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2016

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

The Making of Global Suburbs:
Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Planning Practices

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Planning, Policy, and Design

by

Juliana Miranda Zanotto

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Scott A. Bollens, Chair
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2016

DEDICATION

To

My parents
who may not understand the English words in this dissertation,
but who have given me unconditional support

*Mãe, Pai,
dedico essa tese a vocês
como um pequeno gesto de agradecimento
por todo o apoio e amor que recebi
apesar das dificuldades e da saudade*

To

Erwann and Lucca
who fill my heart with joy and love

Je vous aime de tout mon cœur

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APA	Area of Environmental Protection <i>Área de Proteção Ambiental</i>
COMEC	Metropolitan Planning Agency <i>Coordenação da Região Metropolitana de Curitiba</i>
IAP	State Environmental Agency <i>Instituto Ambiental do Paraná</i>
MRC	Metropolitan Region of Curitiba
UTP	Territorial Unity of Planning <i>Unidade Territorial de Planejamento</i>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I was approaching the completion of this dissertation, I became deeply affected by two political events: the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, and the election of Donald Trump in the United States. These events exposed great divisions in how people react to what they perceive to be “realities.” As I observed the viewpoints of people around me, I became increasingly aware of where I stand. I felt a deeper connection to my own values and worldviews. I want to thank the many people who have shaped who I am and who helped me nurture the values I hold dear.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my family in Brazil: my father, my mother, my brother, and my sister for surrounding me with unconditional love. I value their support, patience, and understanding. I want to thank them for helping me, for believing in me, and for making me smile. I am also very grateful for the many times they flew across the continent to be with me. Completing a doctoral degree in a foreign country might seem like a great achievement, but it is simply the result of the love and support of my family who taught me the value of education, humility, honesty, and persistence. They have been and will always be by my side.

My deepest gratitude goes to my partner Erwann and my son Lucca. They always made me feel that things were going to be all right, even when workload, bureaucracies, and uncertainty were overwhelming. I am thankful for their patience and love during the countless hours I spent in front of the computer. I am also indebted to Erwann for making us great food and planning fun weekends. The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the re-energizing time in the company of my boys and away from books and papers.

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Scott Bollens, for being constantly excited about my ideas and for asking me the hard questions. I appreciated his generosity and availability. He always encouraged me to move forward and to be honest about where I stand. I have been inspired by his research and his reassuring trust in humankind. It has been a privilege to work with him.

My sincere appreciation is extended to the faculty members at the University of California, Irvine, who welcomed me and generously shared their knowledge, reflections, and insights. I am especially grateful to my committee members. The class I took with Dr. Smith and the conversations I had with him provided me a greater understanding of what globalization and neoliberalism mean. I am thankful for the feedback he provided throughout the years.

Dr. Martha Feldman has been a great mentor as she patiently worked with me since my first year at UCI. I have a deep admiration for her research and teaching styles. She embodies the kind of dedicated, accomplished, and insightful female academic I aspire to be. I am grateful for her guidance in this direction. I also want to thank her for introducing me to the practice theory reading group. This group has provided me a valuable intellectually stimulating experience.

I am extremely thankful to Dr. John Whiteley who supported me in many ways throughout my trajectory at UCI. His enthusiastic care for the wellbeing of students is truly inspiring. I feel very lucky to have worked with him. He read this dissertation thoroughly several times and helped me to become a better writer. I also would like to thank him for introducing me to the Empowering Sustainability initiative, for trusting me, and for going out of his way to help me when I needed help. As he has said many times, we are family.

There is no doubt that I would not have succeeded as an international doctoral student without the help and patience of several UCI staff members. I deeply appreciated the prompt assistance I received in numerous occasions from Norma Yokota, Janet Gallagher, Jennie Craig Welti, and the staff at the International Center. They made my life much easier.

This research would not have been possible without the trust of my informants. I want to thank all my interviewees for taking the time to share with me some of their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. They enabled me to broaden my perspectives and to understand where they stand. I am also very thankful to my planning colleagues who welcomed me in their office and allowed me to observe their work.

I would like to thank the many people who have written numerous letters of recommendations throughout the years. I am thankful for the support of Dr. Johanna Looye and Frank Russell, at the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Cristina de Araújo Lima, at the Federal University of Paraná, Dr. Scott Bollens, Dr. Martha Feldman, Dr. John Whiteley, and Dr. Ken Chew, at UCI.

In the past years at UCI, I enjoyed the friendship of people who made life as a doctoral student enjoyable and interesting. I am particularly grateful for the conversations, cups of coffee, and hugs I shared with Deborah Lefkowitz, Mo Sami, Victoria Lowerson, and Sally Geislar. Thanks also to my Empowering Sustainability family around the world. I value their trust, their knowledge, and their energy. They have inspired me to strive for a better world.

Finally, I thank the Brazilian government agency CAPES for providing two years of funding through the Full Doctorate Abroad Grant, BEX1051/12-1. And, I thank the University of California, Irvine for providing funding through several scholarships, grants, and awards.

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ABSTRACT

The Making of Global Suburbs:
Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Planning Practices

By

Juliana Miranda Zanotto

Doctor of Philosophy in Planning, Policy, and Design

University of California, Irvine, 2016

Professor Scott A. Bollens, Chair

In this research, I critically examine the making of global suburbs—affluent communities on the peripheries of cities across the world that house transnational elites and actualize in space great socio-economic inequality and wealth concentration. From a practice theory approach, I utilize the case of the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba, in Brazil, to analyze the local practices that justify, legitimize, and enable the creation of these spaces in connection with larger social structures, particularly globalization and neoliberalism.

I look at global suburbs in relation to the flows of people, goods, and ideas under globalization; the principles and assumptions of neoliberalism; the role of regulatory agencies; the discursive practices that legitimate actions; the way in which planners make sense of their work; and the relationships between the elite and the poor in an unequal post-colonial society. The analyses reveal the making of global suburbs as framed within specific ways of seeing reality that makes these spaces feasible, desirable, and legitimate, despite potential negative social

and environmental outcomes such as segregation and environmental destruction.

Widespread and uncritically accepted neoliberal principles, such as privatization, individualism, competitiveness, decentralization, and efficiency provide the basis for discourses, policies, and values that enable the making of global suburbs. At the same time, both the enactment of practices and the spaces they create and legitimate reproduce the social, political, economic, and institutional structures that enabled their existence in the first place. Ultimately, the research unveils how spaces with potential regressive outcomes are created.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Que é mesmo a minha neutralidade senão a maneira cômoda, talvez, mas hipócrita, de esconder minha opção ou meu medo de acusar a injustiça? Lavar as mãos em face da opressão é reforçar o poder do opressor, é optar por ele.

What is really my neutrality if not a comfortable, perhaps, but hypocritical, way of hiding my choices or my fear to fault the injustice? To wash one's hands on the face of oppression is to reinforce the oppressor's power, to side with him.

(Paulo Freire, 1996, *Pedagogia da Autonomia*)

Teresa Caldeira opens her book *City of Walls* with a chapter she titled “Anthropology with an Accent.” When I first read her book as a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, I realized that the title of the chapter defined my situation as it defined hers. As a Brazilian living and studying in the United States and conducting research in Brazil, my interests, analyses, perceptions, and ways of understanding the world are unequivocally shaped by subjective experiences in both countries.

Writing a dissertation and communicating my perceptions in English served to heighten my appreciation for the role of language itself. Language is socially constructed. As such, it significantly defines our world and our perception of “realities.” As I search for English words to describe what I observe in Brazil, and as I stumble to explain the meaning of Portuguese words to my fellow American colleagues, I feel the degree to which the phenomena I am studying are embedded in their local and diverse contexts. At the same time, I am

constantly reminded of the transnational character of urbanization processes, especially when I observe similarities between American and Brazilian business centers, shopping malls, and residential developments.

My interest in the matters I address in this research was born of an event filled with different accents. Eight years ago, I received a call from a Romanian friend who had graduated from a Master's program in the United States and was working for an urban design firm in Irvine, California. I was heading home at the end of a class on suburbanization, taught by a Bulgarian professor, when she called. She explained that she had been working on the design of a suburban community to be built in Brazil. She needed help translating some words from English to Portuguese.

She later sent me an email with the words to be translated: master planned community models, neighborhood prototype, regional big "m" (market) questions, town models, international green building programs, home, sustainable opportunities. As a graduate student in the United States, I understood the meaning of these words. But even though I had studied urban planning in Brazil, I struggled to translate some of these words, especially not knowing the context in which they were going to be used. I also wondered how someone who did not know Portuguese could grasp reasonably the local context in order to design a residential development. I sent her a few options explaining that they were not completely accurate because it was difficult for me to translate some of the words. When she thanked me, she added that it would have been difficult for her to translate these words into Romanian as well.

Today, the translation would have been much easier. In the past few years these words have been popularized as they are often now employed in discourses supporting current spatial transformations in Brazil, including the proliferation of upscale exclusionary enclaves on the outskirts of major cities. These spaces, which I refer to as “global suburbs,” are the spatial focus of this research. But rather than diving into physical or social analyses of these spaces as given, I am interested in discussing *how* they are *made*. Throughout this manuscript, I use the phrase “making of global suburbs” to emphasize the perspective that these spaces are not natural or logically expected responses to urban growth, violence, or people’s innate desires. Instead, they are created – or more accurately – manufactured, packaged, and sold in the global economy. But beyond commodities, these spaces produce and reproduce the social, political, and institutional structures that enabled their existence in the first place.

The conceptual framework I employ echoes Dikeç’s (2007, 4) approach to spaces “not as given, but as produced through various practices of articulation,” including urban policies as “institutionalized practices that define space.” As Lefebvre (1991) suggests, spaces are intentionally produced by humans and, rather than being empty containers in which interactions and activities take place, they shape the kind of interactions and activities that *may* take place. Lefebvre’s neo-Marxist approach highlights the *production* of space as part of the economy. But he also calls attention to the role of spaces in constituting realities, in expressing meanings, and in influencing behaviors.

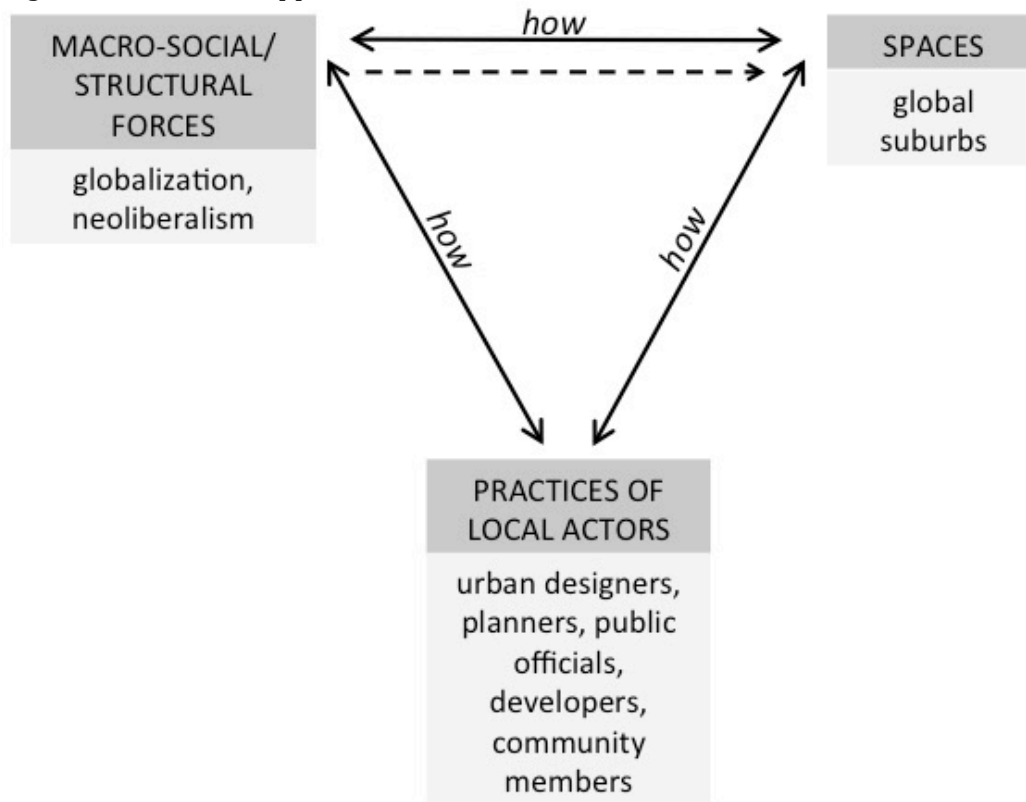
Lefebvre's conceptualization of the production of space parallels Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration, which proposes the mutual constitution of structures and agency. What he calls "duality of structures" suggests that "the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of practices they recursively organize (p. 25)." Structures, which Giddens understands as properties of social systems in the form of rules and resources, both enable and constrain actions at the same time as they are produced and reproduced by actions.

Drawing from these theoretical lenses, I approach this research project from an understanding that spaces, practices, and social structures are mutually constituted. I propose that spaces play an active (rather than passive) role in enabling and constraining practices, activities, and relationships that in turn produce and reproduce social structures. Rather than forming a linear and unidirectional relationship, structures, spaces, and practices are circularly affecting each other, as Figure 1.1 illustrates. I conceptualize these connections not just as Lefebvre's social production of spaces, but also as the *spatial production of the social*.

Figure 1.1 illustrates an approach that differs from what others studying the relationship between social structures and spaces (e.g. Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000, Sassen 2006) have presented because it introduces local (discursive and non-discursive) practices into the equation. Thus, while sociologists, geographers, and planners agree that recent spatial transformations, such as heightened urban fragmentation, are outcomes of

structural transformations, particularly the advancement of neoliberalism and globalization (i.e. the relationship represented by the dotted line on Figure 1.1), little attention has been given to *how* this relationship occurs at the local level. Also, largely missing from these accounts is a consideration of the inverse relationship, i.e. how spaces may enable, reinforce, or constrain social relations and structures. This is what I refer to as the spatial production of the social.

Figure 1.1: Research approach



Source: Author

I address these gaps through the investigation of practices carried out at the local level. The practices I analyze pertain to the making global suburbs. Throughout this manuscript, little is said about practices related to the making of

plans and policies. It is a deliberate choice to analyze the making of spaces, rather than plan or policy making.

It is widely acknowledged in Brazil that what actually gets done in cities has little resemblance to the recommendations contained in plans and policies (Maricato 2000). Although municipalities and metropolitan regions are often mandated to elaborate and frequently revise Master Plans, what is written in them rarely translates to the built world. The gap might result from a variety of reasons including badly written plans containing vague recommendations, poor understanding of the reality and actual needs of municipalities, and a disregard for the actual political, economic, and institutional capacity of the public sector to implement recommendations. Another frequent reason for the weak role of plans in shaping the city is the influence of groups with economic and political power to affect what gets done in spite of the recommendations contained in formal plans.

Similarly, policies and legislation suffer from deficiencies that hinder their translation into action. One reason is that poorly written policies and legislation leave too much room for interpretation. Another reason is that, in some cases, no legal tool is available to regulatory agencies as guides in determining the fate of development proposals. Another aspect to be considered is the actual implementation and enforcement of laws. In Brazil, laws are arbitrarily applied. They are said “to stick” when they are actually applied and enforced. Laws that “don’t stick” are largely ignored.

In this context, I focus on the making of global suburbs from an understanding that cities are shaped incrementally, one development at a time.

Thus, the study of how spaces are created in Brazil is more relevant to the understanding of what gets done in cities than the study of plans and legislation. This assumption was corroborated by several of my informants who pointed to the deficiencies of plans and legislation and who acknowledged that cities do not reflect what is written in text. However, to the extent that plans and legislation are important to the fate of global suburbs, they will be discussed.

I examine the making of global suburbs as a phenomenon whose existence depends on practices carried out by a variety of actors. For these spaces to emerge and proliferate, actors need to imagine, design, finance, approve, build, sell, buy, live in, and accept them. This is true for virtually all spaces that are institutionally created (i.e. created through formal planning processes). However, it is particularly interesting to study the making of global suburbs because of the controversial nature of these spaces. Upscale exclusionary enclaves are often built on peripheries that have been traditionally occupied by irregular settlements and low-income communities. In these locations, infrastructure, services, and recreational and cultural amenities are deficient or scarce. Often, global suburbs (characterized as upscale low-density and single-use spaces) occupy environmentally protected areas.

Rather than neutral or unequivocally desirable spaces, global suburbs represent a series of tensions related to social inequality, environmental protection, influences on the production of space, and the role of the public and private sectors. To understand the making of these spaces, which may, from a cynical but plausible perspective, be defined as elitist and segregationist

unsustainable spaces, is to move forward the discussion on how urban planning practices might advance regressive outcomes that intensify inequalities and environmental decline.

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, this research is concerned with the mutual constitution of global suburbs, globalization, neoliberalism, and local practices (especially, planning related practices), The broader questions framed under this research approach are:

- a) How are spaces that may generate negative social and environmental impacts created?
- b) How do globalization and neoliberalism enable and constrain the creation of these spaces?
- c) How do planners, designers, and public officials, who are generally aware of the potential regressive outcomes of exclusionary spaces (including segregation and inequality), make sense of their work?
- d) How do spaces reproduce the political, social, and economic structures that enabled their existence in the first place?

I address these questions through a multi-level analysis of a single case study: the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba in Brazil (MRC). The research includes the analyses of various dimensions of the process of making global suburbs. It explores, more specifically, elements at the structural, institutional, collective, and individual levels that must come together in alignment for these spaces to emerge and proliferate. I look at global suburbs in relation to:

- the flows of people, goods, and ideas under globalization;
- the principles and assumptions of neoliberalism;
- the role of public agencies;
- the discursive practices that legitimate actions;
- the way in which planners make sense of their work; and
- the relationships between the elite and the poor in an unequal post-colonial society.

As will be the case throughout this dissertation, I approach the matters under investigation from a critical viewpoint. If we consider global suburbs not as a given, but as resulting from a series of actions and decisions of actors with (conscious and perhaps unconscious) interests, then we must ask not only how they are made (as I ask in this study), but also if they *should* be made. Answering the second question involves grasping the potential (political, social, environmental, cultural) effects of these spaces. It also presupposes the making of value-based judgments about such effects. It is not an easy task to identify the effects of global suburbs or to adopt value-based judgments that satisfy pluralist societies. Nevertheless, it is not a neutral decision to study the making of global suburbs. On the contrary, it is an attempt to understand what I describe as the *detached urbanism* enacted by the planning professionals I observed.

Planning is a normative practice. It is preoccupied – at least in the way it is taught and theorized – with ideas, values, skills, and methods that make cities better. Although “the meaning of ‘better’ remains an assumed ethical principle” (Winkler and Duminy 2014, 3) that is rarely questioned, there are overarching

goals theorists largely attribute to planning practice. These include the advancement of equality, justice, inclusiveness, diversity, and sustainability.

It is difficult to argue that planning practice should advance anything that opposes these common sense and noble goals. However, it is difficult to argue that global suburbs promote equality, justice, inclusiveness, diversity, or sustainability. The frustration and resentment expressed by some of my informants indicate they also perceive a gap between the ideal normative goals of planning and the real spaces it creates. At the same time, I am puzzled by the detachment of some of my planning colleagues.

I do not take global suburbs for granted. I suggest that simplistic justifications for their existence, such as urban growth, threat of violence, or people's innate desires superficially address more complex and nuanced relationships. By problematizing the making of global suburbs, I assume that the level of physical and symbolic exclusion instigated in these spaces is neither natural nor immutable.

The dissertation is organized in nine chapters. Chapter 2 explains the choice of the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba as a case study, and describes the data collection and analysis methods. Chapter 3 discusses the spatial focus of this research, including the reasons for adopting the term "global suburbs," the characteristics of these spaces, and a brief spatial analysis of global suburbs in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba.

Chapters 4 through 8 present the analysis and empirical findings of the making of global suburbs in the MRC (see Table 1.1). They are organized

according to macro-social and institutional contexts as well as collective and individual practices that enable the production of these spaces. Chapters 4 through 8 address how global suburbs are conceptualized, designed, financed, approved, built, sold, and inhabited.

Chapter 4 focuses on the role of globalization in facilitating the movement of people, money, and ideas to travel across countries. These flows have influenced the design and finance of global suburbs in Brazil. They have also shaped consumer's preferences for specific types of architecture, housing, and communities, making global suburbs a successful market product.

Chapter 5 provides a description and analysis of the regulatory and permitting process that enables global suburbs to legally exist. It focuses on relationships, legislation, and the public value of regulatory agencies. The analysis points to specific ways in which relationships, legislation, and public value are structured, employed, and defined in order to support the current permitting process.

Chapter 6 focuses on the enactment of discourses whose framings limit ways of seeing and acting and, in turn, enable global suburbs to emerge as legitimate urban typologies. I deconstruct the dominant discourse in order to make visible its framing, limits, and taken for granted assumptions. I also discuss how the dominant discourse serves different actors who enact them.

Chapter 7 addresses planning practices, particularly the design of global suburbs carried out in the private sector. It theorizes an approach to planning practice that I call 'detached urbanism' and which entails political, professional,

and valuative detachment by planning practitioners. Detached urbanism explains how these professionals understand their role.

Chapter 8 explores intra-personal relationships between the affluent newcomers and the traditional low-income residents at the periphery. It explains how a peaceful and friendly relationship is maintained through symbolic practices of inclusion despite the territorial practices of exclusion that are adopted in global suburbs. Finally, Chapter 9 outlines and connects the main findings articulated in this research and provides final thoughts on methodological, theoretical, and practical contributions.

Table 1.1. Organization of the empirical chapters

CHAPTER	QUESTION(S)	DATA SOURCE	FOCUS OF ANALYSIS
Chapter 4: Globalization in Global Suburbs	How is globalization manifested in and reproduced by global suburbs?	Primary data: site visits, interviews, participant observation Secondary data: news reports, website, theses and dissertations	Ideas, events, and behaviors influenced by trends originating in other countries or that reflect global connections
Chapter 5: The Permitting Process	How are global suburbs regulated and approved?	Primary data: interviews and participant observation Secondary data: plans and legislation	Actors and resources that are part of the permitting process as well as the concerns, roles, and values of regulatory agencies
Chapter 6: Framing Discourses and Legitimizing Practices of Neoliberal Urbanism	How are global suburbs legitimized? How have they become largely accepted as an urban typology by a diverse group of actors with diverse interests?	Primary data: interviews and participant observation Secondary data: legislation, theses and dissertations	Implicit assumptions, framings, dichotomies.
Chapter 7: Detached Urbanism	How private sector planners involved in the making of global suburbs understand their role and their practices?	Primary data: Interviews and participant observation	Planners work, routines, resources, concerns, relationships, feelings, and viewpoints
Chapter 8: Territorial Exclusion and Symbolic Inclusion	How may the peaceful coexistence of global suburbs and low-income peripheral communities be explained?	Primary data: Interviews and site visits Secondary data: theses and dissertations	Interactions between global suburbs residents and favela dwellers

Source: Author

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

On the part of the researcher, creative and solid data analysis requires astute questioning, a relentless search for answers, active observation, and accurate recall. It is a process of fitting data together, of making the invisible obvious, of linking and attributing consequences to antecedents. It is a process of conjecture and verification, of correction and modification, of suggestion and defense.

(Janice M. Morse and Peggy Anne Field, 1995, *Qualitative Research for Health Professionals*, 126)

The research approach in this project combines principles of social ecology, political economy, and practice theory. From a social ecology approach, I analyze complex social phenomena from different scales and a multiplicity of disciplines. From the political economy perspective, I emphasize the importance of political institutions and economic systems. Utilizing practice theory, I link the features of political economy to practices at the local level, hence acknowledging the role of individual agency.

The data collection, analysis, and theorizing processes in this research follow the interpretive approach. Theoretical formulations are derived inductively from the data. In this sense, the epistemological assumption of this research design is that what I learn from the data is highly dependent on the values of my respondents and my interactions with them. The assumption is that there is not a single reality "out there" that can be unveiled through objective observation. Rather, multiple socially constructed realities can only be explored through

interactions with those who experience them. Therefore, perceptions of events may vary from respondent to respondent. These differences must be explored in order to enrich the value of theoretical formulations.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, my own experiences as a Brazilian academic who has studied planning in Brazil and in the United States shape my worldviews as well as my understanding of, and reactions to, the phenomena I investigate. Although I am not always conscious of the way in which my subjectivity is present in the data collection and analysis processes, I acknowledge that I am unable to fully separate who I am from how I conduct research. This is a realization that scholars who have become “less patient with research done from a safe theoretical and analytical distance” (Bollens 2012, 5) have come to embrace.

The call for new methods of studying planning underscores the “need to reach far beyond the familiar scope of ‘explanatory social science’” because “conventional social science has had us waiting in the bus station for our plane.” (Forester 2015, 148). I believe this requires being present – body, mind, and heart – in the field. The objectivity and distancing of conventional social science methods restricts the role of the researcher to a mere (and possibly unrealistic) neutral observer. This approach limits the development of insights that arise from engagement in the field and interactions with sites and people. In this way, I do not claim objectivity or complete neutrality. Instead, I strive to describe events and analyze data in a way closely to how my informants construct them and faithfully to how I interpret them.

Practice Theory

Practice theory provides a methodological and analytical approach that allows researchers to grasp the interactions between micro and macro-contexts and between agency and structure, i.e. the relationship between individual practices, interests, and motivations, and organizational arrangements and social structures. The objects of study are practices enacted by a variety of actors—the routines, actions, discourses, and interactions with which they engage. Thus, practice theory research goes beyond detailed description of realities by incorporating critical analyses of practices.

Numerous studies addressing practice do not explicitly employ a practice theory approach. As Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) explain, there are different ways of studying practice. Reviewing practice-based research in organizational studies, they identified three categories of studies according to their main focus: *empirical, philosophical, and theoretical*. The empirical approach answers the “what” of a practice lens (e.g. What do planners do?). It recognizes the centrality of people’s actions to organizational outcomes. It reflects an increasing recognition of the importance of practices in the ongoing operations of organizations, and it foregrounds human agency rather than structural features. The philosophical approach answers the “why” of a practice lens. A focus on practice is critical because practices are the primary building blocks of social reality. Thus, it assumes that rather than being external to human agents or as socially constructed by them. The social world is brought into being through everyday activities. Finally, the theoretical approach answers the “how” of a

practice lens: how practices are produced, reinforced, and changed, and with what intended and unintended consequences. This approach is concerned with the articulation of particular theoretical relationships that explain the dynamics of everyday activity, and is explicitly based on the core principles of practice theory.

A range of philosophies, most prominently the ideas of Heidegger and Wittgenstein, informs practice theories. Perhaps the two leading exponents of practice theory are Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, but more recent contributors to the practice theory approach comprise a large group of theorists (including Reckwitz 2002, Schatzki 2002, and Latour 2005). These thinkers form a diverse group and only general commonalities exist among them.

Practice theory must be understood as a plurality, rather than a unified theory (Nicolini 2012). It is perhaps more accurate to talk about practice *theories*. In fact, practice theory is not a theory per se. It is a conceptual and methodological framework: a way of approaching the study of practice and of understanding social reality. When pursued coherently, this approach produces a new sensitivity and orients our attention toward new objects of inquiry.

Drawing from Feldman and Orlikowski (2011), Nicolini (2012), and Schatzki 2002, the important foundations of the practice theory approach are the following:

a) Practice theory approaches focus on practices, not practitioners (e.g. focus of planning practice rather than planners). It is necessary to understand the set of practices involved in a scene of action before we can ask what sort of agency and 'actor-ship' is made possible by these specific conditions.

b) Practice theories do more than just describe what people do. Rather than just descriptions of the micro functioning of reality, they require theorization, i.e. explanation of how practices emerge, are sustained, or changed and their relationship with other practices and social phenomena.

c) Cognition and sense-making emerge from practices, rather than from the brain of an individual. That means we do not always act in certain ways because of what we know, but we know what we know because of the practices we engage in.

d) Practice theories foregrounds the importance of the body and objects in social affairs. Practices deal with human and non-human material entities that people manipulate or react to.

e) Practice theories assume that practices are productive and consequential. Thus, it argues that everyday actions (rather than abstract systems or mechanisms) are central to the production and reproduction of social structure and social phenomena (such as science, power, organizations, and social change). Thus, the apparent durability of any features and structures always involves some type of productive and reproductive work.

f) Practice theories argue that all phenomena are related and mutually constituted. This means that not only do recurrent actions constitute structures, but also enacted structures constitute the ongoing actions. In this sense, agency must be understood as already configured by structural conditions.

g) Practice theories reject dualisms, including conceptual oppositions such as mind and body, cognition and action, objective and subjective, structure and

agency, individual and institutional, and free will and determinism. The practice theory approach encourages the redefinition and reintegration of elements as dualities instead of independent or polarized concepts.

Incorporating a practice theory approach in a research design requires researchers to strive for depth of analysis in a single case study. This in turn enables the understanding of the contexts in which practices take place. In this study, practices are considered to be the link between overarching ideologies and structures and the discourses, behavior, and the actions of local actors.

Given that practice theory is based on a series of core principles, as listed above, researchers seeking to engage in a practice theory study must adopt a methodology that is coherent with the ontological assumptions of practice theory. Thus, Schatzki (2012) argues that no matter what theoretical lens one is adopting, in order to acquire the knowledge necessary to theorize from practice, “the investigator has no choice but to do ethnography” (11). The argument for ethnography is based on the idea that no other method may produce the data necessary to address the matters that concern practice theorists.

Case Study Selection

I chose the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (MRC) as a case study, first and foremost, because of my familiarity with its history, institutions, and socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts. This is a region where I had access to informants and where I had previous knowledge about the planning process and the relevant regulatory institutions. I also spoke the language of the informants

and already had, or was able to gain, their trust. I followed the recommendation to “start where you are” (Lofland et al. 2006). Despite having been physically away from the MRC for a few years, I had a personal history in this place.

But, the MRC was only suitable as a case study because it has experienced the proliferation of global suburbs for the past two decades. As detailed on Chapter 3, over thirty developments were identified in the MRC, including two from the largest developer of global suburbs in Brazil. The case of the MRC is also interesting given the worldwide recognition of Curitiba’s urban planning history as a successful one. But, as Irazábal (2006, 93) notes, “despite being internationally showcased as a model of good planning and urban design, this city has not been immune to the global capital pressures and urban design tendencies occurring in many cities throughout the world.” Moreover, widespread ideas about planning in Curitiba are often confined by the city’s boundaries and ignore what goes on in the peripheries, which are the subject of this research.

Data Collection

I collected both primary and secondary data from a variety of sources. I utilized a combination of participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and site visits as sources of qualitative data. I also compiled data from census, maps, aerial photograph (Google Earth), websites, planning documents, legislation, meeting minutes, and other academic work (theses and dissertations).

Participant Observation

I conducted participant observation at a private sector urban design office located in the city of Curitiba. This office has been involved in the process of planning and designing suburban developments for about ten years. Developers hire urban designers to produce feasibility studies, preliminary drawings, urban design plans, marketing material, and documents that are required in the permitting process. Urban designers, called 'urbanists' in Brazil, are at the center of the process because they interact both with developers and public officials.

I assumed the role of participant-observer while working as a full-time collaborator in the office for about 150 hours in a total of five weeks (three weeks in May 2013 and two weeks in August 2013). In the office, I observed interactions between urban designers and developers (which happened both by phone and in person), urban designers and public officials (which happened over the phone), and among the urban designers as they discussed projects, daily work, interactions, viewpoints, and personal lives.

Being present in the office, I could observe these practitioners' accounts of their work and their interactions. I was able to shadow practices across space and time (Nicolini 2012), i.e. observing different phases and aspects of project development that happen in and outside of the office. I learned a great deal about the process of designing global suburbs, dealing with clients (developers), interpreting and applying legislation, and going through the permitting process.

As a novice in the office, I went through the learning process that reveals specific ways of seeing, talking, and feeling that make a person a member of that

specific practice (Nicolini 2012). I gained an insider's perspective on the practices of urban designers, their goals, challenges, and rationale. Also, being a collaborator in the office enabled me to conduct informal interviews with participants, i.e. to ask questions during the course of naturally occurring activities (Lofland et al. 2006).

The office staff was aware of my role as a researcher. The head of the office, who authorized my observations, disclosed my research interest to the staff as: "learning more about the work involved in designing suburban developments." I believe this did not prevent my access to information, and did not make other participants uncomfortable since, as qualitative researchers have noted, people tend to give little importance to the role of researchers or even to forget about it (Lofland et al. 2006). In fact, I was regularly treated as a staff member with whom the urban designers shared their ideas and concerns, and asked for my opinions.

Observations focused on the discursive and non-discursive practices of urban designers and others with whom they interacted. I was particularly observant of what they do, how they do it, how they talk about what they do, what resources they use, how they interact with others, their viewpoints, and the narratives they use to legitimate or justify practices. Observations were guided by a set of questions adapted from Nicolini's "sensitizing research questions" (2012, 220), which are listed in Appendix A. These questions reveal the focus of practice theory.

While in the office, I jotted notes in my computer, which I was also using to conduct office work assigned to me. These notes included comments and viewpoints expressed by the urban designers as well as the comments they made about phone conversations or meetings they had. Immediately after each observation day, I wrote complete field notes describing all activities, interactions, and discussions I observed during the day. I also wrote analytical and theoretical memos (Charmaz 2006) to explore hunches and questions that emerged during the fieldwork period.

Interviews

In 2011, 2013, and 2014, I conducted a total of thirty-three semi-structured in-depth interviews with thirty-one respondents. Two respondents were interviewed twice. Interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. I conducted all interviews in Portuguese (mine and my respondents' mother tongue) and in person (with the exception of two phone interviews). I met with respondents at their place of choice, in most cases, the meeting was held in their workplace. All but two interviewees allowed me to audio record the conversation. I took notes during and immediately after the two interviews not recorded and I transcribed all other interviews.

Most respondents formed a diverse group of actors involved in the process of making global suburbs. Respondents were three developers, eight urban designers and planners working in the private sector, six public sector urban planners, one realtor, one environmental consultant, three residents of

global suburbs (including the president of a homeowners' association), three heads of municipal planning departments, one technician at a municipal planning department, and one employee of the State Environmental Agency. I also interviewed three academics and two NGO representatives, who are not directly involved in the making of these developments but are interested in their potential impacts.

These respondents represent a variety of professions and geographical areas. They worked mostly in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba. One urban designer and one developer working in different states within Brazil were also interviewed. I interviewed public officials from municipal, metropolitan, and State agencies. Two interviewees were members of NGOs. Developers, urban designers, an environmental consultant, and a realtor represented the private sector. I also interviewed the urban designers who I had observed during field observation. This made it possible to compare my observation and their accounts of events. A detailed analysis of the role of actors involved in the process of making global suburbs is presented in the stakeholder analysis in Chapter 6.

Interview guides varied according to the role of respondents in the process of making global suburbs. A sample list of questions is included in Appendix B. Questions were added, eliminated, or edited through the different interview rounds. Using open-ended questions as a guide, interviewees were encouraged to emphasize the aspects of the process that they found more important, direct the course of the interview, and discuss issues not originally asked.

Site Visits

I visited the largest global suburb in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (described in Chapter 3) three times from 2011 to 2014. Because I was not authorized to enter the gated residential communities, I observed the developments from publicly accessible spaces, i.e. streets connecting the gated communities and the commercial center¹. I photographed the development from these locations without prior authorization, given that these are public areas. I also drove and walked by other developments in the MRC. I observed from the outside other global suburbs and drove or walked through irregular settlements (*favelas*).

Site visits, although restricted to publicly accessible areas, contributed to a better understanding of the spatial context in which global suburbs are inserted. I observed the distance from city center to some of the developments, the types of infrastructure provided within and around these developments, and their spatial relationship with neighboring low-income neighborhoods. I noted how residents use the public areas in the largest global suburb. I observed the security guards, the vehicle patrols, the gates, and the fences. I experienced first hand the way by which outsiders are identified, prevented access to the communities, and discouraged from photographing the developments.

¹ I did visit the interior of the gated communities in 2004, prior to the beginning of this study, when I also visited other smaller global suburbs at the MRC.

Archival Data

I collected demographic data from the Brazilian census institute (IBGE) website. I also consulted a series of publicly available legal documents (e.g. laws and decrees); plans; meeting minutes; and academic work. Additionally, I relied on information from real estate and developer websites and marketing material. These sources are listed in the references of footnotes.

Translations and Anonymity

I conducted and transcribed all interviews in Portuguese. I translated the interview excerpts presented throughout this manuscript to English. I also translated quotations from material published in Portuguese. In the excerpts, I included ellipses ‘. . .’ to indicate interruptions or breaks in thought. I used bracketed ellipses ‘[. . .]’ to indicate omissions of words, phrases, or paragraphs from the original interview excerpt or quotation. To guarantee the anonymity of my informants, the names of people that appear throughout the manuscript are fictitious.

Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis of interview transcripts and field notes followed the interpretive methodology, moving beyond *what* has occurred to see *how* it happened. In this way, I analyzed the stated reasons of the actors for their behavior, trying to uncover the match between behavior and belief, and looking

for ways in which those beliefs and behaviors are echoed in specific practices (Lin 1998,167).

I adopted the steps commonly employed in qualitative field analysis (Loftland et al. 2006, Charmaz 2006, Corbin and Strauss 2008). The first analytical activity was open (line-by-line) coding. I labeled small parts of the data according to their content and started to grapple with their meaning. After completing open coding for a large amount of the data, I moved to focused coding. In this activity, I used the most significant and frequent codes to sort and organize the data. At this stage, I also compared codes and interview excerpts from different informants. For instance, I compared how different stakeholders described the regulatory process that ultimately approves global suburbs, and how informants answered the question about “why people choose to live in global suburbs?” The use of “constant comparative methods” (Charmaz 2006) as an analytical tool generates more abstract concepts and reveals trends emerging from the data.

Next, I grouped codes into categories and analyzed patterns and relationships by comparing these categories. As analytical hunches emerged during this process, I wrote memos that captured the connections I saw and the insights I had about the data. This was an inductive (i.e. driven by the data rather than prior hypotheses) and highly iterative process in which analysis moved constantly from the data to a more abstract level (e.g. categories) in order to confirm emerging concepts and theoretical formulations.

In the second field trip, which included the second round of observations and interviews, I conducted theoretical sampling (Charmaz 2006). This means that data collection after the initial analysis aimed at probing preliminary concepts and theoretical formulations. The selection of interviewees and the choice of questions asked addressed the voids in my initial analysis.

Strategies suited for interpretive work and adopted during both the data collection and analysis processes (see Lincoln and Guba 1985) support the trustworthiness of findings and theoretical formulations. Central to these strategies are: prolonged engagement in the field (around 150 hours and thirty-three interviews), systematic analysis of data moving back and forth from empirical data to abstract conceptualization, theoretical sampling (during the second and third rounds of interviews and observations), and triangulation of methods (spatial analysis, critical discourse analysis, qualitative analysis) and data sources (transcripts, field notes, official documents, census, photographs, maps).

The research does not aim to produce statistically generalizable findings since generalizability requires, among others, random sampling. However, it is likely that phenomena observed and theorized at the MRC occur similarly in other localities. I intend to provide sufficient description of the MRC case to allow researchers' assessment of the transferability of my findings. Although findings may not be generalizable to other cases, I hope that they are faithful to my case and generalizable to broader substantive theories of the interplay of forces operating at different scales in the production of spaces; theories focusing on

potential regressive outcomes of planning practice; and theories of processes, practices, and territorialities under neoliberal urbanism.

CHAPTER 3: GLOBAL SUBURBS

Sometimes reality is too complex for oral communication. But legend embodies it in a form which enables it to spread all over the world. It was 24.17 Oceanic Time when I approached the suburbs of Alphaville [A sign reads:] Silence. Logic. Security. Prudence.

(Jean-Luc Godard, 1964, Alphaville, opening scene)

Although most of us seem to know what we are talking about when we refer to 'suburbs,' a clear and consistent definition of the term has been lacking in the planning literature. This is because suburbs are diverse; they come in different shapes and forms. Authors may refer to suburbs by focusing on one or a few dimensions. For instance, definitions may emphasize location (e.g. between the urban core and rural areas); physical characteristics (e.g. low-density, leap-frog development); primary use (e.g. single-family homes, strip malls); or social relations (e.g. white middle-class). Forsyth (2012) suggests that given the diversity of suburbs, and the complexity that accounting for all dimensions of suburbs entails, it is preferable to replace the term by more specific words such as postwar subdivision, edge city, and office park, or to refer to specific types of suburbs by adding qualifying adjectives such as ethnoburbs, technoburbs, residential suburbs, and old suburbs.

Global suburbs are one such sub-type of suburbs. Yet, its definition is similarly problematic. Across a variety of fields and within the planning field, the

use of the term 'global suburbs' has been growing and a variety of definitions emerge. In international relations, for instance, 'global suburbs' may refer to centers of power in intermediate zones between the Global North and South (Clair 1996). In this view, global suburbs are countries at the periphery of the global economy. Another possibility is to understand 'global suburbs' in relation to its counterpart 'global cities.' In this case, the emphasis might be two-fold. First, global suburbs are understood as communities located on the outskirts of Sassen's (2001) global cities. Or, they might refer to suburban areas undergoing the changes Sassen attributed to global cities, as Burgers (1995, 370) explains:

The changes Sassen describes for global cities also seem to occur in suburbia. Suburban economies are, like those of New York and London, essentially service-based. More importantly, they are also more determined by the national and international than by the local level. Apparently, there are not only global cities but also global suburbs.

An example of a global suburb, from this perspective, is Irvine, California. According to Maher (2004, 801), "parts of Irvine still feel suburban, but its economy and social geography have been reshaped by transnational capital and a growing reliance upon transnational labor in the service economy." She explains that the region, whose service economy depends largely on immigrant workers, hosts a variety of high-tech companies, ethnic restaurants, and a vibrant cultural scene.

Other references to global suburbs, particularly in the planning literature, emphasize that suburbanization is no longer a Western phenomenon. In these accounts, global suburbs are international developments that replicate the

suburban model found in Western countries. Often, these are private and gated communities in less developed countries. An example is Orange County, an upscale residential community on the outskirts of Beijing, China. The Western style development features landscaped backyards, swimming pools, golf courses, and large single-family homes inhabited by lawyers, business people, and celebrities (Rosenthal 2003).

Similar developments are found in Argentina, where the growth of gated communities around Buenos Aires since the 1990s represents a change of urban culture and mentality. For a long time, the richest population lived in the capital city itself, where infrastructure, services, and housing stock were of better quality. The suburbs housed the poor, essentially immigrants from rural regions, who settled in poorly equipped lots and self-help housing (Thuillier 2005).

In Jakarta, Indonesia, the need for security and the desire of an exclusive lifestyle created the demand for new towns. In charge of these developments are private entrepreneurs who hire (often expatriate) architects, urban planners, and property specialists to fulfill people's desire for living in a quiet, modern and secure environment. Entrepreneurs, in turn, take advantage of huge and quick monetary profits (Firman 2004).

Suburbs like the ones described above are found around the world. They are global suburbs because they replicate, globally, many of the dimensions associated with Western suburbs. In other words, they are upscale low-density residential developments located outside the urban core. But they are also global suburbs because, as Fishman (2002, 7) puts it:

First and most importantly, the residents of these global suburbs are those within their respective societies who benefit most from globalization, and hence are eager to imitate the spatial patterns of privilege in the dominant global society, the United States. [. . .] Secondly, these global suburbs are designed, financed, and serviced by a host of global business organizations that have learned the techniques of decentralization in the United States and Europe and are thus well-equipped to bring the goods and services once available only in the core to the periphery.

The definition of global suburb articulated by Fishman (2002), and which applies to developments found in China, Indonesia, Chile, Argentina, and several other countries, is what best describes the spaces that constitute the focus of this study. These spaces not only replicate locational, physical, and social dimensions of American suburbs, they also “reproduce in the megacity the relations of cultural and economic domination that characterize the global economy as a whole” (Fishman 2002, 7).

The term global suburb was absent from the accounts of my informants and the documents that I analyzed. In fact, ‘suburb’ in Brazil has an entirely different meaning. When Brazilians speak of *subúrbios*, they refer to low- to middle-income neighborhoods away from the city center. The word *suburbano* refers to a lifestyle that, contrary to the American use of the word, is typical of low-income families.

My interviewees typically refer to the spaces I studied as gated communities (*‘condomínios fechados,’* which literally translates as ‘closed condominiums’). They do not differentiate gated communities in the city from those in the peripheries, nor do they use language to distinguish gated

communities that are larger, contain several uses besides residential, and may have more significant impacts on the surroundings.

When interviewees talked about gated communities, it was clear that the term is controversial; it carries a positive connotation to some and a negative one to others. For residents of gated communities, developers, and realtors, 'gated community' is a term that encompasses a series of positive qualities, e.g., status, privacy, security, predictability, and high quality of life.

The excerpts below illustrate positive accounts of gated communities:

When I was four years old, we moved to the first gated community of Curitiba. [. . .] We used to play as if there were no. . . the world could end, we were happy, we had our space, surrounded by nature. There were the woods, a little lake, we rode our bikes up and down, we played soccer. So, not devaluing other children, but our childhood . . . we were very happy, really very happy. [. . .] When [my family] had the opportunity to buy land, we said 'let's build a gated community, let's try to replicate the lifestyle we had, a lifestyle that, let's say, we raised our children. Let's try to replicate that.' Because if more people had the opportunity of knowing how it is to live in a gated community of houses, it would be really good. (Developer, Interview 11005)

People want a good parcel to build a home and raise their children, and they want safety. [. . .] Here, for you to live in a house alone, you are really vulnerable. So, the solution is to live in a gated community or enclosed subdivision (they are similar things but judicially different) in which you are able to share the costs and have relative safety. You may have leisure and safety and the other things that people who want to live in a house are interested in. (Developer, Interview 13008)

I was talking to someone at the [community's] gym. She said 'I love to live here, I come walking in the morning, the smell of the woods, it gives me peace.' I said 'I agree with you, I really like living here.' [. . .] You may walk on the streets at 3am listening to music on your iPhone and nobody is going to steal it. This is priceless. (Resident, Interview 13014)

Conversely, the term 'gated community' may carry negative connotations, particularly for professionals in the planning field. These individuals have been exposed to literature that highlights the negative impacts of gated communities. Through their professional education, they were taught to design and plan cities to benefit the larger population. They have learned to see gated communities from a critical viewpoint.

For instance, when asked about the reasons behind the proliferation of gated communities in the city of Curitiba, a planner working for the city's planning agency recalls readings he was exposed to during his undergraduate studies. In particular, he mentions Jane Jacob's *Life and Death of Great American Cities* and explains that:

The construction of a wall is the death of the public space. You are eliminating the eyes on the street, which is what gives protection. So, what incentivizes this practice, in theory, I don't know if it is security or a sense of security. Even if you are making the public areas unsafe, it allows people living within [these walled] areas to have control. (Interview 11004)

However, as they pursue their careers, a number of planning professionals become involved in the making of gated communities. Some are hired to design these developments; others work for public agencies that approve their construction; and others work in master plans and zoning codes that make gated communities permissible, if not encouraged.

Because they are aware of the negative connotations of gated communities, e.g., privatization of public spaces, militarization, segregation, unaesthetic appeal of walls and gates, and potential increase of violence outside

the walls, planning professionals involved in the making of gated communities replace the term by words that focus on their potential positive aspects. During interviews, the following terms appeared quite often: 'planned community,' low-density controlled occupation,' and 'new neighborhood.'

It is common to hear professionals involved in the making of gated communities criticizing negative views of these spaces. For instance, an urban planner refers to gated developments as an "urban typology." He clarifies that there are cases in which gated communities are desirable and that negative connotations result from prejudice that must be eliminated.

What is necessary is to not see the gated communities in a prejudicial way. [. . .] When it proliferates in areas where mobility is needed [...], it is not interesting for the city as whole because you live within walls, you lose the diversity of the urban area, and the public spaces deteriorate. But, there are situations – when they are studied from the viewpoint of shared protection, environmental protection – in which this typology shall be recommended. [. . .] From the urban standpoint, essentially technical, and without considering the social aspect, it is an urban typology that we must not neglect. When well utilized, it may converge to public interests, why not? (Private sector planner, Interview 13009)

Besides choosing to use a variety of terms as substitutes for 'gated communities,' planning professionals, residents, and developers point out the technical and legal differences between gated communities and subdivisions. In several occasions, when asked about a certain development I referred to as a gated community, interviewees corrected me: "this is not a gated community (*condomínio fechado*), it is an enclosed subdivision (*loteamento fechado*)." When I asked about the difference between the two, I often got a quite confusing answer. The following conversation with Denise, an urban designer, is illustrative:

DENISE: There are some absurd things. There is an area that has been approved as a subdivision and is enclosed. How can that be? I am sorry, but we need to pass a street by this development. But then, God forbid, people... the judge lives there. So, we can't; we must leave it as is. That sort of thing can't happen in a civilized society. If it had been approved as a [gated community], it would be a different story. But, it is a subdivision, how can it be enclosed?

INTERVIEWER: I have asked this question to different people. You look at an aerial image and you see it is a gated community. Then, I ask: 'oh, what about this gated community?' The answer is: 'no, this is not a gated community, it a subdivision.' 'But it is enclosed,' I say. 'No, the gated community does not exist.'

DENISE: Yes, in the legislation it does not exist. It is an aberration.

INTERVIEWER: 'But, it is there, in front of me. How come it doesn't exist?', I ask. They answer: 'No, it is a subdivision that has been allowed to be enclosed. Whenever we [i.e. the public agency] want, we may open it up.' So, I ask: what is the difference then?

DENISE: The word I use to define this is aberration. And, in my opinion, this is ultimately the public sector's fault. It is the pressure of the private sector with which the public sector has colluded. It is [the public sector's] prerogative to say 'there is no gated community.' Condominiums are, in the Civil Code, for multi-family buildings, not for horizontal housing. So, it does not exist; we can't do it. 'Oh, but people want to feel safe, [the developer] doesn't want to donate land.' Well, the developer doesn't want to donate 35% [of the development's area] to the city? He doesn't want to implement a public amenity [which are both required by Federal Law on subdivisions]? Fine; he won't [build a gated community]. (Interview 13001)

As the interview excerpt indicates, using the appropriate language when referring to the spaces I studied was relevant to many of my informants. Thus, during interviews, I adopted the same terms used by respondents. For instance, I asked about a 'gated community,' 'enclosed subdivision,' or 'controlled occupation' depending on how my interviewee was referring to the space in question. Still, although none of my interviewees used the term 'global suburb,' there are four reasons for employing the term in this research.

1) The reference to 'global suburbs' is a conscious effort to dialogue with theoretical and empirical research addressing similar types of developments found in other countries. In this way, I state that the spaces I studied in Brazil (and the practices that make them possible) cannot be explained exclusively from the local perspective. Similar spaces are emerging throughout the world. They must be studied in the global context.

2) The term 'global suburbs' draws a parallel between these developments and the typical American suburb. In several dimensions, the spaces found in Brazil attempt to replicate an American model. They are located outside the city center. They comprise large single-family homes and fulfill the demands of affluent residents seeking a different lifestyle away from urban problems.

3) Using the term 'global suburbs' allows me to explicitly differentiate these spaces from the older, smaller, and more urban gated communities. The distinction is important for two main reasons. First, gated communities are neither a new nor an uncommon phenomenon in Brazil. Residential segregation, in general, and gated communities, in particular, has characterized the Brazilian urban fabric since the urbanization wave in the mid 20th Century. From raising walls around one's home, to the enclosure of existing streets, to the creation of gated single-family developments, to the gating of multi-family buildings, virtually everyone in Brazil has been living behind gates for decades. But the practices I studied are related to the creation of spaces that have emerged in the past twenty years. In this time period, neoliberal policies became dominant in urban planning and governance throughout the country.

Second, it is likely that the impacts of global suburbs on the surrounding communities and on the larger society are different than the impacts caused by smaller and more urban gated communities (Zanotto 2009). For instance, while the latter are inserted in the urban fabric (i.e., residents still depend on the surroundings for shopping, recreation, studying), the former provide a higher level of isolation. Residents of global suburbs, for the most part, shop, work, and play either inside the gates or in the center city. The surrounding areas, with which residents of global suburbs have little contact, comprise empty land, low-income neighborhoods, squatter settlements, and industries.

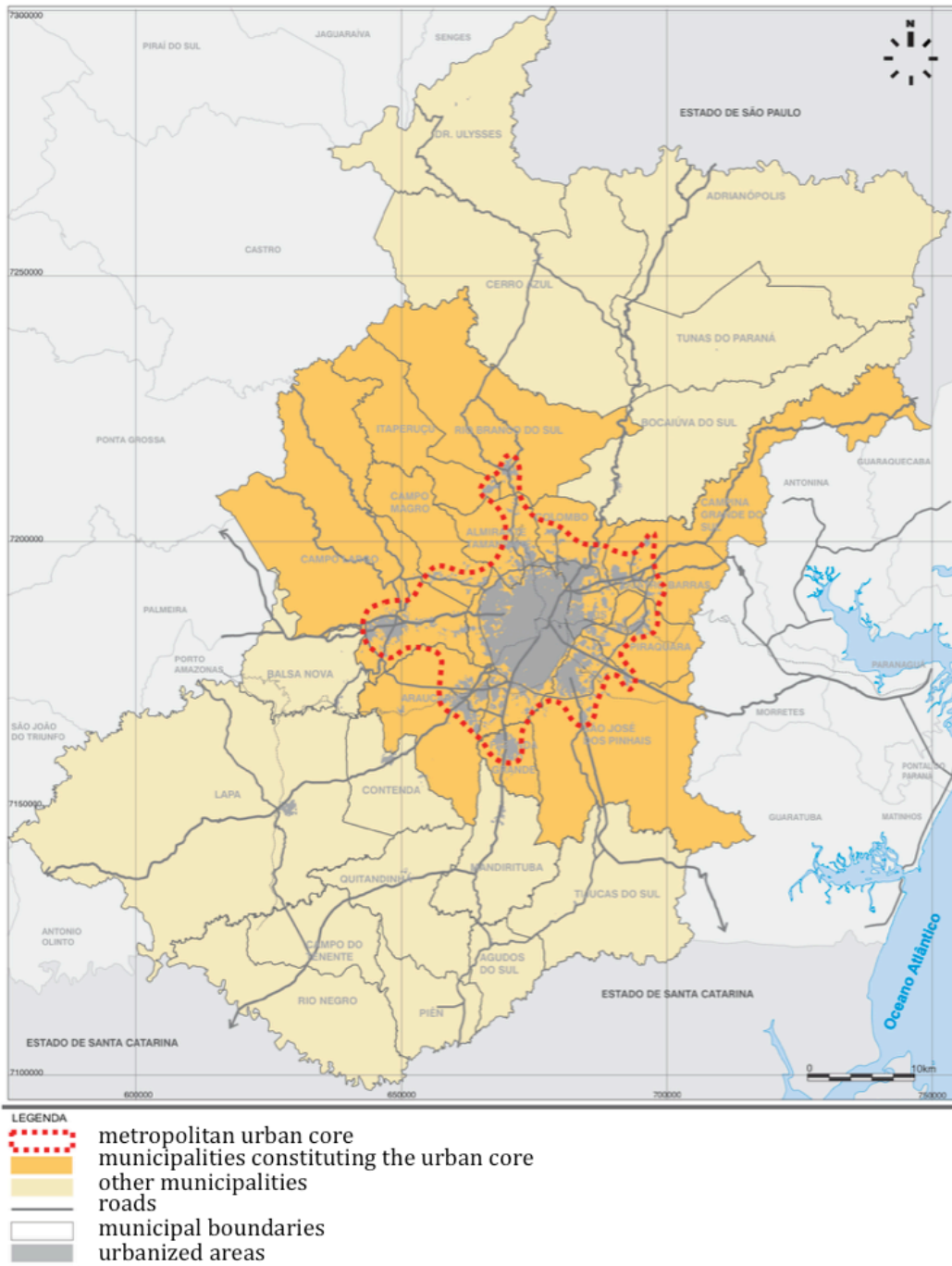
4) By employing the term 'global suburbs' I am able to move away from the technical and legal differences between 'gated community' and 'enclosed subdivision.' The term global suburbs include both development types since it focuses on their spatial characteristics. Although gated communities and enclosed subdivisions are physically similar, the legal and technical differences between the two will be noted whenever relevant.

Henceforth, I will use the term 'global suburbs' to refer to upscale residential developments located on the peripheries and that reproduce the cultural and economic dynamics of the global economy. In Brazil, they are often fortified low-density communities that comprise large single-family homes, green areas, recreational amenities, and sometimes commercial and institutional uses.

The Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (MRC)

This research analyzes the making of global suburbs in one case study. The Metropolitan Region of Curitiba included fourteen municipalities when it was established in 1973. Later subdivision and additions through annexation yielded the current twenty-nine municipalities. It is the ninth most populated metropolitan region in Brazil, with an estimated 3.5 million inhabitants in 2015 (IBGE 2015). It is the largest Brazilian metropolitan region in terms of geographical area, with approximately 16,500 square kilometers, or 6,400 square miles (IPPUC 2011). The municipalities that form the region may be classified as 'urban metropolitan core' and 'other municipalities' (see Map 3.1). The urban core includes areas from 12 municipalities that border Curitiba and form a continuous urban agglomeration in which around 92% of the population resides. The other municipalities have more intense rural activities and a more tenuous relationship with Curitiba.

Map 3.1: The Metropolitan Region of Curitiba



Source: COMEC 2012 - altered by author

Although only around 5% of the MRC is considered urbanized, more than 90% of the population lives in urban centers. The city of Curitiba accommodates 52% of the population of the MRC. However, its share has declined in the past

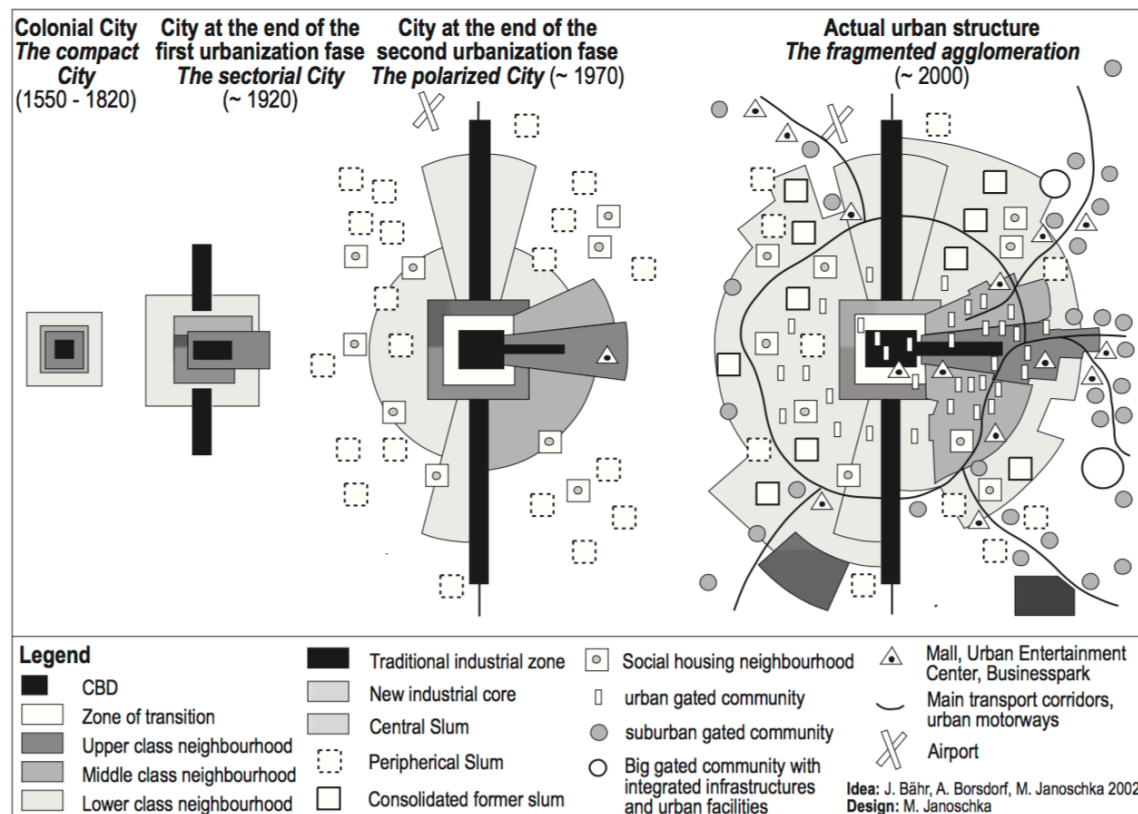
three decades as most of the intense population growth in Curitiba occurred through the 1980s. In the past 30 years, growth rates in Curitiba have been lower than rates in adjacent municipalities resulting in a process of peripheralization.

Great disparity is observed between the core - Curitiba - and the rest of the metropolitan region. The city of Curitiba is known worldwide as a model city created by successfully implemented planning interventions. Nonetheless, at the metropolitan scale, the center-periphery model typical of developing countries characterizes the socio-economic disparity between Curitiba and the peripheral municipalities (Moura and Kornin 2002, Macedo 2004, Moura and Firkowski 2009). In fact, the polarization of the MRC has been exacerbated by planning practices initiated in the 1960s that pushed out to the peripheries uses and activities (e.g. polluting industries, squatter settlements, and low-income communities) that were incompatible with the image of a model city (Garcia 1997, Oliveira 2000).

Over the past decade, however, the metropolitan region has been transformed into a “fragmented agglomeration” (Janoschka and Borsdorf 2006, Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000) where diverse uses and socio-economic groups are found closer to each other. The fragmented model has been associated with urban transformations in Latin American cities; particularly the spread of shopping malls, business centers, and upscale residential developments that were once concentrated in affluent central neighborhoods. Figure 3.1 illustrates the evolution of the Latin American city and the shift from polarized to a fragmented model. It highlights new spatial features Janoschka

and Borsdorf (2006) call “suburban gated communities” and “big gated communities with integrated infrastructures and urban facilities.” These two typologies include what I refer to as global suburbs.

Figure 3.1: The evolution of Latin American cities



Source: Janoschka and Borsdorf 2006

In part, the transformation of the MRC into a fragmented agglomeration may be attributed to higher levels of globalization and liberalization. Local academics have pointed to “the internationalization of the MRC,” as a phenomenon that includes both the establishment of multinationals in the peripheral municipalities and the replacement of local providers by international chains of restaurants, hotels, supermarkets, and shopping centers (Moura and Kornin 2002). In this context, the proliferation of gated communities resembling

American suburbs reflects changes in consumption preferences influenced by the globalization of mass media, the proliferation of Western advertising, and the growing availability of Western products (Leichenko and Solecki 2005). This topic is further explored in Chapter 4.

Global Suburbs in the MRC

The first task undertaken in order to conduct an analysis of the existing global suburbs around Curitiba was to identify these developments. Through analysis of aerial images provided by Google Earth, interviews, online search, and site visits, thirty-two developments were identified in seven of the eleven municipalities that constitute the urban core around Curitiba. These cities have been traditionally occupied by industries, low-income housing, informal settlements, and environmentally protected areas.

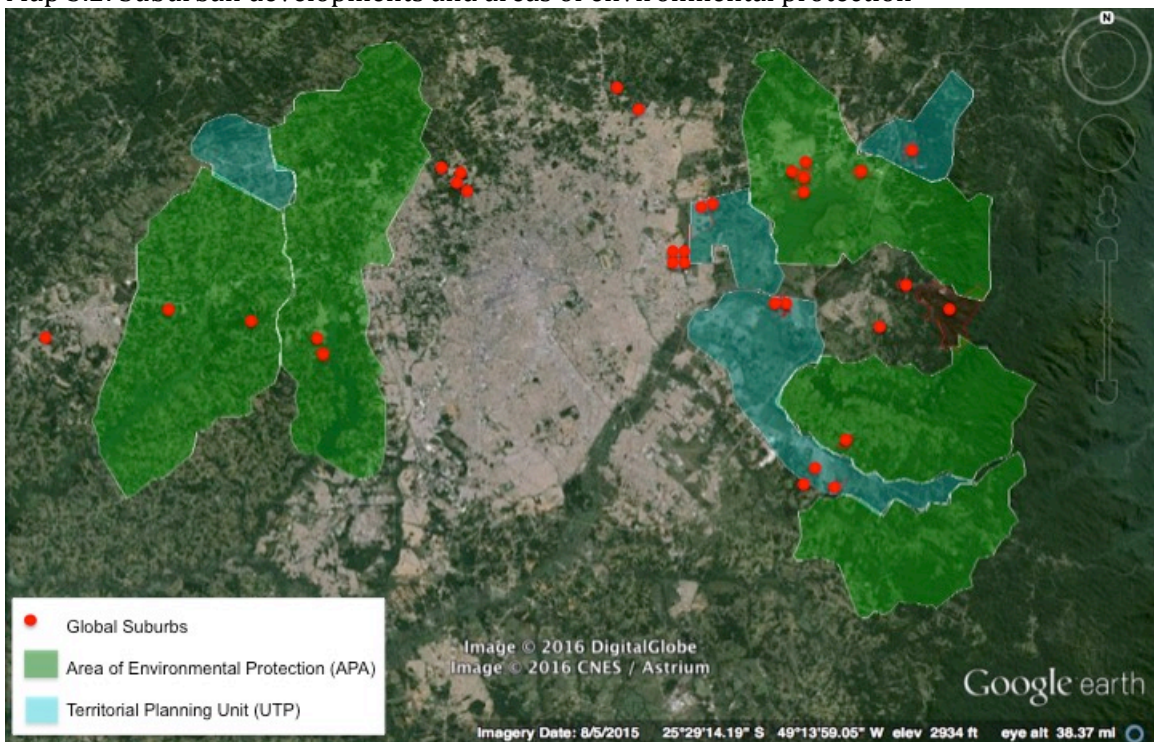
Global suburbs are concentrated to the West, North, and East of Curitiba. The West and East regions, in particular, are environmentally sensitive areas that include water supply sources for the metropolitan region. In order to preserve these areas, a series of State Decrees approved throughout the 1990s created five macro-zones called Area of Environmental Protection (*Área de Proteção Ambiental* - APA) that restrict development and five macro-zones called Unit of Territorial Planning (*Unidade Territorial de Planejamento* - UTP), which are less restrictive (see Map 3.2). While APAs were defined in regards to the watershed's capacity and water quality, UPTs were considered parts of the watershed under

pressure for urbanization. The creation of UTPs sought to establish a transition between already urbanized areas and APAs or rural areas.

The establishment of APAs and UTPs reveals tensions between the neoliberal project of urban expansion, on the one hand, and environmental preservation, on the other. Conflicts intensified in the 1990s,

[...] when the State of Paraná sought, more actively, an insertion into the global economy. In this way, starting in 1996, the State government promoted deep socio-spatial transformations in the territorial organization of the MRC and adopted, fully, neoliberal policies associated with the idea of “Competitive City,” grounded on a discourse of “Sustainable Development.” (Lopes and Mendonça 2010, 240)

Map 3.2: Suburban developments and areas of environmental protection



Source: COMEC and Google Earth, altered by author.

In this view, the creation of UPTs, in particular, enabled industrial and residential development in environmental sensitive areas. Notably, the zoning

change enabled the development of the largest global suburb. The area, which had been defined as APA, through a Municipal Law (134/94) in 1994, was transformed into UTP in 1999. This change reduced the minimum lot size making the development of a global suburb economically viable.

Urbanization, including the proliferation of global suburbs, in the West, North, and East regions disregards the recommendations of the Metropolitan Plan (*Plano Integrado de Desenvolvimento - PDI*) from 2006, which advised growth to be directed to the Southern region. Nonetheless, because the same environmental features that make certain areas the object of protection are also marketable amenities, global suburbs spread across areas of preservation (see Map 3.2). A planner at the Metropolitan Planning Agency explains:

Global suburbs want to locate near the dam, in a place where you have [a nice] landscape, trails, and still be close to the city, so that you have roads connecting them. So, all this favored the [spread] of global suburbs to the Eastern region. (Interview 11007)

Global suburbs are initially created when developers acquire land or partner with landowners. They subdivide the parcel into lots and add basic infrastructure (such as water and sewage lines, electricity, landscaping, street paving, and public lighting). Developers also build the walls and fences around the development, implement security features (e.g. alarms, surveillance cameras, and gates), and build the common areas (e.g. the guardhouse, clubhouses, golf courses, and swimming pools). Private parties (investors or potential residents) purchase the lots and build houses according to the homeowners' association rules.

Figure 3.2: Aerial view of global suburbs at the MRC



Source: Google Earth

The size and number of lots in global suburbs vary considerably. Older communities built in the late 1970s constituted primarily weekend recreational ranches. Newer developments, built since 2000, are denser and often used as permanent residences. Developments may include as few as twenty units or as many as one thousand. Lot sizes vary from around 400 to 7,000 square meters. They employ security features such as walls, fences, and gates, and in some cases also surveillance cameras and guards. They include various recreational amenities such as trails, lakes, playgrounds, swimming pools, soccer and tennis fields, and golf courses.

An important selling point, besides security and recreational facilities, is proximity to nature. Real estate advertising featuring these developments

emphasizes green amenities and states the amount of preserved native vegetation within developments. As depicted on Map 3.2, several global suburbs are located within or adjacent to areas of environmental preservation. Some developments either have access to, or view of, lakes or mountains and some include parks and creeks within their property.

Proximity to nature, security systems, recreational amenities, and large lots and houses contribute to the luxurious character of these developments. Online search² of real estate for sale in these developments was conducted at two time periods: on September 2011, and on March 2016. The results are shown on Table 3.1. In 2011, sixty-two houses in fifteen different developments and ten lots in five different developments were being offered for sale. House sizes varied from 200 square meters up to 1,400 square meters, with the mean size being 457 square meters. Lot sizes varied from 400 square meters to 4,700 square meters, with the mean size being around 1,800 square meters. The highest price reached 3.1 million *reais*, or approximately 1.7 million dollars³. The mean price per square meter was 3,341 *reais* – almost 35% more expensive than the price per square meter for 4-bedroom houses within Curitiba⁴. The average age, of those for which data was available, was 3.2 years. Many houses available for sale were new. This means that people bought lots, built houses on

2 Online search conducted on the websites www.imoveiscuritiba.com.br and redeimovies.com.br on September 23, 2011 using the parameters “metropolitan region + residential + condo + house (or parcel) and minimum price = R\$300,000 (for houses only).

3 Commercial dollar as of Sep. 22, 2011 = R\$1.8385.

4 Data gathered by the Institute of Real Estate Market in Parana (INPESPAR). Price for July 2011 = R\$2,492.64.

them, and sold the houses without ever inhabiting them. This might indicate that these houses were built as investments with the intent of being sold.

In 2016, 128 houses (twice as many as in 2011) were available for sale in at least 26 different global suburbs. House and lot sizes were similar to those for sale in 2011, with a few larger lots available. As in 2011, the average number of bedrooms was four and both new houses as well as houses a little over ten years old were available. The price range increased considerably, ranging from 810 thousand *reais* to almost 11 million *reais*, with the mean price at 2.2 million *reais*. In U.S. dollars, however, the prices were lower in 2016 given the devaluation of the Brazilian *real* during this time period. The price per square meter continues to be higher than in Curitiba⁵ and was, in 2016, 25% higher than the mean price for a 4-bedroom house in Curitiba.

⁵ Data gathered by the Institute of Real Estate Market in Parana (INPESPAR). Price for February 2016 = R\$3,734.21.

Table 3.1: Houses for sale in global suburbs in the MRC in 2011 and 2016.

	2011*	2016**
Number of houses for sale	62	128
Number of developments	15	26
Total price***		
range	R\$ 450,000 to R\$ 3,100,000	R\$ 810,000 to R\$ 10,900,000
mean	R\$ 1,491,935	R\$ 2,253,675
Price per square meter		
range	R\$ 1,216 - R\$ 5,166	R\$ 1,817 - R\$ 10,085
mean	R\$ 3,341	R\$ 4,706
House size (square meter)		
range	200 - 1,400	220 - 1,550
mean	457	466
Parcel size (square meter)		
range	400 - 4,700	392 - 6,743
mean	1809	1,636
Number of bedrooms		
range	3 - 5	2 - 7
mean	4	4
Age (years)		
range	0 - 13	0 - 11
mean	3.2	4.3

Source: Author

* Search conducted on real estate websites www.imoveiscuritiba.com.br and www.redeimoveis.com.br on September 23, 2011 using the parameters "metropolitan region of curitiba + house + gated community + minimum price=300,000 + minimum size = 200.

** Search conducted on real estate websites www.redeimoveis.com.br and www.vivareal.com.br on March 09, 2016 using the parameters "metropolitan region of curitiba + house + gated community + minimum price=300,000 + minimum size = 200.

*** Prices are shown in Brazilian reais. The US dollar was R\$1.8385 when the search was conducted in 2011 and R\$3.6962 in 2016.

Alphaville Urbanismo

The largest development company in Brazil, Alphaville Urbanismo S.A. has spearheaded the proliferation of global suburbs throughout the country. Not only has it built over 115 developments in all five regions, but it has also inspired other developers. Extensive marketing, including product placement at the main TV channel during prime time soap opera, has contributed to the popularity of the brand. Today, Alphaville is known among virtually all Brazilians to be synonymous with status, quality of life, and a desirable lifestyle. Because of Alphaville's importance in national context, further description of its history, strategies, and accomplishments is warranted.

The first large gated community in Brazil, named *Ilha do Sul*, was built in São Paulo in 1971. The innovative project included six 20-story residential buildings with four luxurious apartments per floor. There were common areas including a park, four swimming pools, a playground, gymnasiums and sport courts, a game room, a physiotherapy room, an infirmary, a beauty parlor, a library, movie theaters, theaters, snack bars, and a restaurant (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003a).

In 1973, the same developer that introduced *Ilha do Sul* to the Brazilian real estate market acquired almost 1.9 square miles of farmland on the outskirts of the city of São Paulo. The project, which was initially intended for the creation of a business center, turned into the first edge city of Brazil.

After displacing 110 tenants who had occupied and cultivated land either legally or illegally, the development company Albuquerque Takaoka S.A. raised

an entire planned city from scratch. In addition to large gardens and wide avenues, the developers brought the necessary infrastructure to the former rural area: sewerage, water works, public lighting, electric power, telephone lines, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, convention centers, shopping centers, clubs, fuel stations, bank services and even a heliport (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003a).

The project named Alphaville,⁶ was a success with large corporations and multinationals wanting to relocate to the new planned city. Some of these companies pressured the developer to build residential areas so that their employees could live close to work. One of these companies was Hewlett-Packard. Its representative, who had been responsible for projects such as the HP headquarter in Palo Alto, California, provided the specifications of the Palo Alto project. Brazilian architects working on Alphaville's projects adapted the Palo Alto experience to the Brazilian context (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003a).

In 1974, less than a year after the opening of the business center, Alphaville received its first residential area. By 1994, an additional thirteen residential clusters had been created. Today, there are 132 residential clusters with 8,600 houses, 100 apartment buildings, business centers, commercial areas, and more than 8,000 residents (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003a, Poppe 2013).

In 1994, with the death of Yojiro Takaoka, one of two founders of Albuquerque Takaoka S.A., a new development company emerged. Renato

⁶ The name Alphaville was suggested by José Almeida Pinto, one of the architects who worked on the project. His inspiration was the movie "Alphaville" (1965) by Jean-Luc Godard. Pinto thought the name would be strong since it is similarly pronounced in different languages (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003b).

Albuquerque and his new partner Nuno Lopes Alves⁷ created Alphaville Urbanismo with a determined mission: “to improve and extend the urban model to other cities in Brazil” (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003a, 11). Today, Alphaville Urbanismo is the largest Brazilian company in the sector. There are over one hundred and fifteen developments completed or under construction spread throughout all but four states⁸ in Brazil. The company also completed two developments in Portugal.

The expansion of Alphaville Urbanismo was well expressed by Renato Albuquerque in 2003: “In 8 years we have urbanized almost 22 million square meters and as of 2005 this total will be more than 42 million” (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003b, 24). In 2011, it completed 60 million square meters, which is a larger than the size of Manhattan, in New York City.

In October 2006, Gafisa, one of the largest development corporations in the country, became the major shareholder of Alphaville Urbanismo with a 60% ownership and plans to purchase the remaining 40% in the following five years⁹. Located in São Paulo, Gafisa was founded in 1954. It has since concluded 950 projects, building a total of more than 10 million square meters in almost every state. As a result of this transaction, Alphaville Urbanismo became a branch of Gafisa, keeping the brand name that had become associated not only with a type of gated community but also with a unique lifestyle.

7 Nuno Lopes Alves, a Portuguese lawyer who lived several years in Brazil, was living in Portugal when he became Albuquerque’s new partner (Alphaville Urbanismo 2003a).

8 The only states where no Alphaville developments are found are: Santa Catarina, Alagoas, Roraima, and Amapá.

9 “Gafisa compra Alphaville Urbanismo por R\$383,5 milhões” available at <http://noticias.uol.com.br/economia/ultnot/2006/10/02/ult29u51155.jhtm> (accessed on April 05, 2009).

By 2010, Gafisa controlled 80% of Alphaville Urbanismo's shares. But in 2013, New York-based private equity firm Blackstone and its Brazilian partner Pátria Investimento became the main shareholder with 70% of shares, while Gafisa retained 30%¹⁰. The American investors saw Alphaville as "a well-managed, high-potential Brazilian company, primed to capitalize on the country's increasing growth and development."¹¹ And according to the news report, Alphaville had "a pipeline of about 13 billion *reais* of land in the process of being prepared for development."¹²

Alphavilles throughout the country are all very similar: gated communities outside the city's center that provide recreational amenities, greenery, quality infrastructure, strict rules, security systems, and private management. These characteristics define Alphavilles and what is marketed as a unique lifestyle.

Alphavilles are also considered good investments. It is common for lots in newly developed communities to be sold out within days, if not hours. The company's website presents some figures on the increasing value of real estate over the years. For example, property values within Alphaville Granja Viana (in the State of São Paulo) have increased by 50% in one year while values within Alphaville Salvador (in the State of Bahia) have increased 600% in six years.

10 Yu, Hui-yong. 2013. "Blackstone Buys Stake in Brazil's Alphaville From Gafisa." Bloomberg Business. Available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-06-07/blackstone-buys-stake-in-brazil-s-alphaville-from-gafisa> (accessed on March 12, 2016).

11 Yu, Hui-yong. 2013. "Blackstone Buys Stake in Brazil's Alphaville From Gafisa." Bloomberg Business. Available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-06-07/blackstone-buys-stake-in-brazil-s-alphaville-from-gafisa> (accessed on March 12, 2016).

12 Idem 11

Alphaville in the MRC

In 2000, Alphaville Urbanismo launched Alphaville Graciosa in Pinhais, a peripheral municipality about 30 minutes northeast of downtown Curitiba. Occupying an area of almost 617 acres, Alphaville Graciosa is the largest global suburb in the MRC. The area previously zoned as area of environmental protection (*Área de Preservação Ambiental – APA*) was converted in 1998 - by State Governor Jaime Lerner - into a territorial planning unit (*Unidade Territorial de Planejamento – UTP*), providing the legal conditions for the establishment of developments such as Alphaville Graciosa (Lopes 2003).

Figure 3.3: Urban design plan of Alphaville Graciosa, in the MRC



Source: Willer Arquitetos

The development comprises 1,218 residential lots clustered into four separately walled communities. Alphaville's amenities include a clubhouse (with a bar, a restaurant, and a fitness center), tennis courts, swimming pools, soccer and volleyball courts, an 18-hole golf course, a chapel, parks, lakes, and a commercial center (for a more detailed spatial analysis of Alphaville Graciosa, see Zanotto 2009).

As in all Alphavilles, the security system at Alphaville Graciosa is an important feature of the development and a key selling point. A realtor proudly lists the features of a quasi-militarized system:

Here we have 140 men working in security, all wear bullet proof vests, all have guns. I think we have around 8 security cars moving around. We have a security manager who works together with the contracted security company, he is actually a retired sheriff. The entire security layout was developed by an Israeli company. [. . .] Everybody who works here have their fingerprints recorded, their criminal records checked, even the maids and construction workers. It is forbidden for construction workers to sleep on the construction site. [. . .] That means the security is very effective. In 10 years, there hasn't been any case of robbery, burglary, nothing. (Interview 11009)

In 2003, a new Alphaville was built adjacent to Alphaville Graciosa. Despite having its own separate entrance and being separated from Alphaville Graciosa by a wall, Alphaville Pinheiros is integrated with Alphaville Graciosa since residents may use the recreational amenities and commercial establishments at Graciosa. It occupies an area of almost 54 acres and contains 157 residential lots, a lake, trails and a park.

Figure 3.4: Walls and houses in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

Figure 3.5: Fences and houses in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

Figure 3.6: Entry gates in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

Figure 3.7: Street in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

Figure 3.8: Protected native vegetation in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

Figure 3.9: Golf course in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Alphaville website

Figure 3.10: Shopping mall in Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

The developer sold all of the lots in the first few years after launching the development. But sixteen years later, several lots continue to be vacant, as lot owners have not yet build houses. The estimated population once it reaches full occupation is 6,500 residents (Alphaville Urbanismo 2001). According to the developer, the targeted market was characterized as upper middle-class and upper-class families in the MRC with monthly household incomes greater than 30 times the minimum wage. The heads of those families are between 30 to 45 years old, married and have two children. The first buyers were mostly small and medium-size business owners, high-level autonomous professionals, retail owners, consultants, and commercial representatives. More than 65% of buyers had a university degree (Alphaville Urbanismo n.d.).

Two studies of Alphaville Graciosa and Pinheiros indicate that the actual profile of residents has matched the expectations of the developer. Polli (2006) concluded from data provided by the homeowners' association that the majority of residents are upper-middle class couples between 35 and 50 years old with two children. Most are business owners, high-level autonomous professionals, directors of multinational companies, and accomplished sportsmen. The research also suggested that residents did not have any relationship with the surrounding neighborhoods and conducted work, businesses, and social activities in Curitiba.

Ritter (2011) observed similar results from ten interviews and thirty-two surveys. The main changes were a higher percentage of retired residents and increased use of commercial establishments and services nearby, particularly banks, grocery stores, and public notary. However, 88% of respondents still worked in Curitiba.

Alphaville Graciosa and Pinheiros are the best exemplars of global suburbs in the MRC. They are the focus of some of my own analyses and will be frequently mentioned throughout the manuscript.

CHAPTER 4: GLOBALIZATION IN GLOBAL SUBURBS

As space appears to shrink to a 'global village' of telecommunications and a 'spaceship earth' of economic and ecological interdependencies – to use just two familiar and everyday images – and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is (the world of the schizophrenic), so we have to learn how to cope with an overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds.

(David Harvey, 1990, *The Condition of Post-Modernity*, 240)

Across the globe, people of different cultures, socio-economic status, and divergent political views have perceived that there is something 'new' about the world. Over the span of one generation, we have experienced transformations in the ways we communicate with each other, in the cities we inhabit, in the products we buy and how we buy them, and in our daily routines. We are largely convinced that we live in a new era. Yet, despite these shared feelings, there is little agreement on what exactly has caused so many changes, how 'radical' or 'new' these changes are, and how they affect us.

Globalization is often offered as the explanation for the series of events that ultimately led the world to become increasingly interconnected. Embedded in the popular image of a globalized world is the notion that technological development has brought distant places and people closer. Through the use of media and technology, we have become familiarized with different cultures and

accustomed to imported products. The constant flow of information, money, people, and commodities across countries has created a highly integrated world. David Harvey (1990) pointed to distinct qualitative changes in the way in which we perceive space and time. What he termed “space-time compression” refers to the challenging and sometimes stressful experience that includes the speeding-up of the pace of life and the overcoming of spatial barriers.

Beyond the recognizable effects of globalization on our daily lives lies a complex set of structural changes affecting economic, political, and cultural organizations. Transformations in these three arenas are interrelated. They and include changes in forms of production, in international trade, in the roles of local government and international organizations, and in the behavior of consumers across the globe. Van Kempen (2007, 20), for instance, defines globalization as “a combination of new technology, increased trade and mobility, increased concentration of control, and reduced welfare-oriented regulatory power of nation states.”

Rather than a flat world, as is suggested by American journalist Thomas Friedman in his popular 2005 book *The World is Flat*, sociologists, economists, and planning scholars agree that globalization has resulted in heightened inequality among and within countries. By the 1980s, while Asian countries experienced impressive economic growth, Latin American and African countries were facing a debt crisis. As a result, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) implemented a debt management regime, including a series of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Loans to countries in crisis

were approved with certain conditions, including cuts to public spending, the opening of markets, and the privatization of state owned enterprises.

Development was defined as participation in the world economy and the "development project" that dominated the previous decades was replaced by the "globalization project" (McMichael 2007).

Today, after decades of increasing globalization, it is notable that participation in the world market has produced uneven development across the world. The gap between developed and undeveloped countries increased. Only a small portion of the world's population benefited from economic growth and technological development. Besides increasing inequality, a series of recent financial crises and rapid environmental decline indicates that, ultimately, globalization did not promote overall prosperity (McMichael 2007).

According to the world-system perspective, participation in the world economy unavoidably leads to uneven development. Inequality is inherent in the system because countries at different positions in the world economy are presented with different opportunities for, and constraints on, development. Thus, different types of production (e.g. labor versus capital intensive) and different amounts of trade, affects the economic trajectory of core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral countries (Wallerstein 2004).

What is clear is that globalization is not a "natural" condition. As a social creation it is neither inevitable nor immutable. McMichael (2007) refers to globalization as a "project" because, as he claims, it is a political intervention enshrined in the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, IMF, and WTO), neo-

liberal governments, and transnational corporations. But, as stated earlier, these strategies, which are crafted at the global level, had unequal local effects because, despite the increasing influence of international forces, local conditions still matter.

Global and Local Matter

The effects of globalization at the local level, including changes in urban governance, policies, and spatial configuration are varied, ambiguous, and contradictory. Just as globalization has led to unequal development across countries, with a few benefitting from it and others left behind, so it affected regions within countries and urban areas within metropolitan regions differently. As Marcuse and Van Kempen (2000) point out, the impact of globalization varies according to a series of local conditions, such as geography, history, level of economic development, level of globalization, level of racism and ethnic discrimination, level of inequality, and type of political system.

What seems 'new' in the globalized world is the degree of connection between the global and the local. The most recent financial crisis in the United States, which affected virtually the entire world, is just one example of global connections. Giddens (1990, 64) characterized the nature of the relationship between local happenings and events originating miles away:

Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space. Thus whoever studies cities today, in any part of the world, is aware that what happens in a local neighborhood is likely to be influenced by

factors – such as world money and commodity markets – operating at an indefinite distance away from that neighborhood itself.

Across Latin America, despite differences in urbanization processes within nations, common trends of heightened economic insecurity and increasing urban inequality and spatial segregation have been associated with “the reduction in the costs of communication, of the opening up of economies to free trade, of the free movement of capital and of the reduction of state intervention in the economy” (Roberts 2005, 111). Although these trends are certainly related, the rest of this chapter focuses on spatial segregation, as it is pervasive in the relationship between globalization and the making of global suburbs.

The spatial configuration of cities is determined by the interaction of both global and local forces. Increasing spatial segregation has been observed in cities across Latin American countries as well as in other developing and developed countries. The division of a city into segregated areas according to different functions, culture and status is not new. But, in the contemporary city, divisions are strengthened as the differentiation between areas becomes more apparent, and the lines between them are hardened (Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000).

Forces leading to segregation are qualitatively different under globalization. Spatial changes are more likely to result from large capital investments rather than from the dynamics of local land markets and social discrimination. As Roberts (2005, 118) explains, “[t]he deregulation of land markets and the free movement of capital has brought substantial investments in all Latin American cities in large-scale commercial developments, such as

shopping malls, and in luxury housing, both in the center city and in suburban locations.” As a result, spatial changes in the urban fabric gave rise to “a new spatial order” (Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000).

Fragmentation as a New Spatial Order

The center-periphery model illustrates a 'polarized' pattern of segregation in which larger areas of the metropolitan region accommodate different groups. This pattern was predominant in Latin American cities during the 1970s and 1980s. High urbanization rates coupled with economic deceleration had a two-pronged effect. On the one hand, a combination of urban policies and market forces pushed the urban poor and new immigrants into informal settlements on the peripheries as urban areas became unaffordable. On the other hand, middle- and higher-income residents increasingly resorted to self-segregation as a strategy to escape from urban problems (Caldeira 2000, Coy 2006, Davis 2006). Walls and gates were raised around existing communities and new single- and multi-family gated communities emerged. Segregation patterns became distinguishable at the metropolitan level as central neighborhoods accommodated the wealthier population while the peripheries were turned into a "human dump" where, "in some cases, urban waste and unwanted immigrants end up together" (Davis 2006, 47).

Since, however, the late 1980s, a new pattern, or a "new spatial order" has emerged (Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000). The scale of segregation shifted from metropolitan to intra-urban resulting in a fragmented, rather than a polarized

urban fabric. In the fragmented city, different social groups are closer together, but divisions are stronger and more explicit. The differentiation between areas is apparent and marked by physical boundaries. While the polarization model established two fairly distinguishable areas within the metropolitan region, the fragmented structure presents strong segregation within adjacent areas where a mix of land uses and social groups are proximate but separated by walls and gates (Caldeira 2000).

A distinctive feature of the fragmented city is the emergence of upscale enclaves throughout the metropolitan region. Luxurious residential communities and upper-class office, commercial, and recreational facilities, which were once concentrated in prestigious central areas, have proliferated across traditionally low-income peripheries (Janoschka and Borsdorf 2006). On the one hand, the peripheral location offers cheaper land, more space, and better environmental quality than the overcrowded urban areas. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of upscale enclaves and poor (and often irregular) communities offers a spatial expression of socio-economic inequality.

In Brazil, upscale gated residential communities have been proliferating on the peripheries of major cities since the 1970s. For 30 years, these communities were concentrated in the two largest metropolitan regions of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. However, since the year 2000, most metropolitan regions have experienced rapid proliferation of suburban residential enclaves.

The relocation of upscale enclaves from the center city to peripheral areas in the developing world is, to some extent, comparable to the American

suburbanization movement. In both cases the privileged population attempts to escape the problems of dense urban areas by resorting to a refuge in the peripheries. This phenomenon occurs throughout the developing world (Fishman 2002; Glasze, Webster and Frantz 2006; Webster, Glasze, and Frantz 2002). The physical characteristics of gated communities and suburban developments located in Argentina (Thuillier 2005), Chile (Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2008), Brazil (Caldeira 2000, Coy 2006), Uruguay (Álvarez-Rivadulla 2007), Indonesia (Firman 2004), China (Giroir 2006), and South Africa (Landman and Schönteich 2002) are strikingly similar to those found in the United States.

Theories explaining the proliferation of typically American development typologies (e.g. gated communities, sprawl, and suburbs) in other countries fall into two categories: theories of emergence and theories of diffusion. Theories of emergence highlight local conditions as the drivers behind the development of American patterns in other countries. The rationale is that the socio-economic and political environments that enabled the emergence of these typologies in the United States are stimulating the emergence of the same model in other countries.

McKenzie (2006) proposes that the presence or absence of private communities in American cities can be explained by local environmental conditions. The basis for his argument is twofold. First, private communities are not evenly distributed throughout the United States. Second, the concentration or absence of these developments in different places coincides with statistically significant patterns. In his analysis, he could explain two-thirds of the variation in

levels of private community construction using only two variables: the relative level of county indebtedness, and the relative cost of urban land.

From this analysis, McKenzie (2006) concludes that local conditions are the most significant factors leading to the emergence of private communities. His analysis, however, is limited to local conditions of different regions within one country. Also, he acknowledges “the existence of an institutionalized (if imperfect) American model, coupled with the ease of exporting the knowledge needed to mass-produce it, makes it easy for developers and planners in other nations to adopt many of the American model’s features” (p. 27).

Richardson and Gordon (1999) develop a similar argument regarding the suburbanization phenomenon around the globe. They state that the difference between suburbanization in the United States and in other countries is better explained by time lags than by contrasting policies. They emphasize the notion, already articulated in their previous work (Gordon and Richardson 1997), that suburban development is a response to consumer preferences rather than stimulated by tax incentives, land use policies, or real estate markets. In this way, once countries experience changes in local conditions (such as a rise in income levels, car ownership, infrastructure, and technology improvement) that facilitate the fulfillment of an already existing consumer preferences, they are likely to experience increasing levels of suburbanization.

Theories of diffusion, however, propose that the proliferation of American typologies around the world results from the exportation of a model. Arguments include the notion of ‘Americanization’ or ‘Westernization.’ Similarities amongst

suburban developments indicate that, rather than a local phenomenon; they are part of an increasing global trend stimulated by international forces. These theories suggest that the proliferation of American residential models is made possible by political and socio-economic changes that have resulted from the adoption of neoliberalism across the globe.

First, the liberalization of investments and trade policies allowed local capital accumulation, promotion of consumption driven economic sectors, and the creation of a 'globalized' capital accumulating class. Second, regulatory reforms promoted by the World Bank, IMF and WTO in developing countries encouraged decentralization of governments. Third, the emergence of private real estate markets and financial institutions in previously communist countries allowed the increase of private ownership (Leichenko and Solecki 2005).

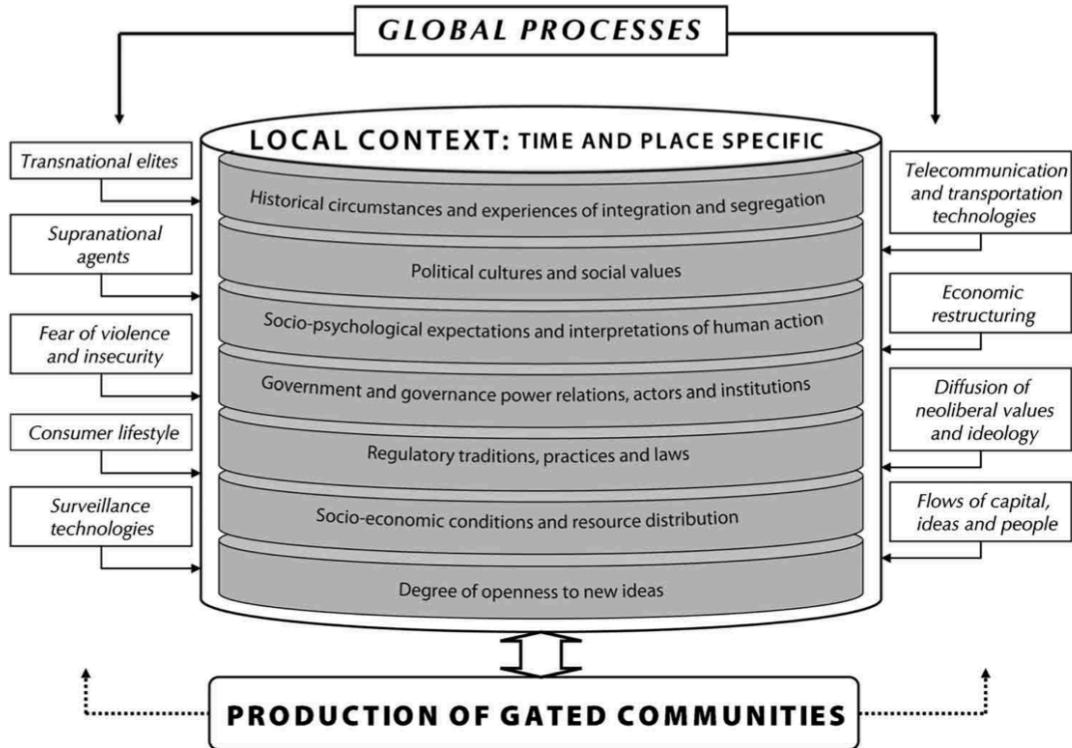
Theories of emergence and theories of diffusion are complementary. They give more or less weight to local or global forces as motivations for the proliferation of typically American developments in other countries. While the development of upscale enclaves on the outskirts of major cities must be understood in connection with international forces of globalization, these developments are approved, built, marketed, and sold at the local level.

Grant and Rosen (2009), in their study of gated communities in Canada and Israel, were able to explain how global and local forces interact and ultimately shape spaces. They propose that:

Global forces affect the local through mechanisms such as the transnational connections of local elites or the persuasive influence of international media communications. Local actions influence

global processes by producing concrete products—like gated enclaves— that embody and manifest neoliberal premises and thus produce exemplars for comparison. As developers in countries around the world produce gated enclaves, they simultaneously reproduce locally significant understandings of people and space and reinforce the transmission of global values, ideology, and products. (p. 577)

Figure 4.1: Global and local forces in the production of gated communities.



Source: Grant and Rosen 2009.

Figure 4.1 illustrates how global and local forces influence each other in the production of gated communities, according to Grant and Rosen’s (2009) study. Although it clearly identifies the forces at play, the illustration does not do justice to the nuanced findings of their study. The boxes suggest that processes can be neatly classified as local or global. The unidirectional arrows fail to reflect the simultaneous production and reproduction of the global and the local. These are pitfalls of the choice of illustration, not of the findings of the study.

An important characteristic of spaces produced under globalization across the world is their physical similarities. The design principles guiding these projects are strongly influenced by global standards, which may be adapted to or ignore local conditions. These spaces display homogenous design conforming to a universal design code that results from global aesthetic values and global design processes.

Ben-Joseph (2009) refers to large private developments replicated globally as Entrepreneurial Urban Projects. He explains that:

First, many of these projects are designed and planned by international architectural firms, which imbue each new development with their specific attitudes and styles. Secondly, local governments are 'captured' by the marketing and internationalisation of design that is readily disseminated through media and the Internet. Thirdly, the desire for consistency, and assurance for minimum performance, particularly in building construction, has pushed authorities to endorse or adopt universal codes and standards whenever available (p. 2693).

In the context of globalization, the urban design process and its final product must fit the neoliberal framework in which the production of space serves international markets while allowing localities to be competitive. Thus, rather than producing living spaces, the design process yields 'products' to be exchanged in the market. The commodification of urban design in general, and of the habitat in particular, characterizes the making of global suburbs. These upscale suburban gated communities are packaged and marketed to specific groups of people. The relationship between the making of these spaces in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba and features acknowledged as reflective of globalization is examined in

the next section. It also discusses the mutual nature of this relationship as the local production of these spaces reinforces and reproduces globalization.

Globalization in the Global Suburbs of the MRC

Through the analysis of interviews, participant observation, site visits, and archival data, I identified instances in which globalization is manifested in, and reproduced by, the making of global suburbs in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (MRC), Brazil. The findings are organized according to the nature of these instances: a) design; b) finance; and c) consumption of global suburbs. The following sections describe and analyze these three instances with attention to the relationship between the spaces created, the practices that create them, and globalization as a structural force that is both influencing and being reproduced through local practices.

Design

Within a 30-minute drive northeast from Curitiba's downtown, I pass by high-density low-income neighborhoods, industrial areas, empty land, and informal settlements (*favelas*). The landscape is typical of peripheral areas of Brazilian cities. A couple of minutes before arriving at the largest global suburb of the metropolitan region, I notice that the poorly paved road gave way to a smooth, well-lighted, landscaped avenue. On the left side, behind a new private school and a stretch of undeveloped land, there are improvised housing structures along unpaved narrow streets that form *Favela Zumbi dos Palmares*

(Figure 4.2), one of the largest slums in the metropolitan region. On the right side, I see green lawns, a strip mall, and large houses on small hills. The houses are fenced into four different gated communities that, in addition to some commercial lots, a strip mall, a golf course, and a sports club, form the Alphaville Graciosa complex (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2: View of Favela Zumbi dos Palmares



Source: COHAPAR

Alphaville, like other global suburbs, exhibits the cleanness and orderliness of upper-class American suburbs. Large single-family homes and well-maintained parks are located along landscaped curvilinear streets. An 18-hole golf course adds greenness and openness to the scenery. Taken together, these features give the development a refined look found in suburban neighborhoods of first world countries. The uniqueness of the global suburb in

the local context is evident when compared to the typical Brazilian neighborhood characterized by high density, mixed uses, lack of green spaces, and poorly maintained roads.

Figure 4.3: View of Alphaville Graciosa



Source: Author

The similarities between global suburbs and American upper middle-class suburbs are not coincidences. Designers of global suburbs find inspiration in foreign ideas and adopt global design standards. In some cases, developers hire international firms, some of which designed the very projects that influence global design. The following paragraphs analyze the roles of local and global firms in designing global suburbs.

Local urban designers, as the globally connected elite they serve, are generally familiar with American housing patterns. The typical American suburb that inspires global suburbs around the world is depicted in movies, TV series,

books, and the Internet. For instance, the small library in the urban design office where I conducted observations contained a number of books featuring American suburban planned communities. As an urban designer explained, they use books as sources of inspiration. They also search online for new spatial solutions. Their ideal is to offer something “new” for each development. Books, in particular, also serve to “convince” developers to accept a proposed design.

Urban designers are often responsible for proposing the design and spatial features of global suburbs. In some cases, however, developers have specific requests. Some of the urban designers I interviewed explained that developers sometimes provide photos and information about American gated communities they would like to replicate in Brazil. In one occasion, a developer flew the urban designers to Miami to visit gated communities he hoped to be sources of inspiration. More commonly, however, developers indicate Alphaville¹³ as a source of inspiration. Typical design features of Alphaville that are replicated in almost every development and inspire other global suburbs include: lots for single-family homes; green lawns; recreational amenities such as a golf-course, a gym, a soccer field, basketball and tennis courts; fences; walls; gates; and curvilinear streets.

International urban design standards inspire Brazilian urban designers and developers. In some cases, however, developers hire international firms to plan and design global suburbs in Brazil. The master plan and the welcome center of

13 Further details about the development company Alphaville Urbanismo and the two developments found at the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba were provided on Chapter 3.

Alphaville Brasilia 2, for instance, were developed by RTKL¹⁴ and Perkins + Wills¹⁵, respectively. Both are global firms with headquarters in the United States and offices in São Paulo. Another example is *Pedra Branca*, a planned community including single- and multi-family residential areas, commercial centers, and a university campus in the metropolitan region of Florianopolis. The master plan of this community was developed by DPZ¹⁶ (the American urban design firm that founded New Urbanism), and its sustainable infrastructure was designed by Arup¹⁷, a global firm headquartered in London and with offices in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Expertise from abroad has been enlisted in the design of amenities within global suburbs. For instance, international firms were responsible for the design of both the security system and the golf course in Alphaville Graciosa. The need for protection within gates is attributed to perceived local security issues. The militarization of residential areas is commonplace in Brazilian cities. In Alphaville, the solution came from abroad. The high level of security desired by the targeted population required the expertise of a firm experienced in developing security systems in a war zone. A realtor states, “the security layout was entirely developed by an Israeli firm” (Interview 11009). An American architect signed the

14 <http://www.rtkl.com/projects/brasilia-2-master-plan-phase-2/>. Accessed April 15th, 2015.

15 <http://perkinswill.com/work/welcome-center-alphaville-bras%C3%ADlia.html>. Accessed April 15th, 2015.

16 <http://cidadepedrabranca.com.br/um-pouco-de-historia/?lang=en>. Accessed April 15th, 2015.

17 http://www.arup.com/Projects/Pedra_Branca.aspx. Accessed April 15th, 2015.

design of Alphaville Graciosa's 18-hole golf course¹⁸, which is among the best in Brazil.

Globalization enables developers to expand their search for professionals beyond national boundaries. International firms may be more qualified to lead projects where the application of international design standards is desirable. Often these firms designed the very projects that influence global design standards. The work of international urban design firms is one of the forces behind the internationalization of urban design that leads to homogenization across the world (Lang 2009). The increasing contribution of global firms to urban design projects in Brazil increases the pool of professionals who are available to developers and brings competition among designers to the international level. For instance, an urban designer showed me the portfolio of an international firm describing it as "the work of our competitor" (Observations 1305).

The aesthetics of global suburbs are crafted through carefully devised rules applied to both the design of each gated community as well as the building codes that regulates construction of each housing unit. At the community level, designers who work at or for Alphaville must adhere to certain principles, including minimum lot sizes, regular lot shapes, adequate placement of walls and fences, and choice of plants in landscaped areas. Within each lot, owners must comply with Alphaville's building codes, which are stricter than municipal codes. Every construction must be approved both by Alphaville and by municipal authorities. Every community has its own team of professionals, including an

18 Alphaville Graciosa Clube, accessed April 23, 2015, http://www.clubealphaville.com.br/structure_preview.php?id=1&atual=golfe,

architect, whose obligation is to verify compliance with minimum setbacks, minimum house size, maximum height, and use of allowable colors, material and construction method, among others.

Strict design principles and building codes contribute to Alphaville's profits. These tools provide predictability for property owners who are assured that their immediate surroundings will not change in the long-term. Predictability makes investment within gated developments less risky because it eliminates the possibility that future uses or new constructions nearby could negatively affect real estate values.

Additionally, design principles and regulations guarantee consistency and maintenance of an aesthetic that is appealing to the targeted population. What is being replicated in Alphaville, in the other developments it inspires, and in global suburbs abroad, are global design principles that yield the "symbolic aesthetic of up-to-datedness" (Lang 2009). These principles create 'products' successfully accepted in the market.

The international appearance of global suburbs permeates the collective imagination of the global elite. The suburban landscape appears in the media through images of large western style single-family houses surrounded by greenery. And, as Pow (2009) notes, the aestheticization of urban space, as illustrated in pristine gated communities, accentuates neoliberal ideologies as they allow the elites to maintain class identities by excluding others.

The project director of Alphaville Urbanismo refers to the style prevailing in Alphaville's houses as "an architecture more Miami [style]." He explains that:

[. . .] the houses are modeled after American houses (those prefabricated homes of fast construction, painted in pastel tones, with white trim, a gray roof, and sometimes a *porte cochere* with one or two columns). I mean, it is a model commercially seen as a movie home, from an American magazine. I think that the faster communication resulting from the globalization process allows for a more frequent contact. You are all the time seeing in the Internet, on TV, in the magazines, a lot of information about what is happening abroad. At one time it was not like that, I mean, what was an example of a house was the house of [. . .] Brazilians you saw in *Manchete* [a Brazilian magazine]. Those were Brazilian homes, often from good architects, sometimes not. The references were closer. Today, the reference is an anonymous house you see frequently in a commercial, in the press in general. (Willer in Roiphe 2007, 164)

Another architect suggests that the American style is popular and has market appeal because people tend to like what they know. American movies depict an architectural style that has become popular, “it is ingrained in people’s memory.” It creates a “fictitious intimacy” (in Roiphe 2007, 173). She also believes that imported American models are considered chic in Brazil because they are different and innovative. Once the elite consumes these models, they become the “consumption dream of the majority” (p. 177). However, international models are not always adequate to the local reality. For instance, she points out that the loft style in which the kitchen and living room are integrated, known in Brazil as ‘American kitchen,’ may not reflect the local lifestyle. “Who does not cook? Who does not fry a steak? The house is going to smell steak. [In the United States] they don’t cook, but here we do” (p. 177).

Despite questionable design quality, the international architecture featured in global suburbs pleases realtors, investors, and residents. As spaces in general, and houses in particular, become commodities, they are transformed

from living spaces to market products. In this context, principles guiding the program and the aesthetic of constructions are more connected to market demands than to the needs of inhabitants. Roiphe (2007), when studying houses within an Alphaville development in São Paulo, observed among architects an understanding of architectural objects as objects of consumption. They frequently succumb to the realtors' premises that houses in Alphaville must have at least four master suites and a four-car garage. Likewise, residents, who seem to be more concerned with their ability to dispose of their house in the future than with living in it, demand these standard features despite the real needs of their families.

Investors, developers, residents, urban designers, and architects have largely accepted the application of global design principles. In Brazil, the "Alphaville standard" based on these principles has become a reference in influencing other developments. An urban designer explains that even though they do not copy "the Alphaville standard," they try to offer developers the "urban design quality" typical of Alphaville. For her, what defines the Alphaville standard is its careful design, particularly "the continuity of blocks, the uniformity of lots." She explains: "There is not a lot that is very narrow, one that is rectangular, another one triangular; then you turn the corner and the blocks are misaligned, then you turn again and they look like this" (Interview 14001).

Not only has the design produced by Alphaville inspired other global suburbs similarly targeting upper class residents, it has also inspired less luxurious and cheaper developments. The aspiration of living in a single-family

house within a suburban gated development featuring security systems and recreational amenities is not exclusive to the very rich. Developers have been eager to fulfill the desires of the middle-class by providing smaller and less expensive gated communities partially replicating larger global suburbs.

Alphaville Urbanismo, for instance, created in 2009 a line of products targeting the middle-class. Terras Alphaville, as it is named, builds upon the company's well-regarded brand to provide smaller lots for the middle-class.

From the discussion above, it is important to highlight that the local development company Alphaville Urbanismo has been able to actualize, in its hundreds of developments, the global design principles that characterize global suburbs around the world. By applying these principles locally, Alphaville promotes global and local connections. On the one hand, it transforms global design principles into local standards; i.e. other Brazilian developers and the population at large are able to identify, visualize, and communicate these principles as they are encapsulated in the brand 'Alphaville.' Rather than having to resort to technical terms or foreign examples, Brazilians may simply point to Alphaville for reference. In this way, the popularity of the brand and the consistency of the Alphaville 'concept' allow its design principles to permeate the imagination of the population.

By applying global design principles locally, Alphaville makes global connections. Not only it is able to attract foreign investors, engage foreign designers, and appeal to foreign residents (as explained in the next section), it is also cited in international publications discussing global suburbs and gated

communities. For instance, Fishman (2002, 2) cites Alphaville alongside other “suburbs of privilege” such as “Kung Nam Ku, outside of Seoul, Manila’s Makati, Kuala Lumpur’s Bangsar, Dhaka’s Gulshan, [. . .] and Lima’s Miraflores.” Leichenko and Solecki (2008) cite Alphaville as an example of “consumption landscapes.” Grant (2004) considers Alphaville a new type of gated community she calls “complete communities.” Alphaville has become both a local and a global exemplar of the application of global design standards.

Finance

Foreigners have contributed to the financing of global suburbs. Urban developments, as numerous other service and commercial activities, are part of the global economy. For instance, large development and construction firms have stocks listed on international stock exchange. The first Brazilian real estate company to be listed in the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) was Gafisa, in 2007. In addition to being one of the largest real estate firms in Brazil, Gafisa became the largest developer of global suburbs in 2006 when it became a shareholder in Alphaville Urbanismo. According to Gafisa’s website, an important incentive to list the company’s stock in the NYSE came from Samuel Zell, an American real estate investor who bought 32% of the company in 2005¹⁹. In 2013, New York-based private equity firm Blackstone and its Brazilian partner

19 “Com os Sócios Certos.” Gafisa, accessed October 28, 2014, <http://www.gafisa.com.br/NoticiaDetalhes.aspx?noticiaId=27>

Pátria Investimento acquired 70% of Alphaville Urbansimo²⁰. Most of the company's ownership is now in the hands of foreign investors.

Consumption

Part of the process of making global suburbs includes inhabiting, or rather, consuming – as I suggest here – these spaces. Buying, renting, moving in, and living in a house within these developments are often considered the last stages of the process. From the perspective of urban designers, consultants, construction workers, developers, and public officials, for example, once a community is built, lots are sold, and people move in, their job is over. For residents, on the other hand, this is just the beginning of their relationship with the space, community amenities, neighbors, and a new lifestyle.

The stage in which residents inhabit these spaces and enjoy a new lifestyle may also be seen as the initial step in the making of global suburbs. We may consider that it signifies market acceptance of global suburbs as a residential product and stimulates the proliferation of similar developments.

The next paragraphs focus on the residents of global suburbs as consumers of a product packaged and sold through marketing strategies targeting a particular group of people. This product includes physical amenities, e.g. the lot or house, green areas, and recreational facilities. It also includes socio-psychological amenities, e.g. a sense of community, perceived safety,

20 Yu, Hui-yong. 2013. "Blackstone Buys Stake in Brazil's Alphaville From Gafisa." Bloomberg Business. Available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-06-07/blackstone-buys-stake-in-brazil-s-alphaville-from-gafisa> (accessed on March 12, 2016).

privacy, peace, and status. Taken together, physical and socio-psychological amenities offer residents a desirable lifestyle.

Residents of global suburbs are business owners, high-level autonomous professionals, directors of multinational companies, and accomplished sportsmen (Ritter 2011). They are part of the transnational elite (Sassen 2006) and, as such, share similar ideologies, consumption patterns, and lifestyles with elites in other countries. This group is globally linked and more connected (culturally, socially, and sometimes physically) to their counterparts in other cities across the world than they are with their lower-income compatriots from whom they have established physical and social separation. An indicator of the transnational character of residents of global suburbs is the bilingual private school built to address the needs of residents in Alphaville.

The transnational elite is the beneficiary of neoliberal policies that enabled the influx of multinational companies to Brazil since the 1990s. Not only are they often employed in these companies, but they also enjoy new consumption options brought by international chains.

The Metropolitan Region of Curitiba, in particular, received a number of multinationals (e.g. Renault, Volkswagen, Chrysler, Siemens, Bosch) as well as international chains of restaurant (e.g. Subway, McDonalds), hotels (e.g. Sheraton, Blue Tree Tower, Howard Johnson), and supermarkets (e.g. Wal-Mart, Big). The presence of these companies has led some authors to identify a phenomenon of “internationalization” of the region (Moura and Kornin 2002).

The term refers to both the proliferation of multinationals and the replacement of local businesses by international chains.

The internationalization of the MRC results from economic policies initiated in the 1990s by the Federal government. Seeking to attract foreign direct investments (FDIs), the country adopted a neoliberal agenda that included deregulation, liberalization, and privatization. The automobile industry, in particular, received a series of incentives from federal, state, and local governments who competed against each other to attract plants. Municipalities offering free land, infrastructure, low interest loans, and legal guarantees were able to attract FDIs from multinationals.

With the influx of enterprises from abroad, Curitiba saw a rising population of foreigners. Part of this population chose to live in global suburbs. Not only are these communities often close to multinationals dispersed throughout the metropolitan region, they also offer a quality of life comparable to standards in first world countries. The president of a homeowner's association explains:

They already have this lifestyle in the United States, Germany, so the only condominium in Curitiba would be this one. They have to give the same conditions they had in the United States, Germany, France (in the case of Renault), or wherever; they have to provide the same lifestyle here. Thus, the option for these Americans, French, Germans is to live in Alphaville. (Interview 13006)

Like foreigners, Brazilians are attracted to global suburbs because they offer a lifestyle akin to those experienced in first world cities. For example, a resident proudly highlights a positive aspect of the lifestyle afforded by the gated community: "you walk on the streets at 3 a.m. listening to your iPhone and

nobody will steal it” (Interview 13014). But living in a global suburb comes with a monetary cost.

In addition to the cost of acquiring a lot there is the construction cost. In these communities, developers sell the serviced lot, but not the construction. Residents may buy houses already built by previous residents or investors or they may build their own houses. Because of the community’s strict regulations, construction in some global suburbs might be more expensive than in other neighborhoods. For example, in Alphaville, the strict building code specifies a minimum house size and determines which materials may be used. These rules ensure that houses are large and expensive. Moreover, construction activities are prohibited after hours and on weekends. Property owners are required to clean up dirt or debris left on the streets and must rent a chemical bathroom for any job longer than two hours. These requirements require additional expenses.

There are also extra living costs related to the homeowners’ association fees and the need for domestic workers, such as drivers, maids, and baby sitters. Although the Brazilian elite usually hires many of these workers, the isolated location of global suburbs often makes domestic employees essential. One must consider also the cost of maintaining and exhibiting the social status expected of residents of global suburbs. Living in a global suburb like Alphaville means being part of a privileged group of people. As a resident observes, people who live in Alphaville do not want to be seen driving a cheap car (Interview 13014).

There are also costs related to lifestyle changes. For example, a resident explains that there were some lifestyle changes to which she was compelled to

adapt. After moving from an urban neighborhood into a global suburb, she felt the necessity to hire a new maid who could drive, and to use a taxi service to transport her children (Interview 13014). Another resident states that service providers charge residents of Alphaville more because they understand that residents “have money.” So she learned to always ask for quotes before giving her address (Interview 13006). She also mentions that there are concerns about traffic accidents and violence in the region in the late hours. This circumstance led parents of teenagers to hire a van service to drive them to/from social events in the city (Interview 13006).

Residents do not seem to interpret the high living cost in global suburbs as a burden. They understand that these are worthwhile and necessary investments in order to have a desirable lifestyle. It is the price to be paid for privacy, safety, and leisure. Furthermore, the high living cost signals the status that living in these communities represents. Those who are able to afford not just the cost of a lot but all the other extra expenditures are the elite. They are especially attracted to the symbols of status and exclusivity prominent in global suburbs.

The global connections of transnational elites are often expressed in their consumption choices. Imported clothing, accessories, and cars are signs of status and differentiation. This trend is particularly apparent in Brazil, where the elite is eager to adopt cultural values, behavior, and ideals from abroad. What is new and different, especially when imported, is translated as chic. As Lara (2011, 372) suggests, Brazilians are neither as traditional as Europeans nor as

nationalist as Americans. Instead, they are consumers of international tendencies that are often dislocated and out of place.

This trend is also reflected in the housing choices of the Brazilian elite. Global suburbs have been branded and packaged for consumption. To live in Alphaville is to make a statement about social class and status. Developers aim to capitalize on Alphaville's fame and to try to replicate its design. Others try to build upon Alphaville's reputation to increase the attractiveness and the value of their own developments. For instance, the marketing material for communities near Alphaville Graciosa often explicitly states that their location is "near Alphaville."

Preoccupation with exhibiting differentiation and status through consumption choices is particularly relevant among the emerging elite. According to Alphaville Urbanismo's project director, a large portion of Alphaville's population is composed of an emerging elite including TV stars and soccer players. These people's tastes are largely influenced by what is in the magazines and what is fashionable (Willer in Roiphe 2007).

Yet, it is important to note that while seeking to absorb new tendencies, the Brazilian elite subscribes to old inequalities (Lara 2011). Inherited from a colonial past, the separation between classes is manifested in the metropolitan region, in the community, and within residences. While houses in global suburbs exhibit design styles inspired by American homes, its plans have a hint of 'Brazilianity' expressed in the careful designation of separate entrances, flows, and rooms for employers and employees.

The consumerist mindset in which the types and quantities of goods and services one is able to consume define happiness, identity, and status spread out in Brazil after the coup d'état of 1964. The event, which overthrew a democratically elected president deemed a socialist, received the support of traditional elite circles and the United States. It initiated a period of nineteen years under military dictatorship. The order of the day during this time was to grow the economy through neoliberalism and consumption. Following the model adopted in the United States, the government successfully preached consumption as a way of life. Throughout the 1970s, the economic boom - known as the 'economic miracle' - allowed the growing middle-class to fulfill its role as consumers. An economic crisis in the 1980s put an end to the shopping spree, but the consumerist mindset still prevails.

Packaged as consumer goods, spaces are subjected to the ever-changing tastes and demands of consumers. The market is fueled by people's need or desire to discard goods and acquire new ones. Designers and marketing specialists purposefully craft needs and desires by making products quickly obsolete. This strategy is called "planned obsolescence." Thus, the economy, in general, and the real estate market, in particular, creates a demand for products which investors, entrepreneurs, and developers are able to offer. As Alphaville's project director observes, "[t]he market needs to incentivize so that the previous product becomes obsolete. It is cruel! [. . .] They create a necessity that did not exist, so that they can sell the solution" (Willer in Roiphe 2007, 167).

What is observed in Alphaville is what Leichenko and Solecki (2005, 243) have argued:

[. . .] globalization of consumption in the context of neoliberal economic policies influences the housing preferences and housing consumption decisions of a small, yet growing, middle-income segment of [less developed countries] urban residents, leading to patterns of resource use akin to those associated with suburbanization and suburban sprawl found in more developed countries.

Their argument is based on the idea that the globalization of mass media, the proliferation of Western advertising, and the growing availability of Western products in developing countries contributed to influence consumption preferences and to introduce new consumption choices ranging from food chains to gated communities.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the question “How is globalization manifested in and reproduced by the making global suburbs?” This question implies that global suburbs must be understood as a global, rather than a local phenomenon. This assumption is supported by the proliferation of similar typologies around the world (see Fishman 2002) and by the role of foreign ideas and actors in the making of these spaces.

In the case of the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (MRC), higher mobility of people, goods, and ideas has enabled the increasing participation of foreign actors in the making of global suburbs. Foreigners bring expertise to the design,

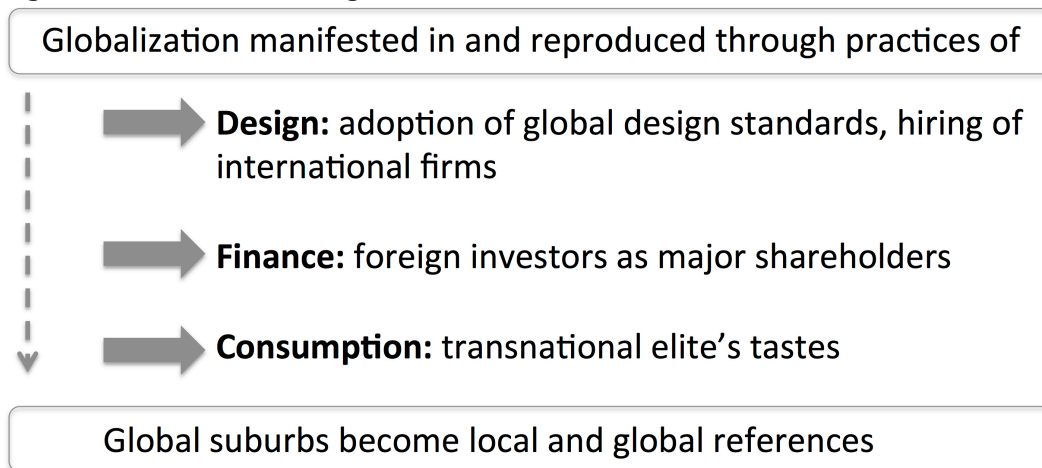
management, and financing of these developments. Additionally, the location, security, and amenities of global suburbs attract residents relocating from abroad.

The analysis of global suburbs with a particular focus on the roles of foreign ideas and actors reveal that globalization is manifested in the design, financing, and consumption of global suburbs in the MRC (see Figure 15). First, the adoption of international design standards lends these developments a pristine aesthetic typical of upper-class American suburbs. These spaces have become familiar to the Brazilian elite, developers, and designers as they are depicted in movies, commercials, foreign books, and the Internet. Second, foreign investors are currently the major shareholders in the largest Brazilian development firm. Finally, both Brazilians and foreigners who inhabit global suburbs are generally part of the transnational elite who shares consumption choices and tastes with elites around the world. As a sign of status and differentiation, they consume global suburbs as they consume brand name clothing and cars.

While globalization – particularly the global flows of people, money, goods, and ideas – has enabled the proliferation of global suburbs, it has also been reproduced through the development of these spaces. The brand Alphaville has created exemplars of global suburbs that, although drawing from foreign models, are now local references. At the same time, Alphavilles have been cited worldwide as the Brazilian model of global suburbs, and are often compared to developments in a variety of countries.

Global suburbs provide housing at a global standard to the international population and national elites working at multinational companies. The mutual influence of multinationals and global suburbs results from the desire of these companies and the world citizens they employ to locate in cities that provide high quality of life and an aesthetic of modernization (Lang 2009). Cities offering residential options for the transnational elite tend to attract multinational companies.

Figure 4.4: Globalization in global suburbs



Source: Author

CHAPTER 5: THE PERMITTING PROCESS

Today we ought to add the latest and perhaps most formidable form of such domination: bureaucracy or the rule of an intricate system of bureaus in which no men, neither one nor the best, neither the few nor the many, can be held responsible, and which could be properly be called rule by Nobody.”

(Hannah Arendt, 1969, in Lukes 1986, 59)

The question I address in this chapter is a simple one: how are global suburbs approved? These developments go through a permitting process and are regulated by applicable municipal, state, and federal legislation. At the end of this process, developers receive a license that allows them to build a global suburb, which generally means subdividing land, service each lot with basic infrastructure, and build recreational and other common amenities. This is an important step in the making of global suburbs and is the focus of this chapter. Of interest here are the different actors, actions, and objects employed in the permitting process that leads to the approval of global suburbs.

The investigation of the permitting process became relevant during preliminary data collection and analysis. Rather than a straightforward procedure with clear rules and predictable outcomes, the permitting process I analyzed is an open space where rules, procedures, and outcomes are negotiated. Given the controversial nature of these spaces (gated communities that are often in areas zoned for environmental protection and adjacent to existing low-income neighborhoods and favelas), it is important to understand the role of the public

sector when engaging in negotiations with developers and ultimately approving such projects.

The literature dealing with the role of planners, planning, and urban governance in neoliberal states provides one possible answer to this question. Sager's (2011) review of the literature from 1990-2010 indicates that (public sector) planners have become "enablers of development." He says: "Planning authorities are compelled to adopt a positive view of market-led development, and simplification of the planning process and relaxation of planning control are key objectives" (155). If this is the case, then my interviews and observations at the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba should provide insights into the specific mechanisms through which public sector planners enable development.

This chapter first provides a brief review of the literature that addresses regulation, review, and approval processes under neoliberalism. Then, I analyze the permitting process of global suburbs at the MRC. After looking at the actors and actions involved in the process, I identify three pillars that sustain the current structure of the permitting process and help shape its outcome: *relationships*, *legislation*, and *public value*. Each pillar is analyzed separately. I argue that the ways in which these elements are structured, employed, and defined reproduce the premises of neoliberalism and support the licensing of global suburbs.

Neoliberalism

First adopted in countries facing the declining profitability of mass-production industries and the crises of Keynesian welfare policies in the late

1970s, neoliberal policies rapidly flourished across the world. The mobilization of the Bretton Woods institutions as agents of neoliberalism institutionalized the supremacy of market forces in the Third World through structural-adjustment and fiscal austerity programs. By the mid-1980s, “neoliberalism had become the dominant political and ideological form of capitalist globalization” (Brenner and Theodore 2002, 350). Its ideological premise rests on the supremacy of private markets over state intervention as the optimal mechanism for economic development. Neoliberal policies aim at privatization, de-regulation, and liberalization as they seek to increase competitiveness, efficiency, entrepreneurialism, and economic freedom.

Based on Foucault’s work, Lazzarato (2009) explains that while creating an “enterprise society,” neoliberalism advances individualism and destroys social bonds and the possibility of social cohesion as it fosters competition among individuals, “entrepreneurs of themselves,” aiming at maximizing their human capital. In this context, the *Homo economicus*, a subject who has interests instead of rights, plays an essential role in ensuring the conditions for neoliberalism to take hold.

Urban policies that actualize neoliberalism on the ground express the impulses of capitalist production rather than social reproduction (Smith 2002). Neoliberal urban policies turn urban areas into settings for elite consumption practices while "securing order and control amongst marginalized populations" (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009, 58). As (Brenner and Theodore 2002, 350) note:

Neoliberal doctrines were deployed to justify, among other projects, the deregulation of state control over major industries, assaults on organized labor, the reduction of corporate taxes, the shrinking and/or privatization of public services, the dismantling of welfare programs, the enhancement of international capital mobility, the intensification of interlocality competition, and the criminalization of the urban poor.

Critics of neoliberalism note the mismatch between the expected benefits proposed by the neoliberal ideology (e.g. efficiency and entrepreneurialism) and the negative effects of neoliberal policies (e.g. inequality and marginalization). They argue that the mismatch results from the fact that the neoliberal ideology assumes an utopian vision of market rules while neoliberal policies are executed through everyday political operations that have real societal effects (Harvey 2005). Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2009, 51) reiterate this analysis:

While the ideology of neoliberalism rests on a deference to a singular, ahistorical and uniquely efficient market, the infinitely more murky reality is that actually existing programs of neoliberalization are always contextually embedded and politically mediated, for all their generic features, family resemblances, and structural interconnections.

It should be noted, however, that neoliberal principles are unevenly enacted among and within regions, leading to what Brenner and Theodore (2002) call “actually existing neoliberalism.” This view emphasizes “the contextual *embeddedness* of neoliberal restructuring projects insofar as they have been produced within national, regional, and local contexts defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles” (Brenner and Theodore 2002, 349, emphasis in original).

Neoliberal Urbanism

Neoliberal urbanism refers to urban planning, governance, and policy-making practices based on neoliberal principles of, e.g. liberalization, privatization, deregulation, and individualism. The adoption of neoliberal principles throughout the world has transformed urbanization (Smith 2002), urban governance (Harvey 1989; Miraftab 2004), planning practice (Sager 2011), planning ideology (Gunder 2010), and the role of planners (Sager 2009). As such, it is “the most useful concept available for connecting the political discourses of the economizing of social life, the reformation of the welfare states, and the complex processes of globalization” (Sager 2011, 148).

Cities have been at the forefront of neoliberal programs aimed at promoting economic growth. Across developed and developing countries, neoliberalism has given rise to strategies of urban governance in which cities must compete against each other. Decentralized political and taxation systems require that cities rely on local revenues as funding sources for infrastructure and services. "Rather than having the national government raise and disperse funds to where they are most needed [. . .] localities must become fiscally self-reliant and compete for private investment" (Logan and Molotch 2007, xv). Decisions regarding land use and zoning regulations, taxation, exactions, subsidies, and infrastructure provision aim, primarily, at creating a favorable environment for investment.

As cities engage in bidding wars to attract private investment, the criteria for regulating and approving developments focus on economic and fiscal

impacts. Large developments with potential to generate high tax revenue (from property, income, or sales taxes), create jobs, and attract more investment, tourists, or upper-class residents are favored and possess the leverage to negotiate better deals. Since economic return is the major criteria in approving projects, issues of social justice and environmental impact are often secondary (Logan and Molotch 2007).

The goal of city officials, developers, investors, and others who benefit from city growth is to assure the 'highest and best use'²¹ of land. Hence, uses that are less profitable or that bring property values down, such as social housing, small retail stores, and services targeting low-income population, must give way to more profitable and desirable uses, such as museums, sports complex, universities, large retailers, offices, and high-income housing (Logan and Molotch 2007). Thus, over the past four decades cities across the globe have engaged in urban renewal, beautification, gentrification, and slum clearance projects that relocate millions of low-income residents (Smith 2002, Davis 2006).

The value of land or built structures in the city is not the same to everyone. Logan and Molotch (2007, 1) use Marx's concept of use and exchange value to explain the difference:

Any given piece of real estate has both a use value and an exchange value. An apartment building, for example, provides a "home" for residents (use value) while at the same time generating rent for the owners (exchange value). Individuals and groups differ on which aspect (use or exchange) is most crucial to their own lives. For some, places represent residence or production site; for

21 'Highest and best use' is a term used in real estate appraisal that refers to the feasible and legal use of land that produces the highest property value.

others, places represent a commodity for buying, selling, or renting to somebody else. The sharpest contrast [. . .] is between residents, who use place to satisfy essential needs of life, and entrepreneurs, who strive for financial return.

Thus, while residents' approach to urban property is generally related to its use value, entrepreneurs are interested in increasing exchange value. Others who share with entrepreneurs a desire to maximize opportunities for economic return form a "growth machine" coalition composed largely of entrepreneurs and governments. They oppose regulations that might favor use values and potentially hinder development. From this viewpoint, land use regulations impede the functioning of a neoliberal approach, in which free markets should determine land use (Logan and Molotch 2007).

The regulatory nature of planning might lend it to an anti-neoliberal agenda, given that it is characterized by government intervention on both public and private spaces. Equating planning with regulation, Richardson and Gordon (1993), claim that planning interferes with people's rights and freedom. Their argument is based on what Banerjee (1993) called *marketism*: "an unbending faith in the market, which becomes a form of ideology" (359, footnotes). Thus, Richardson and Gordon (1993) propose that market approaches are more likely to produce both efficiency and equity than planning efforts and they advocate for privatization, deregulation, and accordingly, less planning. The role of public sector planning is to intervene, as a last resort, when market approaches (such as pricing strategies) are not feasible.

Richardson and Gordon (1993)'s view of planning as intervention, regulation, and control that hinder the proper functioning of effective markets is in

contrast with a viewpoint that suggests that planning and planners play important roles in the enactment of neoliberal urbanism. The rationale of the latter is that neoliberalism does not require total withdrawal of the state, but a different kind of state intervention that benefits certain groups (Aalbers 2013). In fact, Sager (2011) indicates that planning in both developed and developing countries continually serves as an institutionalized force of neoliberal urbanism.

Governments have become increasingly entrepreneurial and willing to work with the private sector (Campbell, Tait and Watkins 2014; Harvey 1989; Sager 2009).

In the context of inter-urban competition, planning is mobilized to ensure the regulation of land use in such a way that it diminishes investment risks by limiting unpredictability at the same time that it provides conditions for private entrepreneurial development. The neoliberal narrative legitimizes the government's role in creating a regulatory environment that appeals to real estate interests (Farhat 2014). Planning regulations that allow flexibility and encourage bargaining gain ground.

Planning theory and practice rely mostly on a teleocratic approach to planning as a rational and deliberate intervention to control and coordinate independent urban activities (a necessary top-down whole-coordinating device to counteract chaos and ensure order) (Moroni 2010). However, the reality is that land use is largely shaped by small-scale ad hoc decisions made through a bargaining process enabled by flexible regulations. This is particularly true in the United States, where land use regulations are rarely subordinated to any larger plan (Tarlock 2014),

In either case, both the top-down whole-coordinating view of (public) planning as well as the piecemeal approach yield regulation that rely on a great level of discretionary power. The whole-coordinating approach to land-use planning implies differentiation and unequal treatment of land and individuals. As Moroni (2010) explains, this is “inevitable once we establish an end-state and try to assign to each piece of land – through a priori zoning or case-by-case decision – its own ‘peculiar’ function in order to help reach that end-state” (145). Moroni argues that the state may decide in a discretionary manner the ways in which land may be used (for instance, through zoning regulation that applies to each parcel).

In the piecemeal approach, which results from lack of subordination of regulations to plans, cities are unable to control present and future land uses and to implement land use regulations consistently (Tarlock 2014). Instead, land use is shaped by small-scale ad hoc decisions made through a bargaining process enabled by flexible regulations. As Tarlock (2014) notes, plans are “generally treated as only policy guidelines to be ignored when convenient” (105) and land use regulation serve as “tenders for bids” (106). In what he calls “regulation through bargaining,” developers are expected to ask for zoning changes and to engage in negotiations with the city.

Negotiations are encouraged through conditional zoning, which allows the rezoning of a parcel upon some conditions imposed to the developer. Supporters of this approach argue that it allows zoning to be tailored to a particular situation and gives cities the flexibility to make good deals. But, as Tarlock (2014) points

out, “whatever the merits of regulation by bargaining, the process erodes any form of planning except site planning” (107).

Discretionary power gives regulatory agencies the ability to make decisions based on a committee or analyst’s understanding of the potential contribution of a certain development to the well being of the larger community. At first, this power might seem antithetical to neoliberalism because it appears to give more power to governments. But in reality, as the literature on neoliberal urbanism indicates, the value of a certain development and the well being of the larger community, for that matter, are increasingly defined in economic terms. Thus, public sector planners have “become more of an enabler of development and therefore runs the risk of being less preoccupied with community impact or environmental quality” (Sager 2011, 155).

Nevertheless, planners are often ambivalent regarding neoliberal urbanism in general and their roles in particular. As Sager (2009) points out, planners’ professional ideals, attitudes, and values are often in a state of tension with the neoliberal reality of their work. In their study of self-perceptions of planners in Ireland, Fox-Rogers and Murphy (2016) noted the almost complete lack of planners who self-identified as “facilitators of development.” The finding, although not surprising given the bad press developers have received, are telling. They show a contrast between what the planners think they are doing and the outcomes of planning processes.

Fox-Rogers and Murphy (2016) suggest that the gap between what planners think they do and what the planning process produces may result from

the institutional constraints that ensure that the interests of private capital are inevitably served regardless of the planners' acknowledgement of their role as facilitating development. But, as Fox-Rogers and Murphy (2016) briefly suggest, the gap might also result from the planners' attempt to cast a more positive light on the planning practice by dissociating it from private development interests. My own findings, as discussed in this chapter, point to a more subtle process: institutional arrangements (particularly related to regulatory processes) are sustained by values that are embedded in and reproduced through planning practices. These values are constantly enacted even though they are not apparent to planners, as they have been naturalized.

This overview of neoliberal urbanism highlights the importance of the concept as an analytical tool. Neoliberalism is certainly not new and neoliberal policies have been around for decades. But the ideological premises of the neoliberal logic as taken for granted as they continue to shape urban planning practices. This chapter makes visible the mechanisms through which public sector planning enables development and ultimately materializes neoliberalism in spaces.

Neoliberal Urbanism in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (MRC)

In this section, I demonstrate through the accounts of my informants the neoliberal ideology is naturalized within the institutional framework in which planners operate, in general, and within planning practice, in particular. Rather than identifying and describing neoliberal policies employed at the MRC, I show

the naturalization of neoliberalism as they become apparent in how planners, analysts, elected officials, and developers understand the role of the public sector, particularly in regards to land use regulations. The assumption is that naturalized neoliberalism, which leads to the formulation and enactment of neoliberal urban policies, plans, and practices, may be uncovered through interviews as the principles of neoliberalism shape the perception of actors about how things work.

Neoliberalism advocates for the supremacy of private markets over state intervention as the optimal mechanism for economic development. Economic growth as the engine of societal development is the primary goal of public agencies. As every aspect of social life is monetized, land becomes a commodity to be exchanged in the real state market and out of which property owners seek to extract the maximum profit. The focus on exchange value rather than use value is revealed in the accounts of public and private sector actors as they refer to the development potential of land. In the excerpts below, premises central to neoliberal urbanism are identified: a) owners must have the right to extract exchange value from land; b) land uses such as industrial or commercial are more valuable than preserved green areas; c) legislation restricting land development hinders economic growth.

I think that you should be able to do what you can in your private property. Here, the guy has land and can't do anything. There is too much land in which the owner can't do anything. So, [he] comes to the city [and we say]: 'no, you can't do anything;' [he] goes to the [Secretary of] Environment: 'no, you can't do anything;' at IAP: 'no, you can't do anything.' Something *can* be done. Because today you have techniques to occupy even green areas, as long as you. . . as

long as you. . . You may occupy, you may install an industry. There are places where industries may be installed anywhere, where there is legislation that. . . it is not like here. [. . .] People have a lot of trouble to install an industry here. They have to listen to IAP, they have to do I don't know what. Recently, we lost two thousand employees that went to São José dos Pinhais. Because of the environmental question, [due to] not having a sewage treatment system. But you could do a pumping system or take the sewage to SANEPAR. So, we lost it. (Planning Analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003).

This area where we worked on is an area Renault was going to occupy, but it did not because it is within the APA. So, Renault went to the other side of the freeway, which is São José, another municipality. People of Piraquara felt it. The city felt [the impact] because Renault was going to generate. . . Because like it or not, Piraquara is a very poor municipality. It is a municipality that does not have anything. Since everything is [zoned as] area of preservation, there are no industries, no agriculture, nothing, because nothing is allowed. (Private sector planner, Interview 11008)

There is an area close to the freeway where the [permitted] occupation rate²² is very low. [. . .] It is unfeasible for industries. [. . .] It is an area with great industrial potential because of great logistic. But the zoning is limiting. (Municipal planning secretary, Interview 13005).

UTP allows buildings up to four stories. It is a less restrictive zoning. So, this part of the city developed more. (Municipal planning secretary, Interview 13005).

The first two quotations illustrate overall dissatisfaction with regulation that restricts development by referring to cases of industries seeking to locate their plants. As it is typical of the growth machine logic, municipalities competed to attract the industry. In one case, Piraquara “lost” because of state environmental regulations that establish a large portion of the municipality as area of preservation. These restrictions imposed through environmental preservation are

²² He is referring to the amount of land in a parcel that may be built on. It is comparable to “building coverage ratio” in U.S. land use terms.

seen as impediments to the city's economic development and explain its condition as a "poor" city.

It is interesting to note, however, that despite dissatisfaction with restrictive legislation, several actors, particularly public sector employees, acknowledge that legislation is not the problem. In fact, they argue that legislation might advance their goal of increasing exchange value and encourage development. For example, in the quotations below, legislation is portrayed as an ally when it transforms areas zoned for environmental protection (APAs) into more flexible zoning (UTPs) and allows the city to "develop more." This flexible zoning is also seen as a way of "giving land a value" (i.e. exchange value) and, in turn, preventing the proliferation of irregular settlements.

What COMEC thought at that time? One way to try to avoid irregular occupations would be to give land a value. Because when the land has no value the owner does not care for it, he abandons it, stops to pay taxes, and the land is invaded. So, areas suffering pressure for occupation were identified. These are small areas when compared to the total, but at that time they were considered strategic for the State government to create legislation since the municipality wasn't taking care of it. (Planner at the Metropolitan Planning Agency, Interview 13011)

We prefer a legally approved gated community than an irregular development. . . because one or the other is going to happen. [. . .] If you do not approve this person's development within the parameters. . . You have to have parameters that give some financial return in the person's land, otherwise he will do another way. He will do it himself no matter what. And it does not help to have someone at the State Environmental Agency reading the laws from his chair and only taking care of things after they already happened; he needs to provide a solution; he is in the same boat, he needs to row along. (Planning analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003)

Another feature of the neoliberal ideology that was a recurrent theme in the interviews was the importance of markets and economic freedom. In the last quotation above, the planning analyst argues that regulatory parameters must account for “some financial return in the person’s land.” Likewise, planners acknowledge that the real estate market and economic return are important issues to be taken into account in processes of land use regulation. A Planner at Metropolitan Planning Agency says: “When legislation is created [...] you have to consider the real estate market and the question of revenue for people” (Interview 13007).

Following a neoliberal logic, informants also expressed a positive view of privatization as it reduces costs for the public sector. These views were salient in accounts justifying the privatization of public space (e.g. green areas and streets) through gating:

[Alphaville] was given a concession of the roads to use them, close them, and install guardhouses. The city, I believe. . . In my opinion, it is more viable this way because there is no [public] maintenance of the roads. (Municipal planning secretary, Interview 13007)

Taken together, these quotations reveal the naturalization of the neoliberal ideology as the commodification of land, the importance of exchange value, the primacy of economic growth, and the local competition for investment are taken for granted. In this context, economic growth, privatization, and economic freedom are positively depicted as values to be pursued through policy.

Those familiar with national urban policies in Brazil might puzzle over the blatant push for a neoliberal agenda expressed in the quotations above given that the country adopted in 2001 a groundbreaking progressive legal framework: the City Statute. In view of that, I must briefly explain the adoption of neoliberal urbanism in Brazil despite (or perhaps, as we will see, enabled by) the City Statute.

The Brazilian economic crises of the late 1970s fueled the social movement for urban reform. The coalition composed of favela residents and middle-class professionals sought to add urban policy concerns to the democratization process already under way. Based on the right to the city principle, the urban reform movement's agenda included: limiting land speculation, reducing urban inequality by giving security of tenure to low-income squatters, and democratizing the urban planning process (Rolnik 2013). The new Constitution of 1988 contained two articles that partially addressed the concerns of the urban reform movement. These articles incorporated the principles of democratization of urban policies and the social function of urban property, i.e. regulation of urban property as a public issue rather than a private one (Friendly 2013). But the City Statute, a national law necessary for the enactment of the principles contained in the constitution, was approved only in 2001 after several years of negotiations among the urban reform movement, the real estate sector, and the municipal, state, and federal government institutions.

Although the City Statute provides guidelines for municipal planning laws and establishes instruments to balance individual and collective interests

(including regularization of informal settlements and a progressive property tax to deter land speculation), the adoption of these instruments and the enactment of the right to the city principle is discretionary. In other words, while several municipalities added the instruments to their master plans, most never adopted them, and others enforced the application of some instruments to benefit political and economic elites.

The selective application of instruments from the City Statute is not surprising considering that the law emerged from negotiations between two groups with distinct agendas. As Rolnik (2013) explains, at the same time that the democratization process was being consolidated, the neoliberal urban model was gaining ground:

Although the City Statute inherited much of its content from the urban reform agenda, during the 1990s, the ideas of 'urban entrepreneurship' also gained ground, as a neoliberal response to the political and economic crisis of the provider state (56).

The issues raised by Rolnik (2013) were also highlighted in one of my interviews. As reproduced in the excerpt below, the weakness of the City Statute as a legal tool to guarantee the right to the city is attributed not only to the compromises required to approve the law but also to the vagueness of the concept of social function of property:

No law in Brazil is approved without a great coalition of forces with several interests. Neither the Constitution nor the City Statute passed. Nothing passes. [. . .] So, what happened in the development of the City Statute? These guys were seeing instruments that. . . [For example], the urban operation consortium, this one is great for the market. So, 'good, we leave this one in.' Progressive property tax? 'We leave this one in but with a seven-

year condition and it must be regulated in [each city's] master plan and be self-applied.' So, it is the most difficult instrument to be applied.

[. . .] Thus, the Statute is itself a collage of a variety of interests. Certainly, the urban reform people were present among those and influencing it in an important way; we cannot deny that. But they were not alone. And, this is important to know.

[. . .]

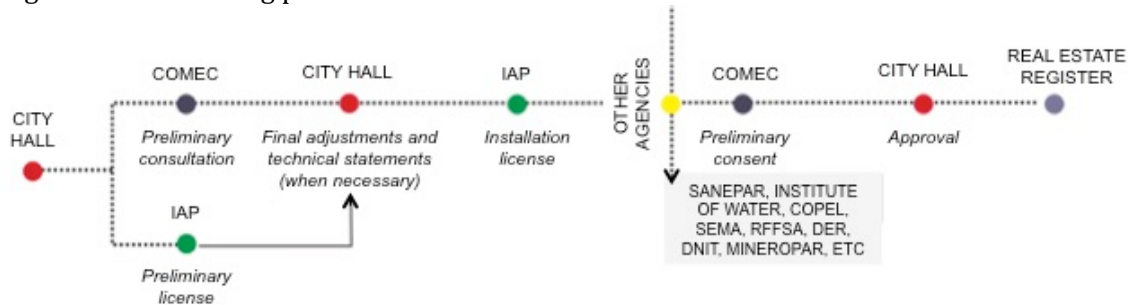
There has been an adoption of instruments, but they are insufficient to combat the market pressure. [. . .] The very idea of social function of property in Brazil is, in fact, an economic function of the property, i.e. if the property is being productive. The concept of productivity in the urban context is the concept of use. Thus, the social function of property is associated with the establishment of utilization, underutilization, and non-utilization. In the city's master plan, to define whether the property fulfills its social function means to look at whether it is utilized. [. . .] Does it say it needs to be used for housing? No. It may be used for a shopping mall, as long as it is used [. . .] The criteria is utilization or non-utilization; not the nature of utilization or any social process you want to develop in the city. That is not what it is about. [. . .] The very idea of social function of a property is not a guarantee of a progressive urban planning. (Private sector planner, Interview 13010)

The success of the urban reform movement was limited. While at the national level there is a progressive legal framework, municipalities reserve the right to discretionary enforcement. In an apparent paradox, cities have been able to adopt neoliberal strategies as they pick and choose which instruments to apply. Rather than a misuse or misinterpretation of the City Statute, Rolnik and the other planner quoted above observe that the neoliberal agenda was present in the origins of the City Statute as its approval depended on compromises between the private sector, political elites, and the more progressive social movements.

The Permitting Process

The website of the Metropolitan Planning Agency (COMECC) explains the permitting process regarding land subdivision.²³ It identifies the agencies involved, the steps of the process, and order of each step in the diagram reproduced below²⁴:

Figure 5.1: Permitting process for land subdivision in the MRC



Source: COMECC, edited and translated by author

The diagram provides the necessary information for developers seeking to apply for permits. However, it fails to explain, among others, how the analysts from each one of these agencies deal with applications, how they relate to one another, with developers, and with other professionals, what their concerns are, what criteria they utilize to analyze applications, and what constraints, pressures, and challenges they face. The interviews with actors involved in the permitting process and representing different agencies and sectors depict a more nuanced understanding of the process.

²³ There are two types of land subdivision in Brazilian land use terms. *Subdivisão* refers to the process in which one larger parcel is divided into smaller lots but no new street is open. In this cases either all new lots face an existing public road or they are only accessed through a walking path from a parking lot facing an existing road. *Loteamento* refers to dividing a larger parcel into smaller lots and opening at least one new street to access the lots. Virtually all global suburbs fall into this category. Thus, Figure 5.1 and the rest of this chapter deals with the permitting process for *loteamentos*.

²⁴ Diagram available at <http://www.comec.pr.gov.br/modules/conteudo/conteudo.php?conteudo=103>. Accessed on September 20th, 2016.

Here [the permitting process] is linear. It starts at the city hall, the city tells if it can or cannot be done. Then, in the case of gated communities, [the developer] needs a preliminary license from IAP. He starts an application there, but the process requires a consultation report from COMEC, so he comes here, he gets the report and brings it back to IAP. IAP will issue the preliminary license. Then, if it is possible to build the gated community, [the developer] will get the installation license. Meanwhile, the city [planning department] will correct the project as needed. (Planner at Metropolitan Planning Agency, Interview 11007)

The client arrives with an area for us to do a study on. From there, what do we do? First, we ask if he has already done a market research, what he already has, and what his interest for the area is. [. . .] Then, they will tell us what is the ideal. We do a whole study of the municipal, state, and federal laws. (Private sector planner, Interview 11008)

If you want to license a development, [. . .] you will contract a firm that will coordinate the creation of the EIA-RIMA [environmental impact analysis report] and the process of environmental licensing at the environmental agency. (Environmental consultant, Interview 11001)

In these quotations, a planning officer at the metropolitan planning agency, an urban designer, and an environmental consultant refer to different steps in the permitting process. As they explain the making of global suburbs, they refer both to actions (e.g. to study, to apply, to contract), actors (e.g. developer, IAP, COMEC, environmental firm), and objects (e.g. legislation, licenses, studies). Their narratives about how regulatory agencies analyze projects and ultimately issues construction and operation licenses for global suburbs vary slightly. As Pentland and Feldman (2007) explain, organizational forms (such as “airline ticketing” or “hiring”— in their studies— and “construction permitting”—in mine) generate multiple, interconnected, and overlapping

narratives of the same event depending, for instance, from whose viewpoint the story is told.

In order to understand the permitting process, I analyzed diverse narratives collected through interviews and I observed parts of the process occurring at an urban design firm. By putting the narratives together, I was able to have a holistic understanding of the process involving different actors. The excerpts on page 114 illustrate parts of the process that happen in different spaces (i.e., urban design office, metropolitan planning agency, and the office of an environmental consultant). Putting together these accounts and coding them according to “actors,” “actions,” and “objects” allowed me to understand the process in terms of who does what. For example, Table 5.1 shows the coding for the second quotation above.

Table 5.1: Example of coding

ACTOR	ACTION	OBJECT
developer	buys	land
developer	conducts	market study
developer	hires	urban designers
urban designer	inquires	developers
urban designer	studies	applicable legislation

Source: Author

I conducted the coding and categorizing processes for all accounts referring to the permitting process. Then, I eliminated the actors or actions that were irrelevant to the process itself, i.e., those that happened before or after or were not related to permitting (e.g., lines 1 and 2 in the example above). This

analysis revealed the main actors and their roles in the permitting process, as listed on Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Actors, actions, and roles in the permitting process

ACTORS	ACTIONS	NATURE OF ROLE
Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Hire urban designers, engineers, environmental consultants, marketing specialists * Coordinate the work of professionals hired * Make final decisions regarding project type, size, design, and feasibility * Submit projects for approval at municipal, metropolitan, and state agencies * Meets with public officers * Utilize economic resources to negotiate with public officers * Uses personal connections to influence politicians and decision-makers in public agencies 	<p>Creators Coordinators Negotiators</p>
Urban Designers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conduct feasibility studies * Study legislation * Propose design options to developers * Develops plans and documents requested by regulatory agencies * Contact public officers for clarification * Meet with public officers * Meet with developers and other consultants * Advise developers * Explain legal and physical constraints of the land to developers * Research similar projects in other areas, cities, and countries * Support developers in meetings with public officials 	<p>Creators Advisors Consultants Negotiators Supporters</p>
Environmental Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop Environmental Impacts Studies for developers * Meet with developers * Advise developers * Suggest changes in developers' plans to comply with regulations * Explain legal and physical constraints of the land to developers * Study legislation 	<p>Consultants Advisors</p>
Officers at Municipal Planning Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Receive application for permit from developers * Analyze conformity of proposed project to municipal plans and legislation * Meet with developers and urban designers * Answer questions from developers and urban designers * Receive orders from elected and appointed officials * Negotiates exactions with developers * Issue statement of compliency (<i>anuência prévia</i>) to developers 	<p>Regulators Analysists Negotiators</p>
Officers at Metropolitan Planning Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Receive application for permit from developers * Analyze the developer's proposal according to federal, state, and municipal legislation * Highlight non-confirming issues for State Environmental Agency's review * Review previous analysis done by municipal agencies * Meet with developers and urban designers * Answer questions from developers and designers * Suggest changes to developers' plans * Negotiate possible mitigatory actions, compensations, or exeptions * Receive orders from elected and appointed officials * Issue document containing recommendations to the State Environmental Agency 	<p>Regulators Analysists Consultants Advisors Negotiators</p>
Officers at State Environmental Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Receive application for permit from developers * Analyze conformity of proposed project to environmental legislation * Review recomnedations from Metropolitan Planning Agency * Meet with developers and urban designers * Consult water, soil, and other specialiststs * Visit the area of proposed project * Request additional documents or nformation from developer or other agencies * Request public hearings * Make requests for changes and adjustments * Issue permits (for construction and operation) 	<p>Regulators Analysists Consultants Advisors Negotiators</p>

Source: Author

The third column on Table 5.2 classifies the nature of each actor's role in the process based on the actions they perform. By understanding the nature of their roles, one has a deeper appreciation of the permitting process not only as a series of procedures and tasks that must be performed but also as a series of relationships that are established according to each actor's role. For example, planners at municipal, metropolitan, and state agencies are not just analysts who review the compliance of project proposals with applicable legislation; they also frequently act as consultants and negotiators. These two additional roles become necessary because legislation is often ambiguous, inefficient, or nonexistent (as it will be discussed later). So, planners meet with developers and designers to clarify legislation, to make recommendations beyond what is required by law, to suggest actions to mitigate potential negative impacts, to negotiate compensations and exactions.

Table 5.2 enumerates of what actors do in the permitting process. However, it does not articulate how these roles and actions interact, how they connect different actors, and how they are performed as everyday routines (i.e. as patterns of actions) in different agencies and offices. Table 6.1 also fails to account for the relationships that are formed before and during the permitting process and that affect the outcomes. The importance of relationships emerges in the accounts of actors from private and public sectors when asked about how projects for global suburbs are approved, as the quotations on page 133 illustrate.

During the observation period in an urban design office, I noted the interactions that happened in person, over the phone, and by email²⁵. I also noted how urban designers communicated about the permitting process as part of their daily work. On a typical day, for example, urban designers called city officials to ask for clarifications regarding the zoning law, they met with developers who made requests on a new project, and they talked with their colleagues about a recent meeting at the Metropolitan Planning Agency.

The vignette below represents a collage of data gathered through interviews and observations. I utilize the vignette to illustrate the nuances of the process with a particular attention to the relationships between actors. In a process where there is room for ambiguity, negotiations, flexibility, and exceptions, relationships become crucial to the fate of a project's proposal.

Vignette: Practices in the permitting process

On a typical Tuesday morning, Pauline sits at her desk at the metropolitan planning agency and opens a folder placed on top of a pile of other similar folders. She scans through some papers and then carefully unfolds a larger paper that takes up almost all of her desk space. With her index finger moving over the plan for a new global suburb plotted in black and white, she studies it. After a few minutes, Pauline walks toward a shelf and pulls up a thick booklet; it is the municipal zoning law. She nods her head when she notices that the plan does not comply with the zoning law. She goes back to the folder and looks for a piece of paper issued by the municipal planning agency. This document, called *anuência prévia* (preliminary consent), states that the municipal planning agency has reviewed the project. Pauline is not surprised that the city issued a preliminary consent to something that is actually not legally compliant. She says that when developers seek to approve high-end developments, “the city always says everything is ok.” That is why, even though it is not really her job, she checks for compliance with municipal legislation, in addition to state and federal regulations.

²⁵ The observation of interactions that happened through email occurred when planners talked about emails they exchanged, read out loud an email they received, or asked for help to write or respond to an email.

She sits in front of her computer and starts to type some notes about the proposed project. She lists what changes need to be made to conform the project to existing municipal, state, and federal legislation. She also recommends some changes aiming at aligning the project with the metropolitan plan. And, she states some concerns she has with possible impacts of the project on the environment and surrounding communities. When she finishes typing her recommendations and concerns, she prints it and adds it to the folder. She moves the folder to the side and picks up another one. She restarts the entire process. This time, Pauline revises the project for a low-income multi-family apartment complex in a poorer municipality.

A couple of days later, Charles, the developer who submitted the global suburb project stops by the agency to pick up the folder Pauline worked on. Charles takes the folder back to Amanda, the urban designer who produced the plan, to discuss Pauline's recommendations. Amanda explains to him what they will need to change and what impacts the changes will have on the design and net sellable area. Charles agrees with some changes, but resists a few others. He decides to schedule a meeting with Pauline and to give the mayor a call. Before meeting with Charles, Pauline's boss stops by her desk and explains to her that the mayor of the town where the developer plans to build the global suburb has talked to him and that he is very interested in having the development approved because it will help his city.

During the meeting, Pauline explains her recommendations and concerns to Charles and Amanda. She frequently refers to different pieces of legislation. Charles asks some questions about the legislation as he aims to understand what is required and what is recommended. He also points out that the neighbor has already built something similar to what he is proposing so he does not understand all the limitations Pauline seems to be imposing on his proposed project. Amanda asks about some different interpretations of the laws and offers some alternatives. After about an hour, Charles agrees to make a few changes because he fears that otherwise his project won't be licensed by the state environmental agency. As he explains "getting the license from the state environmental agency is the hardest part of the process. The environmental laws are increasingly restrictive."

As for the recommendations that are not clearly against any laws, Charles decides to negotiate. He explains to Pauline that he is willing to donate more land to the city than it is currently required in the legislation. He argues that he will improve the roads leading to the development and that these improvements will benefit the surrounding community at no cost for the public sector.

Pauline cannot approve Charles' offer because she does not have the authority to issue the permit. She explains that she will add the developer's offer to her list of recommendations and concerns and that the state environmental agency will analyze them. She provides the document to Charles and Amanda and they

leave. As they head to their cars, Charles asks Amanda to revise the project based on what has been discussed. A couple of days later, once the updated project is completed, Charles meets Amanda in her office, collects the project and heads to the state environmental agency to request a pre-license.

After a couple of weeks, the developer receives a call from the state environmental agency. Mario, the public officer reviewing his application, is concerned about a spring that Pauline mentioned in her report but that does not appear in the plans Charles submitted. Charles insists that the spring does not exist. He suggests that it might have dried up or that Pauline's maps were wrong. Mario's concern is that if he issues a permit and there is, in fact, a spring that has not been protected as required by legislation, he might face prosecution from the district attorney. Therefore, he explains that he will send Victor, a water specialist, to visit the area to verify whether or not the spring exists.

On a cloudy afternoon, Victor, Charles, and Amanda meet at the site. They walk around and do not see water. Charles quickly concludes that the spring does not exist. Victor, however, explains that the spring might be dry that time of the year, but according to the legislation it must be protected by an undeveloped buffer zone. Charles is not happy but decides to ask Amanda to revise the plans. A month later, Charles learns that he has been granted a pre-license.

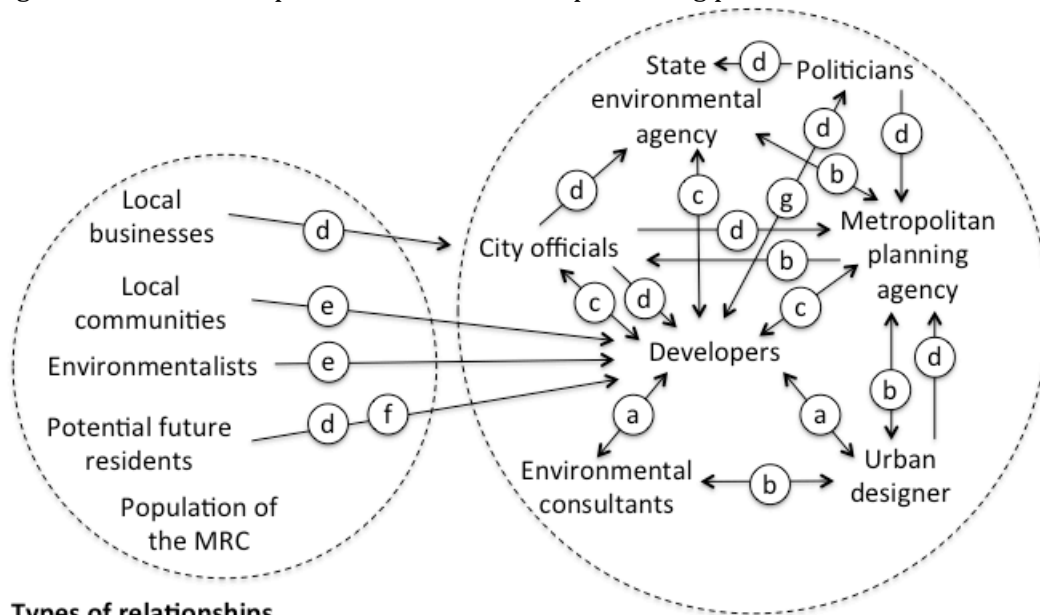
Relationships

The vignette illustrates some practices of different actions and their relationships. In order to expand the analysis to include a broader set of relationships involving a larger number of actors, I used this data to plot the diagram on Figure 5.2. The accounts of different actors helped me to determine the position of each participant in either the right or left circle and the arrows among them.

Figure 5.2 illustrates the web of relationships that shape the outcomes of the permitting process. Actors in the right circle are the main stakeholders, i.e. those who affect the process. Actors in the left circle are not included as

participants, but they are bystanders who might be positively or negatively affected by the outcomes of the permitting process. The arrows between actors represent the interactions between these groups or individuals, e.g. in the form of exchanges of information, consultation, negotiation, support, and requests. For instance, city officials and local politicians negotiate exactions with developers, support their projects, and express this support to the environmental agency. Likewise, local businesses support developers while urban designers exchange information with the Metropolitan Planning Agency and defend their clients' interests.

Figure 5.2: Relationship between actors in the permitting process



Types of relationships

- (a) professional/client
- (b) exchange information/consulting
- (c) negotiation
- (d) express/request support (for developer's plans)
- (e) makes requests in public hearings
- (f) makes requests through market analysis
- (g) friendship/family relationship

Source: Author

The analysis of each actor's position and their interactions helps us understand how participants exert influence over decision-making processes.

Some insights emerge from this analysis:

1) **Developers occupy a central position** as they bridge different actors. This centrality affords them privileged access to information and networking. Their central position is determined by their role as they: a) coordinate the work of different professionals (e.g. environmental consultants and urban designers); b) negotiate with public officers at the city, metropolitan, and state levels separately; c) cultivate relationships with politicians; and d) serve as middlemen between communities and public officials. The next insights elaborate on roles b), c) and d).

2) **There is lack of collaboration among agencies.** Despite the communication and exchange among the main stakeholders, the process does not represent a collaborative model. Bardach (1998, 8) defines collaboration as “any joint activity by two or more agencies that are intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately.” The relationships related to the making of global suburbs fail to meet these criteria. First, although agencies communicate and exchange information, they work, reach decisions, and communicate with developers separately. Throughout the permitting process, information and documents zigzag between the developer and the agencies, which might request additional documents and demand changes to the proposed plans. Because these agencies have different concerns, they might provide divergent feedback to developers, thus contributing to delays and

confusion. A planner illustrates the issue of divergent feedback the planning and the environmental agencies: The person from the municipal environmental agency told us: ‘the [urban planning agency] wants the city to grow, but we don’t want you to cut the trees.’ ” (Private sector planner, Interview 11008).

More importantly, the lack of collaboration among agencies results in fragmented information that may only be put together by developers. “Developers have to put things together; [the agencies’ agendas] are difficult, they do not sit around the same table” (Private sector planner, Interview 13009). The different agencies are not necessarily aware of each other’s requests, decisions, and negotiations. The confusion is generalized, as it is apparent in this planner’s description of decisions made by the state environmental agency:

IAP is a complicated agency. There are several people giving the approval or non-approval. So, sometimes we receive processes that IAP approved and others that it didn’t, for the same reason. (Planner at Metropolitan Planning Agency, Interview 13017)

3) The direct influence of politicians in the regulatory and permitting processes is commonplace. Although it might constitute conflict of interest or corruption, several informants suggested that politicians tend to pressure agencies to approve certain developments. For example, an urban designer talks about a developer who started construction of a new global suburb before receiving a permit. She concludes that he is able to take the risk since “he knows it will be approved because he is friends with politicians” (Observations 1315). Likewise, a city planner suggests that politicians and developers “are all friends, they have dinner together” (Interview 13005).

In addition to having friendly or family relationships with landowners and developers, politicians are sometimes landowners themselves. In these cases, politicians have personal interests in the approval of projects. A planner in the private sector explains:

What I see as the worst is that whoever has assets may influence the city's destinies because whoever has land or capital finances the Mayor's campaign. So, there is a relationship of elites that might expect favors or endorsements. Thus, it is this relationship that I think is a difficult one. And, [there are cases when] the Mayor is the landowner himself. (Private sector planner, Interview 13009)

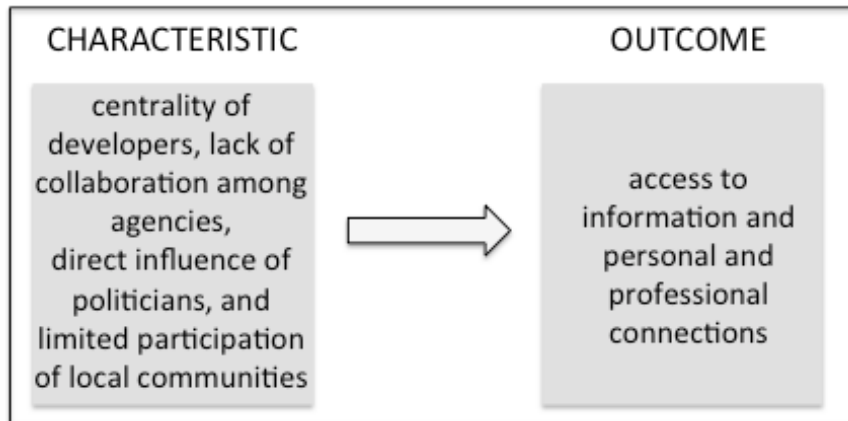
4) The limited participation of local communities increases

developers' bargaining power. As Figure 6.2 demonstrates, the developer plays the role of a bridge between the two spheres. This is because public hearings enable developers to gather demands from local communities and use them as leverage during negotiations with regulatory agencies. Developers go out to the community to present their projects and to learn what the community needs and what their concerns are. Then, developers emphasize in their application process how they will address a community need. The quotation below from an urban designer depicts the developer as voice of "these very simple people" because he gives them "the opportunity to make requests."

The City Hall, the municipal agencies, they don't look at [these poor communities]. So, when someone comes and give them the opportunity to make requests, it is very nice. [. . .] These people are very simple. They ask: 'will there be public lighting? Will the road be paved? We have a problem with pedestrians being hit by cars. We have a problem with our children, we need a health clinic, we need a school, a daycare.' These are their concerns. (Private sector planner, Interview 11008)

This model of participation disempowers the communities by placing them as recipients of the developers' generosity. While the communities possibly benefit from some material gain (e.g. paving, school furniture, traffic lights), they are not included in the discussion of what could or should be done in and for their city.

Figure 5.3: Characteristics and outcomes of relationships



Source: Author

The insights gained from the analysis of relationships formed before and during the permitting process suggest that the web of relationships is characterized by 1) centrality of developers, 2) lack of collaboration among agencies, 3) direct influence of politicians, and 4) limited participation of local communities. The characteristics of these relationships give private developers privileged access to information and personal and professional connections that shape the outcome of the permitting process. A fundamental element in this configuration is the support of politicians, businesses, and private sector planners as well as information gathered from local communities and public agencies that may be utilized as leverage during negotiations. Thus, relationships form the first

pillar that sustains the current configuration of the permitting process that ultimately enables the making of global suburbs.

Legislation

Public employees at regulatory agencies rely on legislation to guide their practices and decision-making processes. However, accounts of actors involved in the regulatory process at the MRC reveal a paradoxical relationship between legislation and urban planning. These accounts highlight that: 1) legislation largely guides decision-making; but at the same time, 2) legislation tends to be created after urban development instead of shaping it; 3) legislation is often confusing; and 4) people are constantly trying to skirt or bend the law as enforcement mechanisms are weak. These four aspects of urban legislation are taken as given characteristics of the 'Brazilian reality' in which the regulatory process is embedded.

1) Legislation as guidelines

Land use regulation, building codes, and zoning laws are part of the legal arsenal planners employ daily as they are tasked with reviewing development applications. As the earlier vignette illustrated, planners and analysts at municipal, metropolitan, and state agencies are responsible for checking the compliance of proposed projects with the applicable legislation. These professionals often function as 'land use cops' looking for irregularities.

Reviewing development applications and checking legal compliance takes a large amount of planners' time. Especially given the shortage of personnel in

planning agencies and the large number of applications to be reviewed, there is little time for other planning activities and for a broader and deeper discussion about city planning within public agencies. It is common practice to outsource plan making to private consultants. Thus, planning departments become caught in regulatory and bureaucratic tasks. Public sector planners and analysts note this reality with a certain frustration:

In fact, what we have at the city hall is a [Department of] Urbanism. We don't have a Department of Planning. [. . .] There is no political will to make it grow, to make things happen, to hire more people. (Planning analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003)

In practicing planning as a regulatory procedure, planners and analysts rely on the legislative arsenal at their disposal. When describing their jobs, they frequently cite legislation. They also explain the denial of permits by saying: "the law does not allow it." And, they talk to other agencies, developers, and private sector planning by constantly referring to the applicable regulations.

However, planners and analysts acknowledge that the legal arsenal at their disposal is insufficient and inefficient in shaping urban space. In fact, they feel powerless when they realize that the purposes of laws are easily undermined as interest groups attempt to reinterpret the text.

The concern of the analysts is legal compliance, to do things legally. Quality became something totally irrelevant at this point. Urbanism, as we think about it in college, becomes totally intangible in the face of the pressure from the real estate market and other interests. It is a feeling of total powerlessness. You know you are doing it wrong, that it is not the best solution. (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015)

I next elaborate on the deficiencies of the legal framework as identified by my informants at the MRC: legislation follows urban development instead of shaping it; it is confusing; and weak enforcement allows people to skirt or bend the law. These deficiencies were frequently cited as reasons for the mismatch between planning ideals and actual urban spaces.

2) Market first, regulation later

A common assumption regarding the relationship between urban planning and land use regulation is that regulations enforce and establish parameters to shape urban development according to goals and visions defined in master plans. In reality, however, land use regulations are often created in response to the demands of the real estate market. In this way, every time development companies create a new “product,” i.e. a new urban typology, regulators find themselves incapable of making decisions regarding project proposals. As a planner says: “When gated communities started to appear, we didn’t know if we prohibited everything or allowed everything” (Planner at the metropolitan planning agency, Interview 13017).

The quotation below illustrates the issue. The lack of existing regulation prevents the planning agency from denying approval of proposals not contemplated in legislation.

For example, [a large peripheral municipality] does not have any specific legislation regulating gated communities. So, we use the building code. Ok, then, there is no requirement for land donation and it allows for a certain number of floors. When you apply this legislation to a vertical gated community [i.e. a gated community of multi-family buildings, instead of single-family homes] where each unit has 50 square meters, you have a density of 500 inhabitants

per hectare, or even more. This is incompatible with the watershed, with the water quality as defined by state regulation. So, the developer starts with that discussion: 'What if I do this or that? What if I treat the sewage?' It is complicated to define legislation for this type of development. So, in the absence of legislation, everything is approved. Every new wave. . . first we had subdivisions, then, in 1979, federal legislation started to require land donation as exaction and developers started to build gated communities instead, because it did not require donation. Then, legislation started to regulate gated communities and when things were getting better, developers started to build gated communities of multi-family buildings. Now I don't know what is next but, normally, that is how it is. (Planner at metropolitan planning agency, Interview 11007)

The policy of the planning agencies is clear: in the absence of specific legislation, planners and analysts look for other regulations to find parameters that might help them deliberate over the proposed project. They do not deny permits without a good legal justification. This chosen course of action is an attempt to respond to market needs and reveal an understanding that the market changes faster than regulations.

Some private sector planners question whether the inability of agencies to say a simple "no" is appropriate: "If it can [be done], it can; if it cannot, it cannot. Just say it" (Private sector planner, Interview 13009). But planners and analysts know that developers do not easily accept a permit denial without a detailed explanation based on the legislation. As a planner puts it: "Developers ask: where is it written?" (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015).

3) Amid confusion, I decide

A recurrent planning dilemma arises from the paradoxical relationship between flexibility and discretion. Regulations that allow for too much flexibility require the use of discretionary power in decision-making, which in turn, may be

deployed to the advantage of power elites. Too little flexibility limits the ability of planners to analyze cases on an individual basis and to accommodate diverse interests in a fast changing 'real' world (see Tarlock 2014 for a more elaborated discussion).

At the MRC, planners in the public and private sectors do not refer to the existing regulatory framework as "flexible." Instead, they characterize legislation as "badly written," "ambiguous" and "confusing." In contrast to flexible legal tools that may allow planners to exercise some discretionary power to advance public interest, confusing land use legislation serves the interests of political and economic elites.

Yes, in many cases legislation is badly written and it opens to possibilities for interpretation. 'I don't know, I didn't understand it.' So, you have to call the city hall. (Private sector planner, Interview 13001)

The legislation is badly written, it is open for discussions, for people to do what they want with it. The laws are texts written by lawyers, they do not connect with the reality of the urbanists and they do not translate into reality on the urban space. These result both from incompetence and an interest in leaving space open for discussion. (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015)

For a politician, the more confusing the better because, then, I decide. [...] Why don't things work? It is also because of this. Because there are people who prefer things not be so clear, so objective. Because amid confusion, I decide. (Private sector planner, Interview 13009)

Planners and analysts frustrated with the ambiguity of land use regulation explain that re-interpretations of the law neglect its original intent.

The original motivation for the law, which defines what the purpose of the law was, is lost. So, we don't know what its purpose was. (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015).

To deal with lawyers is a nightmare. Because you know what the purpose of the law is, and this is a criterion every lawyer should take into account: what is the purpose of the law? To protect the water sources. So, every interpretation that goes against that is not an interpretation that should be given to the law. But, then, [the lawyer] will focus on the version that interests him, he will interpret the law his way, and he will say he has legal basis. This happens a lot. [...] It is difficult because few legal departments understand a thing about urban planning. (Planner at metropolitan planning agency, Interview 13017)

4) People are averse to the law

Besides frustration with re-interpretation of confusing legislation, planners express a great amount of resignation as they acknowledge that weak enforcement mechanisms leads to constant attempts to skirt or bend the law.

If one day I leave my public job and become a consultant I will tell [developers] exactly what they need to do to have their projects approved. But I am sure I will fail. I will say: 'look, you need to do this because that will never be approved; the law does not allow that.' But he will come back to me and hand me – just as I see here – a construction license. [...] For as long as there is no punishment, no correct enforcement of the law, we will never be able to organize things because those who have succeeded doing something wrong once will never be able to do things the right way. (Planner at metropolitan planning agency, Interview 13017)

Most issues related to lack of enforcement have to do with insufficient resources: personnel, technology, and political will, as the quotations below illustrate. It is important to note, however, that planners and analysts often talk about weak enforcement as it relates to the proliferation of low-income irregular settlements.

Within the APA, IAP [the State Environmental Agency] is responsible for monitoring and the City works as an assistant. [. . .] IAP's policing is very minor, they don't have infrastructure, not for a few municipalities and especially for the state as a whole. They do not have a policing infrastructure. (Planning analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003)

[Enforcement] does not exist in practice. In the law, it does. Unless there is a complaint from someone strong, otherwise they will turn a blind eye. Or, when the complaint is persistent, then they have to address it because of the pressure. Or, if it is something too scandalous, too visible. [...] Officers cannot work; their bosses say 'don't police.' [. . .] I worked as an enforcement officer at some point, but I was removed [from the post]. (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015).

Corruption and immorality are taken as cultural issues to which Brazilians have grown accustomed. This is why a planning analyst concludes, "people are averse to the law" (Interview 13003).

Brazil is an immoral country in all senses. [. . .] It is a place where only those who engage in wrongdoings succeed rapidly. If you want to succeed without any wrongdoings you will grow slowly. (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015).

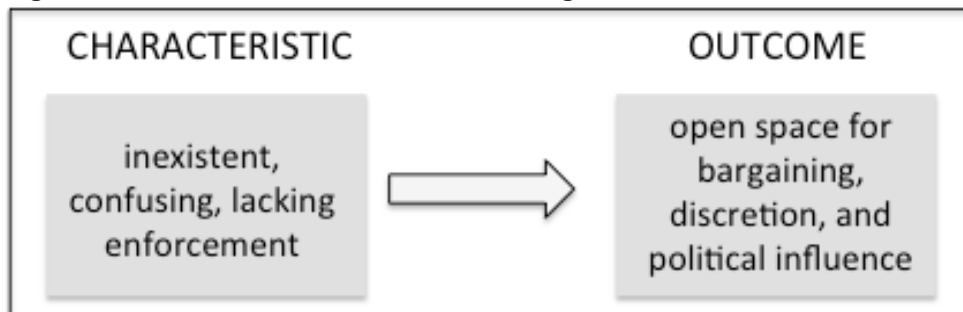
The ideal is that you obey the law, but people do not obey the law. They want to outwit it; their interest is to outwit the law as much as they can. The more they are able to outwit, the better. (Planning analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003)

The characteristics of the legal framework applicable to the permitting process of global suburbs, as identified in these interviews, reveal a paradox between legislation and urban planning. While legislation is the primary tool used by regulators to guide their decision-making process, these professionals face lack of specific regulations, confusing legislation, and weak enforcement. In this context, different people use regulations differently at different times. While planners hope to shape urban development by enforcing legislation, developers

and other interest groups might seek legislation as a point of departure for negotiations. While analysts strive to find in legislation parameters to orient their reviews of permit applications, applicants strive to find loopholes that may render their proposals “not against the law.”

It is important to highlight that the primary issue is not the content of legislation and what it attempts to regulate and control. Rather, it is the lack of legislation pertinent to particular types of development, ambiguity, and weak enforcement that makes it difficult for regulators to use legislation to achieve the desired the spatial or social outcomes. As legal tools are rendered as insufficient and ineffective means of shaping the urban space, other instruments such as bargaining power, discretionary power, and political influence become crucial. The web of relationships in which developers play a central role means that they have privileged access to these instruments (i.e. leverage and political influence) that actively shape the outcome of the permitting process. Thus, legislation forms the second pillar that sustains the current configuration of the permitting process and ultimately enables the making of global suburbs.

Figure 5.4: Characteristics and outcome of legislation



Source: Author

Public Value

The difficulty in defining what constitutes “the public” and what is its “interest” is a well-discussed phenomenon in the planning literature and leads scholars to question dominant normative discourses in planning. For instance, Winkler and Duminy (2014) provide an illuminating example of the different understandings of “equity” and “justice” among residents, community leaders, and academics involved in upgrading projects in two informal settlements in South Africa. Also, scholars and practitioners may claim that the public interest simply does not exist (Moroni 2004), while others have pointed to the implications of divergent viewpoints on the public interest, including mistrust between planners and developers (Tait 2011). In light of the issues involving the definition of public interest and, consequently, public value, this section focuses on the public value attributed to regulatory agencies as it is reflected in the accounts of actors involved in the permitting process.

The stated mission of public agencies involved in the making of global suburbs is to act in the public interest. Their public value lies in their ability to protect, promote, or improve the public interest. For example, the mission of the State Environmental Agency (IAP), as stated on its website, is “to protect, preserve, conserve, control, and restore the environmental heritage, seeking a better quality of life and sustainable development with the participation of society.” The metropolitan planning agency (COMEC) states that “among its activities, are the territorial planning and the coordination of public services of common interest to its municipalities, including public transit, road system,

housing, sanitation, and the development and establishment of guidelines for environmental and socioeconomic development.”

The accounts of public officials, planners, and analysts working in regulatory agencies reveal their acknowledgement of a gap between what their agencies’ mission is, how they understand their role, and what they actually do. These professionals tend to frame their work in a ‘real vs. ideal’ dilemma since “the city does not work as it is on paper, it works differently” (Planning analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003). The perception of a gap between ideal processes and outcomes shape the actual practices of public agencies. The deficiencies in the legislation provide an example of this gap since the purpose of regulations (e.g. to protect the quality of water) is not always achieved. Another example of the gap between ideal and real is reflected in the quotation below. When talking about the metropolitan planning agency’s support for global suburbs as tools for environmental protection (discussed in Chapter 7), the planner contrasts the ideal of leaving areas of native vegetation outside walls and interconnected versus the real deficient monitoring systems that make these spaces vulnerable to deforestation and irregular occupation.

[. . .] for these green areas to function as something sustainable, they should be connected and not be within walls. But if they are not within walls, they end up being deforested or invaded. [. . .] The ideal would be this: to leave these areas open and we would monitor them. The reality is that this does not work. So, one way of preserving them. . . the gated community is seen as one way of preserving green areas [. . .]. (Planner at metropolitan planning agency, Interview 11007)

This example illustrates that the roles of the agencies in the regulatory and permitting processes are not defined by their stated missions but by what they actually do. The roles they perform ultimately create the public value of these agencies.

The idea of public value, as developed by Moore (1995), rests on the assumption that while the role of the private sector is to produce private value (i.e. profit) the role of the public sector is to produce public value. To assess the success of a public agency in producing value is not as straightforward as to measure the amount of money generated in the private sector. The difficulty arises not only from the fact that some forms of value are hardly measurable but also from the very definition of what constitutes value. Thus, Moore (1995) developed a model known as a “strategic triangle” to help public agencies public agencies understand if their activities are valuable, supported, and feasible. Thus, agencies may test the adequacies of their purpose by answering three questions: “whether the purpose is *publicly valuable*, whether it will be *politically and legally supported*, and whether it is *administratively and operationally feasible*” (Moore 1995, 22, emphasis added).

Given the naturalization of neoliberalism at the MRC, as discussed earlier, promoting the public interest through regulations and control is not a public valuable purpose because it limits economic freedom and the operations of free markets. It also fails to gain political support since land is a commodity expected to generate profit in the private market and tax revenue to the public sector. In addition, promoting the public interest through regulation and control is

administratively and operationally unfeasible as governments have insufficient enforcement mechanisms. Development control that entirely prevents or makes it too difficult to urbanize areas of environmental value is not realistic given the risk of invasion from squatters and the pressures from property owners, the real estate market, and municipal officials.

Given the 'reality' of regulatory policies in the MRC, agencies have adapted their role and re-created their public value. Rather than enforcing regulations to control behavior, the 'reality' is that regulations are tools for agencies to negotiate with developers. The agencies' goals are to enable legally approved developments, mitigate possible negative impacts, and extract the maximum benefits for surrounding communities because, as an interviewee put it: agencies "prefer a legally approved gated community than a irregular development. . . because one or the other is going to happen" (Interview 13003).

Thus, by framing their practices within a 'real' vs. 'ideal' dilemma, regulatory agencies re-create their purpose as enablers of development. This purpose is publicly valuable as it results in more urban development, which is uncritically equated with economic growth. Working with developers in order to enable legally approved construction, mitigate possible negative impacts, and extract the maximum benefits for surrounding communities is politically supported by a coalition of local officials, businesses, and developers (i.e. Logan and Molotch's growth machine coalition) as they seek higher revenues and profit from urban development. It also becomes legally supported either through reinterpretation or alteration of existing laws. Finally, it is administratively and

operationally feasible since it foresees the opportunity to transfer infrastructure and service costs from the public to the private sector in addition to extracting some material gains for the surrounding communities.

The idea that public agencies must work with developers to facilitate development, including the siting of global suburbs in areas zoned for preservation, is widespread among both public and private sector actors. The main supporting argument is that society benefits from investments from private developers. An urban designer suggests that changing zoning laws to accommodate global suburbs “is good for the municipality because it will promote controlled growth.” She adds that “the community sees it as a good thing because it will generate jobs for them, improve the roads” (Interview 11008).

The notion that the public value of regulatory agencies lies in their ability to work with private investors is also expressed in the dissatisfaction of developers and urban designers with what they perceive as excessive demands of regulatory agencies. A developer explains:

The surroundings will get adjusted in order to give functionality to the development; I am bringing 700, 800 jobs; that is the function of the public sector. I am already taking all the market risks, making a pretty heavy investment, bringing benefit to an entire community – in tax revenue, jobs, etc – then I will have to fix things in the surroundings? They demand a lot of things as if I generated a very negative impact. (Interview 13008)

The efforts of the public sector to work with the private sector and address its concerns may be illustrated in the creation of an inter-agency workgroup to review project proposals. As explained earlier, municipal, metropolitan, and state agencies review applications separately. They reach decisions and provide

feedback to developers separately. As each agency has its own concern, their decision and feedback may vary. The application zigzags between the developer and agencies until the final licenses are issued. The lack of collaboration among agencies results in a lengthy process that may require several years before permits are issued.

Noting the developers' complaints over the bureaucracy, confusion, and delay in the current approval process, agencies attempted to streamline it. The creation of an inter-agency workgroup in 2008 sought to diminish the length of the process and address the lack of communication among agencies by gathering representatives of all agencies to review projects together and to respond to developers in a more cohesive manner. The workgroup requested that developers submit all documents, studies, data, and plans the agencies might possibly need at once, rather than incrementally. Soon after the formation of the working group, developers realized that producing all the data, plans, and material requested (but ultimately not always useful to the analysts) increased the cost of applications. Thus, developers did not support the new process. The inter-agency workgroup was rapidly abolished. This planner explains:

You have some basics that you need and then you might need some complementary studies. With the inter-agency workgroup, for everything to be ready, you must send me all kinds of studies because if I need something I won't be able to ask you again. This raised the costs. [The developer] already has to bring all the projects, the topographic survey, trees to be cut, location of walls, foundation plans. Then, if he has to change everything later on, it becomes too complicated. (Planner at the metropolitan planning agency, Interview 11007)

The creation and subsequent demise of the inter-agency workgroup demonstrate the efforts of public agencies to address the concerns of the private sector. Bureaucracy, confusion, and delays discourage developers and make locations critical issues less attractive to investors. The reasoning behind the effort to streamline the permitting process lies in the perception that the private sector contributes to economic growth and is an important stakeholder.

While this is a plausible rationale, it also reveals the essence of the agencies' role as enablers of development. Collaboration among agencies, clear communication, and a streamlined permitting process could add to the value of the agencies in advancing public interests. However, the focus of the inter-agency workgroup was on addressing the concern of developers, thus making the process faster. As a planning at the metropolitan planning agency explains, the purpose of the workgroup "was to expedite the process" (Interview 11007).

The process established through the inter-agency workgroup did not contemplate making the outcomes 'better' from the environmental or social points of view. This could be done, for example, by ensuring that demands made to developers in terms of infrastructure and service improvements would benefit the larger community, or ensuring that the environmental impacts of developments would be mitigated. In other words, the process would become simpler and faster, but the outcomes (i.e. what is approved) would not necessarily change.

It is also relevant to note that there are rarely similar efforts targeting improved collaboration with the general public. For instance, despite legal requirements for public participation in the planning process, in general, and in

the approval of large developments, in particular, there is little participation at public hearings. In the interviews, this was rarely raised as a critical issue to be addressed. The common understanding is that lack of participation results from people's disinterest or lack of trust in the process. Those who participate are groups or individuals with an agenda.

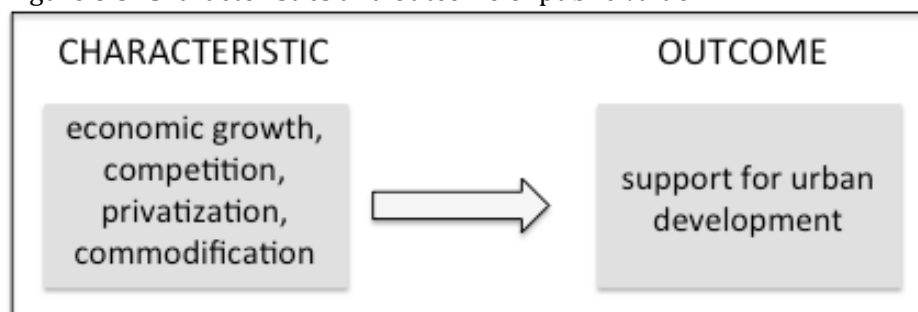
I think that public participation is a way of distancing people from power because it is so lengthy, long, and hard that there is no way a normal person who works, who has a routine, is able dedicate time and interest. Even if she attends the meetings, her voice will not be heard, even if she is proactive and manifests and says what she wants to say. So, knowing this, most people don't even go. Those who go are groups that have actual interests. [. . .] Even if I give my opinion, nothing will be realized, not even close. And, I think this is intentional. (Planner at municipal planning department, Interview 13015)

[During the update of the city's master plan], there was almost no participation. When there were public hearings, people could have participated, but nobody participates, nobody is actually interested in the city. [. . .] We had [a public hearing] here in this APA with a good turnout. But why? Because people knew everything they had there was going to change, they would all be affected. (Planning analyst at municipal planning department, Interview 13003)

The case of the inter-agency workgroup illustrates the agencies' efforts to work with the private sector, even when other sectors of the community at large are not fully included in decision-making processes. The accounts of different actors reveal that the reasoning behind these efforts rests on the naturalization of neoliberalism. The supremacy of markets, economy growth, and commodification is reproduced in the agencies' value as enablers of development. In this logic, the public interest becomes itself narrow and monetized, as legally approved urban development should contribute to private profit and public revenue.

The redefined role of regulatory agencies as enablers of development takes into account the struggle of municipalities. In a neoliberal decentralized government and taxation system, municipalities must raise local revenues in competition with other municipalities. In this context, global suburbs seem attractive because they may bring additional development, create jobs, and increase property values and revenue for the municipality. Local governments may alter regulatory and permitting processes in order to facilitate the development of global suburbs. Besides the attempt to streamline the permitting process through the inter-agency workgroup, agencies have also supported zoning changes to accommodate the development of global suburbs. This was the case of the transformation of an area of environmental protection (APA) into a more flexible zoning (UTP) in Pinhais, which enabled the making of the largest global suburbs at the MRC (as mentioned in Chapter 4).

Figure 5.5: Characteristics and outcome of public value



Source: Author

The redefinition of the role of public agencies as enablers of development reflects an overall understanding of economic growth as public value. Seeking to align their roles and the value they create, regulatory agencies reorganize their practices to support and enable urban development since it is generally equated

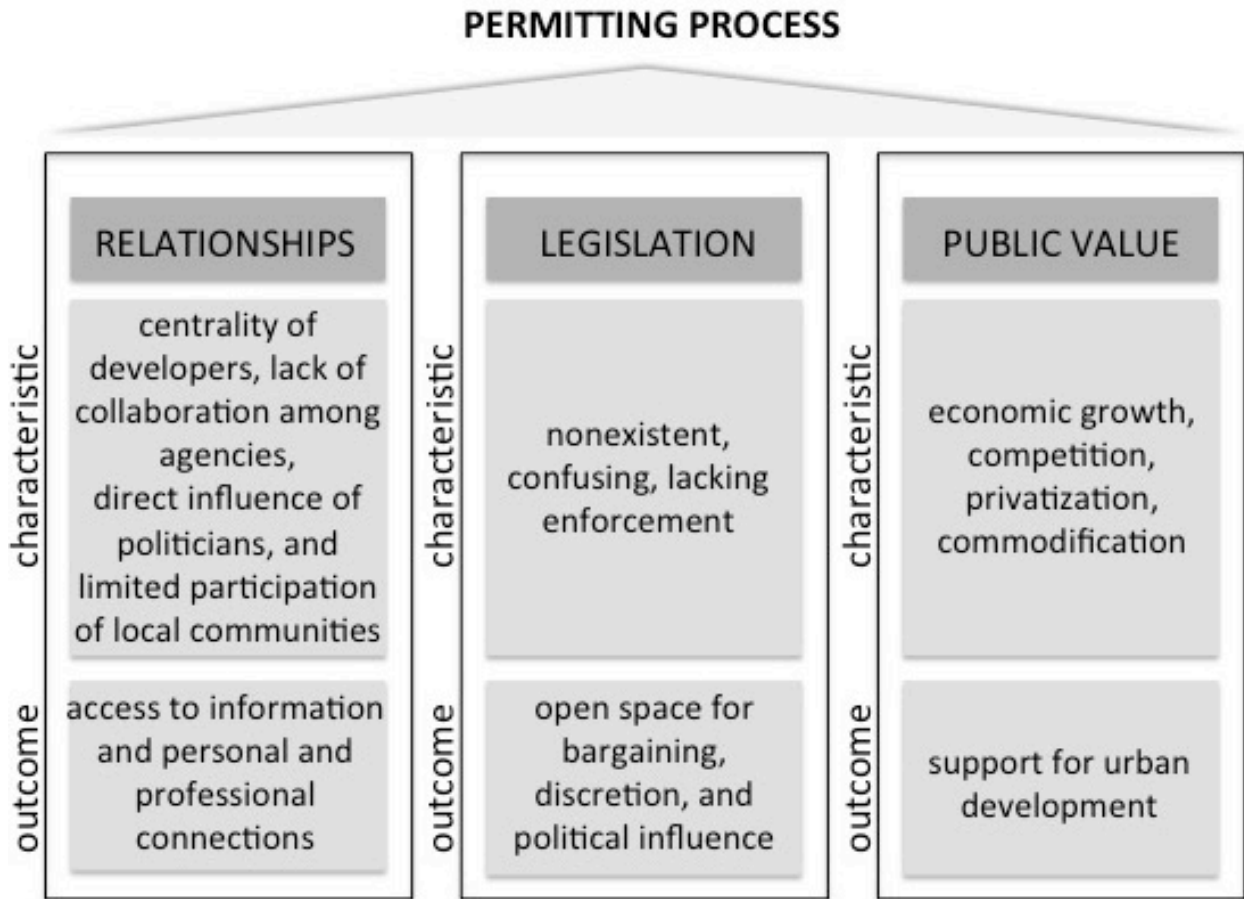
with economic growth. The redefinition of public value is the third pillar sustaining the current configuration of the permitting process that enables the making of global suburbs.

Conclusion

The permitting process through which developers apply for construction and operation licenses is a crucial step in the making of global suburbs. Rather than a straightforward procedure with clear rules and predictable outcomes, the permitting process at the MRC is an open space where rules, procedures, and outcomes are negotiated and where a variety of actors perform a series of roles. In the context of neoliberal urbanism, economic growth is dependent upon the ability of cities to compete against each other to attract investment, often in the form of businesses, urban development, affluent residents, and tourists. As a result, economic interests prevail over social or environmental ones. The socially accepted understanding that municipalities must seek economic growth shapes the role of each stakeholder as well as their relationships.

Through the analysis of data gathered in interviews and observations, I identified three pillars, namely *relationships*, *legislation*, and the *public value* of regulatory agencies, sustaining the current configuration of the permitting process that ultimately enables the making of global suburbs. The specific ways in which relationships, legislation, and public value are structured, employed, and defined construct and reproduce the premises of neoliberalism and provide support and leverage to developers.

Figure 5.6: The pillars sustaining the configuration of the permitting process



Source: Author

First, the structure and nature of relationships among actors place developers in the center. Their centrality results from personal and professional relationships as well as their role mediating communication both among public agencies as well as between agencies and local communities. This central position affords the private sector privileged access to information and professional and personal connections that may be deployed as leverage or support in negotiations with regulatory agencies.

Second, regulators rely on the legal arsenal at their disposal to guide their decision-making process. However, they often face lack of legislation, confusing

legislation, and weak enforcement mechanisms. As legal tools are rendered as insufficient and ineffective means of shaping urban space, other instruments such as bargaining power, discretionary power, and political influence become crucial. The position of developers within a web of relationships gives them access to these same instruments.

Third, as economic growth becomes a public value in and of itself, public agencies, particularly regulatory agencies, reorganize their practices in order to perform roles that are in line with their public value. Rather than regulating behavior to protect common interests, regulatory agencies focus on working with the private sector to reap the maximum benefits to local communities while minimizing the potential negative effects of global suburbs. They become enablers of development as the private sector is seen as an ally in the efforts of cities to raise revenues and provide service and infrastructure with restricted budgets.

Thus, the legal approval of global suburbs results from the enactment of institutionalized and non-institutionalized arrangements of practices sustained by the specific ways in which relationships, legislation, and public value are respectively structured, employed, and defined. The configuration of these elements in the permitting process constructs and reproduces the premises of neoliberalism and gives support and leverage to developers.

These findings support the argument that planning and planners advance neoliberalism by restructuring and redefining the purpose of the public sector. The case of the permitting process of global suburbs in the MRC reveals that

planning serves as an institutionalized force of neoliberalism, consistent with Sager (2011). When redefining their roles and recreating their public values, public agencies reveal their willingness to work with the private sector (Campbell, Tait and Watkins 2014; Harvey 1989; Sager 2009). Thus, while the planners I interviewed may not identify themselves as enablers of development, they enact practices that shape regulatory processes to appeal to real estate interests (Farhat 2014). My findings show how these practices are enacted with the support of particular configurations of relationships, legislation, and public value.

CHAPTER 6: FRAMING DISCOURSES AND LEGITIMIZING

PRACTICES OF NEOLIBERAL URBANISM

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

(Michel Foucault, in Rabinow 1984, Truth and Power).

Discourses are more than representations of the world; they articulate "ways of thinking, behaving and, eventually, being" (Nicolini 2012, 190). The importance of discourses and frames in determining understandings (i.e. knowledge) of realities and ultimately orienting behavior is fundamental in the planning world, where theorists and practitioners are concerned with the translation of knowledge into action. Discourses framed under neoliberalism naturalize its principles and guide actions accordingly. When supported and enacted by a wide variety of actors, these discourses justify and legitimize the creation of specific types of spaces, which in turn reinforce ideological features that enabled their creation in the first place.

This chapter deals with discourses that are produced and reproduced by a variety of actors involved in the making of global suburbs in the MRC. These discourses lead to specific actions while making other options unthinkable. In particular, this chapter critically analyzes discourses that frame and reproduce

“truths” that ultimately legitimize practices of exclusion. The analysis aims at identifying the implicit and explicit content and structural properties embedded in discursive practices that produce and reproduce neoliberalism.

Using data collected through participant observation, archival data, and interviews with urban designers, planners, public officers, developers, realtors, residents, academics, and community members, I adopted the approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1985, Van Dijk 1993) and the method of deconstruction described in Feldman (1995). I conduct analyses of micro and situated discourses with a special focus on implicit propositions, structures, and naturalized ideologies that may be linked to macro social structures - reproducing, accepting, justifying, rationalizing, or challenging them.

Before discussing the analyses and findings, it is important to clarify the approach, method, and conceptual framework that oriented the analysis. The chapter starts with a review of theoretical ideas about discourses and framing. Then, it presents critical discourse analysis as a methodological approach before diving into the analysis of dominant discourses in the MRC.

Discourses

Discourse is a type of social practice. It does not simply represent or reflect reality; it creates social reality (Fairclough 1985, Karlberg 2012). Approaches to studying discourse vary according to whether discourse refers to a local or a broader social endeavor (Nicolini 2012). In the first sense, discourse means the use of language in a particular situation to accomplish some activity.

The second meaning of discourse refers to the use of linguistic and non-linguistic features to maintain the dominance of certain elite groups and ideologies (Fairclough 1985, Van Dijk 1993). In this sense, discourse is seen as "a broad system for the formation and the articulation of ways of thinking, behaving and, eventually, being" (Nicolini 2012, 190). This broader understanding of discourse attempts to relate micro and local events with overarching social structures. It emphasizes the role of power in the production and reception of discourses and in perpetuating inequality (Van Dijk 1993).

The understanding of discourse as part of a macro social system originated with Foucault's emphasis on the relationship between knowledge, discourse, and power. He states that in any society "there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (Foucault 1986, 229). Foucault considers discourses as subtle mechanisms of dominance because they produce and reproduce truths that frame reality in particular ways and orient behavior. Thus, discourse is both the object and the arena of power struggles (Nicolini 2012).

Foucault acknowledges that discourse is not static. The rules that produce discourses by holding together configurations of statements, techniques, interventions, and norms are historical and context specific and, thus, are transformed over time (Nicolini 2012). He proposes that power must be studied from the bottom up, i.e. starting from how the mechanisms of power work in

specific situations. Similarly, discourses should not be understood as the intentional effort of an organized and hegemonic dominant group. Instead, discourses are "highly provisional, localized and contingent expressions of a multiplicity of forces, energies, materials, and interventions consistent with an overarching framework of ontological imperatives and methodological protocols" (Reed 1998, 197, quoted in Nicolini 2012, 197).

Drawing from Foucault, Fairclough (1985) suggests that, while interacting, individuals draw upon a range of "background knowledge" that may be divided into four dimensions: knowledge of language codes, knowledge of principles and norms of language usage, knowledge of situations, and knowledge of the world. All of these dimensions include ideological elements since alternative understandings are possible. For example, alternative use of lexicons or alternative knowledge of the world are possible, but particular lexicons or knowledge are used because they are based on ideological assumptions that have become naturalized, i.e. seen as common sense.

Ideological propositions are highly naturalized when all members of some community understand them as non-ideological common sense. In this way, naturalized ideologies are dissociated from the particular social base and particular interests that generated them. Ultimately, these naturalized ideologies contribute to the 'orderliness' of interactions, i.e. the feeling that things are as they should be (Fairclough 1985).

Van Dijk (1993) adds that the power of discourse, or its means of dominance, lies on the ability of text and talk to manipulate and change minds.

He claims that power is based on access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, status, knowledge, force, as well as genre, form, or context of discourses and communication. Access to discourse and communication refers to having more or less freedom in the use of special discourse genres or styles, or in the participation in specific communicative events (Van Dijk 1993). In this sense, power is exerted in a subtle and effective manner, not through force, but through "persuasion, dissimulation, or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interest* (Van Dijk 1993, 254, emphasis in original). When the dominated has been influenced to accept dominance, we see hegemony and the joint production of dominance.

Framing

Interpretive frames (in addition to categorizations, narratives, and metaphors) are structural properties of discourses that contribute to how they influence our perceptions and practices (Karlberg 2012). This means that similar discourses may express completely different meanings under different frames. So, frames can be understood as ways of organizing information and understanding the world. They determine what and how we see. They are unconsciously acquired and may be embedded in, produced by, and distributed through discourse.

Examples of empirical work connecting the use of particular frames and the effects they have in people's behavior include Karlberg's (2012) study of discourses of peace and justice, in which he concludes that discourses framed

for conflict and injustice hinders the achievement of peace and justice. Likewise, Snow and Benford (1988) suggest that the success of social movements, even under favorable structural conditions, depends on the framing process. Finally, Dikeç's (2007) analysis of urban policy in France (although not employing the term 'frame') indicates that how spaces are classified and defined ultimately defines the space itself and determines the types of urban interventions in these spaces.

Scholars focusing on social movements identify two types of frames: collective action frames and master frames (Karlberg 2012). Collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings, i.e. they simplify and condense aspects of the world in order to support certain actions (Benford and Snow 2000). Thus, collective action frames are specific to certain social movements. Master frames, on the other hand, are broader, more flexible and more inclusive. They can be applied to diverse situations and may lend form and structure to collective action frames (Karlberg 2012). Thus, collective action frames and master frames operate in different levels. Master frames (or deep frames) structure morals and worldviews while collective action frames operate at a more superficial level with much smaller scope (Lakoff 2006 in Karlberg 2012).

Karlberg (2012, 20) describes three master frames that "can simultaneously shape and reflect foundational understandings of human nature and social reality." The "social command frame" understands society in terms of a hierarchy in which power is exerted through control and coercion. Human nature is associated with notions of "dominance and submission, strength and

weakness, and independence and dependence" (p. 20). Within this frame, which is dominant in slavery, feudalism, caste systems, autocratic regimes, some fundamentalist religious doctrines, and patriarchal families, communication is asymmetric and imperative. Some groups are seen as superior and therefore entitled to governance and leadership (Karlberg 2012).

Contemporary democratic societies reject the oppressive and unjust principles of the social command frame. Instead, these societies have been widely influenced by the "social contest frame," which sees society as "a competitive arena in which self-maximizing individuals or groups pursue divergent interests in a world characterized by scarce resources and opportunities" (Karlberg 2012, 21). Human nature incorporates notions of selfishness and competitiveness. Within the social contest frame, which is associated with the ideologies of *laissez-faire* capitalism, the Westphalian system of national sovereignty, partisan democracy, and the legal adversary system, social relations and institutions are organized as contests that produce winners and losers for the betterment of society (Karlberg 2012).

According to Karlberg (2012) the social contest frame has become naturalized and is currently seen as common sense despite a range of negative consequences (e.g. increasing social inequality and inability to address environmental degradation). Thus, he proposes an alternative frame that takes into consideration the current oneness of humanity, i.e. our increasing social and ecological interdependence. The "social body frame" favors cooperation and altruism since it proposes that "collective well-being can only be achieved by

maximizing the possibilities for every individual to realize their creative potential to contribute to the common good within empowering institutional structures that foster and canalize human capacities in this way" (p. 24).

The social command frame, social contest frame, and social body frame coexist and may be employed by the same individual (or institution) in different domains (work, family, government) or even in similar domains. The change from the dominant social contest frame to the social body frame, which Karlberg advocates for, requires profound changes in individual consciousness and institutional structures. These might include both cultivating the capacity of individuals for altruism, cooperation, and empathy as well as employing cooperative and mutualistic conceptions of power and models of dialogical communication and deliberative or consultative decision-making (Karlberg 2012).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Studying discourses from a critical perspective means focusing on analyses that connect micro verbal interactions with macro social structures. These connections are often opaque to participants. The goal of critical discourse analysis is denaturalizing, i.e. making clear social determinations and the effects of discourses of which participants are unaware (Fairclough 1985).

Understanding the relationship between local discourses and larger social structures requires researchers to combine detailed analyses of verbal and written communication with inquiry of social contexts (Nicolini 2012, Van Dijk 1993). This includes analyzing assumptions and implicit propositions (Fairclough

1985) and examining style, rhetoric, and meaning of texts for strategies that conceal social power relations (Van Dijk 1993).

Detailed textual analyses focus on the investigation of written and verbal communication, often including language structure, lexicon, turn taking in conversation, pauses, and intonation. An example is Fairclough's (1985) analysis of a short conversation between two male police officers and a woman making a rape complaint. His line-by-line analysis aims at uncovering implicit propositions that reveal taken for granted assumptions, i.e. ideological propositions that form the participants' background knowledge.

Another example of detailed textual analysis is provided in Van Dijk's (1993) study of parliamentary discourses about immigration, ethnic relations, affirmative action, and civil rights. He analyzes written and verbal texts with an eye on 'content' (i.e. statements that clearly refer negatively about 'them' and positively about 'us') and the 'structures' that give credibility to these contents (e.g. the use of rhetorical figures, argumentation, and storytelling).

These examples illustrate different methods of doing what Feldman (1995) has referred to as “deconstruction;” i.e. looking at texts in ways that reveal ideological limits. Deconstruction rests on two assumptions: “[t]he first is that ideology imposes limits on what can and cannot be said. The second is that most authors write and actors act from within an ideology” (Feldman 1995, 51). Thus, analyses conducted in this way have the potential to uncover ideologies bounding the way in which individuals reproducing these narratives act in and see the world. Common ways of deconstructing texts include “looking at what is

not said or looking at silences and gaps, dismantling dichotomies, and analyzing disruptions” (Feldman 1995, 51).

Besides detailed textual analysis, CDA requires researchers to conduct contextual analysis of discourse. The combination of detailed textual analysis and the investigation of social structures that shape and are shaped by the production of discourses form the core of CDA. The goal, as explained above, is to denaturalize ideological propositions contained in discourses by uncovering implicit statements and critically assessing the relationship between these micro ideological propositions and the larger social structures that enable and constrain their production and reproduction.

Dominant Discourses in the MRC

Before the first round of fieldwork in the MRC, I did not foresee the importance of discourses in the making of global suburbs. During the first interviews, however, I observed that a variety of respondents presented similar arguments positively depicting these developments. I had anticipated that people with diverse backgrounds and professional values would have different views on the proliferation of global suburbs in the MRC, but I quickly noticed the overwhelming support for these developments articulated in very similar accounts of their benefits.

A number of respondents discussed the privatization of public spaces through gating as fulfilling the demands of potential residents. These arguments claim that the government is incapable of providing security and well-maintained

infrastructure, thus the private sector must step in. Therefore, those who can afford the costs choose to live in gated communities where they do not rely on the public sector. People's desire to live safely in single-family detached homes is central to this argument:

[. . .] people move [to gated communities] because they want to feel safe [and] to be sure that they are ultimately responsible for the maintenance of these areas; that is, they do not depend on maintenance from the public sector. (Private sector planner, Interview 13009)

In Curitiba, there has been some research. The last one showed that 85% of people prefer to, or dream of, living in a house. 'Oh, but Curitiba has lots of apartment buildings.' Yes, but people's dream - even those living in apartments - their dream is to live in a house. They want to have a backyard, a dog, and freedom. But there is no place for them. Those living in houses today live unsafely because the state does not provide security. [. . .] If these people had the opportunity, they would certainly move into a gated community. (Developer, Interview 11005)

We lived in [an upscale residential neighborhood in Curitiba], in a street house, a nice and comfortable house. But, the security issue, you know. We lived in a street with few houses, maybe 18 houses maximum, and three of those had been robbed. So I said 'I am not going to be the next one.' We decided to move out within 15 days. [. . .] We looked at smaller gated communities, but we didn't think they were as secure as Alphaville. (Resident, Interview 13004)

These quotations present arguments in support of gated communities that position these spaces in the context of a failed public sector. They emphasize people's need to take matters into their own hands in order to live safely. This kind of argument has been widely acknowledged in studies of gated communities in Brazil (e.g. Caldeira 2000, Coy 2006, Souza 2005) and around the world (e.g. Firman 2004, Landman and Schönsteich 2002, Low 2001, Wilson-Doenges 2000).

Teresa Caldeira (2000), for example, refers to rising crime rates and violence in São Paulo to explain increasing fortification. Likewise, Janoschka and Borsdorf (2006) discuss a variety of cases in which crime and violence are used to justify the increase in gating across Latin America. However, they suggest that, with the exception of Brazil and Colombia, fear of violence and crime largely results from increasing insecurity fostered by the media and real estate companies rather than actual crime rates.

Several of my informants identified the relationship between fear of crime and gating as they explained the proliferation of gated communities. However, when asked about global suburbs as a particular kind of gated community, i.e. larger suburban gated communities often located in areas of environmental preservation and amongst poor neighborhoods, another story surfaced.

In my informants' accounts, rather than merely benefiting those who can afford to live inside the gates, global suburbs are valuable to society at large. The value of global suburbs is emphasized in contrast with the public sector's inefficiency and limitations. These developments are said to bring infrastructure improvements, tax revenue, and jobs to local communities:

The road was made by [the developer], the pavement, everything, the water distribution system, the sewage system, public lighting. One hundred percent of the investment in the region was done by [the developer], including the security. (Realtor, Interview 11009)
Two of my developments generate around 20, 30% of the city's property tax revenue and have created 15 to 20 kilometers of well done infrastructure. (Developer, Interview 13008)
In a way, [gated communities] employ maids and maintenance workers. There has not been a survey; there are no indicators, but the majority of people working in construction in Alphaville are

either from Pinhais or Colombo. I mean manual workers. (Municipal Secretary of Planning, Interview 13007)

The strongest argument in support of global suburbs highlights the environmental benefits of these developments. As the quotations below illustrate, the location of global suburbs within areas of environmental preservation is not only justified and legitimized but also desirable. This is because a variety of actors involved in the process of making global suburbs understand that occupying environmentally sensitive areas with global suburbs is better than leaving them undeveloped and, therefore, as empty land vulnerable to irregular occupation by squatters.

The legislation incentivizes gated communities [in these areas] because [the town] is in an area that concentrates springs, water catchment, and dams. Thus, the legislation demands low density and restriction of [traffic] flows and elements that might have environmental impacts. Gated communities have very low density. (Developer, Interview 13008)

At least in Brazil, it is like that: if you say 'it cannot be occupied' what will happen? Invasions will happen. This is much worse than having a development like Alphaville, which has higher economic level, so you may have lower density with the sewage emission, I don't know . . . more controlled. So, that is better than saying nothing can be developed [on this land]. (Urban planner at municipal planning agency, Interview 11004)

[. . .] these green areas, for them to function as something sustainable, they should be connected and not be within walls. But, if they are not within walls, they end up being deforested or invaded, mostly because of lack of monitoring. We have a project to start monitoring by satellites, but this is new technology and the State does not invest enough to make it usable. The ideal would be to leave the green areas open and we would monitor them. But, the reality is that this does not work. So, [. . .] the gated communities are seen as a way of preserving the green areas. You take a large parcel and, instead of deforesting it completely, you preserve a large area and occupy a smaller part. This is seen with good eyes,

so we are more favorable to [gated communities in areas of preservation]. (Urban planner at metropolitan planning agency, Interview)

I prefer that cities grow in a more organized fashion and with more quality, especially in these peripheral regions where we develop these projects [for gated communities]. I think it is much more a positive thing than a negative one. (Urban planner in the private sector, Interview 14003)

These quotations reveal a story in which global suburbs emerge as a legitimate urban typology to be pursued through public policy. In order to analyze this story, to understand its structure, to deconstruct it, and to identify its connection with macro-social contexts, I must first piece together the fragmented and not always logically organized accounts of my informants into a more coherent storyline.

I reconstruct in two composite narratives presented below the stories my informants told me. They highlight the positive fiscal and environmental outcomes of global suburbs as expressed in the interviews. I compiled the composite narratives by putting together fragments of accounts gathered from various sources and organizing them in a way that clarifies the storyline. They are, therefore, derived from a combination of different interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. These composite narratives aim at reproducing in a more orderly fashion the fragmented accounts of diverse informants.

Composite narrative 1: The fiscal benefits of global suburbs

The city is filled with urban problems such as pollution, traffic congestion, lack of open space, and violence. The government is unable to address these issues. So, people are unable to have good quality of life in the city while relying on public services. They cannot fulfill the dream of having a house with a backyard and dogs. It is natural, then, that those who can afford it will search for exclusionary communities where the provision of services is provided by private firms and paid for by each resident. In these communities, residents enjoy recreational amenities, privacy, nature, peace, and above all, security afforded by a quasi-militarized system including gates, walls, fences, armed guards, patrol vehicles, and surveillance cameras. Better infrastructure, security, and general quality of life are offered without additional government expenditure. In fact, these communities contribute fiscally to municipalities because they increase tax revenue and may attract additional private investment. Moreover, local communities benefit from infrastructure improvements carried out by developers.

Composite narrative 2: The environmental benefits of global suburbs

The state created land use regulations to restrict the occupation of environmentally sensitive areas. However, the government lacks technological, financial, and human resources to enforce legislation and monitor these areas. Thus, squatters who cannot afford formal housing have targeted these empty lands. Irregular settlements are harmful to the environment because they are not serviced with basic water, sanitation, and garbage collection. Squatters dispose of garbage and human waste at nearby water sources. The establishment of low-density controlled occupation in these areas will prevent squatting. These developments will also preserve pockets of green areas while respecting environmental laws. So, it is a win-win scenario for developers, public officials, and the population.

The two composite narratives present the dominant discourses about the making of global suburbs in the MRC. I refer to these discourses as dominant because of two main reasons. First, they are dominant in the sense that the majority of interviewees enact them. Around three fourths (24 out of 31) of interviewees expressed views similar to those illustrated in the quotations presented earlier. Second, the claims and arguments contained in my informants' accounts were naturalized among a very diverse group of people. In other words,

interviewees explained global suburbs in the context of how things are (or, as a municipal planning agent said: “at least in Brazil, it is like that”) without considering alternative understandings of the reality or alternative courses of action. The few respondents who questioned the largely accepted discourses were mostly academics. Their counter-narratives are presented at the end of this chapter.

Deconstructing the Dominant Discourses

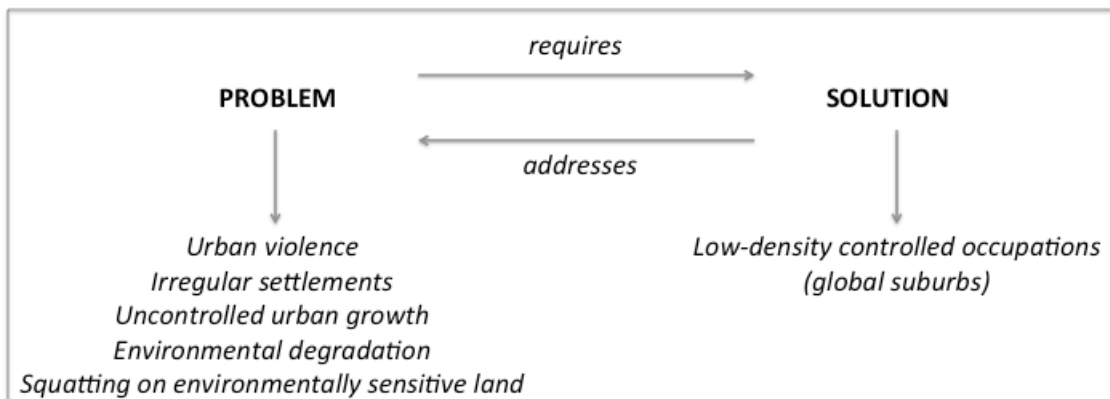
The discourses presented in the composite narratives are structured around claims that reveal a specific way of understanding reality. The most significant claims refer to: a) the inefficiency of the government, which is unable to perform its duties, to provide safety, to protect the environment; b) the privatization of public services, including planning, as benefitting society at large, and c) an individualistic view where individual agents are expected to maximize their opportunities; thus, those who can pay are able to have a better quality of life. Government inefficiency, privatization, and individualism are principles of the neoliberal ideology. The naturalization of these claims in the dominant discourses indicates the dominance of neoliberalism as a framework that shapes actors’ understanding of reality and directs action.

Implicit understandings of the reality are embedded in the use of oppositions that structure these discourses. Arguments are presented in dichotomies such as public vs. private, good vs. bad, desirable vs. undesirable, efficient vs. inefficient, formal vs. informal, regular vs. irregular, squatters vs.

residents, and problem vs. solution. The use of dichotomies leaves little room for alternative views and more complex interpretations of reality. Also, “[b]ecause dichotomies allow for only two possibilities, they tend to restrict the kinds of questions that are asked” (Feldman 1995, 52).

The dichotomy problem vs. solution is central to the arguments being made in the dominant discourses legitimizing global suburbs in the MRC. The basic structure of these discourses implies that problems – such as traffic congestion, pollution, violence, land squatting, and irregular settlements – require a solution. Low-density controlled occupations (a technical and neutral term used by several informants in lieu of other controversial terms such as gated communities) are presented as solutions to address these problems (see Figure 6.1). Therefore, the use of the dichotomy problem vs. solution establishes a linear relationship between the two.

Figure 6.1: Structure of dominant discourses



Source: Author

It is important to note that the use of the dichotomy problem vs. solution is quite common in planning and policy discourses. For instance, in *Badlands of The Republic*, Mustafa Dikeç explains how the construction of the French

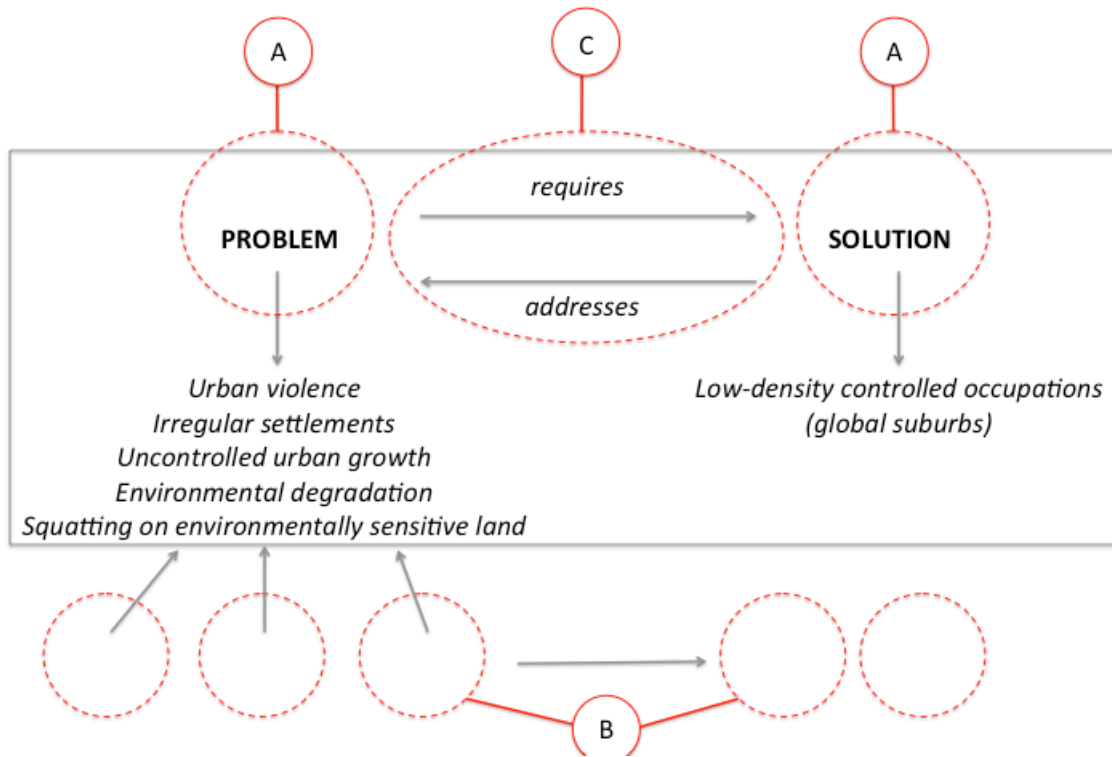
banlieus as “problems” and “threats” oriented the kind of policies of interventions. In the MRC, this rationale legitimizes exclusionary enclaves and orient certain actions, including zoning changes, approval of exceptions for gating, and issuing permits for global suburbs.

The following paragraphs aim at dismantling the dichotomy problem vs. solution in order to de-naturalize the claims included in the dominant discourses. I deconstruct both the content and structure of the relationship between problem and solution to reveal how the dominant discourses construct realities and orient actions in particular ways.

The relationship between problem and solution as presented in the dominant discourses and illustrated in Figure 6.1 may be deconstructed in at least three ways: a) by questioning what is defined as problem and solution; b) by accounting for what is missing from, or made invisible by, the framing of the dominant discourses; and c) by challenging the relationship between what is defined as problem and solution.

The three forms of deconstruction (illustrated in Figure 6.2) are discussed separately in the next paragraphs. For each deconstruction, I present alternative ways of understanding reality, which could potentially lead to different practices and policies. These alternative interpretations intend to make explicit that the current framing limits the emergence of alternative courses of action. Thus, the deconstruction of the current dominant discourse challenges highly naturalized ideological propositions that form the background knowledge that individuals draw upon.

Figure 6.2: Three forms of deconstructing the dominant discourses



Source: Author

Questioning Taken For Granted Definitions

The dominant discourses expose taken for granted definitions of what constitutes problems and what constitutes solutions. For example, irregular settlements are uncritically defined as ‘problems’ while gated communities are accepted as ‘solutions.’ An alternative way of understanding reality might consider irregular settlements as solutions, rather than problems. These unplanned developments are generally characterized by the concentration of makeshift shacks that house the very poor who cannot afford formal housing. Squatting on empty public or private land and self-building homes with cheap

materials is the solution, albeit precarious, many families find to fulfill their housing needs.

The definition of exclusionary enclaves as solutions may also be questioned. Despite the numerous accounts of the positive outcomes of global suburbs, an alternative way of understanding these developments might highlight their potential to advance regressive outcomes such as heightened spatial fragmentation and social segregation. This view would be in agreement with social science research that suggests higher levels of housing segregation may increase social inequality due to a combination of effects such as concentrated poverty, unequal access to infrastructure, services, education, and jobs, and decreased social contact and tolerance (see, for example, Farley 2010).

Similarly, instead of hindering the proliferation of irregular settlements, global suburbs might indeed be framed as illegal settlements because in many cases they do not fully comply with existing laws. For instance, gating housing developments that are approved as subdivisions (i.e. approved as *loteamentos* rather than *condomínios fechados*) is illegal. However, this commonly happens with or without the blessing of municipal planning agencies. Several of my informants alluded to this phenomena, which a planner called “an aberration” (Interview 13001). Research on gated communities in another Brazilian city also identified illegality in the approval and construction of these developments (Silva 2007). Nonetheless, the term ‘irregular settlement’ or ‘squatting’ is predominantly used to describe low-income communities.

Instead of legitimizing global suburbs, discourses based on alternative understandings of reality framed around different definitions of ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ would lead to different actions. For instance, discourses framing irregular settlements as solutions might support slum regularization and upgrading projects. Likewise, discourses framing the proliferation of global suburbs as a problem might lead to stricter gating regulations and/or to land use requirements for creating mixed-use and mixed-income communities.

Accounting For What Is Missing

The dominant discourses frame reality in ways that limit the scope of the claims presented and simplify relationships. For example, by presenting irregular settlements as problems and exclusionary enclaves as solutions, the narratives make related events, dynamics, and contexts invisible. They do not take into account the root causes of irregular settlements. For example, nothing is said about poverty, overurbanization, government corruption, land speculation, unemployment, and shortage of affordable housing.

An alternative way of framing reality that includes (at least partially) what is left out in the dominant narratives would account for lack of affordable housing, low wages, and land speculation as they relate to the proliferation of irregular settlements. This framing would require: a) that irregular settlements be understood in regards to the housing needs of the poor, and b) that solutions actually focus on the root causes of irregular settlements.

Likewise, the definition of global suburbs as a solution addressing environmental degradation leaves out other possible courses of action. For example, an alternative to occupying environmentally sensitive land with global suburbs could be to enforce land use regulations and zoning by strengthening monitoring of these areas. However, the actualization of this alternative requires expanding the capacity of public agencies, increasing spending on personnel and technology, shifting priorities, and implementing mechanisms of metropolitan governance. As the dominant discourses highlight, however, the inefficacy of the public sector is taken for granted and solutions that rely on the private sector are preferred.

Challenging the Relationship Between Problem and Solution

The dominant discourses imply a linear relationship between problem and solution in which a problem *requires* a solution that, in turn, *addresses* the problem. For example, global suburbs are presented as a solution to the proliferation of irregular settlements because it eliminates the risk of land squatting on the land it occupies. In other words, the rationale presented in the dominant discourse is that land occupied by global suburbs are not vulnerable to squatting simply because it is no longer empty.

The emergence of global suburbs in one place, however, does not prevent squatting in another place. The proliferation of global suburbs has the potential to transform former marginal land into prime areas and contribute to increasing property values in the surroundings. For instance, according to a realtor quoted

in Polli (2006, 154), there has been a 30% increase in real estate values within a three-kilometer radius from Alphaville Graciosa since its implementation in 2000. In some cases, an increase of 300% was observed.

As both the private and public sectors sees opportunities for profit around global suburbs, these areas become prime for development and irregular settlements are no longer tolerated. Existing slums are upgraded and regularized (see Chapter 8) and monitoring is strengthened to prevent the expansion of existing and the establishment of new informal settlements.

The transformation of marginal areas into prime areas, where the real estate market sees new opportunities for profit, reveals tensions among the interests of the municipality, investors, and squatters. For example, a municipal planning official explains that the city had taken steps to halt construction in an existing irregular settlement. However, as he explains, a prosecutor contacted by the settlement's residents association condemned the action of the city stating that it had halted construction because it aspired to offer the land to a developer who would build affluent communities (Interview 13007). This story reveals that both squatters and the prosecutor perceive the municipality's potential interest in containing irregular settlements and earmark land for affluent communities.

This process supports the reasoning that global suburbs prevent the proliferation of irregular settlements, as it is implied in the dominant discourses. But, as research reveals, global suburbs may simply relocate rather than eliminate irregular settlements. As it will be discussed in Chapter 9, the slum-upgrading and regularization project in *Favela Zumbi dos Palmaris*, which is

adjacent to the largest global suburb in the MRC turned the irregular settlement into a formal neighborhood. In doing so, the project displaced some of the most vulnerable residents. The displaced population settled in other existing or new irregular settlements elsewhere (Ritter and de Souza 2010, Ritter 2011). Thus, slums may simply relocate since the root causes (e.g., shortage of affordable housing, poverty, and unemployment) are not addressed.

Although no extensive research on the effects of global suburbs on relocating slums is available, the case of the slum-upgrading project suggests that the relationship portrayed in the dominant narrative does not fully reflect reality. The assertion that global suburbs are solutions addressing existing problems that the government is unable to tackle is, therefore, not realistic.

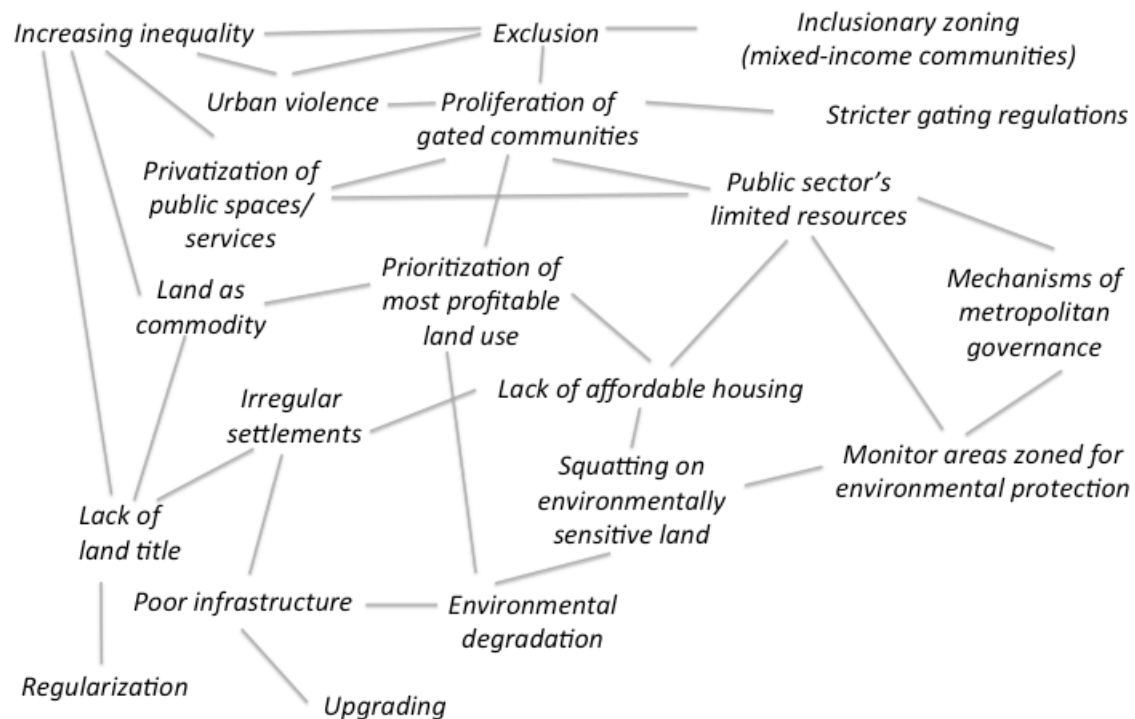
An alternative framing of the relationship between problem and solution may propose that the problem defined in the dominant narratives *legitimizes*, rather than requires, a previously conceived solution. In this way, global suburbs do not emerge from a need to address the proliferation of irregular settlements, urban violence, or uncontrolled growth. They exist on their own merit, i.e. they are solutions looking for problems. In the absence of land squatting, violence, and uncontrolled growth, global suburbs might be perceived as segregationist, elitist, and discriminatory spaces. As such, to justify zoning changes and policies that incentivize the proliferation of global suburbs would be a very controversial, if not impossible, task for developers, city officials, and planners.

In this alternative framing, rather than understanding problems as requiring solutions that, in turn, address problems; the definition of what

constitutes a problem legitimizes the choice of solution that might displace or even aggravate what was defined as problems in the first place.

The three deconstructions discussed above reveal implicit assumptions and relationships rooted in what is said and what is not said in the discourses. The three different forms of deconstructing the dominant discourses aimed at emphasizing the current framing as only one possible way of understanding reality. Alternative interpretations were presented as possibilities that disrupt the rationale employed in the dominant discourses. An illustration of alternative ways of understanding the phenomena of urban development, particularly in respect to the problems and solutions identified in the current dominant discourses, is presented in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: Alternative understanding of urban development in the MRC

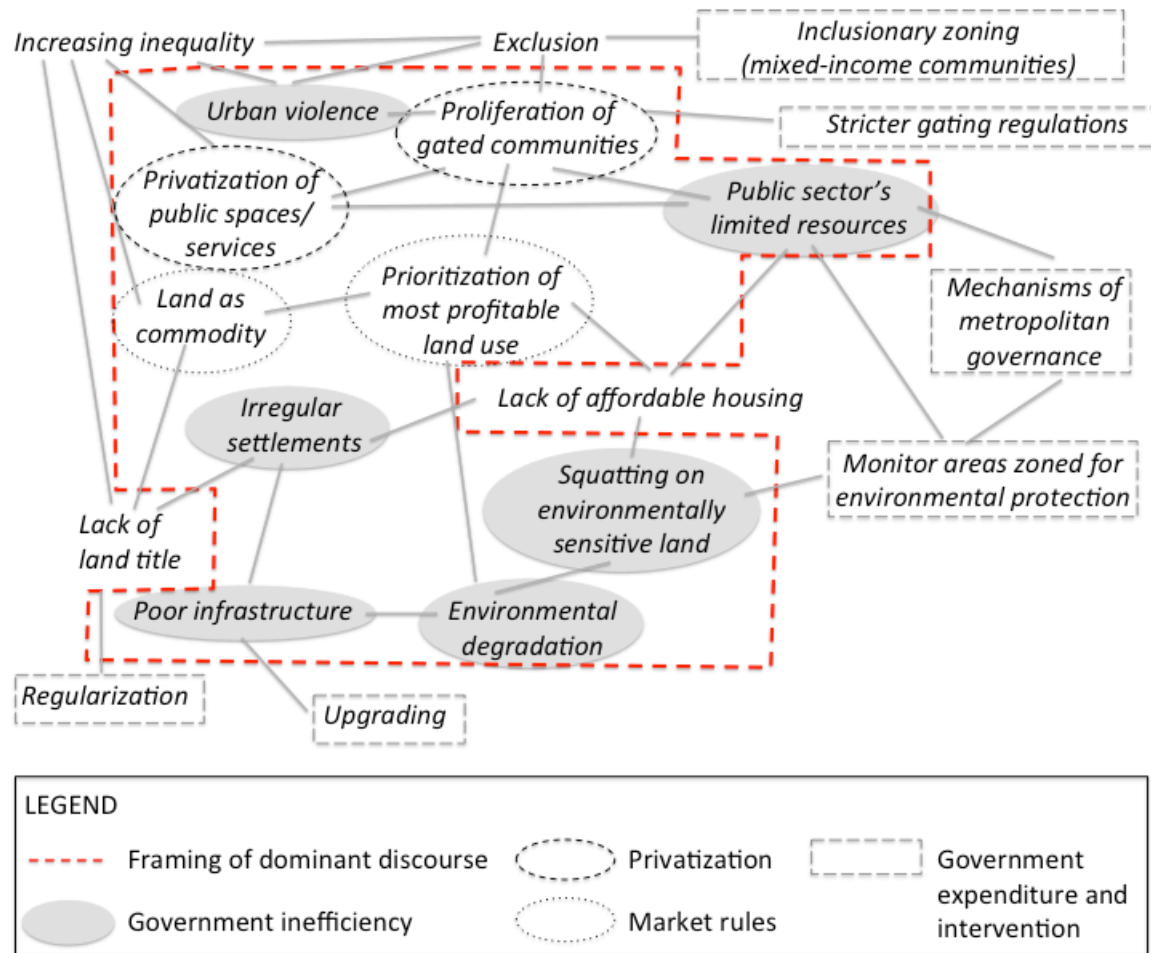


Source: Author

It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss how the connections presented in Figure 6.3 occur. Instead, the illustration is presented as a contrast to the structure of the dominant discourses as pictured in Figure 6.1. It suggests that the making of global suburbs must be understood in the context of a series of nuanced and complex relationships that include both spatial and socio-economic issues and policies. For example, increasing inequality is both an outcome and a cause of violence and exclusion, both of which are given as reasons for the proliferation of gated communities (i.e. desire to self-segregate and to escape from violence). Likewise, while exclusion could be minimized through inclusionary zoning, the proliferation of gated communities could be minimized through stricter gating regulations. As a last example of the relationships depicted in Figure 6.3, lack of affordable housing may be seen as resulting from the public sector's limited resources and from the premise that if land is a commodity, land owners and the government must prioritize land uses that are most profitable.

It is important to note the absence of labels “problem” and “solution” in Figure 6.3. As I argued earlier, the very definition of what constitutes a problem shapes the course of action. The complexity of the relationship amongst the phenomena presented in Figure 6.3 does not lend itself to simple categorizations of problems and solutions. For example, privatization of public spaces and services might address the issue of limited public resources at the same time that it may contribute to increasing inequality by establishing unequal access to resources (such as healthy and clean environments).

Figure 6.4: Visible and invisible dynamics and relationships



Source: Author

Taking Figure 6.3 as a starting point, we may identify what is made visible and what is made invisible in the framing of the dominant discourses. Figure 6.4 illustrates some observations. If we look at what is made visible in the dominant discourses, we begin to see how the neoliberal ideology bounds the framing process. For example, within the red dotted line representing the framing of these narratives there is an emphasis on government inefficiency, a push for privatization, and an approach to urbanization based on market rules. Outside of the framing (the red dotted line in Figure 6.4) are alternative actions that would require larger public intervention and regulation.

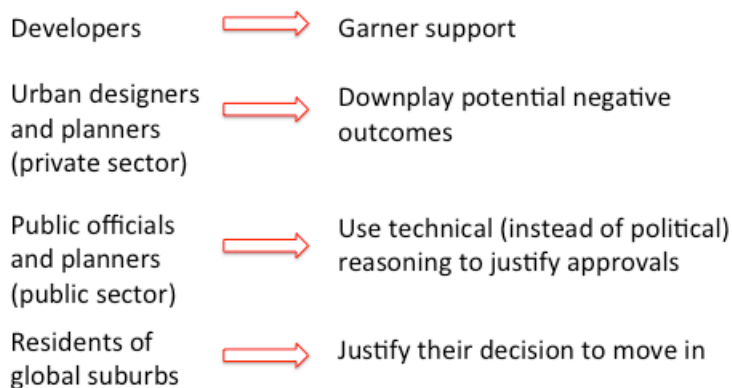
So far, I have identified the dominant discourses supporting the making of global suburbs in the MRC. I exposed the stories of my informants by compiling two composite narratives that organize and connect the main claims and assumptions stated in the interviews. Then, I analyzed these dominant discourses to reveal the structures and taken for granted assumptions that ultimately legitimizes the making of exclusionary enclaves. I identified the structure of the discourses as a simple one rooted on the use of the dichotomy problem vs. solution. As I deconstructed the dichotomy, I presented alternative ways of understanding reality to highlight that the naturalization of the dominant discourses limits other ways of knowing and acting.

The question that remains to be discussed is the one that puzzled me from the beginning of the fieldwork in the MRC and that prompted this analysis in the first place: why are different actors, with different background, interests, and worldviews telling me the same story? In other words, why are my informants reproducing the dominant discourses identified above while disregarding alternative interpretations and different courses of action? A comprehensive answer to this question may include more than what I present in the next section. However, drawing from the data I gathered, particularly the role of different actors as discussed in Chapter 5, I suggest that the dominant discourses have become naturalized and are reproduced by a variety of actors because they serve different purposes to different people.

Same Discourses, Different Purposes

Actors enact the dominant discourses featured in the composite narratives for different reasons. While all respondents mention safety concerns as a justification for gating and most respondents discuss the public sector's inability to provide safety and to control irregular settlements, they tend to emphasize different aspect of the narratives. They also tend to express different feelings toward the realities that give rise to these discourses. As the interview quotations presented earlier indicate, the variation is systematic and dependent on the respondent's role in the making of global suburbs. The relationship between actors and purposes is summarized in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5: Discourses serve different purposes to different actors



Source: Author

Developers' accounts of global suburbs focus on their role in addressing people's demand for quality of life, which they claim is not fulfilled through existing housing options. Thus, they enact the discourses emphasizing, on the one hand, people's desire for the lifestyle that their developments offer and, on the other hand, the inability of the public sector to meet this demand. They also

highlight benefits of global suburbs to the larger community, including the creation of jobs, tax revenue increases, and infrastructure improvement. Developers utilize the discourses to garner support for their projects from local communities, local politicians, and municipal agencies. This support is deployed during negotiations with metropolitan and state agencies.

The narratives of urban designers working in the private sector characterize global suburbs as a tool to control and organize growth in the peripheries. They highlight the design quality of these developments, their compliance with the law, and their ability to prevent the proliferation of squatter settlements. The legality of these developments is particularly emphasized given that they are located in areas where irregular occupations are the norm. Designers also point to the benefits these developments bring to the larger society, particularly in terms of environmental preservation and infrastructure improvement.

The narratives enable urban designers to downplay the potential negative social and environmental outcomes of exclusionary communities. Planners are generally aware of potential negative impacts by virtue of their professional education on urban planning. An expanded analysis of how private sector planners make sense of their role in the process of making global suburbs is presented in Chapter 7.

Planners and public officials working at municipal planning departments and the metropolitan planning agency, despite enacting the dominant discourses, express a great deal of frustration with the reality of their jobs. They characterize

the need for privatization as an unfortunate result of the state's lack of investment in planning, implementing, and monitoring processes. These professionals often lament the shortage of personnel to conduct monitoring and permitting tasks; the lack of or outdated technology such as satellites and GIS; difficulty in hiring skilled workers; inexistent, confusing, or ineffective legislation; and restricted time dedicated to planning related (rather than bureaucratic) work. They also feel their technical expertise is underappreciated both by developers and by their own bosses who are politicians with their own agendas.

Still, planners and public officials responsible for approving these projects and issuing permits use the dominant discourses to justify their decisions. The narratives provide technical reasoning, instead of potentially contentious political motivations, as the impetus for approving these projects. During interviews, planners resorted to the dominant discourses when first asked about global suburbs. However, closer to the end of the one-hour interviews, respondents often brought up issues of corruption, unethical behavior, or political motivation as important influences in the permitting process.

Residents of global suburbs also reproduce the dominant discourses legitimizing global suburbs. They often mention environmental protection and fiscal benefits generated by the communities they live in. Like developers, residents emphasize the quality of life afforded by global suburbs and their own desire to escape from urban problems, particularly violence. None of the three residents interviewed had been victims of violence before moving to the

exclusionary communities, but they all articulated a great deal of fear and a high degree of dissatisfaction with the public sector as reasons to self-segregate.

When asked about the relationship between their affluent community and the neighboring low-income communities, residents listed the positive impacts of global suburbs. Their narratives focused on the jobs generated in global suburbs (mostly as domestic workers); social programs implemented or supported by the development company (as in the case of Alphaville); and infrastructure and service improvement made by developers (these discussed in Chapter 8).

The successful production and reproduction of the dominant discourses by various actors depends on the spatial and temporal context that gives rise to them. For instance, the discourse emphasizing environmental benefits is particularly appealing in Curitiba given that the city a) prides itself as being 'sustainable'²⁶ and b) has a well-marketed successful history of planning interventions (Garcia 1997). The first makes environmental concerns an important matter to citizens, politicians, and public officials. The latter makes the technical justification for global suburbs as low-density controlled occupations effective because, as Garcia (1997) and Irazábal (2004) point out, citizens tend to uncritically accept planning interventions. This narrative might be less appealing in places where environmental protection and planning interventions are unappreciated.

²⁶ The website of Curitiba's Institute of Tourism lists several awards Curitiba received, including the Green City Index Award in 2010 and 2014, the Global Green City Award in 2012, the Globe Award Sustainable City in 2010. <http://www.turismo.curitiba.pr.gov.br/conteudo/destaques-e-premios/1763>

Likewise, the discourse exploring the fiscal benefits of global suburbs is particularly appealing in the Brazilian neoliberal context that requires municipalities to raise tax revenue for municipal services and infrastructure. Many of the peripheral municipalities, especially those that include large areas zoned for preservation (where most industrial activities are not allowed), and those that house a large proportion of the poorer population, suffer from fiscal deficits. In this context, the discourse highlighting the potential of global suburbs in contributing to increased tax revenue and the provision of infrastructure with no public expenditure becomes attractive.

More importantly, if we consider planning to be a “consensus-steering” practice (Pløger 2004), we should note that the dominant discourses are built upon consensus about what is best for the collective interest. The ‘goods’ that come out of global suburbs are ‘public goods’ - namely environmental protection and increased public revenue - that benefit everybody. The focus on collective benefits downplays the individual gains accrued by only a few privileged citizens who can afford to live within the developments’ gates. When talking about societal improvements, the discourses mobilize support from a variety of actors.

Counter-narratives

Although a variety of actors reproduce the dominant discourses, there are important counter-narratives that should be addressed. Academics, in particular, question both the rationale and potential impacts of these discourses. These actors are not directly involved in the process that makes global suburbs

possible, but their interest in the potential impacts of these developments has influenced how they understand the current conditions that enable the proliferation of exclusionary communities.

Academics are critical of the use of irregular settlements as justification for global suburbs. They agree that these settlements are proliferating and that local governments are not able to control them. But, they bring up the issues that lead to informality in the first place, particularly the public sector's inability to assist the poorest population, and the other potential reasons behind the proliferation of global suburbs in areas zoned for environmental preservation.

Regarding the occupation on areas of preservation, I see the transformation from area of preservation to developable area as a pressure from the real estate market. I do not find valid the justification that if the area is left for preservation, it will be invaded and therefore let's occupy it with people able to pay for the necessary infrastructure. [. . .] It is the state's job to prevent invasion. If there is invasion, it is irresponsible to blame the invaders. No; it is the state's fault. The state must be capable of assisting the population. (Planning academic, Interview 11002)

Between having [the favela] encroaching in an environmentally important area or guaranteeing a legally approved gated community, which would guarantee some infrastructure, [the latter] is preferable from the environmental and spatial organization points of view. It is understandable; it is a reasonable argument. The issue is that people in favelas should be offered other opportunities so that they did not have to... that there was no risk of invasion. This is the discussion. Now, once the risk [of land squatting] is imminent, the argument becomes very convincing, right? [. . .] You are providing the palliative solution. (Planning academic, Interview 11003)

Academics and some public officials also point to potential externalities of global suburbs and the developments' inability to address underlying issues.

Furthermore, the benefit global suburbs might bring to the community is

questionable, particularly when considering the low cost versus great advantages developers have.

We are not even discussing the implications of [these developments] in, for example, fuel consumption, which affects air quality, and other impacts of all that. (Planning academic, Interview 11002)

The cost is very low [for developers]. For example, if you think about the advantages that Alphaville had in locating there, they should have paid a lot more [in exactions]. (Planning academic, Interview 11003)

There is also some skepticism about the claim that global suburbs are a means for developers to address people's demand for security.

The real estate market creates the demand; they create the need and then start to address it, putting a price on it. [. . .] I think that it is about taking some social aspirations that are perceptible and transforming them into market products. (Planning academic, Interview 11003)

Violence has been increasing because social inequality has increased. [...] The social exclusion in this country is historic. You have the media talking about consumption, consumption, consumption, and you have a large portion of the population that has no [financial] condition. This creates an aspiration to want [things] and a clash with those who have. Another thing we cannot dismiss is the issue of drug trafficking, which is one of the main reasons for violence. [...] But, it is not just security. You will use the issue of security, the environmental issue, because the [rich] want to show social differentiation, status. (Planning academic, Interview 11003)

A survey conducted in Alphaville Graciosa (Ritter 2011, 246) corroborates the skepticism. Ninety percent of the respondents had never been victims of violence before moving to the global suburb. Still, they all express fear of urban violence.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the dominant discourses portraying global suburbs as desirable and legitimate. These discourses provide plausible narratives that turn potentially controversial practices, such as gating and urbanization of environmentally protected land, into positives. They are strong narratives that serve a variety of purposes to different actors. In this way, the enactment of these discourses brings to alignment actors whose professional background, attitudes, and values may differ. They help some to justify their actions as technically, and not politically, motivated; while allowing others to deal with frustrations. The strength of these narratives is also shown in the little resistance it has received.

Nevertheless, the analysis of dominant discourses reveals the taken for granted assumptions and structural properties that make alternative discourses, and in turn actions, unthinkable. The strength of these narratives does not lie in their truthful account of the reality. To the contrary, the narratives create a contained reality that limits the spectrum of options available. In this context, global suburbs emerge as technical solutions, i.e. an urban typology capable of addressing existing problems. But, as the deconstruction of the dichotomy problem vs. solution reveals, the narratives simplify the complexity of relationships; leave important elements out of the frame; and adopt taken for granted definitions and assumptions.

Considering what is made visible and invisible in the narratives (as illustrated in Figure 20), I argue that they are organized under Karlberg's (2012)

social contest frame, which is characterized by competition and individualism and associated with notions typical of neoliberalism. The emphasis on public inefficiency and market supremacy, for instance, constructs reality and orient actions that benefit the private sector and elite groups. Still, while emphasizing public goods, these narratives address collective interests and become appealing to a wide range of actors including public officials and planners whose professional activities are linked to the wellbeing of society at large.

The discussion of the findings presented here contributes to our understanding about how spaces with potential regressive outcomes (e.g., exclusionary enclaves) are created. More specifically, these findings reveal how knowledge is organized and translated into action that might perpetuate inequality. They point to the importance of discursive practices, frames, and societal structures in shaping how we see, how we act, and ultimately what gets done in cities. In this particular case, the findings also reveal how dominant discourses legitimize practices of exclusion.

CHAPTER 7: DETACHED URBANISM

With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.

(Ítalo Calvino, 1978, *Invisible Cities*)

To understand diverse planning practices, planning scholars must investigate the different settings in which planners work. These settings vary not only across time and space, but also across public and private sectors. The normalization of neoliberal principles in the planning and policy realms affects practices in both sectors resulting, for instance, in the increasing privatization of planning practice. Thus, private sector professionals become major players in actually existing urbanisms (Shatkin 2011).

The overall agreement on the increasing influence of the private sector in what gets done in cities has led scholars to re-evaluate the role of planning and planners in the public sector. Numerous studies focus on the challenges, feelings, interactions, and self-perceptions of public sector planners (Forester 1989, Fox-Rogers and Murphy 2016; Inch 2010; Sager 2009). On the other hand, less attention is directed toward private sector professionals, particularly planners. Is it not clear whether this theoretical bias results from a resistance to define private sector professionals as ‘planners,’ a denial of the (sometimes

perverse) role of the private sector, or an attempt to reinstate the dominance of public sector planning by giving it scholarly prominence.

This chapter contributes to our understanding of the different faces of planning practice by focusing on private sector planning professionals. In particular, I investigate the role of private sector planners in the making of global suburbs. The main question I address is: How do planning professionals, who by virtue of their professional education are generally aware of the potential negative effects of spatial segregation, make sense of their work planning and designing global suburbs?

In her study of planning responses to requests for gating in Canada, Grant (2004, 2005) suggests that “fiscal and political constraints” make it difficult for planners “to resist gating,” regardless of their understanding of what constitutes good urban form. In this case, social issues such as equality, and planning principles such as mixed use and accessibility are overlooked as planners approve gated developments. Interestingly, Grant also suggests that, in some cases, planners perceive gated communities as spaces in which planning principles (such as density, quality design, sense of community) are adequately applied. They express ambivalent views as they point to positive aspects of gating.

The difference between the planners Grant (2004, 2005) interviewed and surveyed and the planners I studied is that while the former work in the public sector and found it hard “to resist” gating or “were compelled” to approve gated projects, my interviewees work in the private sector producing feasibility studies,

urban design, construction drawings, and marketing material for developers hoping to build exclusionary communities.

The title of the professionals I observed and interviewed in Brazil is “Architect and Urbanist.” Rather than different professions (as in most of the world), architects, landscape architects, urban designers, and urban planners are all ‘Architects and Urbanists.’ Through their professional education, they receive substantial training in areas related to design and considerable less focus on socio-economic, political, legal, and policy topics. Nonetheless, they are employed in both public and (increasingly) private sectors and perform a variety of tasks ranging from architecture and urban design to traditional plan making. To use a more familiar term, I will refer to these professionals as planners.

The analysis presented in this chapter focuses on what planners do, how they do what they do, and how they make sense of their practices. Drawing from participant observation and in-depth interviews, I describe and analyze practice stories (Forester 1989, Hoch 1994, Sandercock 2003, Watson 2002) and I connect the routines, tasks, interactions, perceptions, worldviews, concerns, and feelings of planners with the political economy characterized by the naturalization of neoliberalism. This analysis follows a practice theory approach connecting agency and structure under the assumption that they are mutually constituted, i.e. structures enable and constrain practices that reproduce, reinforce, or change structures. In understanding the mutual constitution of planning practices and neoliberalism, the study ultimately addresses the questions of *how*

neoliberalism shapes planning practices and *how* planning practices reproduce neoliberal principles in a particular context.

As I will further describe and analyze in this chapter, the findings reveal a particular approach to planning that shapes how practitioners make sense of their work. What I call 'detached urbanism' is a mode of planning practice that entails the planner's detachment in three dimensions: political, professional, and valuative. I explain these three dimensions as well as the features of planning practice that enable planners to engage in detached urbanism.

Before presenting the analysis of private sector planning practices, I summarize current debates in the planning literature in order to situate the theoretical contributions of my study. The analysis and discussion in this chapter contribute to larger conversations in planning theory that a) acknowledge the diversity of planning practices and the need to include this diversity in planning theory; b) suggest that specific case studies may provide insights into theoretical formulations that cut across geographic barriers by focusing on common issues; c) acknowledge planning's regressive goals, and d) consider practice stories fruitful learning tools to both theorists and practitioners.

Divided or Diverse Planning Theory?

Planning practice originated as a modernist project intended to apply scientific knowledge to objectively address clearly defined urban problems. The project reflects the post-Enlightenment modern society that considered progress and rational behavior the foundations of societal advancement (Beauregard

1996). Planning theorists working within the modernist framework (mostly throughout the 1960s and 1970s) portrayed planners as neutral technicians whose primary goal was to develop technical solutions for the betterment of society. Politics and context were ignored as theorists strived to develop abstract theories involving rigid categorization and clear conceptualization (Beauregard 1996). This rationale assured planners that their decisions represented a single public interest and were both scientific and ethical (Baum 1996).

As postmodernism advanced, the portrait of planning as a technical service lost ground. Objectivity and rationality were replaced by subjectivity and relativity. Criticisms of the universalizing, abstract, idealistically rational, apolitical, and de-contextualized nature of rational planning theories abounded. Flyvbjerg (1996, 384) claimed that what was needed was 'real rationality' since the ideal or normative rationality of modernity disregards the real rationalities employed in actual social institutions and planning processes and, therefore, is a poor guide to moving forward the ideals of democracy and equality. Real rationality, on the other hand, uncovers how the real world of modern democracy and planning operates.

Influenced by Jurgen Habermas' Communication Action Theory, postmodern theories that define planning as a communicative activity embedded in community context emerged as a "new paradigm" (Innes 1995). As Flyvbjerg (1998) explains, Habermas argued that inclusive communication among interested actors (i.e. those who are affected by what is being discussed) has the ability to produce a rational discourse that will, in turn, inform action.

The communicative rationality recalls older ideas of logos, inasmuch as it brings along with it the connotations of a noncoercively unifying, consensus-building force of a discourse in which the participants overcome their at first subjectively based views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement (Habermas 1987 quoted in Flyvberg 1998, 212).

Communicative theorists ground theory on the study of practice rather than engaging in "primarily armchair theorizing and systematic thinking about planning practice" as their predecessors had done (Innes 1995, 183).

Communication through text, conversations, meetings, plans, and reports is understood to "connote or denote specific institutional and political relationships" (Baum 1996, 369). Theorists highlight that the planning process is based on interactions among particular persons in particular contexts.

Communicative theorists acknowledge the politics of planning and suggest that prescriptive theories could help planners deal with the frustrating realities of planning practice (Forester 1989). The essential argument is that, despite political fragmentation, conflicting interests, and competitiveness, consensus building can be achieved through collaborative practices. The enactment of these practices requires the creation of institutional capacity, i.e. "the development of social capital of trust and the intellectual capital of understanding, even across deep divides and tensions" (Healey 1996, 213), which involves building relationships and integrating new ways of thinking and valuing. Here, planners become mediators (rather than technical experts) and decisions are based on objective consensus achieved through communication.

Since the communicative process described by Habermas relies on clear, accessible, and neutral information, planners play an important role in facilitating

such processes. This is because planners can "influence the conditions which make citizens able (or unable) to participate, act, and organize effectively regarding issues affecting their collective lives" (Forester 1982, 67). They do so by determining who should be contacted and who should participate in meetings, deciding which information citizens may access, organizing data, cooperation, and activism, and shaping the trust and expectations of citizens. Forester explains that information is a key source of planner's power because it not only determines who participates in and legitimizes the process, but also highlights the "structural, organizational, and political barriers that may unnecessarily distort the information that citizens have and use to shape their own actions" (Forester 1982, 69).

Forester's progressive view requires planners to acknowledge that misinformation permeates the planning process. Misinformation may be ad hoc, unplanned, random, or spontaneous (i.e. originating from the use of technical terms); or the product of established institutional structures and reflecting the speakers' political-economic roles. Planners themselves may be sources of misinformation. This is because they work under "pressing time constraints," have limited access to information, and may be incentivized "to legitimate existing processes, to mitigate or avoid conflict, and to gain consensus and consent from potentially warring factions (developers, community groups, labor representatives)" (Forester 1982, 75).

What is missing from, or at least not given as much attention to, in communicative theories is the possibility that planners are part of power

structures and political systems and have their own interests, agendas, and preferences. For instance, while Forester suggests that planners might be the source of misinformation, he attributes this to external forces such as time constraints and organizational incentives. This view assumes that planners *want* to be progressive, democratic, and inclusive. But, is it the case that planners always intend to serve public interests?

Critics of the communicative view take issue not only with the portrayal of planners as noble individuals, but also with the normative nature of communicative theories. Flyvbjerg (1996) points out that often planners are portrayed as the victims of power structures, but the reality is that planners are real actors in real political processes. Thus, the idea that planners are noble individuals with ethical commitments disregards the real rationalities of planning. He suggests that planners are not necessarily the good-willed agents of change; "instead, they are civil servants or servants to interest organizations and private companies that pay their salaries and expect them to promote their interest" (p. 386). Thus, planners may deceive the public and mask power games with technical reasoning to get what they or their bosses want.

Communicative theorists share with rational theorists the belief that planners are rational actors able to control emotions and unconscious aims that would lead them to want power. This view ignores the possibility that planners are overwhelmed by conflicting ideas or emotions and may say things they do not consciously mean (Baum 1996). The belief in planners' good nature leads communicative theorists to assume that planners engage in deception "under the

duress of socially constructed (and re-constructible) situations, rather than as a result of deep-seated personality traits or anxieties" (p. 371).

Critics call for theorists to consider both the possibility that planners are not always good-willed as well as the 'reality' of planning in which deception is part and parcel (Flyvbjerg 1996). Therefore, in addition to a psychological approach to why and how planners engage in deception (as provided by Baum 1996), Flyvbjerg argues that incentives for planners to deceive are strong. Realizing that planners are not noble individuals and, indeed, adopt discourses and activities that are morally and ethically dubious is the first step to becoming moral. But, to change planning, one must look at the state's networks of power, rather than appeal to communicative models or planners' good manners.

Yiftachel (1998) echoes Flyvbjerg's criticisms of both the rational and communicative theorists who take for granted the progressive nature of planning and, thus, fail to consider its ability to advance regressive goals (e.g. inequality and segregation). He argues that the same mechanisms that may be used to improve people's quality of life may also be used to repress and control minority groups.

The development of the modern state has given planning its legitimacy and power. But, according to Yiftachel (1998), because the modern state tends to advance the interests of social elites, planning must be considered not only as an arm of government that may or may not contribute to societal progress and reform, but also as a practice embedded in a structure that oppresses subordinate groups. Since the legitimacy of planning as a means of control is

based on rationality, it may be mobilized by the state as an ally in accomplishing its agenda. Through mechanisms of social control, planning enables the elite's domination and control of space, power, wealth, and identity. Resistance is likely to occur when control policies involve ethnic minorities. However, policies of control based on subtler or flexible societal boundaries (e.g. class, gender, locality) may instigate compliance, rather than resistance, as oppressed groups accept the "hegemonic capitalist, national, and patriarchal social order" (Yiftachel 1998, 401).

Critics also point out that the normative nature of communicative theory is problematic. Huxley and Yiftachel (2000, 337) argue that,

[. . .] without the necessary work of critique (identifying problems and the implications of prevailing norms and conditions) and analysis (explaining how the problems were created), the normative dimensions of theory on which prescriptions might be based (indicating what to do to bring about change) are in danger of becoming ineffective responses to immediate crises.

The debate between communicative theorists and their critics reveals epistemological and ontological divides that are hardly reconcilable. On the one hand, planning is described as a primarily communicative activity where good-willed planners are mediators of diverse interest parties who should come together to reach consensus so that planning may advance progressive goals. Theories on this side of the spectrum aim at informing planning practice by focusing on what planners should do.

On the other hand, a stronger emphasis is placed on planning as a political activity where planners, with agendas and interests of their own, work

within power structures producing both progressive and regressive outcomes. Theorists in this camp are more interested in understanding what planners do while deconstructing normative views and assumptions about what planning is or should be. They also highlight the need to address structural forces rather than relying on planners' agency.

In view of the deep theoretical divide, more recent work drawing from political theory and philosophy presents alternative paths. The work on agonism in planning (Bäcklund and Mäntysalo 2010; Bond 2011; Collins 2010; Gunder 2003; Hillier 2003; McClymont 2011; Pløger 2004) points in that direction. As an alternative to potentially unrealistic goals of consensus building in pluralist societies, theorists argue for practitioners and academics to embrace conflict. As a critical response to communicative theories, agonism argues that consensus is not desirable as it results from a provisional hegemony that entails some form of exclusion. In this sense, consensus emerges from a process that stabilizes power relations by potentially silencing dissenting voices (Mouffe 1999).

Drawing mostly from Mouffe (1999; 2000), who suggested that antagonism may be 'tamed' into agonism, this approach suggests that planners should consider conflicts as "disagreements between adversaries and not enemies" (Pløger 2004, 72). For instance, from a Lacanian perspective, Hillier (2003, 54) claims,

[. . .] we could rethink the notions of consensus-formation and agreement in a different way, incorporating both collaboration and competition, both striving to understand and engage with consensus-formation while at the same time respecting differences.

In planning practice, adopting agonism requires the mutual respect of stakeholders who may agree to disagree (Hillier 2002). To achieve the ideals of agonism, the planning process must support the encounter between different conceptions of reality. But, the institutional culture and structure in which planning practices are embedded may not be adapted or suited to agonism. For instance, as Bäcklund and Mäntysalo (2010) reveal in the case of Finland, planning and decision making processes often involve clear division of roles and duties. They also assume that planning proposals are objective and comprehensive, and must be either accepted or rejected.

In light of these debates, it is not surprising that divisions among scholars have characterized the landscape of planning scholarship. Theorists raise concern over the lack of communication among theorists (Yiftachel 1998) and claim that scholars must listen to each other. In a recent paper, Innes and Booher (2015, 196) summarized the current state of affairs:

Today planning theory seems to have become a set of dividing discourses. People talk past one another. Blame, criticism, and incivility often crowd out scholarly dialogue and inquiry (e.g. Bengs, 2005). Theorists belong to discourse communities which employ different languages and methods toward different ends. Students are often confused and frustrated, craving a way to make sense of the differences. While the brouhaha may have started as a war over turf and over which views will be dominant, the result today is that we, as theorists, have little ability to learn from our differences. The situation is conducive neither to constructive conversation nor to building richer and more robust theory. The most difficult obstacle to such conversation is that the critiques have framed a set of dichotomies among perspectives, making them appear incompatible.

Renewed work on communicative theories also attempts to overcome the theoretical divide. Innes and Booher's (2015) recent paper addresses some of the criticisms raised in the last two decades and provides a new lens through which collaborative theories can be re-interpreted. Similarly, Hoch's (2007) analysis of the critiques of communicative theories aims at "[r]ecasting [them] as pragmatic practical theory analyzing and justifying the consequences of collective purposeful action" in order to avoid "conversation-stopping epistemological claims" and to present "pathways to foster deliberation about useful political and social beliefs for planning" (279). Likewise, Sager (2013) revisits the communicative approach and suggests ways in which it could be restored into a plausible critical theory.

The responses of Innes and Booher (2015), Hoch (2007), Sager (2013), and others to their critics is a worthwhile critical analysis of their own (previous and current) theorization. This entails constructive self-reflection and dialogue, which is necessary for theory development (Sager 2013). But there is still a need to engage important issues not fully addressed. For example, there remains little room in current theories to explain regressive outcomes and planners' own agendas. It is also difficult to analyze planning practice in countries where political, socio-economic, and institutional arrangements vary considerably from the Western standard. Thus, alternative ontologies, epistemologies, and theorizing are still necessary to explain and inform planning practices within contexts the existing approaches might not contemplate (Sandercock 1998, Yiftachel 2006, Watson 2012).

The case I analyze here focus on planning practices carried out by actors who do not seek to overcome structural barriers or power imbalances. On the contrary, they might contribute to the reproduction of systems that perpetuate inequalities. This type of planning practice—regressive planning—must be theorized. We should seek mid-level theories that explain, for instance, how planning may advance regressive outcomes, how planners make sense of their work in the private sector, and how planning practice reproduces social structures. This argument is in line with Alexander’s (2015, 4) call for mid-level theories that help us understand planning in its diverse forms.

At the most concrete level of real-life planning, we again find diverse identifiable planning practices, defined as descriptions of what these planners do: identifiable sets of actions linked by common understandings (Schatzki, 2001: 46, 53). These contextuated planning practices can be the subject of study, research, and generalizations that form the building blocks of constructive theory. This will be at a mid-level of (something) planning theories, where “(something) planning” refers to a specific “epistemic” planning practice.

In this chapter I hope to add to the spectrum of planning theories by providing an analysis of practices in a context that is rarely contemplated in the literature: planning in the private sector in a developing country (Brazil). In doing so, I develop a theoretical understanding on a particular approach to planning practice that explains how private sector planners involved in work with potential regressive outcomes understand their role and the work they do. In the next section I explain this approach as ‘detached urbanism’ and I discuss how planners are able to narrow the lens through which they reflect upon their practice.

Detached Urbanism

This section discusses planning practices of private sector planners in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (MRC) working on a series of tasks related to the making of global suburbs. It uses a vignette as a starting point to reveal planners' contexts, worldviews, feelings, constraints, and motivations. The vignette is a composite of fragments from different interviews and observations. The analysis suggests that what planners do, how they do what they do, and how they make sense of what they do entails a great deal of political, professional, and valuative detachment.

Vignette: Practices of designing global suburbs

With her eyes directed at the computer screen and her right-hand over the mouse, Amanda draws a white line over the black background that takes most of the screen. Throughout the rest of the day, she will draw many more lines that will define the size, shape, and location of lots, streets, and green areas within a gated community to be built on the outskirts of Curitiba, Brazil. The lines determine how big the lot will be, whether it will be surrounded by a wall or a fence, whether it will open up to a cul-de-sac or a through street, and whether it will have views to the woods or the golf course. In order to create these drawings, Amanda must make a series of decisions that are bounded by two main criteria: 1) whatever she draws must be in compliance with existing legislation and 2) whatever she draws must generate an amount of sellable land that will ensure her client's profit. The latter criterion is more important than the former as it is the only one that is non-negotiable. "The number of lots and net sellable area is what [developers] want to know," Amanda explains.

The client is a developer in his fifties. He has acquired some land that he plans to subdivide into lots. He will add basic infrastructure, open streets, build recreational amenities, raise walls and fences, add a gate and guardhouse, and sell the lots to people looking to build a house in a safe community. The client's needs are simple: he wants drawings that represent the gated community he imagines. He will take the drawings to the regulatory agencies when applying for a construction license.

Before drawing any lines on the computer screen, Amanda met with her client, who explained the development should look like the neighboring one (a gated community that includes over one thousand single-family lots, a commercial center, golf course, and recreational amenities and was built by a well-known

urbanization firm in Brazil). He presented a hand draft showing where the access, main street, commercial areas, and residential lots should be placed. A few days later, Amanda visited the site and consulted the applicable legislation. She quickly realized that her client's vision, as expressed in his drawing, did not respect environmental constraints (the river spring, the topography, and the native vegetation); did not comply with existing regulations; and ultimately did not produce the "best design."

Over the following days, as Amanda drew and redrew lines on her computer, she read over and over the legislation, she looked for inspiration on the internet and in books at the office's small library, and she made several calls to the municipal and metropolitan agencies in order to clarify aspects of the legislation. She finally came up with a solution: she had a design that complied with the legislation and provided nice green areas for future residents, well-sized streets, and regular-shaped lots where it would be easy to build a house on. It was, in her opinion, a design of quality.

Confident that she had applied her best technical knowledge to create this design, Amanda met the developer to present her ideas. She was well dressed because, as a young female professional, she "care[s] about being well dressed, [...] it shows a little more capability." The developer looked at the drawing she presented and immediately noticed that she had changed the location of the entry gates. She explained that having the main access on the same road as the neighboring famous gated community was "more prestigious" and it would help to "sell lots faster." It also allowed for "better circulation within the development and better distribution of the lots." She emphasized that smaller and regular-shaped lots sell better. She also mentioned that residents would have a nice view of the woods when entering the community and the developer would save money because part of the access was already paved. The developer, however, insisted that the main entrance must face the side road because he owns more land in that direction and plans to launch additional developments in the future. He pulled out his pen and fixed Amanda's drawing while explaining to her where he wanted things to be. He did not consider the trees that would need to be cut nor did his drawing include the buffer of protected vegetation around the spring, as required by federal legislation. Amanda explained that some of what he had in mind was not allowed, but that she would work more on the drawing in order to find a compromise.

Amanda left feeling frustrated because, as she explained, this is one of the worst experiences "when the client does not respect, or mistreats us, or does not take our work seriously, or disregards our work." But, she also felt challenged to show she was capable of doing the work. She went back to her computer, changed the location of the entry gates and adjusted all the other lines accordingly. She did not like how the design based on her client's requests turned out. She printed the older and the newer versions and went around the office asking her colleagues to vote on their favorite design. All of the other planners, with no exception, voted

on the older version, i.e. the one Amanda also considered to be the “best solution.” She decided she would present the new version to the developer, but she would also try to “convince him” that her first proposed design was better. She was going to show him examples of developments with similar technical solutions and tell him about her colleagues’ votes. She joked that if he insisted on the “ugly design” she would ask to remove her office’s logo from the drawings.

In the following meeting with the developer, Amanda was able to convince him to accept her proposed location for the entry gate. But, he had some concerns over the amount of land she had identified as required preservation areas. He thought the buffer around the spring was too wide, so he pulled up his scale to make sure Amanda had considered only the minimum necessary. Amanda and the developer met several times over the following weeks since the developer requested some adjustments. They also talked frequently over the phone when the developer had questions about the legislation, wanted to know when she would be ready to show him her work, and had other requests he wanted her to address. His proposed modifications were always backed by arguments about what would “sell better.” He also always pushed for more developable land and was skeptical of counterarguments that mentioned existing regulation – to which he occasionally replied, “don’t worry too much about that.” At some point in the process he hired an environmental consultant who agreed there were no springs on the site. “Maybe the map from the metropolitan agency (which showed the spring) was wrong, or maybe there was a spring at some point, but it has dried up” – Amanda explained. The developer asked her to adjust the drawings accordingly, eliminating the spring, the buffer area, and increasing the number of lots.

Finally, Amanda had a “product” she considered good because, as she noted: it “unite[d] the developer’s desires [...] and a concept that has some urbanistic quality - where we see the design looks good – and with all that [...] also reduced the cost for the developer and increased his profit – which is the final objective – and [was] within the city’s [legal] parameters.” It also resulted in a “product” that she believes will “positively influence the city” as it will contribute to “orderly growth.”

The vignette describes typical tasks performed by Amanda, an ‘urbanist’ working at a private firm. She spends a good amount of time drawing on the computer, studying legislation, meeting with clients, and thinking about solutions to address clients’ needs. The vignette also illustrates some of the feelings these professionals have in the process of developing solutions and dealing with

clients. There is some excitement during the creation process. There is some confidence when one is able to draw from knowledge and experience to develop a solution. There is some frustration when proposed solutions are met with skepticism or are simply rejected by clients. The vignette also exposes some of the resources at planners' disposal: the computer, maps, photographs, books, websites, legislation, contact with clients and regulatory agencies, expert knowledge, and communication with colleagues.

The analysis of what Amanda and her colleagues do on a daily basis, who they talk to, how they do their work, and how they talk about their work, urban planning, and the city reveal that these professionals and their practice do not fit the description of traditional (public sector) planners often portrayed in the literature. Rather than politically engaged actors striving to overcome power structures and institutional constraints to achieve justice, sustainability, equality, fairness, or other progressive goals, the planners I observed take great pride in the spaces they create within walls for the upper-middle class. Their pride is revealed when they show me illustrations and photos of the developments they worked on: "this one is really nice, it has this nice central square with a playground, there are some swimming pools here, and from here you can see the lake," says one planner pointing to a colored plan hung on the wall.

As it will be discussed in more detail, the concern of these professionals is much more spatially and temporally localized than implied by terms such as justice and sustainability. Their work involves more thought about their clients (developers) and the people who will inhabit the spaces they create than

reflections about the city and the population as a whole. Their judgment of “good” and “bad” is rooted in the limited scope through which they understand their practice.

I call the way in which these planners understand their practice as detached urbanism and I explain it in three dimensions of detachment (Figure 01). ‘Political detachment’ means that planners portray their work as technical service and fail to see the connection between what they do and the social structures that shape and are sustained by their practices. ‘Professional detachment’ refers to the planners’ ability to focus on the task at hand and disconnect it from processes preceding or following their intervention. Finally, ‘valuative detachment’ indicates that planners often put aside professional and personal values to adopt market values important to their clients. The following sections describe each dimension in more detail.

Table 7.1: Detached urbanism

DEFINITION OF DETACHED URBANISM
<p>Deatched urbanism is an approach to planning practice that explains how planners understand their role and the work they do. It entails three dimensions of detachment as explained below.</p>
DIMENSIONS OF DETACHED URBANISM
POLITICAL DETACHMENT
<p>Planners describe their practice as technical service disconnected from larger social structures</p> <p><i>"Overall, [I work on] projects for subdivisions, gated communities, planned neighborhoods, assistance with marketing material, production of graphic material for [residents] who will acquire a lot in a gated community." (Interview 14003)</i></p>
PROFESSIONAL DETACHMENT
<p>Planners distance themselves both from decision-making processes that precede, legitimize, and enable their practice and from the outcomes of their practice</p> <p><i>"[O]ur work is already at a later phase... where that one developer has that one parcel and wants us to produce a design for that area. [...] We do not participate in the [previous] discussion of what should be proposed [for the area].". (Interview 14002)</i></p>
VALUATIVE DETACHMENT
<p>Planners put aside professional and personal values to adopt market values</p> <p><i>"Unfortunately, in the current market, the client is always right, so occasionally we must give up some of the concepts that are principles of the office, but we end up having to adjust a little to the desire of the client as well." (Interview 14003)</i></p>
FEATURES ENABLING DETACHED URBANISM
<p>Use of technology Focus on representation Work fragmentation Presence of imaginary users Use of legislation as a higher objective voice Relationship with clients Focus on client's satisfaction</p>

Source: Author

Political Detachment

The lines that Amanda, the planner presented in the vignette, draws on her computer will become part of people's lives. They will establish how much

backyard residents will have, how large their houses can be, through which streets they will arrive home, and what they will see from their windows. The combination of lines that constitute the entire gated development will delineate a new space in the city. The lines will become real as they are turned into fences, walls, gates, concrete, grass, bricks, and bushes. They will define areas with specific uses and they will determine who has or has not access to them.

Seen this way, the mechanical gesture that Amanda repeats throughout the day, with the help of her computer, is a political gesture. It allocates resources (e.g. access, views, greenery, space) and value (e.g. monetary cost, spatial quality). It determines which resources are physically and visually accessible to the larger population. Planners like Amanda, however, see themselves as technical experts.

The emphasis on the technical aspects of their practice is revealed when planners are asked to explain what they do. They describe their work as a series of tasks that result in the creation of “market products” for their clients.

I participate in the creation of urban projects: [. . .] gated communities, subdivisions, planned neighborhoods, these are the products we develop. Within urban projects, there are several phases all undertaken here in the office: from meeting with the client, sometimes even helping to define the product with the client (which is often not the case), definition of the project's concept, development of urban and preliminary plans, development of working drawings, getting permits from the city and the environmental agencies, and creation of products for marketing material. (Interview 14001)

Overall, [I work on] projects for subdivisions, gated communities, planned neighborhoods, assistance with marketing material, production of graphic material for [residents] who will acquire a lot in a gated community. (Interview 14003)

As illustrated in these quotations, planners describe their practices in technical and neutral terms. They do not talk about conflicting interests, the public good, or issues of equality, justice, and democracy. Politics, power, negotiations, and influences are absent from these planners' work description.

While observing their work on a daily basis, it is tempting to come to the conclusion that what they do is 'just' urban design and there is nothing more to it. However, when visiting some of the developments these planners design, a new perspective on there is revealed. What they do in their office, in front of the computer screen, becomes a space that materializes existing power dynamics and ideologies. As material 'things' that are seen, lived, and talked about, these spaces express meanings and reproduce the dominant discourses about urban development and social relations that enabled their existence in the first place.

Still, planners often deny, ignore, or are unable to detect the connections between what they do and the larger structural context characterized by power imbalances, social inequality, and neoliberalism. This disinterest in, or inability to, make connections with larger social structures characterizes a detachment from the politics of their work as they describe their job as technical service.

Professional Detachment

Amanda's work does not reflect what we think of as traditional planning. Planners like Amanda do not make plans that will dictate the future of the city or change urban form, services, or infrastructure at a large scale. They do not influence the allocation of budget and they do not participate in discussions with

community members, lawmakers, politicians, or groups of people with diverse interests. What these planners do, however, is to incrementally shape the city, one development at a time.

As these professionals focus on each project, they hope to address “their client’s needs.” In some cases, clients (like the developer in the vignette above) need planners to produce the design for a community he has in mind. The developer has ideas about what the project should look like in terms of uses, lot sizes, and amenities. He also has a good estimate of who the potential buyers are, what they value, and how much he will price the lots. The planner is expected to use his professional knowledge in a somewhat limited manner to realize the developer’s ideas.

In other cases, planners’ work is even more focused on particular tasks related to the making of global suburbs. For example, some of the work conducted in the office I observed involved: fixing the design made by another professionals; making urban design, water/sewage systems, landscaping, architectural, and street plans produced by different professionals compatible; producing illustrations for marketing material; calculating, based on the legislation, the amount of developable land; and listing the dimensions and locations of lots within a community to be registered at the real estate notary. Each of these tasks is important in the making of global suburbs, but they are limited in scope. Each one of them is only one step in a larger process.

By focusing on these tasks, the planner has no real connection to what came before and what will come after their own intervention. For example, when

the developer asks for illustrations, a series of steps and decision-making have already happened, e.g. someone had the idea of creating a global suburb, someone financed it, someone designed it, and someone approved it. Similarly, after the planner conducts a preliminary study, she does not always get to know whether the developer will pursue the project because he may decide to hire other professionals to move the project forward. Referring to whether a built project was successful in the real estate market, a planner says, “[s]ometimes we don’t even know the outcome [of the project]. We get to know it when [the developers] tell us how the sales went (Interview 14002).

The narrowness of the participation of private sector planners in the making of global suburbs is important because it gives them a sense of distance from both the institutional structures that enable and legitimize exclusionary developments (such as the ones discussed on Chapter 6) as well as the potential outcomes of segregation and exclusion. The focus on the tasks at hand in a defined time and space enables the detachment from previous processes and future outcomes related to their work. The narrow scope and detachment are justified by a “It’s not my job” mentality.

For example, in the quotation below, the planner explains that her job focuses on “that one developer” and “that one parcel.” She states that she does not participate in the previous process that determined what should happen in that area. In this sense, she acknowledges that she did not participate, for instance, in the creation of land use regulations and zoning that enable gated

communities. Nor did she come up with the idea that a global suburb should be built.

[O]ur work is already at a later phase... where that one developer has that one parcel and wants us to produce a design for that area. [. . .] We do not participate in the [previous] discussion of what should be proposed [for the area]. (Interview 14002)

Nevertheless, the exclusionary enclaves developed in private firms impact the local and metropolitan regions. They influence not only the lives of future residents but also the relationships they will develop with often poorer and irregular surrounding communities. These developments also affect the local infrastructure, the city's revenue, and natural environment. They may generate social impacts resulting from the reproduction of inequality and spatial segregation. To some extent, planners seem to acknowledge these connections.

The interference [in the city] is inevitable. It is something that will be executed onto the existing urban fabric and it is going to make a difference in the urban context. (Interview 14001)

The impacts of these developments are not often accounted for. Observing these planners' daily practices of designing, meeting with clients, and studying the legislation, I noticed that the focus on particular projects, tasks, clients, and parcels is combined with a lack of discussion and reflection about urban planning and the city as a whole. Thinking about the city is not their job; the city is not their client. This planner makes the point clear:

We try to do what is best for the city, but it is not our client. Even though we know that there will be impacts, we must address the needs of whoever hired us. That is why I think it is important to

have good legislation; because a good legislation helps you to not turn your back to the city. (Interview 14001)

These professionals' focus on the technical and immediate tasks they must perform to satisfy a client narrows the lens through which they reflect upon their practice and shifts their concern from broader public interests (because this is someone else's job) to what is important for that developer in that space and time.

Valuative Detachment

At some level, the planners I observed and interviewed identify a conflict between what their professional and personal values and what they do for their clients. For instance, although planners are aware of the potential negative impacts of gated communities, their job still revolves around planning and designing them. Planners point to negative impacts in terms of mobility, privatization, and security:

If it is used indiscriminately, it is a problem because it will restrict mobility, it will privatize the city. (Interview 13009)

The gated community might help [to deal with the problem of security] at the individual level [. . .] but there is that story of turning inwards and maybe leaving the city even more closed. (Interview 14002)

Another planner explains that regulations limiting the height and amount of walls around developments are important because entirely walled developments are "scary:"

The city has a standard, they say the maximum height is 2.2 meters [. . .] we work with the maximum [. . .] Each municipality has their regulation, which is great. There are some developments [. . .] where the sides are entirely walled, it is scary. (Interview 11008)

Planners also identify unethical behavior on the part of their clients. It is common for developers to hide or simply eliminate environmental features from maps in order to be granted construction licenses: “He brought a map that did not show the spring. We went to the site and we saw there was a spring, he tried to deny it was a spring” (Observations 1309). Developers might also change the site itself. In some cases trees that get on the way of the project design disappear: “[The developers] usually say there was a fire” (Observations 1309). In other cases, developers break ground before receiving permits: “He already opened up the road, [. . .] he knows it will be approved because he is friends with politicians” (Observations 1315).

In these cases, planners are outside witnesses with no involvement in what their clients do to get permits or zoning changes. In some instances, however, planners might become accomplices when complying with their clients’ requests.

They asked us to edit the dimensions shown in the drawing. They want us to say the undevelopable buffer has 20 meters [as required by Federal law] instead of [the real dimension of] 18.5 meters. They also asked us to not show dimensions where it is not completely necessary. They said it is not going to be a problem with the [regulatory agency] because they have a card up their sleeve; probably they can pay someone at the city hall. (Observations 1312)

In addition to acknowledging the potential negative impacts of the spaces they create and the unethical behavior of their clients, planners also hold

personal or professional views that are in conflict with their clients' opinions or interests. For example, during an informal conversation, a planner confessed that sometimes she refrains from engaging in conversation with clients she knows have very different worldviews. When one of her clients "talks about poor people" she simply "take[s] a deep breath" because even though she does not agree with him, "he is a client" and she "respects his opinions."

The following quotations illustrate conflicting ideas and interests between planners and their clients:

I believe I am quite flexible when dealing [with clients], but there are some things that annoy me. . . the persistence on doing wrong things or not valuing our work. (Interview 14001)

When we work with the private sector, the goal is always the highest profit and this does not always result in the best design. We end up trying to adjust the design so that it is a design of quality and a better project while trying to address as much as possible this client's need, but it is not always possible. Sometimes, the client is insistent. Unfortunately, in the current market, the client is always right, so occasionally we must give up some of the concepts that are principles of the office, but we end up having to adjust a little to the desire of the client as well.

[. . .]

Even though we all have diplomas, master degrees, graduate studies, and everyone is a qualified professional, we still have some difficulty when we need arguments for these clients. There is still a barrier.

[. . .]

[Our design is] organic, curvilinear, respecting the characteristics of the terrain, trying to have the least impact; we try to produce spaces with higher quality, green areas, so that they are a more pleasant environment, and this is precisely the moment we butt heads with the clients because we want to produce these more pleasant spaces, with more green areas, with plazas, and this impacts, obviously, the final net sellable area. (Interview 14003)

It is notable a sense of resignation when a planner says, “[u]nfortunately, in the current market, the client is always right.” This acknowledgement of the condition in which some of their professional values must be put aside does not stop these planners from doing their jobs and working with developers. Instead, these professionals become detached from the values generally associated with the planning profession and adopt their clients’ values. Design quality, respect for environmental conditions, and legal compliance are sometimes compromised as market values prevail.

Naturalized neoliberalism, which helps to explain the regulatory process discussed in Chapter 5, is also manifested in how the private sector planners understand the conditions of their work. For instance, some planners share with their clients the belief that the public sector is unable to perform its duties and the private market must step in. As discussed in Chapter 6, global suburbs are legitimized through the widespread acceptance of discourses that favor the private sector as they emphasize that: a) the public sector is unable to provide security, therefore the population seeks protection in gated communities; and b) the public sector is unable to monitor environmentally protected areas, therefore they should be privatized.

Additionally, planners express a critical view of the work of regulatory agencies and tend to echo their clients’ complaints that agencies have excessive requirements and do not communicate with one another, and that the approval process is too long, public employees are too slow and not helpful, and information is often unclear.

We went to the [planning department of a town over 380 kilometers away] to meet with a specific person. We had an appointment; the person did not see us. We were sitting on this table and she was right there, doing nothing. We asked her to come to the table, she sent the girl who had started to work there two months earlier. The poor girl did not know anything. [. . .] At some point I said 'look, I am here working for my client; I am not here for the city's benefit. We are being nice to do the best for the city. We are taking the time to come here to see what you want, we are donating more [land] than the required [by legislation].' Then, the client who was next to me said 'yes, now we are going to donate the minimum required.' So, you see, the city loses as well. (Interview 14001)

The agencies don't communicate, then the client is left with his parcel risking being squatted – which is much worse, right – because there is no conversation, an agreement, a solution. (Interview 11008)

In this context, planners express a favorable view of market influence in the planning, regulating, and governing of the city. Like the public sector planners in Chapter 5, they often emphasize the need for the public sector to work with developers for mutual benefit. And, they do not question the presence of developers and the absence of community members on the negotiation table.

Sometimes [the developers] want to change the zoning. There is an agreement with the city, or the city has an interest in changing zoning. [. . .] We study the [. . .] legislation, but sometimes the client says 'no, I want to present a different proposal, different than what the zoning law allows.' [...] Sometimes it is a market trend. [. . .] The market required a smaller lot size. (Interview 11008)

Interestingly, besides adopting market values, planners perceive global suburbs as capable of fulfilling certain planning values. For example, they claim that global suburbs bring some order to an otherwise uncontrolled process of urbanization in the peripheries, where the public sector struggles to contain the

proliferation of squatter settlements. Thus, planners emphasize “controlled urban growth” as a positive outcome of the developments they design.

I prefer that cities grow in a more organized fashion, and with more quality, especially in these peripheral regions where we develop these projects. I think it is much more a positive thing than a negative one. (Interview 14003)

The work of the office, I think, has a positive impact because when you are able to . . . not interfere in a negative way, but organize the growth and try to do the best for the city, for the developer, and for whoever will live there. (Interview 14001)

Detaching themselves from a critical reflection on their practices, planners reproduce the neoliberal discourse of their clients and position themselves as simply providing technical solutions to clients who are themselves not against the public interest, but who “are the public too.” (Interview 14001). They highlight that the making of global suburbs, which involves negotiations with the public sector, donation of land to the city, and infrastructure improvements, brings positive outcomes to cities made chaotic by an inefficient and incapable public sector.

Naturalized neoliberalism leads planners to uncritically (and perhaps unconsciously) reproduce discourses that favor the private sector over larger public interests. Planners reinforce a critical view of the public sector – deeming it inefficient and incapable (see quotations on page 213). Like their clients, planners distrust the regulatory agencies and are skeptical of the public sector’s ability to meet the needs of the city and its population. As a private sector planner put it, “public sector planners see themselves working for the government, not for the city” (Interview 14001). Ultimately, private sector planners defend their clients

and their clients' interests not just because they want to keep their jobs, but also because they agree with their clients' rationalization.

To summarize my argument, the approach to planning practice I observed at the private office in the MRC – which I refer to as detached urbanism – entails political detachment (i.e. planners see their practice as technical service disconnected from larger social structures), professional detachment (i.e. planners distance themselves both from decision-making processes that precede, legitimize, and enable their practice and from the outcomes of their practice); and values detachment (i.e. putting aside professional and personal values to adopt their client's market values). Detached urbanism is, therefore, used to explain the way in which the planners I observed make sense of their work, i.e. how they understand their role and engage with their work.

Features Enabling Detached Urbanism

Several features of the planning practice in the private sector enable planners to enact detached urbanism. These features are “resources in use” (Feldman and Quick 2009) that enable planners to cultivate detachment. This means that rather than fixed properties, the features of the planning process identified in the interviews and observations are put into use in relation to a particular framework. These features have the potential to be resourced to energize multiple frameworks. But here I focus on features as resources that are put into use (accidentally or unconsciously) to enable planners to cultivate detachment.

Use of technology: A substantial amount of planners' work is accomplished using the computer. From the initial steps in the planning and design processes, planners gather a great amount of information without the need to visit the site or talk to people. Planners rely on photographs, aerial images, and maps provided by developers or retrieved online to have a good understanding of the location, size, shape and features of the site they are working on. Most of the information is reliable, but it is removed from the larger context. Planners are able to zoom in and collect information that is most pertinent to the site and immediate surroundings. Anything planners consider unimportant and/or distant is cropped out.

During the design process, the computer screen filters planners' interaction with the site. Native vegetation appears as amoeba-shaped blobs; rivers, streets, and walls are color-coded lines. There are, of course, no people, no noises, no smells. For instance, when one of the planners visited the launching of a global suburb she helped design, she was surprised by the smell of cow manure from the adjacent farm. She joked that the neighbor farmer was perhaps unhappy with the development and purposefully produced the bad smell at the launching day as a form of protest (Observations 1314).

On the computer screen, there is limited context and no connections beyond the immediate surroundings of the site. The object of the planner's work is a piece of land she gets to know, work on, and transform through the computer. The reality represented on the screen is a filtered and selective one.

Focus on representation: Planning is largely about representation. Current conditions and ideas for the future are represented in documents and plans through text, maps, sketches, models, graphs, and illustrations. Thus, for the most part, planners work on understanding and representing present and future 'realities.' Representation is always selective since it has specific purposes, e.g. to show policy makers why zoning should be changed, to provide a vision for the city, to offer the community different transportation scenarios, to explain to developers what areas he may develop and which ones are protected, to illustrate how the view from the street will look like, and to allow potential residents to visualize a new lifestyle.

When you arrive with an illustrative image [of the project] there is better acceptance by potential buyers. . . and even in the city department. . . it is very simplified drawing [. . .] not necessarily representing the reality, but when the developer brings it to the meetings, it helps. (Interview 14002)

The focus on representation seems to be particularly strong in Brazil, where urban planners are educated in schools of Architecture and Urbanism and complete the same coursework as architects. Urban planners' professional title as 'architect and urbanist' means, in practice, that they receive substantial training in areas related to design aesthetics and considerable less focus on socio-economic, political, legal, and policy topics.

Work fragmentation: The process of creating spaces involves a variety of actors and a series of steps. Developers are the central actors overseeing the entire process. Planners, on the other hand, are responsible for only a few of the steps and are often alienated from the rest of the process. For example,

marketing firms conduct market studies, developers and realtors define pricing and marketing strategies, environmental consultants create impact studies, public officials issue permits, and construction companies build the developments. Even tasks that are performed by planners are often given to different planning offices. For instance, developers may hire a firm to complete feasibility studies, another one to create the design, another one to develop technical drawings, and another one to produce illustrations for marketing material.

The fragmentation of work across planning offices and other professionals means that the planner has little attachment both to the ideas that generated the project in the first place and to the final product. Planners are often unaware of the fate of their work, i.e. whether the developer decided to pursue the project, whether it was granted a permit, and whether it was built. In many cases, planners are not certain that projects were executed according to their plans and design or whether they suffered modifications during the approval or construction phases. Fragmentation enables planners to downplay the implications of their work because their participation in the entire process is limited.

Imaginary users: When city planners hold public hearings to discuss the community's needs, ideas, and feedback on proposed plans, they meet people who will be affected by the spaces and/or infrastructure they propose. City planners have these people in mind when they create plans and designs. But planners who work on new private communities, such as global suburbs, do not interact with future users. People they have not met, have not heard from, and

know very little about will inhabit the spaces they create. The potential resident is an imaginary user from a homogenous group, usually thought of in terms of family size and income, e.g. middle-class families of two adults and two children.

We end up knowing the client's profile by the lot size. So, if they are smaller lots, we always do a study of the surroundings: [if] it is a middle or lower-middle class region, then you may imagine the profile of the person. [If] it is lower-middle class, it is a family, normally [with] two or three children. (Interview 14003)

Use of legislation: Planners utilize local, state, and federal legislation in a variety of ways. First, legislation is used as parameters that dictate design possibilities. Planners consult the applicable legislation to understand what they can and cannot do. Second, legislation is used as the authority behind design choices. Thus, planners cite legislation when justifying their design. These two functions (as parameters and justification) give legislation the status of a higher objective voice. Planners are able to explain that their proposed plan or design is not based on personal or professional preferences or values but on legislative requirements.

Paradoxically, legislation is also used to explain unethical behavior or bad design. In this case, planners explain that lack of regulations or ambiguous legislation produce less than ideal processes and products. This means that planners struggle to impose their technical opinion when they are not supported by legislation. They are often unable to convince developers and ultimately produce a plan or design they do not fully agree with because they cannot simply say "it is not allowed." The issue here is that planners become mere translators of legislation and mediators between what the developer wants to do and what is

allowed by the applicable legislation. Planners become detached from the designs they create.

Relationship with clients: Planners in private firms, such as the one I observed in Brazil, work for developers who own or plan to acquire land and build gated communities. In the office where I conducted observations, developers are the people with whom planners have the most contact on a daily basis. They had meetings with them several times a week, exchanged emails several times a day, and talked over the phone regularly. During these exchanges, as planners and developers discuss projects, planners learn a great deal about the viewpoints of developers.

The relationship with developers enables planners to appreciate their goals and the difficulties that regulatory agencies pose upon them. They share the developers' dissatisfaction with regulatory agencies and mistrust in the public sector. As developers share their understanding of how the real estate market works, planners become familiar with new concepts. Planners often hear the concerns of developers over the net sellable area, even though they might not understand the calculations that developers use to come up with a number that determines project feasibility.

The relationship with developers contributes to planners' consideration of market forces in the planning and design processes. Besides using their technical knowledge, planners apply what they learn from clients to their work. The lessons learned generally revolve around what sells better and/or faster, what design options reduce implementation costs, what strategies might expedite

the approval process, and what potential buyers look for. Over time, planners become comfortable utilizing their more informed view of the market as arguments when dealing with clients.

In some instances, planners adopt the language of developers when focusing on higher profits as an argument to support their design choices. For example, when Amanda (the planner earlier described in the vignette) tries to convince the developer of her choice of location for the community's entry gates, she talks about reducing the cost of paving the road, creating regular-shaped lots that sell faster, and capitalizing on the prestige of the neighboring development.

Planners acknowledge that their understanding of the "developer's view" was acquired in working with developers. Their professional training focused, instead, on planning for public interests.

What we do today, I consider to be very different from the urban design we learned in college; especially because urban design in college was a lot more focused on public interests, like the revitalization of a street [downtown]. We worked once on a subdivision, but it was an open subdivision. So, in college we don't have this view, which is the developer's view. (Interview 14001)

Client satisfaction: Planners want to do a good job. They strive for what they believe are the best solutions. In a context where developers are the planners' clients, (i.e. whom they work for) a good job is one that results in the clients' satisfaction. The planner quoted below describes a job well done:

You evaluate by the client's satisfaction. You get this feedback: 'look, I really liked it.' Not always what the client wants is what you would like to have done, but generally we try to unite these two things the best way possible. But, the feedback, when you are working directly with the client, exists. (Interview 14003)

Given that the main criteria developers use to measure the quality of planners' work is the likelihood that the project will generate profit, planners must strive to increase net sellable area and the attractiveness of the development while reducing the amount of undevelopable land, lot sizes, and costs. These requirements become the norm as they are incorporated into the planners' thought process.

The features discussed above enable planners to cultivate detachment. In other words, use of technology, focus on representation, work fragmentation, the presence of imaginary users, the use of legislation as a higher objective voice, the relationship with clients, and the focus on client satisfaction detach planners from the realities in which the spaces they create are embedded. Detachment reduces the likelihood that planners will connect their practices to larger social structures, and to preceding processes and future outcomes (including the potential negative impacts of the spaces they create). A detached planner is able to put aside his/her personal and professional values to pursue values that are important for their clients. These planners are less invested in issues of social justice, sustainability, equality, and fairness than the literature on planning practice suggests.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an examination of planning in the private sector in Brazil, a context largely missing from planning literature. While theorists have acknowledged the increasing role of the private sector in what gets done in cities,

little attention has been directed to practitioners in this sector. The professionals I interviewed and observed conduct several tasks related to the making of global suburbs, including feasibility studies, preliminary plans, master plans, urban design, construction drawings, and illustrations.

The analysis reveals that these planners see their roles and engage with their work differently than portrayed in the literature. Rather than striving to advance progressive goals and address public interests, these professionals work in specific sites to fulfill the goals of their clients. It is important, however, to note that despite their narrow spatial and temporal focus, the work of these planners have lasting impacts in the city as global suburbs are implemented in the existing urban fabric (often in areas zoned for preservation and adjacent to low-income communities). The proliferation of these developments help to shape the city and the interactions among spaces and between people (as discussed in Chapter 8).

What I call 'detached urbanism' is an approach to planning that helps explain how these private sector planners engage in their daily practices of making global suburbs. It entails a) a sense of disconnection between the practices of these planners and larger social structures (political detachment); b) an ability to narrowly focus on particular sites, developers, and tasks with no involvement or concern for processes that precede or follow their interventions (professional detachment); and c) willingness to put aside personal and professional values to adopt market values (valuative detachment).

A series of features of planning practice enable planners to engage in detached urbanism. The use of technology, focus on representation, work fragmentation, the presence of imaginary users, the use of legislation as a higher objective voice, the relationship with clients, and the focus on client satisfaction create a context in which it is possible for planners to cultivate the three dimensions of detachment.

These findings suggest theorists should reconsider taken-for-granted assumptions about planning practice. Larger social issues such as equity and justice, which theorists like to think are part of planners' understanding of their work, might be largely absent from their practices, particularly in the private sector. Urban and environmental issues, which theories often place at the center of planning practice, are regularly put aside as market issues take the forefront. This is especially important as increasing privatization of planning is observed around the world.

This chapter calls attention to the need for including diversity in planning theory through the study of varied contexts and approaches of planning practice. I agree with Innes and Booher (2015) that theorists "employ different languages and methods toward different ends." But I question the claim that this is necessarily "conducive neither to constructive conversation nor to building richer and more robust theory." On the contrary, while theorists must be able to learn from each other's differences, they might travel different (and potentially irreconcilable) paths. What I propose is that rather than thinking about building bridges (which I find difficult given the ontological and epistemological

differences), theorists might visualize diverse planning theories as parallel paths. These theories have different origins and lead to different places. Rather than connecting or agreeing with each other, they connect with specific contexts, challenges, and worldviews. In their own right, they inform diverse planning practices and contribute to a larger and more diversified theoretical body. So, rather than “richer and stronger theory” we should seek deeper and diversified *theories*.

Moving toward parallel mid-level theories that are empirically grounded and that account for the different forms of planning practice in different contexts contributes to closing the gap between theory and practice. In a recent essay, Alexander (2015, 9) questioned grand theories of planning and stressed the importance of “mid-level theories for particular planning practices such as spatial planning.” He says:

Such mid-level theories can be based on realistic empirical analysis and case studies of contextuated planning practices, relate to epistemology that fits the relevant epistemic practice, and develop contingent prescriptions for good practice usable in that context.

In a way, what I suggest is to adopt agonism in planning theorizing and scholarly debate. While agonistic planning theories call for planning practitioners to embrace conflict (rather than seeking unrealistic consensus) and consider diverse interest groups as adversaries instead of enemies, I assert here that planning scholarship might benefit from the same approach. Theory development may benefit from scholars who choose to respectfully agree to disagree instead of attempting to silence dissenting ways of understanding reality.

Communicative theories have made and continue to make important contributions, particularly reducing the gap between theorists and practitioners through the use of practice stories, highlighting planners' agency, proposing goals for planners to strive for, and identifying courses of action for well intentioned planners facing structural constraints. Nonetheless, these theories do not explain planning practices in deeply divided and unequal societies where political, economic, cultural, and institutional deficiencies pose unique challenges to planners.

This chapter provides some theoretical insights into the practices of planners with concerns, worldviews, values, and personal interests that differ from those of the noble and engaged planner often depicted in the planning literature. The findings discussed here raise critical questions about both processes and outcomes in planning practice as well as the role of planning theories. What kind of cities does 'detached urbanism' produce? And, assuming the importance of incorporating notions of equity and justice into planning practice, how may theories contribute to reflexive practices, particularly in the private sector?

CHAPTER 8: TERRITORIAL EXCLUSION AND SYMBOLIC INCLUSION

Os opressores, falsamente generosos, têm necessidade, para que a sua “generosidade” continue tendo oportunidade de realizar-se, da permanência da injustiça

In order to have the continued opportunity to express their "generosity," the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well.

(Paulo Freire, 1987, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*)

When global suburbs arrive at the periphery of Brazilian cities, they encounter already existing neighboring communities that concentrate the very urban problems the developments' walls and gates hope to keep out. Historically, the peripheries, particularly environmentally protected areas, have housed the poorest population. These areas had been abandoned both by the real estate market, given their low exchange value, and by the government, given their inability to monitor and care for protected areas. For many decades, the poor who could afford to live in central cities have claimed these marginal lands. Some peripheral communities are regular subdivisions, others are social housing, and others are irregular settlements, *favelas*, where makeshift shacks proliferate.

Traditional peripheral communities, particularly irregular settlements, concentrate the evils from which the transnational elite seeks to escape. Not only are they areas of concentrated poverty and unsanitary living conditions, they are also often considered a breeding ground for criminals. The residents of these

poor communities are the very people global suburbs' residents fear. The choice of building affluent communities in the peripheries, sometimes adjacent to irregular settlements, seems paradoxical. But, in the MRC, affluent communities and low-income neighborhoods coexist peacefully. In this context, we must ask: How is the proximity between favelas and global suburbs explained? How do these two worlds interact? How do affluent newcomers and the traditional poor population perceive each other?

It is beyond the scope of this research to fully answer all these questions. Instead, it focuses on the relationship between global suburbs and low-income neighborhoods as a lens through which we may unpack their peaceful coexistence. I propose that peace between global suburbs and favelas emerge from a strategic balance between *territorial practices of exclusion* and *symbolic practices of inclusion*. The former refers to practices of territoriality within global suburbs that enforce separations and control interactions, thus making the spatial proximity to poor communities acceptable. It also refers to practices outside global suburbs that change the demographic makeup of neighboring communities and displace the poorest and most vulnerable groups.

Symbolic practices of inclusion, on the other hand, focus on employment within global suburbs as well as interventions by global suburbs on existing communities. While territorial exclusion explains how social "places" are maintained (despite physical proximity), symbolic inclusion explains the poor's acceptance of their "place."

Territorial Practices of Exclusion

The notion of territoriality as it relates to political nationalist dynamics has been largely used to explain the meaning of national boundaries and the power structures they reinforce. We recognize the sovereignty of states over their territories and we have created formal processes through which people and commodities enter or exit national territories. In addition, territoriality in nationalistic terms affects access to resources and political dominance. Wars over the control of land and demarcation of territorial boundaries, such as the Israeli-Palestinian case, illustrate this functionalist notion of territoriality which comprises "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area" (Sacks 1986, 19).

The functionalist view, as Delaney (2005) points out, disregards a larger range of functions territoriality may perform and the various forms it may take. As he explains, "what makes an enclosed space a territory is, first, that it signifies, and, second, that the meaning it carries or conveys refers to or implicate social power" (p. 17). In this sense, territoriality is the process by which meaning is expressed and power is manifested in the material world, i.e. in the territory as a concrete "thing."

Territoriality in the context of metropolitan inequality, for example, must assume that territories are socially created mechanisms that communicate a variety of meanings while reproducing or reinforcing power relations at the local level. Not only may territories be created in order to provide political control and

access over resources, but they may also exclude, divide, isolate, and disempower others. They may constitute symbols of status differentiation and contribute to the creation of group identities.

Examples of the various functions of territoriality at the metropolitan scale that originate from and lead to inequality are numerous. For instance, in the United States, the practice of gerrymandering, in which electoral district boundaries are drawn to ensure majority voters of a certain demographic group, illustrate the use of territoriality to ensure political control at the local level. Euclidean zoning, which may determine minimum lot sizes and exclude uses such as social housing, establishes territories that are unaffordable to certain social groups. As a consequence, by determining who may live where, zoning may promote unequal access to resources such as clean air, parks, schools, and transportation (Pendall 2000).

Another example of territoriality at the metropolitan level is the use of devices to monitor and control access to gated communities and office buildings. These devices divide those who belong and those who do not, and define different status for insiders and outsiders. For instance, residents of the largest gated community in Buenos Aires, Nordelta, identify themselves as "Nordelteños, rather than Porteños - a term used to identify residents of Buenos Aires, illustrating the creation of a micro-identity related to one's condition as a resident of a defined territory within the metropolitan area (Janoschka and Borsdorf 2006).

Territoriality at the metropolitan level may also serve capitalist interests. Mechanisms of control such as surveillance and strict regulations that exclude

undesirable uses and users contribute to the creation of prime areas. Well-delineated and controlled spaces are perceived as safe for people and for investment since the unpredictability typical of uncontrolled and unregulated urban areas is eliminated. For instance, urban revitalization projects that transform marginal areas into prime areas often employ a series of design, management, land use, and surveillance techniques to control (and even eliminate) the poor and homeless while attracting upper class residents, businesses, and tourists (Zanotto 2012).

In the next two sections, I discuss two examples to illustrate territorial practices of exclusion in the case of global suburbs at the MRC. The first case deals with practices adopted within the global suburbs and the analysis draws mostly from site visits, archival data, and interviews. The second case refers to an intervention on existing irregular settlements neighboring a global suburb, hence, outside the global suburb. The discussion of the second case draws from secondary data sources, particularly Ritter's (2011) work on processes of "peripheralization, de-peripheralization, and re-peripheralization" in the MRC.

Territorial Practices of Exclusion Within Global Suburbs

For global suburbs to successfully offer the marketed sense of community, privacy, safety, and high quality of life far from urban problems and close to nature, they must create a controlled environment. This is especially important when the reality surrounding global suburbs opposes and threatens its ideals (as Caldeira 2000 points out). Thus, territorial practices of exclusion become crucial

for the success of global suburbs located amongst poor and irregular neighborhoods in the peripheries of Brazilian cities.

Territorial practices of exclusion refer to mechanisms put in place to control access to certain territories and to differentiate insiders and outsiders. The most explicit territorial practice of exclusion is the construction of physical barriers. Walls, fences, and gates determine the boundaries of global suburbs, limit visual permeability, and prevent access to anyone not previously authorized. These physical barriers are important selling points to potential residents concerned about security. They are primarily presented as part of the security apparatus, but they are also symbols of status. Possessing access codes that open the gates or being recognized by the guards as a resident means being free to go in and out. It also makes one superior to all others who must have prior authorization.

Besides physical barriers, global suburbs often employ additional territorial practices of exclusion. For example, surveillance through cameras and vehicle patrols identify and monitor people even before they reach the communities' gates. In some cases, these practices may exclude people from public areas outside the walls. For example, in Alphaville Graciosa, a public street runs through the development connecting four individually walled residential communities, the community's club, and the publicly accessible commercial center. Although there are no physical barriers preventing access to the street, the security personal in a patrol car closely observed me as I drove around. When I stopped to photograph one of the community's gates, from the public

street, I was approached by a guard who proceeded to note my car plate number and asked for identification documents.

In regards to the relationship between residents of global suburbs and their low-income neighbors, territorial practices of exclusion mediate controlled and selective interactions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, transnational elites form a globally connected and mobile class sharing similar status, tastes, and consumption patterns across the world. They are devoted to a lifestyle, not to a locality. As such, they are disconnected from the local low-income population who they exclude, and from whom they seek differentiation.

In Brazil, however, the transnational elite and the low-income population are strongly connected, though through controlled interactions. I refer to controlled interaction as the type of social contact within global suburbs between the elite and the low-income population. What I seek to emphasize is that rather than spontaneous interactions at neutral places among people of equal status (e.g. interacting with another customer at the cashier line in a grocery store), the encounters between the rich and the poor happen at specific places and times, for specific reasons, and establish unequal relationships (e.g. a maid who interacts with her employers at the house she works in). As Caldeira (2000) points out, spontaneous interactions between different social classes diminishes as public spaces that facilitated encounters are privatized within walls.

In Brazil, at the same time that the elite seeks to distance itself from the 'other,' especially the poor who inhabit unsanitary and crime-ridden communities, they employ these same people to take care of their houses and their children.

This is what Souza (2001, 2005) called a “hypocritical escapism,” i.e. “the elites cannot renounce the help of those who they try to ban from their immediate landscape as neighbors, but who are at the same time useful for them as servants, security agents, and the like” (2001, 443).

The territorial practices of exclusion adopted in global suburbs mediate and define the relationship between affluent residents and the ‘outsiders’ – often favela dwellers – they employ. The following paragraphs present two interview excerpts as starting points to reflect upon the relationship between residents and domestic workers. In the first passage, Elise, a businesswoman who resides in a global suburb with her husband and two children, explains the control mechanisms to which service providers and domestic workers are subjected.

ELISE. They search everyone who is providing services; not visitors. They search under, inside, in the trunk. I am building [a house] now; it is a problem. The mason needs to take the table back because it didn’t work; I need to authorize him to leave with things. Things only enter; nothing leaves without authorization. A rug. . . soon after I moved in, I didn’t know it. . . I sent a rug to the drycleaner; I had to go there [to the entry gate] to sign because I had not given authorization. [. . .] I didn’t know it, but now they are doing this to the maids too. The other day, I think the boss had asked [the maid] to take home some leftover steak. She had to return it because the boss had not [formally] given authorization.

INTERVIEWER. Does it make life more complicated?

ELISE. I think it is good because it makes life easier. We don’t have to worry [. . .] and someone does the dirty job for you. I would never do that to anyone’s purse. Never. I prefer to be robbed than to do that.

INTERVIEWER. Especially to your own employee. . .

ELISE. Yeah, how would I do that to my employee? But, in any case, if it is not just [done] to her, if it is for everybody, why not?

INTERVIEWER. It becomes part of the routine. . .

ELISE. It becomes part of the routine. Oh, and it is also with the hand. Employees put the five fingers in the system to be able to get in. And, another thing that I think is nice is that. . . when you live

in a [street] house, how many times you arrive home and [the maid] brought a friend to help or her child because she had nobody to leave her with? Here, it doesn't happen. (Interview 13014)

What Elise describes are the mechanisms of control at the community's gates. As she explains, every service provider and domestic worker is subjected to security checks that include digital fingerprint matching and inspection of personal belongings such as purses and cars. It is interesting to note that Elise understands how invasive and humiliating these practices are when she suggests that she "would never do that to anyone's purse," she prefers "to be robbed" than to inspect people's belongings, but she is glad "someone does the dirty job for [her]."

When these practices are applied to everyone, as Elise suggests, they become normalized, part of the routine. They have a plausible objective: to provide the peace of mind and predictability affluent residents seek. Ultimately, these practices give certain people access through the gates, but not before highlighting that they are not being part of that community, and that are not trustworthy. Hence, in addition to controlling access as a security measure, practices of exclusion reinforce the separation between employer and employee, resident and non-resident.

The following interview excerpt provides an additional illustration of practices of exclusion that maintain the separation between insiders and outsiders for the comfort of affluent residents at the expense of their employees' wellbeing. Here, Martha, the president of the homeowners' association explains the limitations of transport available to employees.

MARTHA. [Municipal bus serving the development arrives] every hour, it is hard because there is no demand. Here, there is a bus that circulates around the gated communities, outside, collecting the maids. The employers pay for it; a [private] company started it. Earlier, it was provided by the [homeowners] association but, because there were many problems of accident – if the person slides in the bus, if the door closes on someone’s arms – we would take too many [liability] risks. This problem has passed on from mandate to mandate and ended up on me. At the end, we opted to not do this any longer because we would assume a risk that was [of] the maid’s employer. [. . .] You see, from the entry gates of the [gated community], in the smallest one, there are three kilometers to walk. Those [working in houses] close to the entrance are fine, but to the end of the [gated community]. . . in [one of them] is four kilometers. The bus does not go inside. [. . .] [The maid] needs to walk to the gates. She needs to walk. If she had to walk all the way here [to the public street], there is another eight or nine [kilometers]. There is legislation for domestic workers that [determines] to your work destination you can’t walk more than two kilometers.

INTERVIEWER. Oh, I didn’t know.

MARTHA. Yes, we got to know because a guy came to tell us.

INTERVIEWER. But, in these gated communities they are walking longer.

MARTHA. Yes, but they don’t know it. But they [the maids] have the right to a shuttle circulating [inside].

INTERVIEWER. Why doesn’t the bus go inside?

MARTHA. It is not possible. For security. We need to preserve those living there. There is too much crowding; the streets are narrow; there are the construction trucks; plus the residents’ cars; plus the shuttles. . . it doesn’t work. When there were fewer residents, we had a shuttle that circulated inside the [gated community] and to the avenue. But, now, it is not possible. (Interview 13006)

The issue of transport for employees in this global suburb, as described by Martha, involves important tensions in the relationship between residents and domestic workers. In particular, it reveals a dilemma between the working conditions of the employees and the security and comfort of the residents. As Martha acknowledges, domestic workers might have to walk up to four kilometers from the community’s gates to their place of work, despite legislation that limits

the allowable distance to two kilometers. But, she claims, the workers do not know about the legislation. The security of residents would be jeopardized if a shuttle circulated within the gates.

The denial of access to shuttles bringing their own employees signifies the exclusion of workers from the community. The wellbeing of workers is not of concern to residents and the homeowners' association. In addition to long walks within the gates, workers are vulnerable to violence outside the gates. According to a resident, while waiting for the bus on the public street, workers may be robbed. She says: "the workers who have to wait at the bus stops have a problem with robbery; not in front of the development, but a few stops down the road" (Interview 13014).

The working condition of domestic workers and the control they are subjected to reinforce their "outsider" position and maintain a symbolic separation between those served and those serving. These characteristics are far from unique to global suburbs. In fact, domestic workers are commonly subjected to security checks and humiliating conditions in apartment buildings in the city where, sometimes, they must utilize separate 'service entrances.'

What the interview excerpts indicate is that the physical proximity of global suburbs and irregular settlements has not diminished the separation and distinction between the affluent and low-income population. To the contrary, territorial practices of exclusion are sometimes even stricter and more controlling than in the city given the danger is perceived to live next door.

Territorial Practices of Exclusion Outside Global Suburbs

In 2004, four years after the arrival of Alphaville Graciosa, the neighboring irregular settlement, favela Zumbi dos Palmares, received a series of improvements as part of a regularization and urbanization project carried out by the state social housing agency, COHAPAR - Companhia de Habitação do Paraná. As a potentially unintended consequence of the project's interventions, a population shift occurred. The poorest residents, who were not able to afford costs associated with regularized land titles (including monthly payments and property taxes) moved out while new settlers moved in. Thus, the project was unable to fulfill the needs of a considerable amount of the existing population and excluded the most vulnerable residents.

The regularization and urbanization project received a lot of attention and was extensively publicized in the media. Although the settlements had existed for over a decade and, in 2005, included 6,649 residents (Ritter 2011) it had not been of serious concern to the local and state governments until 2002, when the regularization and urbanization project was included in a Governor's electoral campaign. Accomplishing the project required the alignment of both political and corporate interests.

The newly elected Governor's hoped to keep his promises given that the settlement represented a large electorate. The local government, then politically aligned with the state, favored the project as it would address issues of infrastructure, sanitation, and potentially crime, and would generate additional property tax revenue. At the same time, media coverage of the precarious

condition in this large favela threatened the well-established image of the city of Curitiba as a model city and, in turn, the revitalization was also an effort to maintain the city's image. Finally, local and state governments found allies in the private sector given that private investors and corporations, particularly the newly implemented global suburbs Alphaville Graciosa and Pinheiros, were interested in the beautification and crime reduction in the surroundings.

The connection between Alphaville and the regularization and urbanization project in its neighboring favela was not only explicit in Alphaville's stake in the project, but also in how the project was described to the population. During a public meeting, a member of the state social housing agency (quoted in Polli 2006) explained:

We are working on getting you work cards, IDs, for everything you need you will have a way to obtain it, you just need to go to the construction site where there are social workers to assist you all day [. . .]. The goal is to eliminate 100% of irregular occupations. You will have conditions as good as in Alphaville, sewage lines, water, asphalt, electricity, and good homes that won't flood.²⁷

Though the public official quoted above characterizes the favela post-revitalization and Alphaville as comparable communities, what he describes as improvements are the bare minimum conditions for a dignified living. In reality, the physical and socio-economic conditions of the two communities are not compatible. Housing sizes, density, landscaping, and open spaces reflect the low-income status of one community and the upper-class position of the other. As an indicator of the immense disparity, while the entire regularization and

27 Sergio Ricci, Meeting at community center (Centro de Convivência da Vila Zumbi dos Palmares) on January 12, 2005, quoted in Polli 2006, translated by the author.

urbanization project cost about R\$ 22.3 million, a house for sale in Alphaville Pinheiros was valued at R\$ 22 million (Ritter 2011).

I construe the regularization and urbanization project as a practice of territorial exclusion because of the effects it had on the existing low-income population, particularly its most vulnerable members. As Ritter (2011) observed, the population residing in the post-revitalization community was different than the original population. Despite the project's goal to improve the living conditions of existing residents, many original families moved out of the settlement during the revitalization process.

Families originally residing in flood prone areas were evicted as part of the regularization and urbanization project. The project's goal was to relocate these families in other areas within the community where they could receive land title. However, according to Ritter's (2011) findings, after 2004, around 58% of them no longer lived in the settlement. Unable to afford the costs associated with the newly regularized land titles, many families relocated to other new or existing irregular settlements where they remained in environmentally precarious and socioeconomically vulnerable conditions.

Besides the relocation of the poorest families to other irregular settlements, Ritter (2011) observed an influx of new residents. As of 2008, around 1,310 families moved into the settlement. Interviews with a sample of these new residents revealed that they possessed higher income and educational levels. The revitalization project not only excluded the most vulnerable and attracted a population with higher SES, it was successful in

improving housing quality (as people tend to improve their houses when they have titles and are no longer risking eviction), increasing real estate value within the settlement, and reducing crime rates.

Symbolic Practices of Inclusion

Global suburbs and irregular settlements in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba coexist peacefully. Despite materializing in space the great socio-economic inequality and wealth concentration that characterize the Brazilian society; despite the territorial practices of exclusion that controls, scrutinizes, and deny access to 'outsiders;' and despite making the luxurious lifestyle of a few visible to the very poor, global suburbs have not been the target of hostility from their low-income neighbors. On the contrary, peripheral communities have welcomed their new affluent neighbors.

Sociologists and psychologists observe that when people come in contact with others in a superior position, they experience a sense of relative deprivation. In other words, when people compare their life situation to that of more privileged groups, they understand their inferior position and feel deprived. Commonly, the feeling of relative deprivation leads to social tension as people's dissatisfaction increases and civil arrests ensue. Despite observing the great lifestyle differences between their conditions and those of their affluent neighbors on a daily basis, the poorer population at the MRC has not revolted.

Others who study the coexistence of global suburbs and irregular settlements attribute the passivity of favela dwellers to benefits they perceive to

gain from their rich neighbors. A study of the effects of upscale gated communities on the poor in the peripheries of Santiago, Chile, claims that the spatial proximity between affluent developments and traditional poor neighborhoods in the peripheries brings benefits to the latter, despite the walls and mechanisms of exclusion that characterize these developments (Sabatini and Salcedo 2007). The benefits the authors observe, based on interviews with residents of pueblos and gated communities, are jobs, infrastructure improvement, territorial pride, and a sense that they are now “visible” to the authorities. The authors also claim that the poorer residents do not mind the walls and fences and recommend “policy makers should care less about walls and their impact and more about the spatial localization of elite developments” (Sabatini and Salcedo 2007, 601).

Ritter’s (2011) study of the relationship between the largest global suburbs in the MRC, Alphaville Graciosa, and its neighboring favela, Zumbi dos Palmares, also points to material gains as a result of the proximity between affluent newcomers and traditional residents. However, he suggests that these gains serve to pacify a population considered dangerous. The favela, as Ritter (2011, 247) explains, was a looming threat since they constituted some of the largest irregular settlements in the region with high crime rates, particularly related to drug trafficking and homicides. Thus, seeking a good relationship with favela dwellers was an imperative given that “it would be a real disaster if those who sought to escape from urban-metropolitan problems, when relocating to

Alphaville, became susceptible to violence or found imminent danger surrounding their new homes.”

I argue that the peaceful coexistence of global suburbs and low-income communities results from symbolic practices of inclusion that balance out potential negative effects of territorial practices of exclusion. In the next two sections, I discuss two types of symbolic inclusion. The first relates to jobs within the global suburbs that are made accessible to low-income neighbors. The second addresses programs in the adjacent favela, in particular the creation of a waste picker cooperative.

Symbolic Practices of Inclusion Within Global Suburbs

Developers enlist the support of the community and public agencies by presenting global suburbs as job creators. Developers claim that the affluent newcomers will generate employment for the local community because they will need services. The global suburbs need construction workers, gatekeepers, security personnel, janitors, and gardeners. The residents of these developments need maids, drivers, and nannies. Because access by public transportation to global suburbs is generally limited, and commuting time for potential employees residing in other parts of the Metropolitan Region would be very long, it is easier to recruit residents of the surrounding areas.

Martha, the president of the homeowners association at Alphaville

Graciosa states that

80% of the employees are from Zumbi [the favela across the street from the development]; maids, nannies, masons, construction workers, they are all from there. [. . .] “they know that [the global suburb] is a big provider of employment.
(Interview 13006)

The employment opportunity created in global suburbs may contribute to a positive view and welcoming attitude from local low-income community members. When questioned about how the local communities perceive the arrival of global suburbs, a municipal public official states: “there are no indicators, but they should not be against because they end up getting construction jobs, or working as maids, or in maintenance” (Interview 13007). However, it is possible that there is some resentment about the kinds of jobs available to the local population. A planning academic recalls a public hearing she attended:

I remember there was a very interesting discussion in a public hearing [. . .], in which the developers were stating that Alphaville was going to create jobs because they would need maids, gardeners, but someone stood up and said ‘we don't want to be your maids, we want to be technicians, we want education.’
(Interview 11003)

Despite potentially improving the economic condition of local low-income residents, the jobs available in global suburbs reflect and reproduce the class relationships embedded in the structure of the capitalist society. These jobs yield wages, working conditions, and training that contribute to the maintenance of current social and economic gaps. At the same time, these jobs are created, first and foremost, to fulfill the needs of affluent residents of global suburbs. In this

way, those serving and those served are clearly identifiable since socio-economic positions are reinforced by territorial practices of exclusion.

Symbolic Practices of Inclusion Outside Global Suburbs

This section discusses a specific program to illustrate interventions of global suburbs on existing low-income neighborhoods. Since the very beginning, even before the development broke ground, Alphaville Urbanismo, through its branch Alphaville Foundation, developed strategic programs that contributed to an amicable relationship with the existing communities in the MRC. The creation of the waste pickers cooperative in Zumbi dos Palmares was the first social project implemented by Alphaville Urbanismo. Today, the company routinely develops and maintains similar programs around its numerous suburbs throughout the country.

The strategy of seeking cooperation from existing communities has become common practice along the development process of new Alphaville communities throughout the country. The Alphaville Foundation starts their work getting to know the existing communities two years before the construction of the affluent suburb. A creator of the Foundation explains:

[. . .] these two years are important for us to get to know thoroughly the community and start seeing through their eyes. And, when the development arrives, they already feel a part of it and benefit from this new community that will be installed, they are our partners.²⁸

28 Quoted at <http://fundacaoalphaville.org.br/a-fundacao/afundacaoalphaville/>, accessed March 18, 2016.

A more cynical view suggests that the interventions of the Foundation yield, in fact, a great amount of knowledge about the community, which may be used to better develop strategies in gathering its support. Ritter (2011, 257) suggests, for example, that:

[. . .] through these activities, Alphaville is able to access the main universes of people residing around its developments, especially the residents at Vila Zumbi dos Palmares, showing itself as important, useful, and more than that, friends of these communities.

Clara Irazábal (2006, 90), referring to Alphaville's social projects, cites a local professor who holds a similar cynical view:

For some social observers, however, these efforts are old populist measures that are more effective as marketing strategies for the company and pacifying programs for the targeted population, rather than as structural transformative policies (Moura, pers. comm., 2004)

Despite academic criticism, the programs have been successful at creating an amicable environment and avoiding any hostility between the two communities. I propose that success is due to the programs' ability to promote symbolic inclusion. These programs balance out the territorial practices of exclusion described earlier and promote a sense of pride and belonging among favela dwellers. However, I suggest that the feeling of inclusion is a symbolic one. Residents of the irregular settlements are not equals and do not belong to the Alphaville community; instead they are targets of patronizing efforts that, although enabling some material gains and pride (or, what Sabatini and Salcedo 2007 call functional and symbolic integration, respectively), maintains clearly distinguishable socio-economic positions. The interview excerpt below, in which

the president of the homeowners' association describes the waste pickers cooperative program, illustrates the issue:

We created the waste pickers association for them. They had a middleman who charged them a fortune. For example, for a kilo of PET bottles that could be sold for R\$1.50, he was paying them R\$0.08. So, what did we do? We raised money among all neighbors, we had a lot of meetings, we were able to buy them carts so they could go around collecting trash - not just ours. We gave them uniforms, we helped to pay the rent of a warehouse, we started recycling of all kinds, to teach them (the volunteers), and we created the Association of Waste Pickers Zumbi dos Palmares, to avoid the middle-man. [. . .] Because [they needed to collect a high volume of trash] to be able to sell, they would not be able to buy anything for their houses for two to three months. They earn today to pay what they ate yesterday. So, what did we do? We also gathered contributions; we went to the grocery store and opened an account and allowed them to spend a certain amount there so that, in one or two months, they could stabilize, eliminate the middleman, and start to sell directly. [. . .] I had people from [a private university], from the accounting department, helping them; they gave several talks to put this in their mind... very poor people, you understand? [. . .] They really liked to be in uniforms because before, when they went out on the streets, they were undesirable, but now that they were in uniforms and had nametags, they said they had the right to use the restrooms in the restaurants that didn't previously allow it. The restaurants gave them [a snack] and water, you understand? They had another... they were characterized that they were from where? From Alphaville. The thing kept on going and now the cooperative has its own garbage truck. We give them diesel, uniform, and the truck's side panel was bad, so we redid it very beautifully, and they collect our trash. [. . .] Nowadays, the city has recycling [trucks], but since the beginning we didn't have anybody to collect our recyclables, we started to help [the community] this way. We are not going to abandon them now. They are able to collect a lot of trash. (Interview 13006)

As the interview excerpt reveals, the waste-picker's uniforms characterize them as "being from Alphaville." This inclusive status gives those who were previously "undesirables" the ability to use the restrooms at local restaurants. The connection with Alphaville is a source of pride to waste-pickers, and the

generous financial contributions the affluent community gives them foster their sense of gratitude. But, these efforts do not promote structural changes, nor do they make the poor more equal or less feared.

What is observed in the waste picker's cooperative example is what has been noted in participatory programs under neoliberalism, i.e. although these programs aim at empowering the poor, they often result in some material gains and sense of worth while reinforcing socio-economic distinctions. As Miraftab (2004, 242) puts it:

Participation and empowerment are treated as independent of the structures of oppression, and simply processes by which programs foster individuals' sense of worth and esteem. This individualization inherently depoliticizes the notion of empowerment, often reducing it to individual economic gain and access to resources, and leaving the status quo unchallenged.

In this way, symbolic practices of inclusion – such as making certain jobs available and creating a cooperative of waste pickers – do not overcome the dynamics of power. More importantly, these practices might actually increase the dominance of the elite since they focus on individual, rather than social and political empowerment. Understanding the multidimensionality of power and empowerment means acknowledging that power is deployed not only when A gets B to act as A wants, but also when B acts as A wants without even realizing it. In the latter situation, A is able “to influence B's aspirations, beliefs, desires and wants” (Miraftab 2004, 244).

Conclusion

This chapter moved from social, political, and institutional aspects relevant to the making of global suburbs to focus upon how global suburbs interact with the surroundings once they are built. For global suburbs to succeed in attracting investors and residents, they must deal with potential tensions between affluent newcomers and traditional low-income communities. Despite materializing in space the great socio-economic inequality and wealth concentration that characterize the Brazilian society; despite the territorial practices of exclusion that control, scrutinize, and deny access to 'outsiders;' and despite making the luxurious lifestyle of a few visible to the very poor, global suburbs have not been the target of hostility from their low-income neighbors.

I explain the peaceful coexistence of global suburbs and low-income settlements, including favelas, as resulting from the strategic balance between territorial practices of exclusion and symbolic practices of inclusion. At the same time that global suburbs employ a variety of means to exclude outsiders, scrutinize visitors and domestic workers, and control interactions between affluent residents and favela dwellers, global suburbs also afford material gains to their low-income neighbors. By providing jobs, mostly as domestic workers, and by maintaining social projects targeting favela dwellers, global suburbs are able to establish a friendly relationship with the surroundings.

Table 9.1: Practices of exclusion and inclusion

TERRITORIAL PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION	SYMBOLIC PRACTICES OF INCLUSION
Within Global Suburbs	
<p>building physical barriers surveillance patrolling hand scan inspection of personal belongings requiring authorization to enter and exit</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These create: ↓ exclusion access control differentiation of insiders and outsiders controlled interactions</p>	<p>hiring favela dwellers domestic workers security personnel construction workers maintenance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These create: ↓ material gains sense of pride job opportunities favorable view of global suburbs</p>
Outside Global Suburbs	
<p>regularization and urbanization of favela</p> <p>express support for the project influence politicians to carry on the project</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These create: ↓ displacement of the poorest increased property values gentrification of favela re-peripheralization elsewhere</p>	<p>creation of the waste pickers cooperative</p> <p>donating equipment providing uniforms and name tags organizing lectures opening account in grocery store allowing members of the cooperative to collect recyclables within global suburb</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These create: ↓ material gains sense of pride friendly relationship with global suburbs positive view of affluent residents</p>

Source: Author

While the peaceful relationship between global suburbs and local low-income neighborhoods contributes to the success of the affluent community as a place to live and to invest, it brings very little change to local communities besides some material gains. Work conditions, wages, and territorial practices of exclusion keep the poor in their “place,” and do not promote structural changes to

the unequal status quo. At the societal scale, the most impactful outcome of the presence of global suburbs have been their potential to influence events that displace the most vulnerable population groups from existing irregular communities.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

Observe the conduct of these people closely:
Find it estranging even if not very strange
Hard to explain even if it is the custom
Hard to understand even if it is the rule
Observe the smallest action, seeming simple,
With mistrust
Inquire if a thing be necessary
Especially if it is common
We particularly ask you –
When a thing continuously occurs –
Not on that account to find it natural
Let nothing be called natural
In an age of bloody confusion
Ordered disorder, planned caprice,
And dehumanized humanity, lest all things
Be held unalterable!

(Bertolt Brecht, 1930, *The Exception and the Rule*, Prologue)

When Brecht wrote *The Exception and the Rule*, in 1930, as a short “learning play,” he hoped to spark critical thinking on the inequalities intrinsic to the capitalist system. In the prologue quoted above, the actors ask that the audience be suspicious of taken for granted assumptions, and that they do not consider as natural what is habitual. Brecht’s critique of the state of affairs rested upon a sense that people were detached from each other, and alienated in their own worlds. The capitalist system, he believed, led to a “dehumanized humanity” where people of different social classes were treated differently.

Like Brecht’s play, this research sought to problematize a phenomenon that is considered by most participants as natural. By critically examining the making of global suburbs, I argue that upscale exclusionary enclaves are not

simply a response to urban growth, fear of crime, or people's innate desires. Global suburbs result from a variety of practices carried out by actors who have different interests, expertise, values, and worldviews but who come together to idealize, finance, design, approve, build, and live in these spaces. Their practices (intentionally and unintentionally) ultimately enable the emergence and proliferation of communities that perpetuate inequality and segregation.

Adopting a practice theory approach, I analyzed local practices in connection with larger social structures such as globalization and neoliberalism. I explained the making of global suburbs as framed by specific ways of seeing reality that makes these spaces feasible, desirable, and legitimate. Widespread and uncritically accepted neoliberal principles, such as privatization, individualism, and liberalization provide the basis for discourses, policies, and values that enable the making of global suburbs. At the same time, both the enactment of discursive and non-discursive practices as well as the spaces they create and legitimate reproduce the very social, political, economic, and institutional structures that enabled their existence in the first place.

Neoliberalism is not new. It has been extensively discussed in both focus academic publications and popular media stories. Despite criticisms, it is still alive (Aalbers 2013). My concern in this research has been to explain how it is actualized in planning in a particular case. In this way, the analysis bridges broader conceptions of neoliberalism – e.g. its ideological principles and national and international policies – with local practices. It makes neoliberalism visible when it is an invisible force to most participants. It is unaccounted for in the

stories of my informants. Nonetheless, neoliberalism helps us understand how things get done in a certain fashion, why alternative ways of thinking and doing seem unthinkable, and why diverse actors with diverse interests come together to make global suburbs happen.

In this research, specifically, I addressed the relationship between larger principles framed at the societal level and the local practices related to the making of global suburbs. I argued that the legitimacy of both the spaces themselves as well as the processes that lead to their creation rests upon a series of tensions and insecurities typical of the Brazilian society at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The most salient tensions are observed in the role of the private and public sectors, in the reality versus ideals of urbanization and planning practices, in the extent of legality and illegality in the metropolis, in the definition of environmental protection, and in the interactions between the poor and the elite. Insecurities are present in market risks, urban violence, and the threat of environmental destruction by land squatters.

Despite having different interests, values, expertise, and worldviews, actors involved in the making of global suburbs identify these built spaces as able to effectively respond to existing tensions and insecurities. For instance, private control of land use, access, and behavior reduces market risks. Security systems allegedly eliminate violence within the gates. Controlled and legal occupation of land by global suburbs eliminates the threat of environmental destruction by squatters. Insecurities are contained within global suburbs as they address the anxieties of investors, residents, and public officials.

Chapter 4 focused on how globalization is manifested and reinforced in global suburbs. Globalization is broadly understood as a phenomenon including political, social, and cultural transformations that have increased flows of people, goods, money, and ideas across geographies. It is also understood as an ideology, i.e. a way of thinking, about time-space that intensifies the perception of closeness. I discussed three instances in which globalization is manifested in global suburb. These are the adoption of international design standards, the participation of foreign actors in designing, financing, and inhabiting these spaces, and the role of the transnational elite in consuming of global suburbs as signs of status and differentiation. The branding of global suburbs in Brazil, particularly the success of the Alphaville Urbanismo development company, has created exemplars that serve both as local and global references.

In Chapter 5, I focused on the permitting process that ultimately leads to the approval of global suburbs. I identified three pillars that sustain the current configuration of the permitting process: relationships, legislation, and the public value of regulatory agencies. The ways in which relationships, legislation, and public value are structured, employed, and defined construct and reproduce the premises of neoliberalism and provide support and leverage to developers.

Developers are central actors in a web of professional and personal relationships. This position (combined with limited collaboration among public agencies and limited participation of local communities) affords developers privileged access to information and influence that serve as leverage in negotiations with regulatory agencies. Lack of specific regulations, badly written

laws, and weak enforcement, render legislation as insufficient and ineffective in shaping urban space. In this context, other instruments such as bargaining power, discretionary power, and political influence become crucial. Finally, regulatory agencies have re-created their purpose as enablers of development. This redefinition of the role of public agencies as enablers of development reflects the naturalization of neoliberalism. Economic growth as a public value in and of itself and the competition with other municipalities are taken as the “reality” public agencies must adapt to.

Chapter 6 focused on the dominant discourses that support, justify, and legitimize global suburbs in the MRC. Through a critical analysis of both the content and structure of narratives, I exposed the neoliberal principles that frame these discourses. I showed how the use of oppositions limits possible alternatives and simplifies complex dynamics. As a result, global suburbs are presented as legitimate and desirable urban typologies in narratives that enable some actors to justify their actions as technically, and not politically, motivated; while helping other actors to deal with frustrations.

In Chapter 7, I investigated the practices of local private sector planners involved in planning and designing global suburbs. Working for developers, these planners’ practices are defined in their relationship with their clients. By critically analyzing what these planners do, how they do what they do, and how they understand what they do, I theorized an approach to planning practice that I called detached urbanism. This entails a) a sense of disconnection between the practices of planners and larger social structures (political detachment); b) an

ability to narrowly focus on particular sites, developers, and tasks with no involvement or concern for processes that precede or follow their interventions (professional detachment); and c) a willingness to put aside personal and professional values to adopt market values (valuative detachment). I identified a series of features of planning practice that enable planners to engage in detached urbanism—the use of technology, the emphasis on representation, the fragmentation of work, the presence of imaginary users, the use of legislation as a higher objective voice, the relationship with clients, and the focus on client satisfaction. These features enable planners to cultivate political, professional, and valuative detachment.

In Chapter 8, I discussed the relationship between the affluent residents of global suburbs and their low-income neighbors. Despite materializing in space the great socio-economic inequality and wealth concentration that characterize Brazilian society; employing territorial practices of exclusion that control, scrutinize, and deny access to ‘outsiders;’ and making the luxurious lifestyle of a few visible to the very poor, global suburbs have not been the target of hostility from their low-income neighbors. I argued that the peaceful relationship between rich and poor communities is due to a strategic balance between territorial practices of exclusion that keep the poor in “place,” and symbolic practices of inclusion that promote the poor’s acceptance of their “place.”

Each of these chapters reinforced the argument that global suburbs are not simply unavoidable consequences of urban growth; but rather produced through practices of a variety of actors. Their proliferation throughout the world

must be explained through a lens that accounts both for macro-social processes such as neoliberalism and globalization and local practices and actors. In order for global suburbs to exist, they must be conceptualized, financed, designed, approved, built, sold, and inhabited. The findings discussed in this study reveal that making of global suburbs is made possible by:

- The increasing flows of people, ideas, and money in a globalized world (Chapter 4);
- A permitting process sustained by particular configurations of relationships, legislation, and notions of public value under neoliberalism (Chapter 5);
- The production and reproduction of dominant discourses whose framings limit ways of seeing and acting and ultimately legitimize the making of exclusionary enclaves (Chapter 6);
- An approach to planning practice that enables private sector planners to understand their roles as detached from political processes, from decision-making preceding or outcomes following their intervention, and from their own personal and professional values (Chapter 7);
- A balance of inclusion and exclusion that establishes a peaceful relationship between the affluent global suburbs and their low-income neighbors (Chapter 8).

Despite the normative ideals of planning – which often involves environmental and social justice, diversity, and sustainability – the investigation of what is actually done in cities indicates that spaces such as global suburbs – which can hardly be unequivocally portrayed as inclusive, diverse, and sustainable – not only proliferate but are legitimized in formal planning processes.

Contributions

Methodological

In a recent essay, Forester (2015) asked “what kind of research might help us become better planners?” His own response pointed to qualitative analyses of the best planners in order to understand how they do what they do. It is implied that by investigating how good planning is done, researchers could formulate normative theories to inform practitioners on how they could do better. In contrast to Forester, my research does not attempt to identify and study the best planners (in fact, defining “best” or “better” is a task I find extremely complex). It examines, instead, morally dubious planning practices. But, like Forester, I believe that in order to understand what planners do and how they do what they do, researchers must engage in the observation of practices where it is done. This type of work, which Forester has produced over the last three decades, involves in-depth interviews with planners and participatory observation of their work in an attempt to grasp their own rationality, resources, values, feelings, and struggles.

Given the disparities between normative ideals, formal planning processes, and the reality of planning practices, it is imperative that researchers immerse their analysis in the real contexts of practices, as actors perceive them. In this context, I provided a multi-layered analysis of actual practices. Following the suggestion of critical scholars (such as Flyvberg 1998; Flyvberg and Richardson 2002; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000; and Yiftachel 2006), I connected

these practices with larger societal structures as well as with the spaces they create. Practice theory, as a methodological and analytical approach, is suitable to the conceptualization of practices as both enabled and constrained by structures but also as reproducing, maintaining, or changing them. As noted in Chapter 2, practice theory has facilitated the connections made in this research and allowed for the examination of the making of global suburbs from a variety of perspectives and scales.

Theoretical

This research contributes to theory by providing an analysis of planning practices in Brazil, a developing country where power, inequality, and limited institutional resources make planning “realities” different than those described in mainstream planning theory. Nonetheless, the context and issues I analyzed are not unique to Brazil. Theorizing from this case may also illuminate the understanding of planning practices in other countries. In particular, this research provided some theoretical insights into how spaces with potential regressive outcomes are created.

Dominant discourses structured around oppositions that limit ways of seeing and acting are likely to be found in an array of situations where actors with diverse expertise, worldviews, and values take for granted the way things are. This type of discourses may be identified and deconstructed in order to make visible their framings and to explain how actions with potential negative outcomes are based on common understandings of reality.

The concept of 'detached urbanism' has the potential to explain planning practice in a variety of contexts where professionals (consciously or unconsciously) feel the need to distance themselves from the processes and outcomes related to their practices. 'Detached urbanism' improves our understanding about how planners engage in regressive practices.

I provided an explanation of how high levels of inequality materialized in the form of extreme spatial segregation and exclusion are maintained as the rich and the poor peacefully coexist in proximity. The balance of practices of exclusion and inclusion underscores the complexity of inequality as they illustrate daily practices that both reinforce and keep tensions in check. The dynamic between exclusion and inclusion, as presented here, is likely to be found in other contexts where high levels of social inequality are not translated into social unrest, but into relationships of dependence and apparent solidarity.

Practical

The limitation of most research that identifies, characterizes, and seeks to understand a problem is that they tend to not offer solutions. What do we (particularly planners and policy makers) gain from research that does not tell us how we should fix the problem? This is indeed a valid question. I appreciate the urgency and the constraints most practitioners face. In their daily work, practitioners have little time and patience for examining complex research, especially when it does not provide a concrete call for action at the end of the process.

As an academic, however, I have the time and patience as well as the motivation and resources to devote several years and many pages to examining a phenomenon most participants do not even recognize as problematic. So, what I offer practitioners, from where I stand – i.e. as an outsider whose “job” is to reflect upon issues, listen to different voices, look for what has already been done, describe, compare, analyze, and put things together – is simple, but hopefully powerful: a different mode of thinking.

Ways of understanding, and therefore, acting in the world are always framed so as to make other possible ways of understanding and acting unthinkable. Thus, different frames may transform our understandings and our actions. What this research offers is a deconstruction of the current frame so as to leave space for the construction of others. By revealing taken for granted assumptions and questioning apparently common sense narratives, I hope to have made the frame more explicit.

I argue that the framework constructed through the uncritical adoption of neoliberalism limits the emergence of processes and spaces that advance social and environmental justice. More importantly, under neoliberalism, planners (both in the private and public sectors) have adopted market values such as competitiveness and efficiency at the expense of social and environmental values. In this context, I suggest that the neoliberal frame is not suited to promote progressive planning goals. In other words, just as Karlberg (2012) argues that discourses framed for conflict and injustice hinders the achievement of peace and justice, I contend that discursive and non-discursive practices framed for

efficiency, competitiveness, economic growth, and individualism hinder the achievement of social justice, sustainability, and diversity in planning.

I also propose that a different mode of thinking about the making of global suburbs, in particular, may reveal the role of local practices not simply as shaped within larger frameworks but also as maintaining and reproducing frames. Thus, rather than taking larger social structures as given or immutable, they must be seen as constantly produced, reproduced, and changed through practices. This is not to say that we must simply rely on the agency of practitioners in order to achieve more equitable, just, or sustainable processes and outcomes, but that necessary structural changes can only be realized once the role of individual and institutional practices are acknowledged.

This research, I hope, should encourage practitioners and policy makers to reflect upon their individual roles in perpetuating the inequalities reproduced in global suburbs. Rather than detached practitioners, a new mode of acting could be cultivated—one that presupposes that involvement in any part of the process is an active step in the making of global suburbs. The call to reflect upon one's individual role as well as one's taken for granted perspectives is a call to question what and how things could be different. My hope is that the insights that practitioners may gain from the analysis presented here are precisely what will bring about change.

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APPENDIX

A. Sensitizing Questions

Things observed during participant observation and interviews:

What are people doing and saying?
Through which moves, strategies, methods, and discursive practical devices do practitioners accomplish their work?
How do actors perceive their roles, purposes, and goals?
What stories do they tell themselves about their work and practices?
What apparatus do they employ to legitimate their practice (e.g. legislation, institutions, bureaucratic processes, morals, discourses)?
How do they frame issues? How is this framing constructed? How does it influence actions?
What are the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in their practices and discourses?
What resources do actors use and how do they use them in their practices?
What type of collective interests are sustained and perpetuated by the specific practices?
How are asymmetries and inequalities produced or reproduced in the process?
How are the sayings and actions temporally organized? How do the patterns of doing and saying flow in time? What are the effects of these patterns?
What are the mundane practical concerns that ostensibly orient daily work of practitioners? What matters to them? What do they care about? What do they worry about in practice?
How are mundane breakdowns addressed? Where and how are the disputes between right and wrong played out?
Do practitioners use practices to identify themselves as a community? How is the difference between insiders and outsiders brought to bear?

B. Interview Guide

Questions that guided in-depth semi-structured interviews with developers, planners, designers, public officials, and realtors:

What is your role in the process of (e.g. designing, approving, constructing, selling, developing, regulating) suburban developments?
Who do you interact with during this process?
How does the process work? What are the stages and tasks that need to be accomplished?
What is the goal of this process?
What resources are used in this process (e.g. plans, documents, legislation)?
How are these resources used?
How did you get involved in this process?
Has the process and/or your role changed over time?
Is this process effective? Does it accomplish its goals? Are you satisfied with it?
How could it be changed?
What do you think about upscale gated communities in peripheral areas? Why? What are the pros and cons of this type of development?
Why do you think upscale gated communities in peripheral areas have proliferated in recent decades?

Questions that guided in-depth semi-structured interviews with residents of global suburbs:

Who lives in this household? What are their ages and occupations? What is the size of this house?
How long have you lived here?
Where did you move from?
Why did you decide to move here? How was this decision made?
How did you find out about this development? What other places did you consider? Which particular characteristics were you looking for?
Do you like living here? What do you like the most about living here? What do you dislike? What would you like to change about this place?
Do you have friends or family members living in this development or nearby?
How many neighbors do you know? How is your relationship with them?
Do you participate in social activities in this community?
Do you feel a sense of community among your neighbors?
Do you feel safe here?
Which amenities offered in this community, if any, do you use the most?
Where do the members of this household study/work? Where do you shop for groceries? How long do you drive daily?
How often do you visit or shop at establishments in this municipality?
Do you employ housekeepers or other personal employees (driver, gardener, cook, babysitter)? Where do they live and how do they get here?