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# FROM THE CENTER-PERIPHERY LOGIC TO THE FRAGMENTARY SOCIO-SPATIAL LOGIC IN A MEDIUM SIZED CITY

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## Abstract

Through a procedural approach and with the support of empirical elements, this study examines the segmentation dynamics that shape the center-peripheral logic and move towards the delineation of more complex forms of structuring a medium-sized city. The study takes as an analytical framework the role of the municipal government which, in connection with the land-real estate-incorporating capital, reconfigures the urban fabric and favors the emergence of new socio-spatial relationships in the city of Dourados, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. To measure this process, in addition to the development of a comprehensive map, the following methodological procedures were adopted: bibliographic survey; information collected on the spot; survey and data collection with the Municipal Agency of Social Interest Housing. Secondary data research was based on multiple demographic censuses, municipal legislation, virtual platforms of real estate developers operating in the city and also the Sistema Integrado de Seleção Habitacional (Integrated Housing Selection System)/Ministry of Regional Development/Minha Casa Minha Vida (My house My Life) social housing program. In Dourados, ongoing dynamics reveal complexity in the arrangement of segregation, and the elements present in them indicate that the conceptual notion of fragmentation is enhanced as an analytical reference. Especially from the year 2000 the arrangement process has been strengthened, causing the deepening of differences and shaping socio-spatial logics that, although occurring first and with greater intensity in large cities, have gained importance in medium-sized cities.

**Keywords:** Spatial Restructuring; Public Power; Socio-Spatial Fragmentation; Medium Sized City.

## Resumo / Resumen

### DA LÓGICA CENTRO-PERIFERIA À LÓGICA SOCIOESPACIAL FRAGMENTÁRIA EM UMA CIDADE MÉDIA

Por meio de uma abordagem processual e com aporte de elementos empíricos, o texto analisa as dinâmicas de segmentação que conformam a lógica centro-periférica e caminham para o delineamento de formas mais complexas de estruturação de uma cidade média. Toma como recorte analítico o papel do poder público municipal que, articulado ao capital fundiário-imobiliário-incorporador, reconfigura o tecido urbano e favorece o surgimento de novas relações socioespaciais em Dourados-MS. Para dimensionar esse processo, além da elaboração de um mapa síntese, foram adotados os seguintes procedimentos metodológicos: levantamento bibliográfico; informações coletadas in loco; registros fotográficos, entrevistas e levantamento junto à Agência Municipal de Habitação de Interesse Social. Pesquisa de dados secundários teve como fontes censos demográficos, legislação municipal, plataformas virtuais das incorporadoras atuantes na cidade, assim como o Sistema Integrado de Seleção Habitacional/Ministério do Desenvolvimento Regional/Programa Minha Casa Minha Vida. Em Dourados, dinâmicas em curso revelam complexidade na conformação da segregação, e os elementos nelas presentes indicam que a noção conceitual de fragmentação assume força como referencial analítico. A partir do ano 2000, esse processo se reforça, promovendo o aprofundamento das diferenças e conformando lógicas socioespaciais que, embora tenham ocorrido primeiro e com mais intensidade nas metrópoles, têm ganhado expressão em cidades médias.

**Palavras-chave:** Reestruturação Espacial; Poder Público; Fragmentação Sócio-espacial; Cidade Média.

### DE LA LÓGICA CENTRO-PERIFERIA A LA LÓGICA SOCIOESPACIAL FRAGMENTARIA EN UNA CIUDAD MEDIA

Por medio de un análisis procesual, y con aporte de elementos empíricos, el texto analiza las dinámicas de segmentación que conforman la lógica centro-periferia y que caminan para el diseño de formas más complejas de estructuración de una ciudad media. La investigación escogió como recorte analítico el papel del poder público municipal que, en una articulación de intereses con el capital inmobiliario, propietarios de la tierra y promotores inmobiliarios, reconfigura el tejido urbano y favorece la creación de nuevas relaciones socioespaciales en la ciudad de Dourados-MS. Para dimensionar el proceso, además de elaborar un mapa síntesis, fueron adoptados los siguientes procedimientos metodológicos: estudio bibliográfico; informaciones recogidas in loco; entrevistas e investigación de datos de la Agencia Municipal de Habitación e Interés Social. El estudio de los datos secundarios tuvo como fuentes, los censos demográficos, la legislación municipal, plataformas virtuales de las promotoras inmobiliarias que actúan en la ciudad y, también del Sistema Integrado de Selección Habitacional/ Ministerio de Desarrollo Regional/ Programa Minha Casa Minha Vida. En Dourados, dinámicas en curso rebelan complejidad en la conformación de la segregación, y los elementos en ella presentes indican que la noción conceptual de fragmentación asume fuera como referente analítico. Sobre todo a partir del año 2000, ese proceso se refuerza, promoviendo o profundizando las diferencias y conformando lógicas socioespaciales que, aunque hayan ocurrido primero e con más intensidad en las metrópolis, han ganado expresión en ciudades medias.

**Palabras-clave:** Reestructuración Espacial; Poder Público; Fragmentación Socioespacial; Ciudad Media.

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# INTRODUCTION

This text[1] aims to offer a contribution to urban studies, with the discussion of empirical-analytical frameworks that allow us to examine contemporary medium-sized cities structuring process. Part of the effort to analyze the logics of reconfiguration of the urban space in Dourados-MS, considering dynamics that, by revealing greater complexity in the segregation development, make it possible to be analyzed under the conceptual notion of socio-spatial fragmentation.

Bearing in mind that this process can be learned from certain agents, whose coordinated action is responsible for socio-spatial outcomes, the role of the local government that (in an articulation of interests with the land-real estate-developer capital) has contributed to rearrange the urban space of Dourados based on the setting of new inequalities which resulted in the reconfiguration of the center-suburbs relationship and the evidence of more complex dynamics of space structuring, as can be seen in the comprehensive map that is attached to this analysis.

Dourados is the second municipality in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in terms of population, with 225,495 inhabitants (according to the estimated population count carried out by the IBGE in 2020), and concentrates, in its surroundings, a significant number of urban centers with smaller functional and demographic dimensions.

> Due to its geographical position, which makes Dourados the only city of this demographic size and importance, in a radius of more than 200 km, that has a significant level of interurban centrality, denoted by the relevance of its role in the commercial sector and, above all, in the services, which ensure its prominent status in the regional urban network and, consequently, as an average city. (CALIXTO, 2017, p.59).

When considering the population contingent, out of the set of centers in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul connected to the urban network of Dourados in 2010 (IBGE, 2010), there is one more aspect that allows us to scale its regional role, as it brought together a contingent of approximately 740 thousand inhabitants.

Because it is located in a region where agricultural activity is based on agribusiness, Dourados offers preferentially equipment and services associated with this sector, which enhances its regional centrality and connects it with much broader scales, linked to global production circuits (CALIXTO, 2019). This condition drives and enhances a set of changes of the city contents and roles. It is from this perspective that the process to be reviewed is considered, which, in Dourados, had at least, three time moments of expression.

The first takes place during the period prior to the 1970s, when inequalities were hardly visible spatially. Besides downtown, there were no defined functional areas and direct relationships prevailed. The second spell of time, after the 1970s, was marked by the structuring of the urban suburbs and the redefinition and enhancement of socio-spatial distances. It is marked by the government initiatives, through the Banco Nacional da Habitação (BNH, National Housing Bank), especially with the effective occupation of the northern portion of the city and the discontinuous expansion to the south and southeast of the city, extending beyond the BR-163 highway. In contrast, the third period of time, which began in the 2000s, shows a more plural spatial structure, in which the center-suburbs relationship is reconfigured by dynamics that make segregation more complex and deeper.

In order to raise elements that reveal, spatiotemporally, the process of socio-spatial redefinition, this text, in addition to the Introduction and Final Considerations, is divided into three parts, which deal with: 1) the theoretical frameworks that underlie the analysis; 2) the design and layout of the center-suburbs relationship from the 1970s; 3) the reconfiguration of the center-suburbs relationship, with the superposition of a more complex dynamic of socio-spatial segmentation.

# GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS FOR URBAN SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Scholars dedicated to the study of urbanization and the structuring of contemporary Latin American cities have pointed out that the logic of space production, especially in the second half of the

20th century, was marked by a center-suburbs pattern, characterized by the socio-spatial distancing of the poorest towards distant peripheral areas, devoid of infrastructure, equipment and services. For Caldeira (2000), this central-peripheral pattern, which is notable for imposing large distances separating social groups, was predominant between the 40s and the 80s of the 20th century. According to this paper's author who dealt with social segregation as an important feature of the metropolitan reality of the city of São Paulo, "the middle and upper classes are concentrated in central neighborhoods with good infrastructure, and the poor live in the precarious and distant suburbs" (CALDEIRA, 2000, p. 211). Sposito (2019b, p. 2) corroborates this view, when he points out that this pattern "marked the structuring process of Latin American cities during the 20th century and, especially, in the second half of that century".

However, the current stage of capitalist development has imposed a new dynamics on the city, redefining this structuring. Also according to Sposito (2019b, p. 4), considering Duhau and Giglia (2016), the concentration of higher income social segments in areas farther from the center, yet endowed with public and private equipment and services, "puts in check the very center-peripheral perspective that has marked Latin American urbanization for many decades and has been making the spatial structure of today's cities more complex".

Thus, in contemporaneity, the most complex segmentation is based on the dialectical relationship between "close order and distant order" (LEFEBVRE, 1986), since flows take place on multiple scales. Today's city cannot, therefore, be thought of and analyzed in itself as it would presuppose a relational content, that is, one that can only be explained through articulations. If the city does not constitute a unit, due to the dynamics and processes of close and distant order that intersect and structure it, it should also not be read only from the center-periphery pair, which, as stated by Sposito (2011, p. 135), "is no longer enough to explain the city", as new socio-spatial arrangement shave reconfigured this relationship.

With the phase of planetary urbanization (LEFEBVRE, 1999; BRENNER, 2014) and the resulting dynamics,2 there is evidence of the overlapping of a more complex spatial structuring logic, which points towards fragmentation. This new logic, which is articulately constituted on a macro scale (the processes that have generated the city's contemporary production) and at the level of socio-spatial practices, has been approached in different ways by different scholars. The complexity involved in this process not only requires new tools for analyzing the urban reality, but also allows it to be treated by different areas of knowledge, as well as under different conceptions, theoretical-methodological and empirical-analytic perspectives.

Focusing on the new North American and European territorial configurations, Monclús (1998) discusses the dissolution of the compact city, which is constituted, increasingly, in a dispersed and fragmented form. In the study which addressed the largest Latin American cities, Duhau and Giglia (2016) mention that the Fordism crisis brings a diversity of urban orders, no longer marked by unity. Prévôt-Schapira (2001), whose analysis covers the realities of Mexico and Brazil and, more specifically, the city of Buenos Aires, pays attention to the socio-spatial complexity resulting from the aggravation of inequalities that produce fragmented territories. According to the author:

> Vemos así dibujarse un modelo de ciudad estallada, fragmentada. El análisis de la ciudad en términos de fragmentación, en razón de las múltiples fronteras que dividen el espacio en un continuum que se empobrece, parece ser en adelante más operativo que el de los términos centro/periferia que había dominado hasta ahora. (PRÉVÔT-SCHAPIRA, 2001, p. 51).

Specifically in relation to the São Paulo metropolis, Santos (2019, p. 29) points out fragmentation elements and dynamics, considering the "tendency to the formation of a scattered city", intersected by urban voids, with the implementation of housing programs in areas far from those occupied by higher income social segments.

Considering that the fragmentation processes have been, predominantly, the object of study of those dedicated to metropolitan spaces, Sposito and Sposito (2020) and Sposito and Góes (2013) point out the importance of focusing on the relationship between contemporary urbanization and fragmentation also in the analysis of medium-sized cities, where this logic is also in progress.

For the aforementioned authors, socio-spatial fragmentation is linked to a new form of

segmentation, whose content involves several meanings, which demand a broader understanding, due to its polysemic, multidimensional and multiscalar character. From this perspective, it is urgent to rethink the concept of segregation in connection with the new logics and practices that make it increasingly complex. According to Sposito and Góes (2013, p. 296), fragmentation does not replace or eliminate segregation, but "succeeds and contains segregation."[3] It is linked to more recent dynamics that, combined with the previous ones, significantly redefine the space, so that segregation is not only reinforced and deepened, but also becomes more complex. In the same direction, Legroux (2021, p. 238), warns that fragmentation presupposes "dynamics that intensify ruptures and relative incommunicability", expressing an intensification of the segregation processes.

Fragmentation, which includes both form and content, bringing together objective and subjective, material and symbolic elements, is related, according to Magrini and Catalão (2019), to the production of urban fabric (morphology), associated with spatial practices and the construction of imaginary references. Morphology, therefore, cannot be taken in isolation, but in its relationship with the other dimensions.

Based on these assumptions, the fragmentation process, is treated in this paper according to the understanding of Sposito and Góes (2013, p. 281) highlighting its "double determination and expression: spatial and social", thus adopting the term socio-spatial fragmentation.[4]

The current social, economic and political dynamics of medium-sized cities have reverberated in new forms of spatial production and led to processes that can be analyzed under the conceptual notion of socio-spatial fragmentation. For Sposito and Góes (2013, p. 67), "[...] when inequalities deepen, the way is paved for the establishment of difference in the form of negativity", since the spatial condition limits or makes the socio-spatial practices unfeasible. Thus, the imposition of differences, denying the possibility of relationship/dialogue, is directly linked to the process of deepening inequalities[5], as will be discussed below.

## THE PRODUCTION PROCESS OF NEW SOCIO-SPATIAL FORMS: FROM THE DESIGN TO THE STRUCTURING OF THE CENTER-PERIPHERAL LOGIC

Until the early 1970s, urban socio-spatial production in Dourados (founded in 1935) did not configure a clear center-suburb relationship. The central city area, in addition to concentrating the meager commercial and service activities, had the public square as the meeting place, featuring a defined and revealed centrality in the central part of the city, where spatial practices converged, as it brought together the economic, political, social dimensions and/or sociability. Thus, inequalities coexisted and were poorly demarcated spatially, as this area was the place for meeting and carrying out daily activities.

This reality can be measured in the testimony of an old resident and former real estate owner, according to whom, before the occupation of the northern portion of the city, "there was no neighborhood only for the poor. Only after the 1970s, when the rich began buying land in the upper part of Weimar (Avenida Weimar Gonçalves Torres) and the poor remained at the bottom of Marcelino (Avenida Marcelino Pires), did this differentiationmaterialize."[6] Calixto (2000, p. 158), corroborating this statement, adds: "Until then, besides the central part, there were no clear functional areas and even the commerce and services were still incipient, with downtown itself being a place of residence."

In line with Lefebvre (1986, p. 169), for whom space is a social reality, which constitutes a "set of relationships and forms", the 1970s were significant for understanding the dynamics of production of new spatial forms, with the unfolding of new socio-spatial relations. In this process, the BNH policy played a fundamental role, which, via the Sistema Financeiro da Habitação (SFH, Housing Finance System), covered middle-level socioeconomic segments.

To characterize this context, the relationships between city and countryside ought to be considered. With the technical-productive changes resulting from the introduction of soy monoculture, Dourados experienced a phase of expressive economic and demographic expansion, which led this

center to have under its influence the most important agricultural area in the state, placing the region in a framework that articulates interests of different spatial scales. In other words, the introduction of an agricultural system with an agro-industrial profile intensified the changes that took place in the Dourados region, as discussed by Silva (1992). The rearrangement of the agricultural structure, resulting from the concentration of properties and the use of technologies (that rationalized the productive process, impacting the relation of production and work), had repercussions in the production of forms of the urban space, since, as stated by Carlos (2007), a new labor division requires new spatial conditions for its realization.

From then onwards, the spatial distribution of the different social segments in the city began to be determined by a new dynamic: the northern portion of the city began to be configured as a concentration area for the higher-income population. This socio-spatial redefinition process was triggered with the implementation of housing complexes (BNH 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Plans), which produced new locations, contributing to the restructuring of the city and, consequently, to socio-spatial differentiation.

It is also Alberto Campos Perdomo who points out some important aspects for understanding the process triggered by the implementation of the BNH housing units:

> After the construction of these buildings began, the owners of the small farms that laid between the city and the housing complex also began to subdivide the land or sell to someone who would subdivide. This is because these lands began to appreciate due to better access, greater movement, the energy network, piped water and the infrastructure that was installed.

The implementation of these projects (which also defined the layout of the streets in an area until then composed of small farms) drove the "[...] actual occupation of the northern portion of the city by socio-professional segments with greater purchasing power, a process that remained and was enhanced over the following decades, 1980 and 1990" (CALIXTO, 2000, p.159). With the incorporation of new land subdivisions into the urban set up and the consolidation of some areas subdivided in the 1950s, the north zone experienced a period of "appreciation" which therefore attracted the higher income social segment, then residing in the central area, driving the socio-spatial segregation process.

If the emergence and consolidation of land subdivisions around housing complexes are important aspects to understand the urban spatial restructuring, Calixto (2000, p. 160) also draws attention to the fact that this movement was triggered "[...] by the intervention of the local government, articulated, through an often symbiotic relationship, with the interests of certain groups". It was from the decision of the local government that, for example, the definition of the area where such housing complexes would be built occurred.

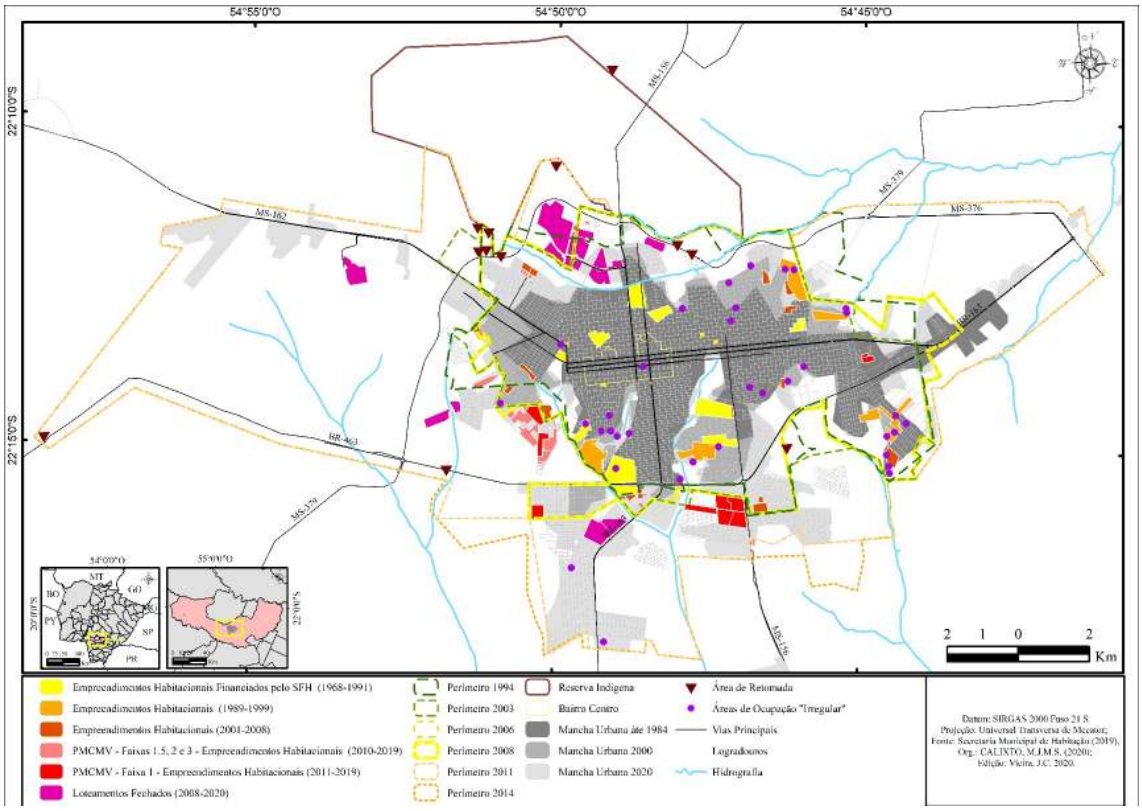
The center-peripheral logic, which is at the base of the process of socio-spatial segregation, begins to be designed more clearly. This logic is enhanced with the discontinuous territorial expansion to the south and southeast of the city, extending even beyond the BR-163 highway (as shown in Map 01), with the implementation of the BNH 4th Plan Parque das Nações I and II, and the Residencial Campo Dourado, which give rise to a new dynamic, characterized by the expansion of socio-spatial distances and differentiated access to locations within the city. Other dimensions of this segregation process are important in this connection, expressed, on the one hand, by high standard vertical production and, on the other hand, by the first records of "irregular" occupations and the emergence of slum (favela) areas (Jardim Clímax, Bom Jesus, etc.).

Enhancement of socio-spatial differentiation was the most relevant consequence of these changes, driven by the concentration of high-standard real estate investments in a certain area – the northern portion – and, later, expanded to the western portion. Calixto (2000, p. 202) also highlights the outlook of the role of the main center weakening process:

> The decentralization of medical and hospital activities, language, computer and swimming schools, cultural and artistic activities, gyms, more specialized commerce - famous brand marketing franchises - favors the "disinterest" of a certain social segment for the immediate downtown proximity.

In the 1990s, around 40 private land subdivisions were implemented on the outskirts of the city,

lacking infrastructure, equipment and urban services. At that time, the municipal housing policy initiative was also intensified, with the implementation of the Canaã housing project (1,933 housing units). Thus, the territorial discontinuity that began in the 1970s increased in the 1990s, imposing new structuring elements in the socio-spatial segregation process. One can cite, as an example, the intervention that took place in the late 1990s, when the urban perimeter was expanded, through Law no. 2213, dated 11.25.1998. The expansion took place mainly around the area occupied by the Triunfo condominium (project launched in the same year in the southeastern portion of the city, with 349 lots, each measuring at least 2,500 m2), located about 21 km from the central area of Dourados.




Map 01 –Dourados- MS: Housing developments and expansion of the urban perimeter (1968 - 2020).

From the beginning of the 2000s onwards, new vectors, in conjunction with the government, imposed a new logic to the space production process, reconfiguring socio-spatial relations and giving them more complexity.

## THE NEW DYNAMICS OF SOCIO-SPATIAL SEGMENTATION AND THE RECONFIGURATION PROCESS OF THE CENTER-PERIPHERY LOGIC

From the 2000s onwards, new dynamics were combined with those that existed before, marking the redefinition of the downtown-suburb arrangement. As a general conditioning factor, here again, the city-countryside relationship stands out. This relationship is influenced by the new expression and expansion of the sugar-energy industry which brings along the development of industrial and financial capital in the region and, particularly, in Dourados. In the municipality, the implementation of a large-scale industrial enterprise, linked to the Bunge group, the São Fernando sugarcane mill, stands out. Likewise, the project to implement the Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD) in 2005, which had an important urban-regional impact, deserves to be mentioned.7

Considering, according to Santos (1985, p. 58), that "[...] space responds to changes in society through its own change", such conditioning factors have repercussions in the redefinition of the city

outskirts, which gradually lose their "homogeneous" content, with the emergence of a new social special division. This socio-spatial dynamic is driven along at least three fronts.

The first includes housing projects implemented by the municipal government in the early 2000s, in partnership with the state and federal governments. Some of them were linked to slum eradication programs, or were aimed at the population living in an area considered to be subnormal. Other projects, with resources from the Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento (PAC, Growth Acceleration Program) and the Programa de Arrendamento Residencial (PAR, Residential Lease Program), were also implemented. Together, these projects add up to more than three thousand housing units, built in different spots in the city outskirts and, in large part, discontinuing the urban fabric.

Subsequently, housing developments under the Programa Minha Casa Minha Vida (PMCMV, My House, My Life Program) significantly impacted the production of the urban periphery, especially in the southeastern section of the city, where the buildings of Strip 1 of the Program were set up in a more concentrated manner - Figure 01. Its location interferes with the spatial practices of thousands of poor residents of Dourados, whose access to the central part of the city, for example, is much more difficult, enhancing the weakening of centrality and the consequent loss of the ability to promote meetings.



Figure 01 - Dourados-MS: PMCMV Enterprises Strip 1. Photos: Nissen Cabral Jr. (2021)

The third front is embodied in the gated communities (Figure 02), which stand out not only as a new real estate product, but mainly as producers of new locations and spatial practices. The

implementation of these projects changes the content of the suburbs and deepens the process of segregation, making the city's new dynamics and production logics more complex, which are no longer acknowledged only from the center-periphery relationship.



Figure 02 - Dourados-MS: Surrounding of the gated community Ecoville Residence I and II. Photo: The author (2020).

And, here, it is worth to enhance the role of the government, which performance is significantly important in the process of redefining the urban structure, when it interferes in spatial practices with the offer of new conditioning factors that impact the dynamics implemented by private agents (real estate companies, developers and landowners), which characterizes the presence of the State within the scope of neoliberalism, not in terms of its "shrinkage", but placing itself directly at the service of economic interests (DARDOT and LAVAL, 2016). In Dourados, this articulation of interests can be dimensioned from two indicators that have driven and enhance the plural production of the periphery.

One of them was the expansion of the urban perimeter, as shown in Map 01. After the approval of Law No. 3,480, dated 09/30/2011, the area went from 81.4 km2 to 210.8 km2. In 2014, there was a second expansion (Law No. 3844, dated 11/24/2014), thus the city area reached 215.7 km2. Thus, in just three years, there is an increase of 134.3 km2, that is, a territorial expansion significantly more intense than the demographic growth, and which begins to outline the spatial dimension of fragmentation, due to the extension and discontinuity of the urban fabric. The other indicator was the updating of the Land Use and Occupation Law, through Complementary Law no. 205, dated 10/19/2012, which ruled the minimum area of lots for public social housing that was reduced from 220 m2 to 200 m2, and of conventional private lots, from 360 m2 to 300 m2. Similarly, the legislation allowed the reduction of land lots in private social land subdivisions, from 360 m2 to 200 m2.

These legal changes, driven by the articulation between private agents and the local government, have broadened the perspectives of action of the developing companies, either through the provisions concerning the area of the lots, or by making previously rural land available in the urban real estate market[8], with the expansion of the urban perimeter.

This logic, in addition to attracting groups with a national or international scale (such as Alphaville Urbanismo S.A., Plaenge Empreendimentos/Construtora and Rodobens Negócios Imobiliários S.A.), leads to the dynamism of local/regional groups (Developers and Construction Companies such as Saad Lorensini, Corpal and São Bento), which now operate in the field of development of gated communities – Table 01. Out of the nine projects implemented in the northern section of the city, 60% were undertaken by the same companies: Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora (based in Dourados) and Protenge Urbanismo Ltd. (based in Londrina-PR).

| *Undertaking* | *Number of lots* | *Year* | *Company* |
|---|---|---|---|
| EcovilleResidence e Resort I e II | 453 | 2008 | Plaenge Incorporadora and Vectra Construtora Ltda. |
| Golden Park | 225 | 2008 | Neopar Participações e Empreendimentos Ltda. e Fábio Frantz Incorporadora |
| Terras de Alphaville | 595 | 2013 | Alphaville Urbanismo |
| Porto Madero Premium Residence & Resort | 538 | 2014 | Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora, Vectra Construtora Ltda. And Protenge Urbanismo Ltda. |
| Green Park | 418 | 2014 | São Bento Incorporadora |
| Porto Seguro Residence & Resort | 270 | 2015 | Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora, Vectra Construtora Ltda. and Protenge Urbanismo Ltda. |
| Bourbon Premium | 173 | 2017 | Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora and Protenge Urbanismo Ltda. |
| Porto Royale Condomínio e Resort | 286 | 2017 | Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora |
| Porto Unique Residence SPA Resort | 413 | 2018 | Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora |
| Hectares Park & Resort | 493 (90 hectares) | 2018 | São Bento Incorporadora |
| Condomínio Riviera | 95 | 2019 | Saad Lorensini Construtora e Incorporadora |
| Vivere do Lago Condomínio e Resort | 687 | 2020 | Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora |
| **Total** | **4.656** | | |

Table 01 - Dourados-MS – Companies responsible for the implementation of gated communities (2008 - 2020). Source: Companies' website. Org.: Author.

In order for the gated communities to be established in the northern area of the city, giving, to a certain extent, continuity to the expansion and real estate valuation front that had been taking place since the 1970s, it was necessary to overcome the physical barrier imposed by the Córrego Laranja Doce, an obstacle to accessibility. The solution came with the construction of a bridge9 and a paved road, which enabled the expansion/integration that, until then, had been blocked by the stream. Accessibility was further increased with the proximity of the ring road and with the opening of an avenue, Avenida Dom Redovino – an undertaking carried out by Saad Lorensini, a business group from Dourados, involved in the implementation of gated communities and in the design of a mall, in the same area of the city – which connects to Avenida Presidente Vargas (the main road that connects the northern district to the central area).

The concentration of the higher income social segments on the north/northwest axis reinforces previous processes of the space social division. Out of the twelve gated communities implemented during the period 2008 to 2019, ten (83.3%) are located in the north and northwest portions of the city.[10] This dynamic, which marks a selective condition in this portion of the city and thus indicates the intensification of the process of socio-spatial segregation, can also be dimensioned based on the market value of the land. According to information by Araújo (2019), based on data from the Department of Finance of the Municipality of Dourados, the average price of the lots per m2 in the northern districts is around 500% higher than the prices in the southern portion.

The data from the 2000 and 2010 Demographic Censuses, grouped by census sectors, also reveal another indicator of the socio-spatial segmentation process within the city. When considering, for example, the heads of families with income above 20 minimum wages, it is observed that they dwell

mostly in the northwestern districts. On the other hand, if the section surveyed includes illiterate people and heads of households with low education, it appears that they are concentrated in the peripheral areas, especially in the south and southeast areas.

As an enhancement of this socio-spatial segmentation logic, private schools (Colégio Lumiére, Wings Educacional and the Yázigi Language Network), shopping arcades, are in the process of being installed in an area attached to the gated communities, and the project to implement the Riviera shopping, as reported in the press, an initiative of the Saad Lorensini group deserve to be highlighted.[11] This trend further confirms that this new segmentation logic is not limited to housing spaces, as is peculiar to the origin of the concept of segregation. But, it indicates that: "Now, new elements are combined to acknowledge fragmentation." (SPOSITO and GÓES 2013, p. 295).

Also engendering new dynamics of socio-spatial segmentation, we can mention the case of buildings in an advanced stage of construction: the Grand Parc Residence & Resort ("twin towers", in Parque Alvorada, northwestern section)[12] and the building advertised as being the tallest building in the city, with 34 floors – the Euro Garden Residence Spa & Resort – on the high end of Avenida Presidente Vargas, which is the access road to the gated communities, in the northern districts.

In this framework, and due to a combination of factors, the periphery changes its content, gaining plurality. As shown in Map 01, it is not the same periphery. Generally speaking, there is the periphery for the higher-income segments and the periphery for the lower-income segments, clearly represented, the former, by the presence of gated communities (concentrated in the northern portion of the city), and the latter, by the presence of PMCMV project, section 1e of areas of "irregular" occupation (mainly concentrated in the southern and southeastern districts of the city and separated from the urban fabric, consolidated by the BR-163 highway). This division portrays one of the particularities or dimensions of the socio-spatial fragmentation process in medium-sized cities: peripheral spaces where the "[...] occurrence of contiguity without continuity is observed" (SALGUEIRO, 2001, p.115).

As already mentioned, the articulation of interests between public power and land-real estate-developer capital impacts the socio-spatial conformation, producing spatial results that accentuate segregation, through the splitting of the city into opposite "sectors". Furthermore spatial selectivity tends to be even more radical in cities like Dourados, when compared to major cities. This is because in the metropolises, the new real estate products, according to Prévôt-Schapira (2000, p. 19), do not occur on virgin lands, but on the fringes previously characterized by the presence of popular occupation or of impoverished population. "De ahí que surge la voluntad de cerrar los espacios residenciales, de vigilar la entrada, incluso de ocultar con muros los barrios pobres que los 'pocos felices' deben atravesar."

In the case of Dourados, this process certainly characterizes a new form of space production that changes the previous socio-spatial configuration, when the periphery was a place of residence only for the poor, revealing new spatial practices and new representations of these spaces. Thus, there is a peripherization of the whole and the parts, and the notion of periphery as distance is overcome (SEABRA, 2004, p. 202).

In redefining the content of the periphery, the relationship with the city as a whole is redefined. Sposito (2011, p. 140) further enhances that the set up of gated communities is one of the redefinition vectors of the center-periphery logic. Thus, the contents of the periphery are revealed in new fronts of real estate valuation and in the new socio-spatial practices.

The different social segments seldom share the same urban territory, as there is a denial of the city to a possibility of integration, as the increase in spatial distances cools off relationships and results in the withdrawal of the city's uses and consumption, including the use of and the consumption in the main center. The PMCMV Level 1 housing projects, for example, installed in areas of lesser "social prestige" and separated from the urban fabric consolidated by the BR-163 highway, to which accrue popular private social land subdivisions that enhance the concentration of lower income social segments in the southern and southeastern periphery of the city, impose difficulties in accessing schools, the workplace, health facilities, leisure or entertainment. This is the case of the residential ventures, Dioclécio Artuzi, Harrison de Figueiredo and Ildefonso Pedroso that, together, add up to more than two thousand housing units concentrated in the southeast areas.

Access to the city complex can be assessed in yet another of its dimensions, based on the survey carried out by Souza (2020) with 115 residents of the Harrison de Figueiredo housing complex. Asked

about the frequency with which they go downtown, the interviewees, in an expressive majority (95%), stated that they go there only once a month, due to unavoidable obligations. The research also reveals that the main reasons for this sporadic frequency are linked to non-affordable conditions and the long and tiring commute required. As for the purchase of food or clothing, residents reported that they do not usually shop at the downtown stores.

The location of these housing complexes, more than hindering the use of infrastructure, equipment and services, reduces access to the whole of the city, making contact between its residents unfeasible. The segmented spatial layout that features the discontinuation of the urban fabric reveals differences and directly interferes in the socio-spatial practice, concretely and symbolically imprinting a new daily life, as the forms are capable of redefining contents.

Corroborating this picture, we highlight the occupation areas called "irregular", where the peripherization process is also revealed, which produces places clearly marked by precarious living conditions (Figure 03). In this perspective, as Sposito warns (2019a, p. 22), the socio-spatial condition of city dwellers directs "processes of separation that go beyond segregation and self-segregation to achieve socio-spatial fragmentation".



Figure 03 - Dourados-MS: Areas of intrusion. Photo: Ailton Lima (2019)

In Dourados, this logic is present in the new locations, which do not favor contact, coexistence and, as a result, integration, since "[...] space practices weave the conditions determining social life" (CERTEAU, 2014, pp. 162-3). They do not only express different ways of living, but different ways of thinking, living, feeling and conceiving their own space.

The new socio-spatial structure makes unfeasible the "meeting of the differences", even though, in some cases, they may be physically close. And here an important point arises: the new front of expansion and real estate valuation, contradictorily, advances towards the Indigenous Reservation.[13]As can also be seen in Map 01, most of the top-valued gated communities are neighboring to the Indigenous Reservation and, actually, impose a barrier that visibly sets the boundary and the separation: a wall (Figure 04).



Figure 04 - Dourados-MS: Ecoville Residence gated community wall. Photo: The author (2020)

Commenting on this proximity, one of the brokers of the Hectares closed allotment asserted that it would not be possible for any indigenous person to "enter there drunk. They will not enter. They cannot. If they come in, they will be contained quickly. They are investing a lot in the security team, because the people who will come here are very concerned about security. They value security a lot."[14] This reveals, as Sposito points out (2019a, p. 18-19), a change in the nature of socio-spatial distance, "which is no longer measured only metrically, but is also the result of new forms of separation, both objective and physical (such as walls) and subjective (control and surveillance systems that generate intimidation and social hierarchy)", which enhances the deepening of inequalities.

The expansion of the urban perimeter can be pointed out as one of the causes of part of the "disputes" that occur in the so-called indigenous repossession areas[15] (Figure 05), because, with territorial expansion, the urban area practically invaded the Indigenous Reservation, as can also be seen on the Map. With the advance of new gated communities, the socio-spatial separation imposed by the walls becomes evident, which makes it more complex, as the walls do not only configure physical barriers, but "[...] expression and conditions of new values and representation of cities, which guide spatial and temporal practices"(SPOSITO; GOES, 2013, p. 301).



Figure 05 - Dourados-MS: Areas of indigenous repossession that surround the urban perimeter. Photo: The author (2019).

The distancing revealed daily also gives rise to a process of construction for those who do not live within walls, especially the indigenous people, or the stranger, the unwanted, or the "other". As Legroux (2021, p. 239) puts it: "Fragmentation thus expresses an intensification and a complexification of different processes, some older, others more recent."

The case of the Dourados Indigenous Reservation demonstrates, as stated by Sposito (2011, p. 141), that "the rich and the poor are juxtaposed, making inequality combined with this relative geographic proximity one of the essential elements of socio-spatial fragmentation, when one wants to enhance its spatial dimension". It should also be added that the flat topography of Dourados allows not to expose the differences, with no confrontation even at the level of "[...] uncomfortable and permanent vision of the poor neighborhood" (SPOSITO; GÓES, 2013, p. 235).

Secured by the actions of the government, the new forms of action of private capitals become more expressive and, as a result, they reveal disparities in the socio-spatial plan, since, also in medium-sized cities, practices and "places of life" are not the same. In the dialectical relationship between social processes and spatial forms, changes occur both in the content of the periphery and in the center-periphery arrangements, in order to indicate the outline of a more complex logic of structuring the city.

# CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of the Dourados reality, we sought to highlight the dynamics which are increasingly observed in medium-sized cities, revealing more complex socio-spatial forms, as treated by urbanization scholars and the structuring of contemporary Latin American major cities.

In Dourados, especially from the 1970s onwards, a logic with marked segmentation developed, in which a central-peripheral conformation is evidenced, in the terms presented by Caldeira (2000) and

Sposito (2019b). However, from the year 2000 onwards, new socio-spatial dynamics form a more heterogeneous periphery, with the reconfiguration of the center-peripheral relationship and the evidence of a new and deeper expression of socio-spatial segregation. Thus, over time, the intensification of the dynamics that promoted the integration of Dourados into the national and world economy imposed more complex logics for structuring the city, resulting in changes in urban forms and in their content.

The local government, in an articulation of interests with the land-real estate-developer capital, allows the space to be introduced into a more intense circuit of exchange, allowing for greater segmentation of access and a redefinition of socio-spatial practices. First, through the SFH and the municipal housing policy, which impose a new structuring logic, with an equally new social division of space. Later, with the PMCMV undertakings and with changes in legislation, which have promoted the extension and dispersion of the urban fabric, imposing a structuring logic that widens the distance of the poorest and ensures the performance of real estate agents, with the launch of their new products.

As a result, the socio-spatial segmentation process, already underway since the 1970s, gained new contours, with the presence of PMCMV Level 1 projects (in the southern and southeastern portion of the city) and gated communities (in the northern section of the city), since the entry of a new real estate product has the potential to generate/stimulate spatial practices that mark the deepening of inequalities[16], also revealed in squatter settlements or slums within the city.

The recent arrival of large capitals, through projects linked to the PMCMV (Rodobens), or even groups such as Plaenge, Vectra and Alphaville (largest developer in the field of gated communities operating in Brazil), enhanced the process of urban land commodification and drives the performance of local or regional companies such as Saad Lorensini, Corpal Incorporadora e Construtora (based in Dourados) and São Bento Incorporadora (based in Naviraí-MS). Thus, the presence of national and/or international scale companies associated with local and regional companies, unravel an articulation of land, real estate and developers interests, promoting the new logic of space production. And these agents, by promoting spatial selectivity, which, in a way, separates the city into opposite "sectors", clearly represented by the north and south portions in the city of Dourados, produce a socio-spatial configuration that justifies the use of the conceptual notion of fragmentation in some of its dimensions.

The new locations, where walled developments are installed, with large leisure areas and equipped with security systems, have leveraged new socio-spatial practices, with the creation of a differentiated and significantly concentrated area in the northern portion of the city, so that inequality does not stand out only in the peripheralization of the poorest, but also in the segregation of the richest in these gated communities.

Currently, meetings between different social segments are practically unfeasible because, besides not occupying the same areas of the city since the 1970s, they do not consume the same products, nor do they visit the same places, since socioeconomic inequalities combine, each time more, with the segmentation of consumption spaces, which is especially aggravated in a city like Dourados, where the expansion of the urban perimeter makes it even more difficult to guarantee rights, such as the mobility right.

In addition to the new forms of production and reconfiguration of urban space, it is worth stressing the development of a project to set up a new shopping center and the recent resumption of high-end vertical production in the north and northwest areas of the city, which engender new spatial dynamics, with the following resulting consequences: increased distances, interferences in spatial practice and expansion of socio-spatial contradictions within the city. This is accentuated, as pointed out, by the fact that gated communities are being set up on the front which opens towards the Indigenous Reservation of Dourados, making it clear that, although very close, they are separated by all means, including by a very concrete boundary, the wall.

Thus, especially from the second half of the 2000 decade onwards, the spreading of the urban fabric and the development of a city in which the periphery takes up new contents, and new forms of separation become demarcated within the city. In other words, as a result of recent transformations, new areas emerge in which the different segments find themselves socio-spatially distant, showing new structuring elements of the segregation process and outlining fragmentation dynamics that, in turn, cross and deepen segregation. This logic produces new meanings, which create the potential and the need for new spatial practices, among which there is no more space for meetings, dialogue, recognition. Due to

the impossibility of contact and sharing of experiences between different social segments, spatial distances translate into socio-spatial distances.

The dynamics underway in Dourados indicate a reconfiguration of the center-periphery logic and the design of a more complex socio-spatial logic. This trend shows that the city stands as a form and condition for new content and practices and also enhances the observation that the fragmentation dimensions are not only appearing in Brazilian and/or Latin American big cities where they have occurred first and with greater intensity, but also elsewhere.

# NOTES

1. The text is the result of reflections triggered by two research projects: 1) Socio-spatial fragmentation and Brazilian urbanization: scales, vectors, rhythms, forms and contents, funded by FAPESP, in the thematic project modality - Case No. 18/07701-8. It is based on dwelling, one of the five empirical dimensions of the project – dwelling, working, consuming, leisure and mobility; 2) The Minha Casa Minha Vida Program and its socio-spatial consequences: the new vectors of space production in medium-sized Brazilian cities, financed by CNPq, Universal Notice. Process No. 439596/2018-1.

2. Aiming to analyze the current relations between space and society, Morcuende Gonzáles (2020) starts from a reflection exercise on the concept of fragmentation in the scope of Latin American production. It considers general processes, such as the capitalism crisis and planetary urbanization, in relation to the fragmentation of everyday life.

3. When dealing with the relationship between segregation and fragmentation Sposito (2013, p. 84), points out that, even though from the point of view of depth, the segregation-self-segregation pair is more radical, as it can prohibit the right to come and go, fragmentation is more comprehensive, as it involves the city as a whole.

4. In this direction, discussing the relationship between the social and the spatial, Soja (1993) states that they are not just homologous, but dialectically interconnected. For Carlos (2007, p. 46), the socio-spatial adjective points to the shift in analysis, “configuring an essence and an orientation for understanding the spatial process: the social.”

5. For a closer look at the discussion on socio-spatial differentiation and inequality, see Sposito (2011, p. 127-130).

6. Excerpt from the interview conducted with Alberto Campos Perdomo on April 23, 1999. (CALIXTO, 2000, p.158-159).

7. UFGD had an annual budget of over R$150 million. See: http://portal.ufgd.edu.br/aufgd/historico. Consultation held on August 3, 2019.

8. Based on the market values practiced in the second half of 2016, Silva (2017, p. 214) states that: “In Dourados, the average price of rural land is R$ 25,000.00/ha, which is equivalent to R$2.50 per m2, while the average price of urban land reaches R$400.00 per m2. Thus, the latter multiplies by 160 times the value of the first.”

9. According to Silva (2017), this was an action by Plaenge, in partnership with Vectra Construtora, on the occasion of the implementation of the first gated land subdivision in the northern section, the Ecoville Residence.

10. Only two of these land subdivisions (which have not yet been consolidated in terms of effective occupation) were implemented in the southern portion, indicating a logic that reinforces the discontinuity of the urban fabric. They are placed as an element of social distinction, separate and, at the same time, close to neighborhoods destined for lower-income segments.

11. Available at: . Accessed on November 26, 2020.

12. Available at: . Accessed on August 03, 2020.

13. TheReservaIndígena de Dourados (RID, Dourados Indigenous Reserve), formed by the Jaguapirú and Bororó Villages, is located in the northern section, about 01 km from the urban perimeter of Dourados. It currently has about 15 thousand inhabitants of three ethnic groups: Caiuás (Kaiowá),

Guarani (Ñandeva) and Terena.

14. Excerpt from the conversation held with Luiz, sales broker, on 10.31.2019.

15. The state of Mato Grosso do Sul is marked by land conflicts involving, above all, the demarcation of indigenous lands. The expropriation of the Guarani and Kaiowá led to the formation of camps for indigenous people who claimed their traditional territories. The expression area of repossession refers to an area that makes up a wider territory, partially recovered and occupied by indigenous people. These areas are recognized by the indigenous community as traditional territory and a part of them is in the process of study and identification by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). Currently, it is estimated that there are around 11 areas of repossession around the Indigenous Reservation and the urban perimeter of Dourados. As we can see on the map, some of these areas are located within the perimeter, as is the case of the area called Nu Porã, in the southeastern portion of the city.

16. Sposito (2011, p. 142). "[...] It is about the deepening of inequalities, denying the possibility of dialogue between the differences, which justifies the adoption of the notion of socio-spatial fragmentation..."

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