


MAPPING LEISURE SPACES AND EQUIPMENT IN A SOUTHERN ISLAND COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT: This article examines leisure in rural areas, specifically by mapping the spaces and equipment available in the community of Ilha dos Marinheiros, a district in the municipality of Rio Grande, in the southernmost region of Rio Grande do Sul. To achieve this, a descriptive study was conducted, with an empirical corpus composed of a field diary containing notes from multiple visits to the location between June and October 2022. The study employed observation as a technique, with a non-participant approach. The data were analyzed using the deductive thematic analysis (TA) method. The findings reveal a scenario in which public authorities invest minimally in providing leisure facilities for this rural community, leaving most leisure activities and the maintenance of existing equipment to the residents themselves.

KEYWORDS: Rural leisure. Spaces and equipment. Ilha dos marinheiros.

MAPEAMENTO DOS ESPAÇOS E EQUIPAMENTOS DE LAZER EM UMA COMUNIDADE ILHÉU NO SUL DO PAÍS

RESUMO: O presente artigo trata do lazer na zona rural, especificamente a partir de um mapeamento dos espaços e equipamentos disponíveis na comunidade da Ilha dos Marinheiros, distrito do município de Rio Grande, extremo sul do Rio Grande do Sul. Para tanto, foi realizada uma pesquisa de caráter descritivo, cujo corpus empírico

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responde por um diário de campo com anotações oriundas de uma série de visitas à localidade entre os meses de junho e outubro de 2022, em que se assumiu a participação-observante e não-participante como técnicas no campo. Os dados foram examinados através do método da análise temática (AT) do tipo dedutiva. O estudo indicou um cenário de pouco investimento do poder público na oportunidade de espaços de lazer nessa comunidade rural, estando a maior parte das atividades e manutenção dos equipamentos sob responsabilidade dos próprios moradores.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Lazer rural. Espaços e equipamentos. Ilha dos marinheiros.

Introduction

Leisure spaces and equipment are recurring themes in the scientific literature produced by the field of Physical Education. Marcellino *et al.* (2007) reminds us that the concepts of space and equipment can be confused, however, it is necessary to understand the first as the “support for the equipment”, and the second as “the objects that organize the space according to a given activity” (p.15). Rodrigues *et al.* (2014) state that access to leisure spaces enhances the development of society, especially with regard to the exercise of citizenship.

A recent study conducted by Ungheri; Medina and Pereira (2022) affirms the importance of providing spaces and equipment for access to leisure. According to the authors, the possibility of experiencing leisure is directly linked to the existence of accessible and adequate spaces. Furthermore, they emphasize that “the unequal distribution of public facilities directly impacts the population's participation in recreational activities, reinforcing social disparities and limiting access to leisure in certain regions” (p.45).

It is important to emphasize that the right to leisure is guaranteed to the entire population by the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil in its article 6, which states that: "The following are social rights: education, health, work, leisure, security, social security, protection of motherhood and childhood for the destitute, in the manner established by this Constitution" (Brazil, 1988).

Beyond the responsibility of public authorities to provide conditions that ensure each citizen has their rights guaranteed, individuals are the protagonists in the construction and reconstruction of the meanings attributed to leisure, as they are part of the movement of social transformation. This condition is reaffirmed by Mascarenhas (2004), who believes in leisure as a “force for the reorganization of society, an educational agency capable of fostering and collaborating in the construction of new norms, values and behaviors for coexistence among men” (p.13).

Often, in order to exercise this right, individuals have to face a series of barriers, which are related to violence, security, lack of physical infrastructure, unavailability of access, among other everyday issues (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014).

Inequalities in access to leisure are also reflected in the difference in access to it in rural and urban areas. Ghiggi (2008) discusses in his study the differences in these spaces, highlighting that, while urban areas offer a wide variety of spaces and facilities geared towards leisure, rural areas present more limited options. The author points out that rural workers often have few leisure options beyond common spaces, such as halls near sports fields and areas close to churches, which are not always in operation. Therefore, this difference directly impacts people's freedom of choice regarding leisure activities, making their options more limited compared to city dwellers, where the infrastructure of spaces tends to be more favorable and diverse.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the social importance of leisure in rural areas and the well-being it can enhance for those who live in rural areas - as is the case of the Ilha dos Marinheiros community - in the sense of making them feel a sense of belonging to the place. Maziero *et al.* (2019) says that:

When we reflect on the various debates and studies regarding the permanence of those who live in rural areas, particularly young people, we can ascertain that the issue of leisure and social interaction are of paramount importance as strategies for strengthening and ensuring the continuity of the population in the countryside. Ultimately, by providing leisure and recreational

environments, these people would not need to leave the countryside and migrate to urban centers or capitals to be able to access such conditions for relaxation and enjoyment (p. 511).

Therefore, the study asks: What facilities and recreational spaces are available to the island community? What are the conditions of this equipment and these spaces? Is access to them public or private? When can they be accessed? Finally, what is the diagnosis regarding the characteristics of these spaces/equipment and their uses on Ilha dos Marinheiros?

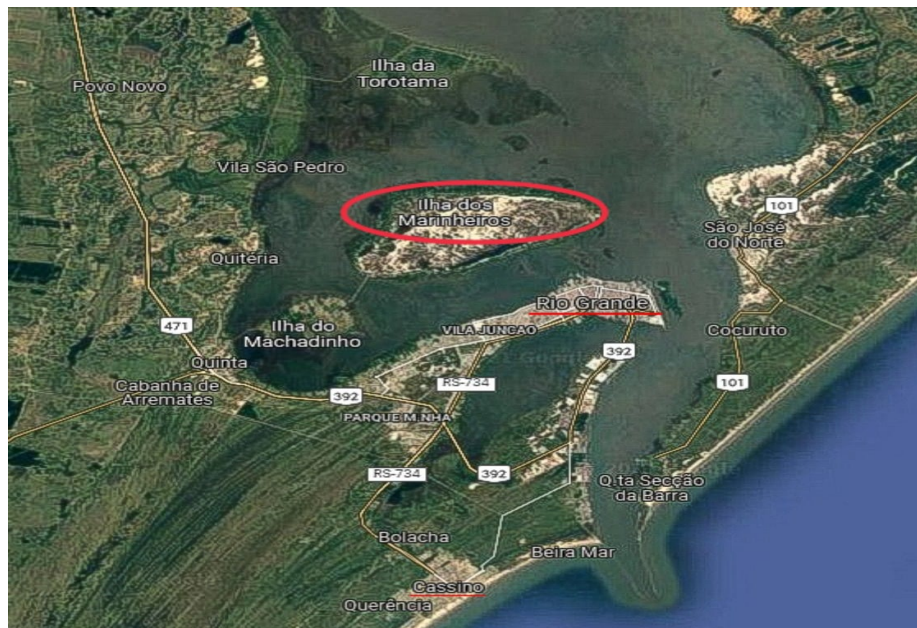
Ilha dos Marinheiros

Ilha dos Marinheiros is located at the southern end of the coastal plain of Rio Grande do Sul. More precisely, on the western shore of Lagoa dos Patos, approximately 32 km from the city center of Rio Grande. Considered the largest island in the state, it has a Portuguese colonial history and is known for its fishing, agriculture, and production of *jurupiga*, a typical local drink made from grapes.

According to Torres (2020), in the mid-1940s, the island had around 7,200 inhabitants. However, today that number has decreased and is around 2000 residents approximately. Recuero (2008) already stated that the drop in the number of residents was due to the impact of migration caused by the lack of jobs and the crisis in agriculture and fishing, compromising the sustainable development of the population and financial stability. More recently, extreme events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the floods of May 2024 in Rio Grande do Sul⁴ have accelerated this process.

⁴ Between the end of April and mid-May 2024, Rio Grande do Sul suffered an extreme weather event that flooded more than 400 cities, displaced nearly 630,000 people, and killed dozens, becoming the biggest environmental tragedy ever recorded in the state's history.

Figure 1: Geographic location of the study area – Ilha dos Marinheiros.



Source: Image from Google Earth (2022).

Furthermore, it is important to point out that within the island there are sub-localities, namely Bandeirinhas, Fundos da Ilha, Coréia, Marambaia and Porto Rei. These sub-localities interfere, in a certain way, with the occupation of the residents. In the Fundos da Ilha and Porto Rei areas, for example, there is a higher concentration of farmers due to the fertility of their lands. In Bandeirinhas, Marambaia, and Coréia, artisanal fishing stands out, with the exploitation of shrimp, mullet, sole, kingfish, crab, among others.

The community of Ilha dos Marinheiros has three Catholic churches where the islanders devote their faith. One of them is the Santa Cruz church, located in Marambaia, the region with the highest concentration of residents. In the back of the island, you'll find the church of Nossa Senhora da Saúde [Our Lady of Health], and in Porto Rei, the church of São João Batista [Saint John the Baptist]. Other religions are also practiced on Ilha dos Marinheiros, such as Umbanda and evangelical churches, with gatherings for their rituals.

Figure 2: Map of the sub-localities of Ilha dos Marinheiros.



Source: Google Earth, 2022.

Until 2004, there was no "dry" crossing to Ilha dos Marinheiros. Access to the community was via small boats⁵, dinghies, or canoes. All of these are wooden boats, which differ in their shape and construction. It should be noted that these means of transport are also linked to Portuguese culture and constitute work tools for the inhabitants, given that they are mainly used in fishing, but also in agriculture, since the products are mostly taken to the city of Rio Grande/RS to be sold.

In the 1980s, the island began offering a ferry service for vehicles, allowing access via dirt roads. However, it was only in 2004 that the long-held wish of many residents was fulfilled with the inauguration of a bridge, which made it possible to cross by land to Ilha do Leonídio⁶, which, in turn, is connected to the Vila da Quinta, located near BR-392. Facilitating access was a considerable factor in the development of the island and tourism in the region. On the other hand, it facilitated the frequent departure of many residents.

⁵For more information on these vessels and their uses, see Correia *et al.* (2012).

⁶Ilha do Leonídio is also known as Ilha de Machadinho. There is a paving project that began in 2024, with approximately 2km remaining before the asphalt reaches the bridge connecting Ilha do Leonídio to Ilha dos Marinheiros.

Figure 3: Land access bridge between Ilha do Leonídio and Ilha dos Marinheiros.



Source: Collection of Karoline Avila, Rádio Gaúcha Zona Sul, 2014.

Although there has been progress in terms of access to the island, especially with the possibility of reaching it by land, the movement of residents to enter and leave the area often becomes a problem. This is because the available public transport has reduced hours with only two options, one in the morning and one at night. However, on Sundays and holidays, this transportation is non-existent, making commuting even more difficult and hindering access for residents and non-residents alike to the sub-localities of the Island.

Due to all the specificities mentioned above, leisure activities sometimes become secondary in the locality, which contributes to the few opportunities that exist coming in the form of specific actions and events. Among the existing options, we can mention the involvement of the local community with amateur football, a fact presented by Correia, Freitas and Rigo (2013). According to the authors, football and football clubs on Ilha dos Marinheiros have historically been important leisure activities for the community, since, in addition to matches, some clubs began building larger social headquarters around the 1960s. Up until that point, the spaces were quite rudimentary and only functioned when the team was playing, that is, on weekends. With the increase in the

number of locations, these spaces also began to serve as facilitators of social interaction throughout the week. In it, fans and supporters of the group gained access to an organized space with a bar and even a television, equipment that was rare in the homes of most local residents at that time.

Another important leisure activity that takes place in the area is the Volta Ecológica da Ilha dos Marinheiros (Ecological Loop of Sailors Island), a running race that is in its 17th edition and is organized by the Rio Grande Street Runners Association (ACORRG). The race's main route covers the 24km circumference of the island, attracting many visitors and generating enthusiasm among the local community. Silveira (2015) observed in his study that “during the course of the race, the participation of residents who wait for the athletes to pass by to support them with applause, shouts of encouragement, distribute bottles of water, among other types of support is noticeable” (p. 15).

Because it is a community with a predominantly elderly island culture and strong family ties, religious events also present themselves as a good opportunity for sociability within the community. The residents use their faith to fill their free time with personal satisfaction, taking advantage of traditional parish festivals to meet, listen to music, dance, and have fun. The motivation for such use of religion stems, according to Recuero (2008, p.6), “from the isolation to which the island has always been subjected, maintaining practically intact a way of life, common in the past, preserving a type of identity that has long since disappeared on the continent”, giving shape to a culture and a religiosity that ends up governing that social group.

Methodological Procedures

This is a descriptive study which, according to Prodanov and Freitas (2013), is when the researcher only observes and records the facts without interference, that is, without manipulating them. In this way, the researcher observes, records, and finally analyzes and organizes the data obtained through tools such as interviews, forms, questionnaires, tests, and systematic observations.

To develop this paper, visits were made to all sub-localities of Ilha dos Marinheiros between June and October 2022. Sub-localities are understood to be the territorial division of the Island shown in Figure 2: Bandeirinhas, Fundos da Ilha, Coréia, Porto Rei and Marambaia.

Initially, public and private spaces considered to be the most social hubs on the island were visited, such as football clubs and churches; as well as those with easier access, such as the bridge that marks the entrance and exit to the island. These spaces were selected because they were familiar to one of the authors, as she is a former resident of the area, and were known to be used for leisure activities. Based on the encounters and results obtained during the initial visits to the aforementioned spaces, the author continued exploring the island in search of other recreational areas⁷. The table below provides an overview of the seven visits carried out:

Table 1: Description of the visits made to Ilha dos Marinheiros

DAY OF THE VISIT	SHIFT	PLACES VISITED	TYPE OF OBSERVATION
June 07, 2022 (Tuesday)	Afternoon	a) Bridge	a) Non-participant
June 15, 2022 (Wednesday)	Afternoon	a) Esporte Clube Libertador b) Church of Our Lady of Health c) Our Lady of Lourdes Retreat (grotto) d) Lagoa das Noivas	a) Participation-observer b) Participation-observer c) Non-participant d) Non-participant

⁷ It was not possible to access all the spaces that were intended, as they were closed on the days visited.

July 02, 2022 (Saturday)	Morning/Afternoon	a) Bridge b) Esporte Clube Libertador	a) Non-participant b) Participation-observer
September 11, 2022 (Sunday)	Afternoon	a) Esporte Clube Libertador b) Pedal boats	a) Participation-observer b) Non-participant
September 13, 2022 (Tuesday)	Afternoon	a) Sports Club Noise b) Esporte Clube Libertador c) Church of Our Lady of Health d) Lagoa das Noivas	a) Participation-observer b) Non-participant c) Non-participant d) Non-participant
September 14, 2022 (Wednesday)	Morning	a) Santa Cruz Church b) St. John's Church c) Camping Kiosk	a) Participation-observer b) Non-participant c) Non-Participant
October 16, 2022 (Sunday)	Morning/Afternoon	a) Bridge b) Esporte Clube Libertador	a) Non-Participant b) Participation-observer

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2022.

During the visits, we opted to conduct both participant and non-participant observations as instruments for data collection. This is because different situations arose during the survey of spaces and equipment.

Participant observation was used when there was effective interaction with the group of people occupying the visited space, that is, when the researcher assumed the role of a member of the researched group. This occurred, for example, during visits by football clubs and festivities held at Esporte Clube Libertador (E.C. Libertador). Since this type of observation presupposes a higher level of participation, the researcher's approach can be reversed, and instead of calling it participant observation, we can refer to it as observer-participation.

According to Prodanov and Freitas (2013), this type of instrument can have the disadvantage of hindering the objectivity of the research due to the fact that it exerts influence on the group, and is influenced by personal antipathies or sympathies and by the clash of references between observer and observation. On the other hand, the

fieldwork sometimes required greater involvement to produce the data, which allowed us to observe aspects of participation. Thus, this attitude aligns with what Peruzzo (2017) discusses regarding the characteristics of participant-observer research, which are: the researcher's insertion and participation in all activities of the researched group; the researcher's interaction and active voice as a participant in the group; the researched group recognizes the researcher's intentions; the researcher's connection with the researched group may already exist or be established from the beginning of the research; the researcher commits to delivering the research results to the researched group after completion or during the execution process.

On the other hand, some situations led us to employ non-participant observation, that is, when direct contact with the group or reality being studied was avoided, without the need to integrate into it. This type of observation occurred, for example, during visits to the paddle boats and on the bridge that provides access to the island, where the data was produced by the researcher positioned at a distance, without any involvement. In this regard, it is possible to witness the event or phenomenon, but not be influenced by the situations. Even though the observation was made from a distance, it did not mean that it was not conscious; therefore, it has an objective and systematic character (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013).

All visits resulted in the creation of field diaries. According to Campos, Silva and Albuquerque (2021), a diary is a “tool that consists of the complete and accurate recording of observations of concrete facts, events, feelings, verified relationships and personal experiences of the professional/investigator, their reflections and comments” (p.101). According to the authors, the field diary “should be used daily to ensure the greatest possible systematization and detail of all situations that occurred during the day and the subtext in the subjects' statements during the investigation or interventions”

(p.101). In addition, photographs of the spaces, equipment, and practices were also taken without personal identification.

Finally, to organize and examine the data, we used Thematic Analysis (TA). Souza (2019) argues in his study that:

Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method used to identify, analyze, interpret, and report patterns (themes) from qualitative data. The minimum that thematic analysis provides is to organize and describe the database in rich detail; as for the maximum, "the sky is the limit", since this analysis greatly contributes to generating an interpretive analysis of the data (p. 51).

Given this, the TA was carried out through a deductive approach, that is, the field research was done with previously defined categories/themes: spaces and equipment. Among the advantages of using this analysis, the following stand out: flexibility in data analysis, it is an easy method to learn and execute, and it is accessible to the general public (Souza, 2019).

Results and Discussion

The occupation of territories is the result of historical processes that take into account their geographical and spatial division, but which are shaped by the relationships established by the subjects who inhabit them, manifest themselves culturally, and legitimize the identity of a place (Ungheri; Medina; Pereira, 2022). Within this set of relationships, when considering a democratic occupation of the territory, it is necessary to think about providing spaces and facilities that enable the emergence of cultural expressions that fulfill social rights, such as leisure.

In this context, specific and non-specific leisure spaces were found during the observations. Specific equipment refers to equipment built and designed for a specific recreational activity, taking into account factors such as the physical dimensions of the equipment, the target audience, and cultural interests. In turn, non-specific equipment

refers to equipment that was not originally designed for leisure purposes, but, conversely, ends up fulfilling this role. Pellegrin (2004) uses the house, the bar, the street, and the school as examples of non-specific equipment, taking into account that, originally, these spaces were understood as housing, commerce, circulation, and formal education.

One of these spaces is the bridge providing access to Ilha dos Marinheiros, which stands out as a non-specific leisure space, considering that it was not built for that purpose, but due to its easy access and location, it ends up providing leisure opportunities for the local community and visitors – especially with the practice of fishing – since it is configured as a space for people to meet and socialize.

Conversely, despite the bridge being established as a public and accessible leisure space, its structural conditions present challenges. During data collection, a large amount of trash left by visitors was found at the site. This becomes a major problem, considering that the trash discarded on the bridge can end up polluting the Lagoa dos Patos lagoon and, consequently, cause an environmental imbalance. However, despite this inconvenience, no trash cans were found near the location.

Figure 4: Structure of the bridge providing access to Ilha dos Marinheiros and trash found at the site.



Source: Personal collection of the researchers (2022).

Another point that deserves attention is the lack of safety for those crossing the bridge. In several places, the handrails and parts of the concrete structure are broken or at risk of falling, which increases the chances of accidents. Therefore, it is the duty of the public authorities to carry out maintenance on this space sporadically, and thus contribute to making it more attractive and safe for visitors. Nevertheless, visitors also play an important role in the conservation of this space. As Rechia (2003) points out, caring for public spaces along with a civic attitude facilitates the actions of public authorities. Therefore, the participation of visitors and community residents in collecting their trash and preserving the environment, for example, presents significant challenges for municipal management, as it ends up being "demanded" to always do its best.

Similarly, the churches scattered throughout the island also serve as non-specific leisure spaces. This is because, as already mentioned in the work, they host religious festivals throughout the year that, in addition to the service, include lunch, live music, and games. Strong religiosity prevails among the residents, therefore, one of the main religious traditions of the islanders is to go to the Cruzeiro (Cross) in processions. The Cruzeiro is a cross placed in the middle of the field behind all churches; therefore, the location of the cross determines the end of the processions in which the islanders make their requests and give thanks for miracles received. Recuero (2008) details this tradition in his work on the island's religious festivals, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Because during religious festivals, one must go to the wayside cross and touch it, then return and ask for a blessing in front of the chapel. But it is there, in front of the cruise ship, that the islander, having already negotiated, offered (gave), asked (received), and established the duty to later reciprocate with the divinity he reveres. The cross is symbolic, and the gestures and movements are a reference to the body language that interacts with these intellectual symbols of a society structured by popular religious tradition (p.164).

However, despite their importance to religiosity, churches remain closed most of the time and are only open to the public on days of mass, at pre-established times for the faithful to light their candles or say prayers. To carry out the data collection, permission was granted by the administration boards to visit Our Lady of Health Church, located in Fundos da Ilha, specifically next to E.C. Libertador, and Santa Cruz Church, which is located in Marambaia.

All⁸ churches have halls located near their main buildings. Inside, there is ample space with restrooms and a considerable number of tables and chairs. However, during visits, one can see that the hall of the Santa Cruz Church is well-maintained and organized, with freshly painted surfaces. The Church of Our Lady of Health is in need of renovations, as it has cracks in the walls and the main door is broken. Furthermore,

⁸ Even without access to the interior of the São João Church, it was possible to observe its exterior.

the roof of his hall has structural damage. Aside from this need for renovation, the church is relatively well-maintained and painted.

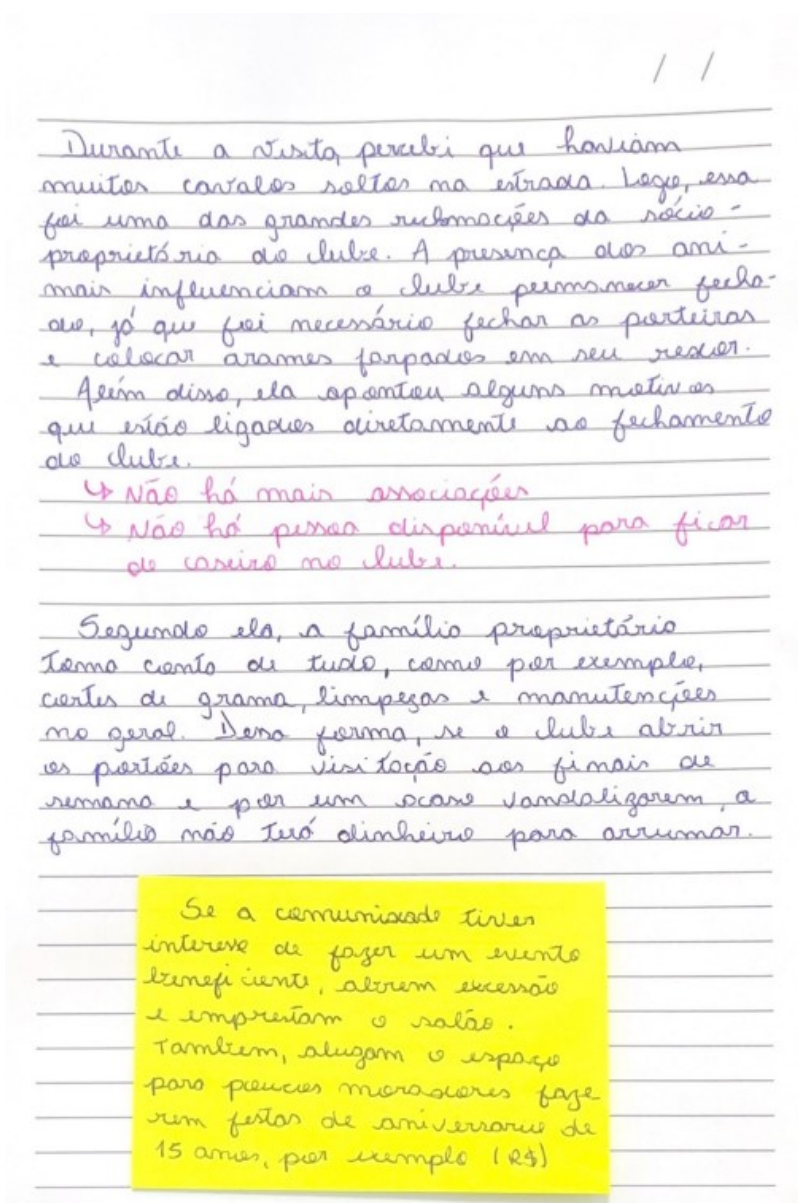
The churches are managed by the boards of directors together with the residents of the island. During the research period, according to the church directors we spoke to, masses were being held at the Santa Cruz and São João churches. At the Church of Our Lady of Health, no masses were being held, but it is tidied up and open every day for the faithful to pray the rosary and light their candles. At the Santa Cruz Church, bingo games are held on Saturdays to raise funds to pay for church expenses such as masses, electricity, candles, and other necessities. Furthermore, during the visit to the Santa Cruz Church, a member of the board reported that the festivities were not being held because the sale of alcoholic beverages had been prohibited by the Diocese of Rio Grande, a fact that prevents them from generating profit to cover expenses.

As for specific leisure spaces, that is, those built with a designated activity in mind, amateur football clubs stand out, which have a large and well-organized physical structure. There are two active clubs on the island: E.C. Libertador and E.C. Barulho, founded in 1933 and 1948, respectively. Both are located in the back of the island, relatively close to each other, and are privately accessed spaces, but they offer the community moments of fun, especially during amateur football championship games. Reaching the clubs, disregarding the condition of the dirt roads, is easy. There are signs indicating the entrances to the locations; however, you need to open the gates and cross small dirt roads to reach each club's headquarters.

E.C. Barulho remains closed to the public most of the time, opening its gates only on match days for the city's amateur football championship. Given this, a meeting was arranged with one of the co-owners to visit the club, conduct an observation, and

have a conversation. Throughout the visit, several important testimonies were given and recorded in the field diary⁹:

Figure 5: Entry in the field diary regarding E.C. Barulho on October 29, 2022.



Source: Collection of researchers (2022).

When analyzing these situations, we come to believe that consequences such as the lack of community associations, the abandonment of animals on the road, and the absence of trustworthy people to work at the club are a reflection of rural exodus. It is

⁹ We opted to display the original entries from the field diary, understanding that the form, expressions, and writing strategies could be preserved with the "heat of the moment".

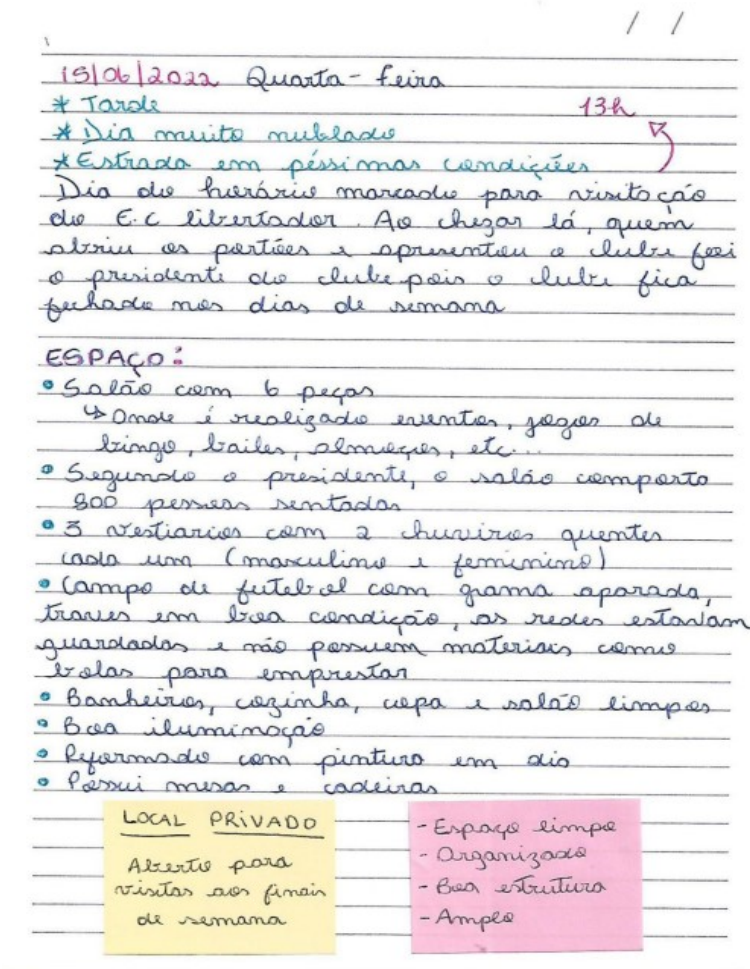
known that, gradually, young islanders migrate to urban areas in search of new study and work opportunities. Due to some emotional connection, they end up returning to their community not permanently, but “passing through” on weekends or specific holidays. Hamann (2017) presents some issues that may allow these people to remain in rural areas for longer periods:

Ensuring access to basic necessities such as health, education, and security is the minimum necessary to motivate people to remain in rural areas. Infrastructure such as roads, internet and quality electricity can also be a determining factor in motivating the rural population to remain in rural areas (p.38).

Taking into account the physical structure of the club, it was verified that the space has been renovated, the paintwork is up to date, and there was no litter scattered around the place. Cleanliness is impeccable, from the kitchen to the outside. Overall, the space is in good condition for use. Furthermore, the club has a cafeteria, restrooms, locker rooms, a trophy room, and, outside, the grass on the two soccer fields was trimmed and well-lit, giving the feeling of a comfortable and safe environment.

Similarly, E.C. Libertador also features a good structure both internally and externally, as seen in Figure 5. This can be observed in more detail with data presented in the field diary. Just as happened in the case of E.C. Barulho, a time was also scheduled to visit the space. The visit took place on Wednesday, June 15, in the early afternoon, and the researcher was accompanied by the club's president. During a conversation, he reported that they lend their space to residents to promote sporting events, such as a street race (Volta Ecológica da Ilha) or other specific leisure events for the benefit of the community, such as Christmas, Easter and birthday parties. In addition, there are members who pay BRL10.00 per month and can hold private parties such as weddings, birthdays, and other events.

Figure 6: Record of the E.C. Libertador structure presented in the field diary on June 15, 2022.



Source: Collection of researchers (2022).

One of the traditional tourist attractions on Ilha dos Marinheiros is the Recanto Nossa Senhora de Lourdes, located in the Porto Rei area. The venue has completely free access and is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm. In this regard, due to the beauty of its infrastructure and the organization of the place, many tourists and residents are attracted for recreational and/or religious purposes. During the visits, the site's state of preservation was remarkable; even at the time of the visit – a Wednesday afternoon – garbage collection was being carried out by the city hall, and the caretaker was working on plant maintenance.

Next to the Recanto Nossa Senhora de Lourdes, on the inner part of the island, lies the Lagoa das Noivas (Bridal Lagoon), which attracts many visitors, especially

during the summer season. However, the place is not easily accessible to the public, as reaching the lagoon requires climbing up and down a very steep sand dune, with no other way to access it. In this way, we identified that people with physical limitations cannot access the location easily.

The lagoon is an open-air space, and the volume of water depends on the season. Although it is a popular spot for swimmers, there are no lifeguards available. Across from the site, there is a bar called *Camping Delícias da Ilha* that is open daily and sells drinks and snacks. In addition, there is also parking available to access the lagoon and the sanctuary. Sometimes, due to the high volume of traffic, the parking lot cannot handle the demand for cars, and visitors end up parking in inappropriate places, generating conflict with family farmers because it hinders the circulation and access of residents to their homes. Since there is no traffic enforcement, there have been cases of illegally parked cars blocking the passage of public transport and ambulances.

Inaugurated in 2022, *Pedalinhas da Ilha* has also become another important and specific leisure space in the community. The paddle boats were located in the town of *Bandeirinhas*, behind a snack bar, open every Sunday and public holiday. As for the equipment, there were 15 pedal boats available in total, 10 with a superhero theme and 5 traditional ones (without themed paint), all well preserved and numbered.

To board the pedal boats, access was via a pier built by the owners themselves, and depending on the pedal boat chosen, the price could reach up to BRL30.00, with the option for up to two adults and one child for that price. This is the only service offered on site, and the snack bar, which shares the space, is only open during the summer season.

During the visit, which took place on a Sunday, the researcher discussed how the pedal boats worked with the owner. He reported that "the space is mostly visited by

people from the city". Furthermore, the owner was looking forward to the summer season, as the influx of people from the city to the island increases, consequently leading to more activity on the paddle boats." (Field Diary, September 11, 2022)¹⁰.

The specific and non-specific leisure spaces are thus distributed across the different locations on Ilha dos Marinheiros, with no concentration favoring any particular island population. Conversely, access to these locations has often become a problem, given the large number of potholes in the road that made access to the island difficult on visiting days, and this could extend to any attempt to reach the island to enjoy the spaces mentioned. Considering that the period in which the research was conducted was a rainy season (June to October), this made movement through the spaces even more difficult.

In most cases, to reach the island and travel between its locations, you need your own vehicle. Given that public transportation only runs twice a day, it becomes difficult to use it. Another way to reach the island is by boat, such as dinghies and canoes, that make the crossing from the center of the city of Rio Grande to the locality of Porto Rei. However, upon arriving at the Porto Rei pier, users are forced to walk to their destination or rely on rides, as there is no other form of public transportation to get around the island.

Before heading out for field research, other places to visit were pre-established, including the São João Church and the Kiosk Camping, both located in the Porto Rei area. However, I was unable to access these locations, as they were closed on the days I visited and out of operation during the research period. I understand that not having had access to these two locations follows the same logic as the functioning of the other spaces described, that is, they obey certain characteristics of the social dynamics of the

¹⁰In 2024, Pedalinhos da Ilha ceased operations. The owner opened a commercial establishment, removing the paddle boats from the water and from the recreational area.

locality, are at the mercy of a seasonality of specific (largely religious) festivals, and depend on the warmer seasons of the year to have an influx of interested people.

According to Marcellino et al. (2007), the lack of spaces dedicated to leisure contributes to the seclusion of people, who, because they do not have access to public squares and parks, for example, end up spending more time at home, neglecting social interaction. According to the author, to reverse this situation, the government must, through public leisure policies, create new facilities and spaces and revitalize existing ones, so that the population will have access to leisure activities, ensuring their constitutional right. Furthermore, it is known that the structural quality of these places can interfere with the use and interest of users, enabling or preventing the acquisition of healthy habits (Silva; Silva and Oliveira, 2016).

Final Considerations

This study aimed to contribute to the identification of recreational spaces and equipment in the community of Ilha dos Marinheiros, located in the rural area of the city of Rio Grande, in the far south of Rio Grande do Sul. To that end, we conducted research based on visits to specific and non-specific leisure locations in the different sub-localities of the Island, with the respective preparation of field diaries. These visits took place between June and October 2022 and were conducted both as non-participants and as observers, since on many occasions we found ourselves directly involved with the participants in activities that were taking place in the spaces visited.

Therefore, what caught our attention most regarding the spaces and equipment was that most of the places we visited were private spaces and/or open to the public only on weekends or specific days. Consequently, there is a gap between Monday and Friday in certain sub-localities, which means that the user base consists not only of

island residents, but also of people "from outside" who are passing through the island. Furthermore, regarding the spaces, it can be stated that there is no concentration of them in a specific part of the Island; on the contrary, they are distributed throughout all the sub-localities. Regarding spaces, we noticed a greater use of specific leisure areas by the community, which means that although there are few spaces available, the community tends to make use of those that exist and are in good condition.

Based on the results found, it can be said that, in relation to the vast geographical area and number of residents on the Island (although we acknowledge the existence of a migration of young people to the urban area), there are few public spaces available for the rural community to enjoy leisure activities. We know its importance for strengthening the population, providing entertainment, and exercising citizenship among residents, especially since, as already mentioned, leisure is a constitutional right that must be guaranteed by the public authorities.

Therefore, the scenario presented indicates a lack of investment by the public authorities in relation to leisure spaces and equipment on the Island. Considering that this is a community with approximately 2000 residents, including children, young people, and adults, it is unacceptable that there is no internal public transportation and available spaces such as squares, parks, outdoor gyms, in short, specific leisure spaces for the community to use and socialize. Meanwhile, the leisure sector on Ilha dos Marinheiros ends up being served by personal and/or private initiatives, available on a seasonal basis. The discontinuity in the supply of spaces and equipment affects the consolidation of entertainment practices in that rural community.

These barriers faced by the island community need to be made visible so that public leisure policies can be designed not only "for" the people who live there, but "together" with them. Ultimately, they are the ones who understand the dynamics of

rural areas and how these can be integrated into leisure activities for both residents and visitors.

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