



Agents producing urban space: the case of the city of Novo Hamburgo – Rio Grande do Sul

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Destaques

- The city is concrete, real, decisive, segregating, contradictory.
- The city is the result of a collective construction by the various agents that produce it.
- Novo Hamburgo is a medium-sized city in Brazil, with a condition of relative centrality.
- Urban space is organized according to distinct interests.
- Identifying the agents of transformation in the city is essential to understanding urban space.

Abstract: All cities are full of contradictions. Novo Hamburgo, for example, constitutes a mid-sized city in the Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre (RMPA), in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. This city arose from German colonization in the beginning of the 19th century, went through a phase of industrial expansion in the 20th century, and faced an economic slowdown with national and international competition by the end of that same century. All those processes revealed the contradictions among the agents producing urban spaces that struggle for their hegemony. In this context, this research tries to identify and debate the actions of the main agents producing the urban space in Novo Hamburgo, as well as describe their main features. To do so, this research was developed using bibliographical data survey, official documents, fieldwork, and data consolidation in clerk work. This work showed contradictions and interests among the different agents producing urban spaces, having the State as the main agent in the urban formation and expansion of the city.

Keywords: Urban space; Urban space agents; Novo Hamburgo; Urban planning.

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AGENTES PRODUTORES DO ESPAÇO URBANO: O CASO DO MUNICÍPIO DE NOVO HAMBURGO – RIO GRANDE DO SUL

Resumo: Todas as cidades são carregadas de contradições. Novo Hamburgo, por exemplo, constitui-se em uma cidade média da Região Metropolitana de Porto Alegre (RMPA) no estado do Rio Grande do Sul. O município surgiu com a colonização alemã no início do século XIX, passou por uma fase de expansão industrial no século XX e enfrentou a desaceleração econômica com a concorrência nacional e internacional no final desse mesmo século. Todos esses processos fizeram aflorar as contradições entre os diferentes agentes produtores do espaço urbano que disputam sua hegemonia. Nesse sentido, a presente pesquisa busca identificar e problematizar sobre a ação dos principais agentes produtores do espaço urbano em Novo Hamburgo, bem como descrever suas principais características. Para tanto, a pesquisa foi elaborada através de levantamento de dados bibliográficos, documentos oficiais, trabalho de campo e consolidação dos dados em gabinete. O trabalho mostrou as contradições e os interesses entre os diferentes agentes produtores do espaço urbano, tendo o Estado como o principal agente na constituição e expansão urbana do município.

Palavras-chave: Espaço urbano; Agentes do espaço urbano; Novo Hamburgo; Planejamento urbano.

AGENTES PRODUCTORES DEL ESPACIO URBANO: EL CASO DEL MUNICIPIO DE NOVO HAMBURGO – RIO GRANDE DO SUL, BRASIL

Resumen: Todas las ciudades son llenas de contradicciones. Novo Hamburgo, por ejemplo, se constituye en una ciudad mediana de la Región Metropolitana de Porto Alegre (RMPA) en Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. El municipio surgió con la colonización alemana en el inicio del siglo XIX, pasó por una fase de expansión industrial en el siglo XX y enfrentó la deceleración económica con la competencia nacional e internacional al fin de este mismo siglo. Todos estos procesos revelaran las contradicciones entre los diferentes agentes productores del espacio urbano que disputan su hegemonía. En este contexto, esta investigación intenta identificar y debatir sobre la acción de los principales agentes productores del espacio urbano en Novo Hamburgo, así como describir sus principales características. Para esto, esta investigación fue elaborada a través de recopilación de datos bibliográficos, documentos oficiales, trabajo de campo y consolidación de datos en oficina. Este trabajo mostró las contradicciones y los intereses entre los diferentes agentes productores del espacio urbano, con el Estado como el principal agente en la constitución y expansión urbana del municipio.

Palabras clave: Espacio urbano; Agentes del espacio urbano; Novo Hamburgo; Planeamiento urbano.

INTRODUCTION

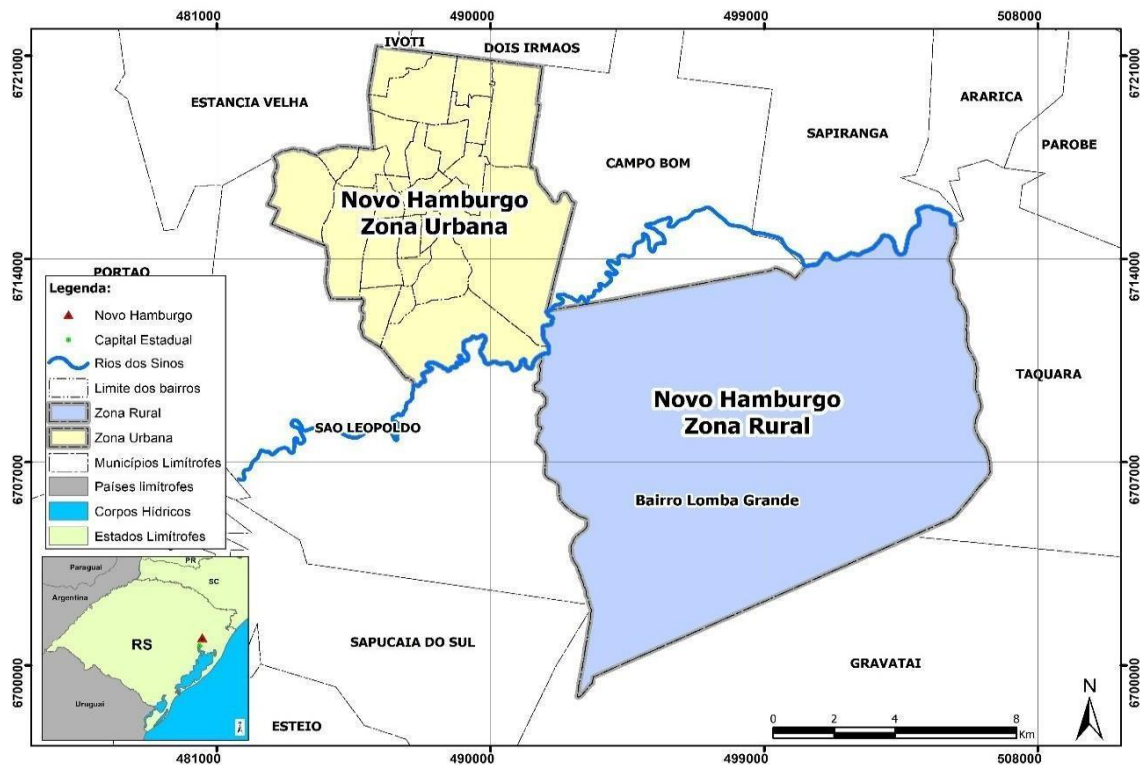
The city is concrete, real, decisive, segregating, and contradictory. Starting from the (abstract) act of thinking about the city, isolating it from its concrete reality, we arrive at what we call urban planning. Planning is thinking about a solution to a problem that doesn't yet exist; it's making choices that will have consequences over time, depending on whether they are good or bad. Applying

this abstract planning to the concrete city encounters obstacles, sometimes insurmountable ones.

Considering that the city is the result of a collective construction by the various agents who produce it and, therefore, an accumulation of forms in urban space, we can understand it as an overlay of various plans and projects, finished or not, which are linked to different models, therefore capable of being reproduced and which refer to a conception of an ideal city and, on the other hand, we can understand it as a real city, with its various concrete problems (mobility, housing, sanitation) unrelated to the master plan (Abreu Filho, 2006).

Novo Hamburgo (Figure 1), for example, is one of the thirty-four cities in the Porto Alegre Metropolitan Region (RMPA). The municipality is the fifth most populous in the RMPA, with approximately 241,306 people (IBGE, 2022). This criterion (population), by itself, already classifies the city as medium-sized (100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants) according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). However, a study by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2001) lists other parameters that can be added to the demographic factor, positioning Novo Hamburgo among the medium-sized cities in Brazil. Among these are processes of relative centrality that attract population from bordering and adjacent municipalities (Ivoti, Campo Bom, Nova Hartz, Dois Irmãos, Estância Velha, Sapiranga, Parobé) in a pendular migration related to labor activity in industry, commerce, and services.

Figure 1 - Map showing the location of Novo Hamburgo, highlighting the urban and rural areas of the municipality.



Source: Elaboration by authors (2023).

Furthermore, the municipality has a predominantly urban population, with 98% of citizens residing within the urban perimeter (IBGE CIDADES, 2019), indicating a high degree of urbanization. At the same time, part of the municipality's territory (mainly in the south) has strong rural characteristics, showcasing the contrasts that Novo Hamburgo possesses.

The municipality holds a prominent position in the leather and footwear industry and became known as the "national capital of footwear" from the 1960s onwards, when the first National Footwear Fair (FENAC) took place, projecting the municipality nationally and internationally. Concurrently, a rapid process of urban expansion occurred with the construction of new housing developments and working-class neighborhoods (Oliveira, 2009).

From the 1990s onwards, the municipality experienced deindustrialization due to the influx of Chinese products into the national market (in greater volume and at lower prices), as well as the so-called "fiscal war" between states and municipalities across the country. This led several footwear companies to seek

other production locations, mainly in the Northeast region of Brazil. This deindustrialization process generated socio-spatial dynamics distinct from those of the previous period of economic prosperity, highlighting structural problems related to housing, sanitation, and public health (Teixeira, 2016).

It is precisely during this period of instability that problems arose, principally among the agents of urban space. And this is the main focus of this research, that is, to identify and analyze which agents compose the urban space of the city of Novo Hamburgo. In addition to this introduction, this text also has three other sections. The second section is dedicated to the operational methodological procedures, highlighting the collection, organization, and analysis of data. The third section corresponds to the development of the work, highlighting and discussing the concept of urban space and presenting the different agents identified in the city of Novo Hamburgo. Finally, the fourth section is dedicated to the final considerations, with the reflections that the research has been able to develop up to this point.

METHODOLOGICAL AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The research method can be understood, in a broad sense, as a path to reach a specific end or, as Antônio Carlos Gil (1989) argues, the scientific method is the set of intellectual and technical procedures adopted to achieve knowledge. In this sense, the method allows us to arrive at a result, either to ratify our research assumptions or to refute them.

For this research, a series of information sources were used, including bibliographic, documentary, and fieldwork sources. These mainly consisted of qualitative information; however, quantitative information was also included, understanding that the combination of these (qualitative and quantitative) sources allowed for a thorough and comprehensive analysis. Therefore, our research followed these paths:

Bibliographic research – a literature review on the topics of urban space, urban planning, urbanization, agents producing urban space, housing financialization processes, and related subjects, forming the basis for the analysis

undertaken in this case study on the agents producing urban space in Novo Hamburgo.

Official documents – these are various materials from the municipality of Novo Hamburgo, such as municipal legislation (building code, construction code, mobility plan, and master plan) and other legal regulations. Also included in this data are articles published in local periodicals concerning housing issues, land subdivisions, and everything related to the occupation of urban space.

Fieldwork – an activity aimed at observing current and past processes related to the urban expansion of Novo Hamburgo, constituting a relevant tool for data acquisition. Although occasional and irregular, the fieldwork allowed for, primarily, the collection of photographic records important for the development of the research.

Office work – a phase that sought to generate, organize, and systematize the data considered important to the research. In this process, the data were organized and prepared for the final stage of analysis and interpretation of the results.

Analysis and interpretation of the results

Considering that this research aims to identify and problematize the actions of the main agents producing urban space in Novo Hamburgo, as well as describe their main characteristics, we opted to use documentary research. Documentary research proved relevant due to the amount of material that could be obtained, whether through public bodies or through mass media. According to Gil:

researcher with data of sufficient quantity and quality to avoid the loss of time and the embarrassment that characterize many studies in which data are obtained directly from people. Moreover, in many cases, it becomes possible to carry out a social investigation through documents alone (Gil, 1989, p. 147, translated).

These documents can be either historical (produced before the research) or contemporary (produced while the research is taking place). One of the characteristics of documentary research is that the materials we can obtain have not yet received any analytical treatment; that is, their analysis and relevance must be carefully evaluated at the time of their inclusion in the research,

otherwise certain results may be invalidated (Lakatos & Marconi, 2003). The fact that whoever produced a particular document had a prior intention, a predisposition to demonstrate something or to omit it, in addition to unintentional errors committed during the production of the documents, can, as already mentioned, render the research unfeasible.

One advantage of documentary research is that its production is not directly influenced by the researcher, unlike interviews and observation, for example (Cortes, 1999). This avoids certain distortions, such as responses and/or behaviors presented to the interviewer that would theoretically be more socially acceptable.

In this sense, the search for documentation relating to the municipality of Novo Hamburgo was one of the main activities in the period between March 2020 and December 2021 (due to the pandemic). Municipal legislation (building code, construction code, mobility plan, and master plan), the municipality's Geographic Information System (SIGNH), and articles published in local periodicals concerning housing issues, land subdivisions, and everything related to the occupation of urban space were analyzed as far as possible.

Urban Space and its Agents in Novo Hamburgo

According to Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989), the characteristics of urban space are linked to the movements of society and are continuously (re)producing spatial forms over time. The simultaneity with which these characteristics appear reveals the complexity of the relationship between the social structure, the functions it demands, and urban forms. Society and space construct a dialectical relationship; therefore, the reproduction of society is intrinsically linked to the reproduction of space, beyond the simple location of activities, buildings, or human groups.

These typical characteristics of urban space indicate, at the same time: fragmentation and articulation (empirically evidenced in a first analysis); representation of society over time (forms and contents); imposition or determining social condition (reproduction of space); symbolic field (beliefs, myths); and space of dispute (right to the city) (Corrêa, 1989).

Urban space is organized according to distinct interests, and the condition of relative hegemony of certain groups and/or agents determines a greater or lesser fragmentation of the urban fabric. Being constituted unequally, it generates conflicts within the complex social structure that composes it. The right to the city is claimed daily by segments of the urban population in their desire for housing, work, leisure, and everything that the city provides but which is not accessible to everyone.

Contradictory is the term that best summarizes the nature of urban space. Contradiction is present in the relationships between society and the space that surrounds it. Revealing this contradiction is at the heart of geographical science. For this, it is necessary to identify those responsible for the construction of urban space. In this research, they are identified by the term "agents," as proposed by other authors who address the topic (Capel, 1974; Carlos, 2011; Corrêa, 1989).

Identifying these agents is fundamental to understanding urban space and its (re)production over time. Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989) lists the agents that produce urban space, classifying them into five types (State, landowners, owners of the means of production, real estate developers, and the excluded) who can act autonomously from the others or in combination, depending on the degree of interaction between them and the power relations that are established.

Horácio Capel (1974) similarly addresses the agents that shape urban space (owners of the means of production, landowners, real estate developers, construction companies, and public entities), identifying, similarly to Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989), the actions of these agents and the contradictions inherent in this process of (re)producing space. Ana Fani Carlos (2011) follows a similar theoretical line, considering the subjects of the action, or agents, as simultaneously the State, responsible for political predominance; capital, which uses all artifices and strategies for its reproduction; and the social agents who have space as a condition, means, and product of their action.

Ana Fani Carlos (2011) further argues that this production (of urban space) is a capitalist social production, where all human actions are (re)defined by the logic of capital. According to this logic, space becomes a commodity, replacing its use value with exchange value so that it can fulfill the virtuous circle of capital

reproduction. Therefore, in the author's understanding, urban space is predominantly mediated by the real estate market, where exchange value overrides use value. In this logic, the market determines who can inhabit a given area of urban space and who cannot (because they do not have the financial means to do so). Amenities are created, providing value and differentiated access to certain spaces, legitimizing private property through legal norms.

This space of dispute (Corrêa, 1989), being constituted in an unequal way, generates conflicts within the complex social structure that composes it. These disputes originate fragmentations in the urban fabric, even though they are physically articulated by roads and paths and socially by labor relations; they compose the mosaic of the contemporary city, highly controlled (access, circulation, and use restrictions) and contemporarily financialized. The conception of housing by the financial market, at a global level in the process referred to as financialization (Rolnik, 2015), or rather, the dominance of capital at various scales, results in a transformation in social structures and, consequently, in housing policies in general.

State-run public housing programs such as the Minha Casa Minha Vida Program (PMCMV) have facilitated access for consumers who previously had difficulty obtaining housing financing (Classes C and D) and for those who were outside the formal real estate market (Class E), altering the city's configuration. Raquel Rolnik (1995), referring to the city, argues that urbanization processes attract, like a magnet, everything around them (roads, peripheries, suburbs), transforming everything into urban areas. One only needs to look at the urbanization rates of large and medium-sized Brazilian cities, especially Novo Hamburgo, the locus of this study, which has an urbanization rate of around 98% (IBGE CIDADES, 2019).

Identifying the agents of urban transformation in Novo Hamburgo is one of the objectives of our work. Since its founding, Novo Hamburgo has had an industrial/manufacturing vocation, particularly in leather and footwear, a result of immigration from the first quarter of the 19th century. This makes it important to highlight the influence, actions, and consequences of the city's urban production and expansion processes driven by the State, the owners of the means

of production, and landowners. Real estate developers, similarly, contributed to the urban expansion process by subdividing land, building working-class and low-income neighborhoods, constructing gated communities and high-end buildings, acting autonomously or in conjunction with other agents.

The State

The State (understood here as a Public Entity, composed of the three spheres of power: federal, state, and municipal, as well as the three spheres of public administration: executive, legislative, and judicial), appears in the early days of the "district of Novo Hamburgo," considering that the plots of land offered to immigrants were made available by the Brazilian Empire free of charge. This action of promoting the settlement of the extreme south of the country by the State shows the importance of the presence of this Entity in the urbanization processes that the settlement, later a district and future municipality, underwent. The facilitation of access to land for immigrants, provided by the State but not accessible to others, transformed that newly arrived penniless immigrant into a landowner.

The legitimization of private property during the settlement process of the Vale dos Sinos region (begun in 1824) shows that the State's actions were not by chance. As Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989) argues, the State tends to privilege certain segments of society to the detriment of others. In the case of Novo Hamburgo, the interest at the time was to populate the region, granting land to immigrants, to the detriment of other social groups that already inhabited it. The State also plays the role of mediator of conflicts between agents, resulting from the power relationship established in the pursuit of control over urban space. The State's action always takes place within a legal framework, whether in the elaboration of plans and projects for the city, in the removal of populations living in at-risk areas, or even in refraining from acting (which, in our understanding, is an action). The State also appears as a real estate developer, when it produces/facilitates the production of housing for certain social groups, or as a landowner, when it acquires/expropriates plots of land that will later serve as a means of exchange with other agents.

All that means is that nothing that happens in terms of expansion, revitalization, and urban restructuring occurs without the law. Initially, the State facilitated the occupation and, subsequently, the territorial planning of Novo Hamburgo. Before the institutionalization of master plans, this planning was provided by the Codes of Conduct (the first one drawn up in 1929), Building Codes, and Construction Codes. The first Master Plan was elaborated in 1963, and years later, the municipality proposed a new Plan (1970). This period corresponds to the significant demographic growth that occurred in Novo Hamburgo, a consequence of the development of the leather and footwear industry, which attracted a contingent of workers from all regions of the country. The State thus sought to regulate the growth of the urban area, proposing that constructions should only be carried out with prior authorization from the Municipal Government.

All this legal framework is produced by the State through its technical body, formed by professionals from different areas of knowledge, mostly architects and civil engineers. According to Marcelo Lopes de Souza (2005), planners are also "planned," that is, formed/deformed during their higher education courses, in the work environment, etc. Thus, it is understood that urban planning is not neutral, as it expresses the dominant interests of social groups, companies, institutions, etc.

Isabel Pinto Alvarez (2018) also highlights that neutrality doesn't exist for the State, as diffuse interests pressure those who have the power to alter urban legislation, at the municipal level, in their favor. Capital seeks to reproduce itself continuously; this movement of circulation and reproduction creates devaluations/revaluations of certain areas of the city, transforming the existing materiality through new uses. The entity that holds the power to intervene in urban areas, including expropriation, subdivision, removal, infrastructure implementation, and many other actions, is the State, at the municipal level.

According to Milton Santos (2014), the State exists to create fixed elements, which in turn attract flows; thus, the State guides urban expansion in its socio-spatial content, deciding its effectiveness and direction. The market (real estate, capital), in the absence or insufficiency of the State, creates fixed elements

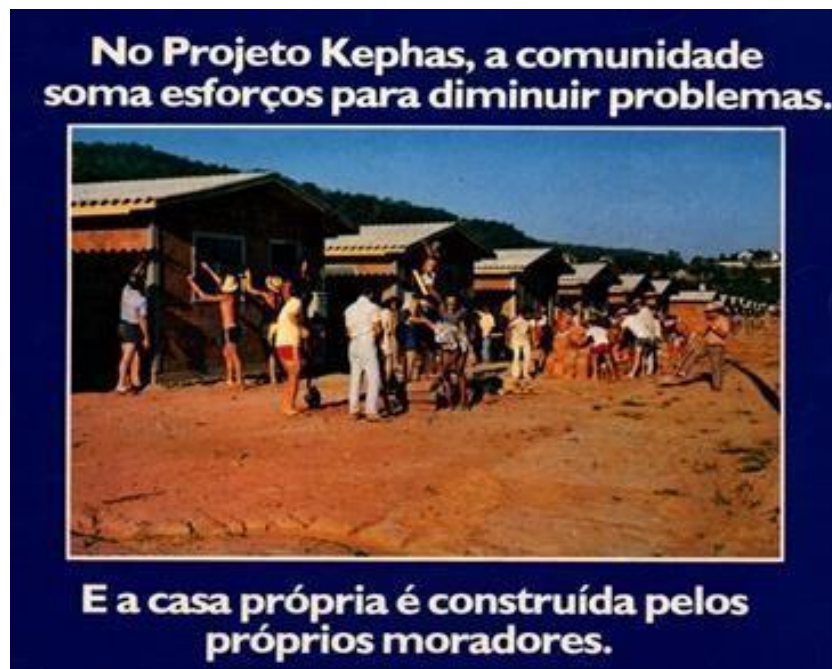
to meet the demand generated by this expansion; even so, it is the State that regulates this participation (more comprehensive or not). These two agents (State and market), acting in combination, are guided by external and internal forces, provoked by the clash between the new and the old.

External forces refer to everything outside the area of study (capital and investments from abroad, for example), what varies is the scale of analysis, which can be a city, a region, or the country. Internal forces relate to pre-existing local spatial arrangements, the status quo generally present in all Brazilian cities. The new, as the qualifier itself suggests, is the innovation provided by the technical-scientific-informational environment (communications, transport, financial accumulation) and which ends up further enhancing urban stratification. The old relates to the pre-existing spatial, social, political, and economic organization, and may, under certain circumstances, be an obstacle to the expansion of the new (Santos, 2014). Thus, there are other issues in addition to possible conflicts between agents, related to these internal and external forces, between the old and the new:

Thus, to the conflict between the old and the new are added other conflicts, that is, between external and internal forces, between market forces and official action. In fact, however, such conflicts or contradictions are intertwined and are, in reality, inseparable. The State is, sometimes, the bearer of the new, sometimes it guarantees the permanence of the old. The same is true of market forces. These create the internal, bringing with them the external, and thus generating a contradiction between the two (Santos, 2014, p. 107, translated).

Thus, the State's actions, in conjunction with other agents or autonomously, have shaped, and continue to shape, the urban space of Novo Hamburgo. Various actions have been implemented over time in the municipality in an attempt to improve housing conditions in the most deprived and socially vulnerable areas. Figure 2 illustrates the dissemination of the KEPHAS Project, an initiative of the PMNH (Novo Hamburgo, 1980) linked to a social housing policy at the federal level.

Figure 2 - Promotional material for the KEPHAS Project



Source: Public Municipal Archive of Novo Hamburgo (2022).

The project, initiated in 1978, projected the construction of 400 houses using a self-build model, meaning that the residents themselves would build their houses with the help of other residents in a collective effort. This strategy was part of the "João-de-Barro" Project promoted by the National Housing Bank (BNH) at the time. It's no coincidence that the name of the Federal Government initiative refers to the name of the bird that builds its own house (even though all other birds do as well), indicating that, in this case, the beneficiary of the program would build their own house.

More recently, in 2022, two irregular subdivisions in the city were included in land regularization programs, in partnership with the Federal Government through housing programs for low-income populations. An initiative of the municipal government, Vila Martin Pilger (Vila Nova neighborhood) and the Marcílio José Pereira Subdivision (Primavera neighborhood) received urban renewal projects.

Therefore, despite the criticisms leveled against the State, it is necessary to understand that certain (regulatory) powers and responsibilities are inherent to its nature and can only be carried out through it. However, in a capitalist society,

“[...] the general tendency is for the content of the State's action to conform to the broader interests of the dominant classes and, undoubtedly, to the perpetuation of the system itself” (Souza, 2005, p. 117, translated).

Landowners or owners of urban land

This class of agent seeks, above all, the maximum valorization of land rent. Speculation can encompass various aspects of the power dynamics existing in the city, from the simple reservation of land areas, in which the owner awaits the appreciation of the land in the surroundings of their estate or plot, without making any kind of investment, putting pressure on the municipal executive and legislative branches with the goal of altering laws or master plans that benefit them. They are "fundamentally interested in the exchange value of the land and not in its use value" (Corrêa, 1989, p. 16).

The immigrants who arrived in Rio Grande do Sul, starting in 1824, became landowners whose land was, over time, subdivided into lots, subdivisions, industrial and commercial areas, forming the municipality of Novo Hamburgo. The actions of these agents, combined with those of the State, were essential for the urban development of Novo Hamburgo, mainly due to the high demand for housing that arose as a result of the growth of the leather and footwear industry from the 1950s onwards.

It's important to point out that the most valuable land was located in the central areas of the city, and the least valuable land was on its periphery. The subdivisions that gave rise to the various neighborhoods of Novo Hamburgo were, not by chance, located on the outskirts. Some of them were never even completed, as is the case, for example, of the IAPI (Institute of Retirement and Pensions for Industrial Workers), located on the border between the Operário and Guarani neighborhoods. The project was abandoned without completion, and today only seven blocks of residential buildings remain, located in front of the city's general hospital. The area intended for the subdivision was reclaimed by the federal government through the BNH (National Housing Bank) and gave rise to another development: the COHABURGO subdivision.

Cases like this are not uncommon in Brazil, and reveal a lack of planning and management by municipal executives. However, residing in the periphery does not necessarily imply being devoid of infrastructure. Those places endowed with natural amenities (lakes, rivers, mountains, green areas) are represented as being highly selective and attract a population with high purchasing power, in what Roberto Lobado Corrêa (1989) calls status urbanization, that is, a physically peripheral area, but not a socially peripheral one.

In Novo Hamburgo, this strategy of landowners, of maintaining reserve areas for future appreciation while waiting for the State to implement basic infrastructure, is still common. The Zaffari Group's development called Boulevard Germânia, in the Primavera neighborhood (285 hectares), is a good example of the current (but not so new) trend of so-called "Neighborhood-Cities". According to the regional newspaper *Correio do Povo* (2021), there will be 1,232 lots, including residences and vertical condominiums, a shopping center, educational units (school, university), as well as an environmental park along the Arroio Gauchinho, which crosses practically the entire length of the subdivision.

The owners of the means of production

As a city with a large industrial sector, Novo Hamburgo has had, since its emancipation (1927), a number of industries that were/are major consumers of space. The actions of these agents, in general, go against the interests of landowners, as they seek cheap land for their industrial and commercial ventures. As Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989) emphasizes, real estate speculation is not in their interest at first, since the retention of land for speculative purposes ends up making the supply scarce and, as a corollary, increases the price of land and can be reflected in their production costs. A curious fact in the urbanization process of Novo Hamburgo is a type of "symbiosis" between the State, landowners, and owners of the means of production. Since its founding, the municipality has had among its public representatives (administrators, mayors, councilors, etc.) individuals who were, at the same time, landowners and entrepreneurs in various sectors. Cases like that of Jacob Kroeff Neto (slaughterhouse owner) and Ângelo

Provezano (slaughterhouse owner), who were at the head of the municipal executive branch despite being respectable businessmen and landowners.

This practice of overlapping functions in the same territory seems to be "commonplace" in municipal administrations until the mid-20th century, as indicated by the works of Tânia Marquês Strohaecker (2005) and Roberto Lobato Corrêa (2011). The conflicting action of these agents (landowners and industrialists) is mediated by the State to the advantage of the industrialists, considering that we live in a capitalist system and the arguments of this agent, in favor of full employment and economic development, prevail over those of the landowners who practice land speculation. Thus, under pressure from the industrialists, the State implements infrastructure necessary for the functioning of industrial/manufacturing parks, in addition to providing cheap housing (low-income housing subdivisions) in the vicinity of the factories to accommodate the workforce.

In Novo Hamburgo, at the beginning of colonization and during the period up to the approval of the first Master Plan (1963), industries were located in Hamburgo Velho and its surroundings. With the city's growth, companies gradually moved to peripheral areas. This process of industrial relocation doubly favored landowners, as it was possible to obtain considerable income from the sale of the old factory space (located in a central area) and also to relocate to areas where the land value was much lower than the old location, in addition to having installed infrastructure provided by the State.

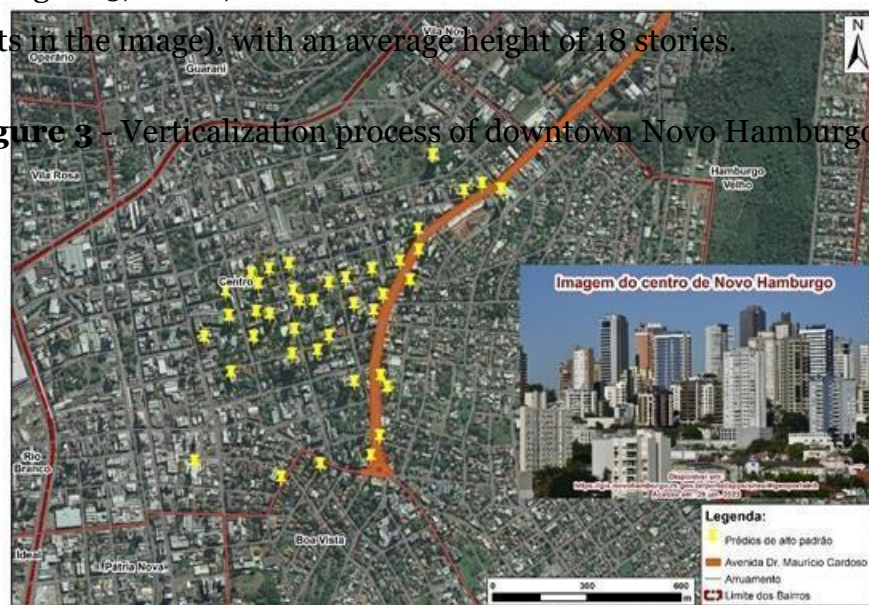
Real estate developers

This agent of spatial transformation appears in various forms, the principal and empirically evident one being the physical production of the city (CAPEL, 1974). Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989) also discusses other forms in which real estate developers appear, and both authors highlight the fact that the production of low-income housing, for example, is not among the preferred actions of these agents, considering the low repayment capacity of this population and the high default rates.

Under the aegis of capitalism, the focus is on building, developing, and financing real estate for the wealthiest segments of the population. Condominiums, buildings, and medium- to high-end properties are rapidly reproducing in neighborhoods previously selected based on research into the potential real estate market. The lowest-income segments are being pushed to the city's periphery, living wherever possible. The strategy of real estate developers to produce housing for the poorest classes is to obtain help from another agent: the State. Social housing construction programs are not new in Brazil. BNH, COHAB, MCMV, among many others, were initiatives of the State in conjunction with real estate developers to try to minimize the problem of the housing deficit in Brazil.

In Novo Hamburgo, it is possible to identify the production of high-end real estate in a limited area of the city. The region of Avenida Maurício Cardoso, bordering the neighborhoods of Centro, Mauá, and Hamburgo Velho, is the best example. The verticalization observed in this region of the city can be seen in other municipalities (Campo Bom, São Leopoldo), and the observed trend is one of growth. Figure 3, below, illustrates this concentration of residential buildings (yellow dots in the image), with an average height of 18 stories.

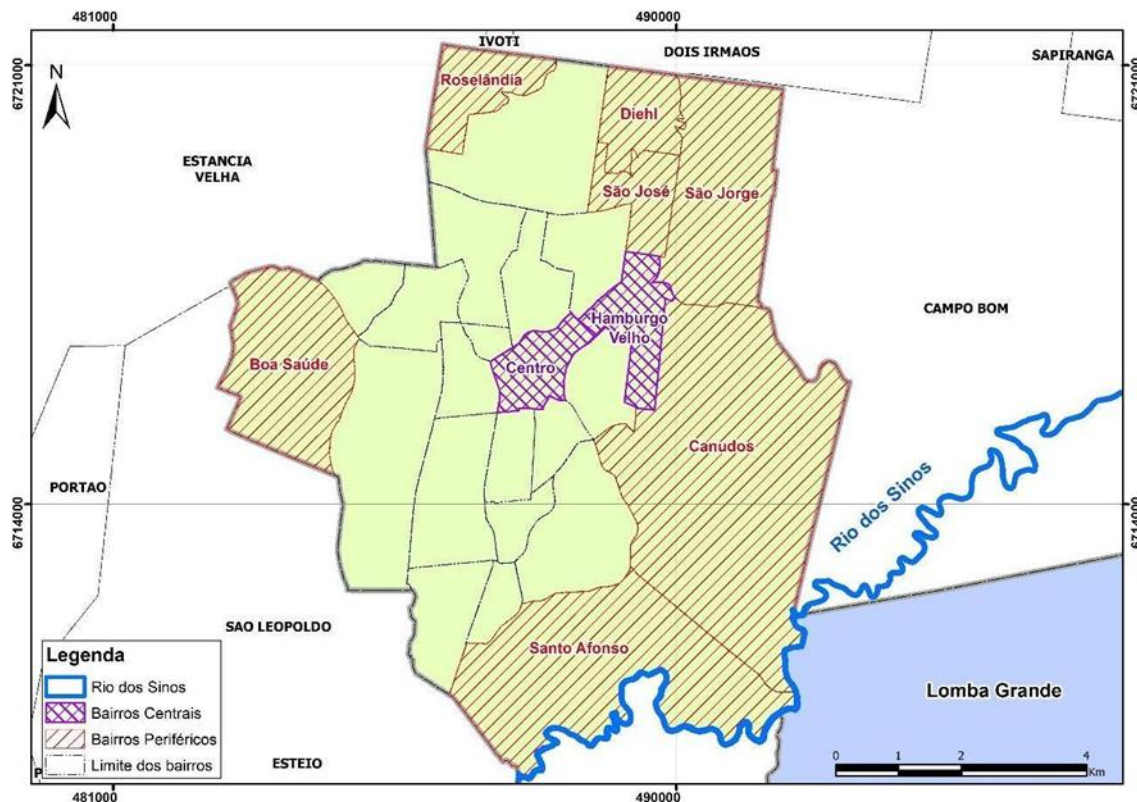
Figure 3 - Verticalization process of downtown Novo Hamburgo



Source: Elaboration by author (2022).

In contrast, on the periphery, there is a lack of state attention regarding land regularization, implementation of basic infrastructure, and public facilities, a characteristic not unique to the municipality of Novo Hamburgo. This situation can be observed in most Brazilian municipalities, and although the expression "center-periphery" is no longer sufficient to analyze current urban expansion processes, at first glance, it makes perfect sense. We have a portion of space (central area) where the high-income population is concentrated and another portion (periphery) where the poorer populations are concentrated. Figure 4 shows the central area of Novo Hamburgo, where the main high-standard buildings of the municipality are concentrated, and the neighborhoods further from the center (Santo Afonso, Boa Saúde, Canudos) which bring together a lower-income population and where, not coincidentally, the areas of irregular occupation of the municipality are located (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Urban area of Novo Hamburgo highlighting the central and peripheral neighborhoods



Source: Elaboration by (2022).

The excluded

These groups are characterized primarily by a lack of access to housing, among other rights guaranteed by the Federal Constitution. They are populations living in peripheral areas, subject to flooding and inundation, at risk of landslides, adjacent to Permanent Protection Areas, on land with some type of soil problem and which, due to these adverse conditions, is not attractive to the real estate market. The cost of urbanizing these areas is high and the return on investment is doubtful, which eliminates the possibility of incorporating these spaces into the formal real estate market.

As previously mentioned, real estate developers are not interested in building low-income housing (due to insolvency and default), while landowners are interested in maximizing profits from the sale of their land (whether to the State or to real estate developers). The State's responsibility is to provide dignified housing. Lacking the manpower and technical expertise to undertake such a project, the State delegates, through bidding processes and housing programs, the task of building low-income housing subdivisions to the private sector (real estate developers). The location of these developments could not be otherwise: the periphery (cheaper land), the quality of the construction materials used is low, as is the technical quality of the work. Being a private company whose objective is to make a profit, such strategies are not surprising. The lower the cost of construction, the greater the profits.

Novo Hamburgo has, according to information provided by the Secretariat of Urban Development and Housing (SEDUH) in 2019, 141 areas, including irregular settlements, Social Interest Areas, and what is known as "Urban Rural Nuclei – NRU". Furthermore, SEDUH states that 24% of the municipality's population lives in irregular settlements (around 60,000 people). However, it is important to note that not all irregular settlements and/or occupations are mapped by the municipality, suggesting that more people are living in precarious and/or irregular conditions than the municipal agency estimates.

Since its formation, the municipality of Novo Hamburgo has coexisted with irregular settlements and land subdivisions. When the first immigrants

arrived (those who gave rise to the municipality), there were already populations living in this area; they were freed slaves who worked in the Linho Cânhamo (hemp and flax) factory, among others, so it was not an uninhabited place. As the settlement developed, these people were housed in the peripheries.

An example of this practice is the current Guarani neighborhood, which until the 1930s was known as "Africa" because it housed a Black population. These individuals were removed from that area and settled, initially, along Osvaldo Cruz Street and later, in the current Primavera neighborhood. This type of hygienist and segregating measure is common and seems to be the *modus operandi* of municipal public administrations in Brazil. The urbanization process occurs through cycles of appreciation, depreciation, and revaluation of real estate; therefore, these individuals, lacking capital, are left to their own devices, hostages of the informal real estate market. In this sense, as Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1989) points out, the production of their own housing in favelas, occupations of public or private areas constitutes acts of resistance and survival at the same time, because, despite other agents, it shapes the space independently.

The excluded seek the right to the city in various ways, after all they live and work in it, even if many do so informally or clandestinely. Lucio Kowarick (1983) points to the fact that there is a narrative on the part of a certain layer of society suggesting that these most needy populations should be placed under the State's tutelage, without the capacity to decide their own destiny, as if the act of governing were a privilege of the local elite, restricted and enlightened, who have the capacity to determine what is right and what is wrong for society as a whole.

For this phenomenon, Lucio Kowarick (2000) coined the term "urban spoliation," which, in short, can be understood as a sum of situations characterized by the non-existence or extreme precariousness of collective consumption services, access to land and housing, on the part of this population, and is intimately linked to capital accumulation and the degree of misery resulting from it.

Coincidence or not, the examples used in the subsection on the State, which deals with its actions in the peripheries, can also be used here,

demonstrating the interdependence of agents in the construction of the city. The KEPHAS subdivision began as a municipal project linked to a federal government program and is currently an area of extreme socioeconomic and infrastructural deprivation. Located between the São José and Vila Diehl neighborhoods, the subdivision expanded southward with another project: KEPHAS II, and northward with KEPHAS III. Furthermore, other subdivisions (Colina da Mata, Flor do Vale) and occupations on the west side have sprung up in its immediate vicinity, encroaching on green areas and with slopes unsuitable for housing, as can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Location of the KEPHAS I, II, and III Housing Developments in the municipality of Novo Hamburgo



Source: Elaboration by author (2022).

It is important to remember that there is another contingent of excluded people who inhabit the city: the population known as the homeless. This segment of the population finds itself in an even more precarious situation than those who live in informal occupations or other irregular settlements. The homeless population is identified as the group that is in extreme social vulnerability, since not even basic meals are guaranteed throughout the day.

The relationship of these agents (both those living in occupations and the homeless) with other agents, as one might suppose, is conflictual, tense, and sometimes violent. The State is the main agent that maintains direct contact with the excluded, due to social housing programs, assistance, registration in federal government programs (Bolsa-Família income support, Continuous Cash Benefit

of Social Assistance - BPC), social reintegration, and others. But it is also the State that often promotes the most violent actions against the excluded, through police force or even through repossession orders. Even though they sometimes have the same interests, their points of view diverge and their perspectives are distinct, which causes this permanent tension between all the agents producing urban space.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Thinking about the territorial planning of Novo Hamburgo (or any other Brazilian city), starting from the actions of the agents that produce urban space, is a fruitful path to understanding the city and its expansion. The State, as the main guiding agent of urban dynamics, through the implementation of plans (health, education, sanitation, social housing, etc.), projects (roads, creation of subdivisions, industrial districts, etc.) and legislation (land subdivision law, building/construction codes), in addition to its role as a mediator of conflict between other agents, bears the greatest responsibility for the city. Real estate developers, owners of the means of production, and landowners sometimes become indistinguishable, in a symbiosis that is not always balanced or symmetrical, but which has a common objective: the reproduction of capital.

The actions of these agents currently have ramifications within the State (through patronage/co-optation/clientelism), as a way to have their demands met and achieve hegemony over urban space. The excluded, in turn, continue to occupy in the pursuit of the right to the city and what it selectively offers. In recent decades, housing rights movements have organized autonomously, but in an incipient way, considering the existing housing deficit, both in Novo Hamburgo and in the State of Rio Grande do Sul and in Brazil; however, this movement should be celebrated.

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