional” role, but which is correlated with changes that “encompass the total society, that is, the World, or the Socioeconomic Formation” (Santos, 2006, p. 10). 74).

The “production of space” tends to dominate social practice, “it corresponds to the productive forces,” of course, the “employment of productive forces and existing techniques” by groups or social classes organized within an “institutional framework” that is capable of intervening on a (large or small) geographical scale, inevitably considering their “ideologies and representations, especially spatial representations” (Lefebvre, 2005, p. 10). 139).

In the terms stated above, “social space is a product” that must be interpreted relationally, space in time, where the former “represents simultaneity, the synchronic order of social reality” and the latter “denotes the diachronic order and, thus, the historical process of social production.” The text highlights “human beings who enter into relationships with each other through their activities and practices” (Schmid, 2012, p. 3).

Our study and research activities, therefore, are carried out in the field of sport, which is practiced in space (in a synchronous manner) and in time (diachronically), considering the social dimension of the empirical objects highlighted, in this case sports clubs (Barros, 2004).

From this perspective, the research sources, the periodicals that circulated during the period in question, available in the digital collection of the National Library, were considered as testimonies and discourses produced in a specific era, to be approached serially, that is, “with some level of homogeneity, and which open up to the possibility of quantifying or serializing the information perceptible there in order to identify regularities” (Barros, 2004, p. 10). 147).

By taking another look at the history of the Grajahú Tennis Club, therefore, we hope to contribute to the historical understanding of the sport in the city of Rio de Janeiro, considering that other research on clubs in the neighborhoods has already been carried out, namely: Tijuca (Silva, 2022), Irajá (Melo; Raposo, 2021), Olaria (Melo, 2020), Ilha do Governador (Melo, 2021), Zona da Leopoldina (Melo, 2020), Vila Isabel (Silva; Melo, 2022), Lagoa (Melo, 2022), and Barra da Tijuca (Melo; Santos, 2021).

The Grajahú Neighborhood, the Grajahú Tennis Club, and its Social and Sporting Practices for Installation in the Space

The mountain range that forms the Tijuca Massif is located between the southern, northern, and western regions of Rio de Janeiro. During the 16th century, it was a source of natural resources (mainly water, coal, firewood, and timber) for the city's development. In the 19th century, much of its forest was felled to make way for coffee cultivation, and this historical degradation caused an unprecedented water crisis in the city, which led to concerns about reforestation of the area even in that century (Sales; Brito; Guedes-Bruni, 2024).

Grajaú was located in the Tijuca mountain range. It was one of the slopes facing the north side of the city, where, in the 19th century, three farms were located, one of

which was Murumby (see figure 1 black ellipse) which, in 1884, belonged to the family of Jhon Rudge, when it was divided between the Matriarch, D. Maria Maxwell Rudge and her sons, Guilherme and Eduardo (as we can see in the black ellipse in figure 1) (Cardoso, 1989).

Figure 1: Map of the city of Rio de Janeiro (1875)



Source: Garriga, 1875.

The plots of land belonging to Dona Maria and Guilherme were sold to the large landowner, Sebastião de Pinho, who, in 1886, transferred the land to the Brazilian Industrial Company, and it was only in 1912 that these lands were acquired by the Brazilian Real Estate and Construction Company. The portion belonging to Eduardo Maxwell Rudge remained in his possession until 1922, when he died. As he had no children, his share was passed on to twenty-seven heirs from São Paulo who, on April 9, 1924, sold it to the same Brazilian Real Estate Company responsible for the subdivision of the space (Cardoso, 1989).

Certainly, the development of transportation in the city, especially from 1868 onwards, contributed greatly to the change in land ownership perception regarding what would become Grajaú. Rio de Janeiro in the 19th century was stratified, with a non-

residential core in the central region of the city, where commercial activities, tenements, and other constructions of the less favored social classes of Rio society were located (Abreu, 1987).

The southern region, bordered by Guanabara Bay, mainly the Glória, Catete, and Botafogo neighborhoods, was home to the urban bourgeoisie, primarily structured around the streetcar service. And the suburbs of the northern zone of Rio de Janeiro, already filled by the structuring of the D. Pedro II railroad from 1871 onwards and even by the streetcar services responsible for transforming that rural space into an urban one (Abreu, 1987).

Even infrastructure, such as paving, sanitation, construction of houses and commercial establishments, as in the case of the Vila Isabel neighborhood, designed in 1873, which bordered Grajaú (indicated by the white arrow in Figure 1), for example, was linked to the development of transportation (Abreu, 1987).

At this point, the link between the production of urban space in Rio de Janeiro and capital of French origin is noteworthy (Mauro, 1999). This was the case in Grajaú, since the Brazilian Real Estate and Construction Company, created on September 5, 1911, had as its majority shareholders two French public limited companies that held 80% of its capital: the Caisse Commerciale et Industrielle de Paris, represented in Brazil by Baron Amedée Reille, and the Société l'Immobilière du Seine & Seine Oise, represented here by Antônio Eugênio Richard Júnior and Mareei Bouiloux Lafont, both linked to the Crédit Foncier du Brésil et de l'Amérique du Sud, a French bank founded in 1906 to finance operations, including real estate (Abreu, 1987; Cardoso, 1989).

Marcel Bouiloux Lafont was born in 1872 in Angoulême, France. Trained as a lawyer with a specialization in International Law, he inherited the Banque Bouilloux-

Laffont Frères etCie from his family. His first visits to Brazil were in 1906, when Pereira Passos' reforms were taking place in the city (Mauro, 1999). Antônio Eugênio Richard Júnior, born in Grajahú, Maranhão, in 1873, was an engineer who graduated from the Brazilian Military School (Correio da Manhã, 1902). In 1912 he retired as a Captain of Engineering (O Paiz, 1912), at which time he intensified his activities in the real estate business.

The partnership between Companhia Brasileira de Imóveis e Construções and Crédit Foncier du Brésil et de l'Amérique du Sud enabled segments of the middle class of Rio de Janeiro's population, a still restricted market, to finance their real estate acquisitions. The company sold land for cash or on credit, between five and ten years, with or without the construction of the property, which could also be financed. It was indeed a lucrative business for a company whose objective was to extract land rent and which gradually expanded its operations in Rio de Janeiro until it went public on the Stock Exchange (Cardoso, 1989).

In this context, more precisely on October 24, 1913, the first urban plan for the subdivision of the Grajaú neighborhood was launched (black ellipse in figure 2). The initial idea was to build twelve streets and two squares, using the plots of land acquired by Eduardo Maxwell Rudge only in 1924, so that the construction of the wide streets, the subdivisions with wide frontages (between 10m and 12m), the installation of water infrastructure, the paving of the streets that would be landscaped, and the construction of the residences could take place. The intention was indeed to create a residential neighborhood aimed at an elite in the northern zone, a place still marked by old buildings and several factories, as was the case in the neighborhoods of Andaraí (white ellipse in figure 2) and Aldeia Campista (blue ellipse in figure 2) (Cardoso, 1989).

Figure 3: Map of the city of Rio de Janeiro (1913)

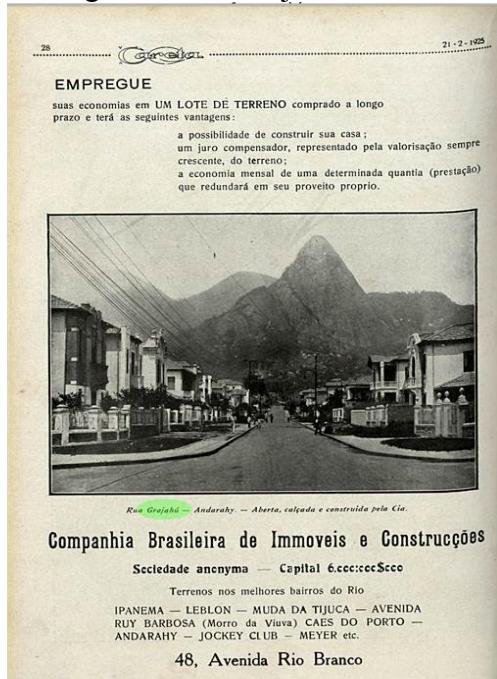


Source: Rio de Janeiro, 1913.

The first street opened in Grajaú was “Grajahú Street,” formerly known as “Seventh Street” (Report, 1911), where in 1918 a chapel was erected in honor of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception (O Paiz, 1918), by Francisco Antônio Tricárico, one of the first residents in the area, an architect of Italian origin, employed by the Brazilian Real Estate and Construction Company, with important ties to Mareei Bouiloux Lafont, one of the main shareholders of that land company (Revue Franco-Bresilienne, 1909).

Grajaú was a “pleasant” place, endowed with “beautiful dwellings,” crisscrossed by “good roads,” and comfortable warehouses for all sorts of businesses. It had a population of “social prominence and fond of large-scale undertakings” (O Jornal, 1926, p. 32).

Figure 4: Advertisement for the Brazilian Real Estate and Construction Company, showing a view of Grajaú Street in 1925.



Source: Careta, 1925.

There was a demand for sociability in the neighborhood that was then being built, as this was a common process in Rio de Janeiro, which, since the mid-19th century, had begun to experience a “better conformation of an entertainment market, a process that was related to a set of changes in the national scenario that directly affected the daily life of the capital” (Melo, 2020).

So much so that in 1921 a first sports association was created, the Grajahú Football Club, from the meeting of amateurs for the practice of the British sport (Correio da Manhã, 1921) which, in that context, was spread throughout the city of Rio de Janeiro organized by different leagues and practiced in different stadiums that moved the public (Santos, 2010).

In neighboring districts, there were already clubs dedicated to football, such as Andaráhy Athletic Club (Azevedo, 2021) and Villa Isabel Football Club (Silva; Melo,

2022). There was also a club dedicated to the practice of Tennis founded in Tijuca in 1915, the Tijuca Tennis Club (Melo, Silva, 2021), not to mention the already traditional América Football Club, founded in 1904 in the Saúde neighborhood, but which moved to Tijuca in 1911, among numerous other associations.

There is not much information available about Grajahú Football Club, perhaps because it did not have a long existence in a sparsely populated neighborhood at that time (1920s), but which was gradually taking on more urban characteristics and becoming an elite area in the northern zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro (Cardoso, 1989).

In 1925, however, in a “beautiful house built in the center of the plot, containing two living rooms, three bedrooms, a dining room, a kitchen with a gas stove, a bathroom with a water heater, etc., on a plot measuring 11x33 on the pleasant Grajahú street no. 40”, in the possession of the Superintendent of the Municipal Council, Mr. Baptista Pereira, (Jornal Do Brasil, 1925, p. 24.), was elected with a “thunderous round of applause” the “Dr. Edmundo Silva Junior” (Brazil, 1925, p. 6), engineer, resident at Rua Grajahú 56 (Almanak Laemmert, 1900, p. 665).

In the first year of Grajahú's operation, newspapers reported on parties that lasted “until late at night,” when sports and dances were practiced, involving the residents of the neighborhood (O Jornal, 1925, p. 13).

In 1926, the club acquired its first facilities in the neighborhood through a quota system that was quickly covered by owner-members at the old Maquiné Street 119 (O Imparcial, 1926, p. 8). It was a vast plot of land measuring 3,200m² where up to 3 tennis courts could be built, one of which was ready for use, a basketball court and a skating rink (O Imparcial, 1926, p. 8).

The social headquarters were located in a beautiful, comfortable, and hygienic building that followed a picturesque artistic plan with its “beautiful varnished balcony with baskets of flowers and garlands hanging from the beams (...)", “occupying more than 2/3 of the house, the ballroom and assembly and conference hall of unmistakable beauty is set in the center of the building, with a rich floor all artistically designed”. “Framing it, at one end of the hall is the pantry and kitchen (on one side), on the other side the changing room, the secretary's office, the waiting room, etc.” (O Jornal, 1926, p. 100) 8).

Figure 5: View of the Grajaú Tennis Club headquarters.



Source: O Jornal, 1926, p. 9.

Grajaú celebrated its first year of existence with a resounding party. Its halls were packed for the ceremony which included a speech by President Edmundo Silva Junior, a basketball game with the Helênico Football Club, a team from Rio Comprido, won by the birthday celebrant who received a beautiful trophy, followed by lively dances that lasted until the early hours of the morning (O Jornal, 1926, p. 8).

Amid numerous sporting and social activities in 1926, the club also promoted politics to benefit the neighborhood, when in an assembly it expressed its support for

the city's mayor at the time, Antônio Prado Junior, aligned with the federal government of Washington Luiz, for the installation of electric lighting on Maquiné Street, where its headquarters were located (A Manhã, 1926).

“Dr.” Diogo Xerez, a lawyer who had been the first secretary during Edmundo Silva Junior's administration, was the club's president in 1927 (Vida Doméstica, 1927), when his social and sporting life remained intense. Costume balls were very common (Revista da Semana, 1927), as were basketball training and games (A Manhã, 1927a), volleyball games and checkers and ping-pong tournaments (O Imparcial, 1927), not to mention the continued investments in facilities, such as the technical preparation of tennis courts and gymnastics equipment (A Manhã, 1927b).

During the club's second anniversary celebrations, a lively jazz band filled its halls. Even an election to choose the queen of the festival was held, with the gentle Miss Vera Rutowstich being congratulated in 1st place by the judges, the Commander of the Naval School Romeu Bastos and the well-known lawyer Candido de Oliveira (Domestic Life, 1927).

The club experienced a rapid rise, becoming one of the most prestigious in Rio de Janeiro, the “blue and white representative of Modern Copacabana” (A Manhã, 1927c, p. 5). The parties were crowded, and during Carnival in 1928, the celebrations continued on its premises (Correio Da Manhã, 1928). Numerous others occurred the following year (Correio Da Manhã, 1929a).

Therefore, there was frequent concern about the club's facilities, and its sporting calendar was even interrupted due to works at the social headquarters (A Manhã, 1928) and renovations to its basketball court (A Noite, 1929). Even during movie screenings,

there was a concern to offer the best and most comfortable accommodations for members (Jornal Do Commercio, 1929).

In basketball, it rivaled the traditional Villa Isabel Football Club (Jornal Do Commercio, 1928). In a match against Clube de Regatas do Flamengo on the Flamengo premises, he emerged victorious in front of a large crowd (Correio Da Manhã, 1929b). Volleyball was a women's sport that traditionally rivaled América Football Club and Tijuca Tennis Club, both clubs from Tijuca (Correio Da Manhã, 1929c).

Ping-Pong was also frequently practiced. He competed in the Carioca League championship of the sport (Gazeta De Notícias, 1928) in which he was awarded for his victorious participation (Correio Da Manhã, 1928). In tennis, a sport still restricted to certain practitioners, usually in elite clubs in the city, such as the Tijuca Tennis Club, the Grajaú internal tournament was already a traditional and competitive event (Correio Da Manhã, 1929c).

A tribute took place during Carnival in 1930 recognizing the achievements of the Grajahú Tennis Club; it was an “Elite Samba” dedicated to its members, with lyrics written by Dan Mário Carneiro and music by José Francisco de Freitas, both respected artists who had participated in compositions by Ismael Silva and Francisco Alves, prominent representatives of Brazilian music (Diário Carioca, 1930, p. 10). 5).

Numerous similar clubs invited Grajaú to host friendly matches, and for this reason, the tennis, volleyball, and basketball training sessions of the women's and men's departments enlivened the daily life of the club (A Noite, 1930a), which was indeed “the favorite retreat of the neighborhood families who find there pleasant moments of social, spiritual, and sporting interaction (...). The result of a jewel accessible to the (elite) social class of the members, valued at 20,000 réis (Jornal Do Commercio, 1930).

A vocation was being promoted: “(...) to foster physical culture for both sexes, but more intensively for women (...). “What are young women like today, driven by sports as if it were a necessary substance for the body and the refinement of the race?” Something very similar to the neighborhood's identity, “the young city,” for its “spring-like” and “smiling” grace. “It is surrounded by verdant hills, where a mild temperature makes us forget the dizzying and unrestrained center, disturbing to the nerves” (What's There, 1930, p. 56).

The club's president in 1930 was José Mirilli, a resident of the neighborhood and a deputy director of Credit Foncier du Bresil (A Noite, 1924), one of the banks responsible for financing that recently thriving real estate development. The organization was also thriving, as we can gather from the enthusiastic account of a chronicler:

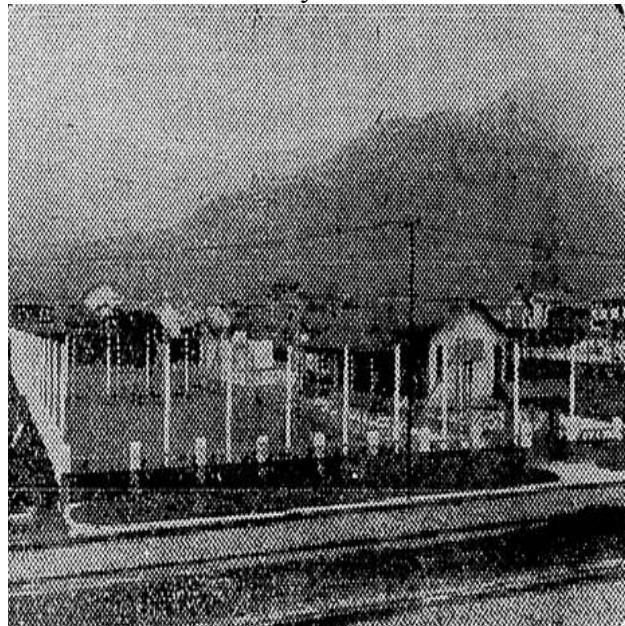
The Noble Association brings together within its ranks a numerous and select number of people from our finest society. Started with vulgar enthusiasm by a group of sportsmen from the Andaráhy neighborhood, it initially only used dance as a way to liven up its social circle. Gradually, other parts of his program were also implemented. And so came tennis first, then basketball, volleyball, shuttlecock, and other specifically sporting modalities (A Batalha, 1930, p. 5).

That year marked the beginning of Grajahú Tennis's participation in athletics, not by chance, in the “Taça Brasimovis” competition promoted by the Brazilian Real Estate and Construction Company (A Noite, 1930a, p. 8). Similarly, involved with the real estate development in the neighborhood, at the club's headquarters was held “a large festival to benefit the construction of the future church that will be erected in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (...), in addition to a building to house “two schools intended for children of both sexes residing in Grajahú and nearby areas” (Correio Da Manhã, 1930a, p. 11).

The ties between the club and the neighborhood were even closer during the celebrations of the “5th anniversary of the new social center that brings together the select society of the aforementioned neighborhood (...) which emerged in another where other sports and social associations already had a certain tradition” (A Noite, 1930b, p. 8).

There was an administrative dynamic that enhanced the club's actions, it provided “discipline” to the members, a “division of responsibilities” to the board, its revenue was “flattering,” and the membership grew significantly “thanks to intelligent personal promotion among the members of Grajaú's social elite.” “Material improvements” were also taking place at the social headquarters and in the sports facilities (O Jornal, 1931, p. 11).

Figure 6: The Grajahú Tennis Club headquarters with views of the tennis, basketball and volleyball courts.



Source: O Jornal, 1931.

In 1931 the president was again José Mirilli. Dr. Mario de Moraes Paiva, an employee of the Court of Auditors, served as vice-president of the club and had been

appointed Secretary General of the Police in 1930 by Dr. Baptista Lusardo, Chief of Police (Correio Da Manhã, 1930b), perhaps for this reason, as a way of strengthening ties, he was invited to visit the headquarters of the Grajahú Tennis Club, “(...) being festively received by the board and several members of the brilliant recreational society” (A Noite, 1931, p. 7).

On an evening dedicated to the arts, numerous personalities frequented the club's halls, among them Lamartine Babo, a renowned Brazilian music artist who was even honored (A Noite, 1931a). Brazilian athletes participating in the South American athletics championship were also honored, some events were to be held, and dances were to brighten the club's halls (A Noite, 1931b), as well as a picnic organized on the picturesque island of Paquetá, in Guanabara Bay, between members of the club and Fluminense Football Club (A Noite, 1931c).

In sports, something new. In addition to the usual sports at the club, such as tennis, basketball, volleyball and athletics, “miniature football” or “Football Celotex” (what we now call “button football”) was also gaining followers (Diário De Notícias, 1931).

In basketball, the club joined the initiative for the sport's autonomy in relation to the Metropolitan Association of Athletic Sports in 1932. Jayme Chacon, an important basketball enthusiast who played for Vasco da Gama, was the representative of the Grajahú Tennis Club in the initiative that aimed to create a basketball league in the city of Rio de Janeiro (A Batalha, 1932).

The club's social dynamics were lively. Dances, the election party for the club's Queen, arts festivals organized by its director, “Dr. Saint-Clair Senna”, an experienced Brazilian music artist, had repercussions in the press (Diário Carioca, 1932) and even

charitable actions, such as the “Christmas for Poor Children” with “abundant distribution of clothes, toys, food (...)" were carried out (Jornal Do Brasil, 1932, p. 16).

In tennis, the club was vying for a spot in the 1st division of the championship organized by the recently founded city Federation. Its new director for the sport, “Mr. Paschoal Ferroni, director of the Brazilian Press Association,” claimed that the criteria established for the clubs' ranking were fair, “though not absolutely fair” (A Noite, 1932a, p. 10). 12).

For this very reason, the club received at its headquarters, through President José Mirilli, a delegation from the Rio de Janeiro Federation of “racquet sports,” whose impressions of the material conditions offered by the club were the best possible (A Noite, 1932b).

This, the material conditions of its headquarters (production of space), were a constant concern, renovations were taking place and even the expansion of the space for the construction of new sports and social facilities was on the agenda of an assembly, when it was decided to purchase another plot of land (A Batalha, 1932), which would later be resold to the owning members in the quota system that the Club adopted on negotiated space (Jornal Do Brasil, 1932).

The founding and owner-partners held prominent positions in Rio de Janeiro society, such as the “respected industrialist Mr. Joaquim de Oliveira” who celebrated his daughter's birthday party on the club premises (O Radical, 1933a, p. 3) and the vice-president, Dr. Mário de Moraes Paiva, who at the time, in addition to being a congressman, held the position of general director of accounting at the Ministry of Labor and Industry (Diário Da Noite, 1933a).

During a visit by the interventor of Rio de Janeiro, then the Federal District, Pedro Ernesto, to the Grajaú neighborhood, the club was given the opportunity to host a gala reception at its headquarters, since improvements in the neighborhood, such as the landscaping of the newly built Edmundo Rêgo square, were being negotiated with the executive branch (O Radical, 1933b, p. 12). Another party held on the club's premises to raise funds for the construction of the “church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help” was another indicator of the catalytic role the club played in the neighborhood (A Noite, 1933).

In 1933, following its sporting experience, the club was part of the founding of the Carioca Basketball League (Diário Da Noite, 1933b), when it won the city's opening tournament (Diário Da Noite, 1933c) and received praise from the respected Tijuca Tennis Club: “to the brave and chivalrous Grajahuense basketball players who know how to impose themselves through fair and authentic play, giving the city an increasingly necessary example of the true sporting spirit and essentially technical competition” (Diário De Notícias, 1933).

Despite this, sports are unpredictable and often reveal serious social problems, even in an elite club, as was the case with Grajahú, such as what happened with José Paladino, an athlete of the club, in a clash with the referee in a match, when he was punished by the Rio de Janeiro basketball league (Correio Da Manhã, 1933). There was even a fight between fans and referees during another match that was interrupted, against Vasco da Gama (Diário Da Noite, 1933d). At the end of the season in which Flamengo was crowned champion, Grajahú Tennis Club finished in 7th place (Correio Da Manhã, 1934a).

In the following season, he would compete in the 1st championship of the 2nd division of the Carioca Basketball League (A Noite, 1934b), where he reached the final phase of the tournament, and Jayme Chacon, an athlete from the celestial squad, competed in the first championship of the Brazilian Basketball League (A Noite, 1934c).

In the interclub tournament of the Rio de Janeiro Tennis Federation, Grajahú would compete in the intermediate division, thus meeting all the material requirements of that league (O Jornal, 1934a), in total there were 51 matches played by its athletes, with special mention, again, of Jayme Chacon, who also held the position of general sports director of the club (Correio Da Manhã, 1935a).

The deliberative council, formed by founding and owner members, delegated to José Mirilli “full powers” to choose his board of directors, which brought together prominent figures in Rio de Janeiro society (O Jornal, 1934b). In order to “intensify the exchange between the beloved club and the Grajahuense family”, this new board created a commission to visit them in their homes (Correio Da Manhã, 1934b, p. 11).

As a result of all the educational work, during the club's anniversary celebrations, given the growing number of members, the “Grajahunse Week” was held, which would include a “grand ball,” held in its “basketball court that would be transformed into a large garden” (A Noite, 1934d, p. 8).

During a new visit by the interventor of the federal district, Pedro Ernesto, to oversee the landscaping works at Edmundo Rêgo Square in the neighborhood, the headquarters of the Grajahú Tennis Club served as a venue for a famous cocktail party (A Noite, 1934a). It was soon declared a space of public utility by decree 5.116 of August 18, 1934, signed by the same Interventor (O Jornal, 1934c).

In a clear process of establishing itself in the neighborhood, the club once again included in its assembly the acquisition of another plot of land, in addition to the definitive purchase of the space where its headquarters were built, electing a commission to detail a financial plan (Correio Da Manhã, 1934c).

Perhaps due to financial needs, as suggested by a columnist, Grajahú did not participate in the tournaments organized by the city's Tennis Federation in 1935. Internally, there was some disagreement about this decision, but in fact, basketball was profitable for the club, given the larger audience present at its facilities (Correio Da Manhã, 1935a). Even other social practices, such as cinema, were used for the purpose of raising funds (Correio Da Manhã, 1935b).

In a new election held by the Deliberative Council, Deputy Mario de Moraes Paiva was appointed as President, who throughout the 10 years of the association's existence had rendered esteemed services (Correio Da Manhã, 1935e).

There was an investment (why not an educational one?) in engaging with children, for this reason, the club even created a children's department, under the direction of “Mrs.” Dora Motta”, a group of scouts and a dance dedicated to children. Even a children's playground was planned as part of the renovation of the headquarters of the “glorious club,” which was undergoing a “great surge of progress” and an increase in its “membership.”

The club was indeed a point of sociability in the neighborhood, when it served as a meeting point for the “Grajahú Improvement and Promotion Committee” with the objective of organizing the celebrations of “Grajahú Neighborhood Day,” which took place with great enthusiasm, including a dawn salute with a “21-gun salute,” “open-air

mass,” “musical programs,” “fireworks display,” and a “dance” held at the Grajahú Tennis Club's social headquarters (Correio Da Manhã, 1936a, p. 10). 6).

Figure 7: Aspect of the celebrations of “Grajahú Neighborhood Day” in 1936



Source: O Jornal, 1936.

The President of the aforementioned committee (above) was the journalist Djalma Nunes, a club member, who that year began to serve as general treasurer of the Grajahú Tennis Club, due to the resignation of Dr. Vicente Faria de Coelho, a renowned lawyer. He said that the “(...) committee has already given the neighborhood a beautiful square, better water distribution, tree-lined streets, cleanliness, sewage, in short, a series of improvements. Now I hope to do for the progress of Grajahú what I have done for the neighborhood, with the help of the residents (...)” (Correio Da Manhã, 1936b, p. 10).

Djalma Nunes envisioned the main changes for the club, primarily resolving the acquisition of the land next to the club, with the goal of expanding the space. This was easily resolved thanks to “the goodwill of Engineer Richard,” the landowner, who at the time of the Grajahú neighborhood's construction exerted significant influence on the Brazilian Real Estate and Construction Company.

Secondly, it was necessary to regularize the situation of the space where the club's headquarters were located, which had been acquired “by a group of selfless individuals, under the name Associação Grajahú, whose deed had not yet been

finalized.” Associates such as Diogo Xerez, Commander Romeu Braga, Dr. Jayme Praça, among others, promptly found a solution that would be advantageous for the club and the neighborhood.

The new headquarters of the Grajahú Tennis Club will be built in an area of 75 meters in front and divided into two wings. The left wing will house the club's headquarters, with three excellent floors and a terrace, and the right wing will be divided into apartments, the rent from which will be more than enough to amortize the already planned loan without the club having to spend a penny. On the club side, the following will be installed on the ground floor: billiards, barber shop, ping-pong, reading room, cloakroom, etc. On the three floors still belonging to the club, there are three excellent ballrooms, a library, a lecture hall and fashion room for ladies, a smoking room, an office, a meeting room for the board of directors, a room for poker, chess, etc. On the terrace, dances will take place on warm nights, Sundays, and gymnastics sessions. The entire terrace will have wicker tables with beach parasols. The sports complex will be located downstairs and will include: two tennis courts, an indoor gymnasium, an ice skating rink, and restrooms. In the background, a large swimming pool will be built, twenty meters wide and fifty meters deep, imitating a beach as closely as possible; to the right, a small playground for children, with swings, slides, etc. The entire area is budgeted at 1,100,000\$000 (Correio Da Manhã, 1937a, p. 10, 12).

Figure 8: The Grajahú headquarters in 1950 with its tennis courts (white arrows), outdoor gymnasium (red arrow), swimming pool (black arrow) and social headquarters (yellow arrow).



Source: Brasiliana, 1950.

The winds of progress were reaching the sport, signaling that the choices of the recent past had been correct, when the club decided to no longer participate in the competitions of the Rio de Janeiro Tennis Federation, giving priority to basketball. He played a difficult match against Huracán, an Argentinian club, at their home grounds, which was attended by a large crowd (O Jornal, 1936).

In the 1936 Rio de Janeiro basketball league championship, the club was crowned champion for the first time in a final (best of three matches) against Riachuelo Tennis Club, which was greatly celebrated by members and residents of the neighborhood (Correio Da Manhã, 1936d).

These results reflected the participation of the Director of the Basketball Department of Grajahú Tennis Club, Luiz Soares Filho, a “great pillar of the Carioca Basketball League,” who was considered one of the “best assistants to Mr. [name missing].” Fred Brown in preparing the entity's scrathmen and the Grajahú Tennis Club” (O Jornal, 1936b, p. 2). They were also related to the astuteness of Jayme Chacon, “the true preparer of the team” and the “encouragement of the fans who greatly helped the devoted lads of Grajahú” (A Batalha, 1937, p. 7).

In tennis, the club remained in the same situation as the previous year. It would not participate in the Rio de Janeiro league competitions, which prompted criticism from a columnist who argued that the club was not a “commercial counter” but rather a club with great “social projection” (Correio Da Manhã, 1937b, p. 10), 10), which was then countered by the club's President, José Mirilli, replacing the “very busy” Dr. Mario de Moraes Paiva, who did acknowledge the existence of two factions within the club regarding the direction of tennis, the amateurs and those who advocated for

professionalism, a dispute that was resolved by taking into account his participation in subsequent championships of the Rio de Janeiro league (Correio Da Manhã, 1937c).

Even the basketball team, which had recently won the city tournament, also contributed to the club's progress. There was anticipation surrounding the ongoing construction of the “largest basketball gymnasium in South America” (Diário Carioca, 1938, p. 8). Between lively parties, beauty pageants, and other social events, Grajahú sought ways to accumulate resources. He even planned to increase his membership by 1,000 members (Diário Carioca, 1938).

There was a space to build on, a landmark in the sporting and social life of the neighborhood that greatly contributed to its development, which corresponded to the material conditions of the elites who were established there. Next, let's move on to the final considerations.

Final Considerations

This paper addresses a contemporary problem: the loss of representation of neighborhood clubs in Rio de Janeiro. The Grajahú Tennis Club is just another example of this reality that we have studied historically through the idea of space production. That is, how the club establishes itself in the neighborhood, through the practical actions of its members, considering sports and social events.

The periodicals available in the National Library's newspaper archive, organized using a serial approach, served as testimonies and discourses that allowed us to understand the social dimension of Grajahú within the neighborhood.

This is a club that was founded in 1925 by residents of the town of the same name in the northern part of the city, which was undergoing a gradual process of

urbanization, through the undertaking of the Companhia Brasileira de Imóveis e Construções, a company financed mainly by capital of French origin that hoped to profit from a segment of the Rio de Janeiro population with a certain purchasing power and social standing.

Soon Grajahú acquired a portion of the land in the neighborhood, taking into account the actions of its owner-partners, and began to carry out its sporting and social activities. It was a club that, during its early years, was committed to local development, serving as a point of social interaction for residents and even as a catalyst for various initiatives aimed at improving the neighborhood.

Its members were indeed people with a certain degree of social prominence, which facilitated the club's access to the city's elite and the negotiations involved in its establishment in that urban space. It came to be nicknamed the “blue and white of modern Copacabana,” such was its representativeness and the renown of the neighborhood that was beginning to emerge in Rio de Janeiro with very particular characteristics.

At a certain point, due to his material aspirations, he opted for a more lucrative sport, basketball, over the one linked to his origins, tennis. In 1936, it became the Rio de Janeiro basketball champion, with particular emphasis on its coaching staff. I also wanted to have a social headquarters worthy of the neighborhood, with numerous sports and social facilities, to continue serving as a center of reference. The fact that its partners were part of the local elite was indeed a facilitating factor in acquiring the space in 1937.

It was the material conditions and the people who developed their practices in the urban space that brought Grajahú into the spotlight in the city. His story continued.

Still open today in the Grajaú neighborhood, as it celebrates its 100th anniversary, it continues to serve sporting and social functions, but faces clear difficulties in maintaining its facilities, as evidenced by the problem addressed in this article. Would the elites, therefore, be a productive force to be considered in the dynamics of neighborhood clubs? We believe so, and in the heuristic potential of this variable in understanding the social role of sports clubs in the city.

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