Geotemas, Pau dos Ferros, RN, Brasil
ISSN: 2236-255X, v. 15, 2025.

VECTORS OF ACCUMULATION IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: THE CASE OF GATED COMMUNITIES IN CAMPINA GRANDE – PB

Vetores de acumulação no ambiente construído: o caso dos condomínios fechados em Campina Grande – PB

Vectores de Acumulación en el Entorno Construido: El Caso de los Condominios Cerrados en Campina Grande – PB

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Article History
Reveived: 30 july, 2025
Accepted: 22 september, 2025
Published: 12 november, 2025

ABSTRACT

The present article aims to discuss gated communities in Campina Grande as a crucial part of the process of capital accumulation in the urban built environment. In addition to addressing classical categories and concepts within Marxist thought in the political economy of urbanization and the city, the text presents an empirical approach that brings the city of Campina Grande to the center of the debate, relating the formation of valued sectors and neighborhoods to the dynamics represented by horizontal condominium residences, following a logic driven by accumulation vectors from the center to the periphery. To this end, the most profitable neighborhoods and sectors of Campina Grande were cataloged for the period from 2010 to 2020, along with the emergence of “new” high-standard housing developments outside these traditionally valued areas. The data were obtained from primary sources through fieldwork, and from secondary sources, such as the current Municipal Master Plan, digital platforms with socioeconomic data about the municipality, and previously developed academic works.

Keywords: Housing; Capital Accumulation; Built Environment; Gated Communities.

https://doi.org/10.33237/2236-255X.2025.7377

ABSTRACT

O presente artigo tem por objetivo discutir os condomínios fechados em Campina Grande, como parte crucial do processo de acumulação de capital no ambiente construído urbano. Além de discutirmos sobre categorias e conceitos clássicos no pensamento marxista na economia política da urbanização e da cidade, o texto apresenta um recorte empírico que traz a cidade de Campina Grande para o centro do debate, relacionando a formação de setores e bairros valorizados com a dinâmica que se mostra com as residências em condomínios horizontais, a partir de uma lógica que

se dá por meio de vetores de acumulação do centro para a periferia. Para tal, foram catalogados os bairros e setores mais rentáveis de Campina Grande, correspondente ao período de 2010 a 2020, e o surgimento de “novas” moradias de alto padrão fora desses tradicionais setores valorizados. Os dados foram obtidos por meio de fontes primárias em coletas de campo; e fontes secundárias, por meio de dados do Plano Diretor Municipal vigente, plataformas digitais com dados socioeconômicos do município e trabalhos acadêmicos já desenvolvidos.

Palavras-chave: Moradia; Acumulação de Capital; Ambiente Construído; Condomínios Fechados.

RESUMEN

El presente artículo tiene como objetivo discutir los condominios cerrados en Campina Grande, como parte crucial del proceso de acumulación de capital en el entorno urbano construido. Además de abordar categorías y conceptos clásicos del pensamiento marxista en la economía política de la urbanización y de la ciudad, el texto presenta un recorte empírico que coloca a la ciudad de Campina Grande en el centro del debate, relacionando la formación de sectores y barrios valorizados con la dinámica representada por las residencias en condominios horizontales, a partir de una lógica que se desarrolla mediante vectores de acumulación del centro hacia la periferia. Para ello, fueron catalogados los barrios y sectores más rentables de Campina Grande, correspondientes al período de 2010 a 2020, así como el surgimiento de “nuevas” viviendas de alto estándar fuera de esos tradicionales sectores valorizados. Los datos fueron obtenidos a través de fuentes primarias en recolecciones de campo, y de fuentes secundarias, mediante datos del Plan Director Municipal vigente, plataformas digitales con información socioeconómica del municipio y trabajos académicos ya desarrollados.

Palabras clave: Vivienda; Acumulación de Capital; Entorno Construido; Condominios Cerrados.

1 INTRODUCTION

Housing can be seen as the part of the city that occupies the largest fractions of the built environment, being an essential element for understanding the dynamics of the capital accumulation process and the dwelling strategies that shape human life. Reflection on housing is tied to the numerous social, economic, political, and spatial transformations that mark the urban fabric, and the impacts on the meaning of housing from the perspective of the resident (as an individual who obtains a home) and of the agents of urban production.

This condition effectively contributes to the use of space (and specifically of the built environment) as a commodity within the accumulation process, which has been present in the city of Campina Grande since the 2000s with the intensification of real estate activity. Luxury masonry houses, apartments in high-rise towers, and residences in gated horizontal condominiums are examples of this model of urban space production anchored in market mechanisms linked to real estate companies, which operate by occupying not only central areas but also the fringes of the city.

In Campina Grande, a mid-sized city in the interior of Paraíba with 419,379

inhabitants (IBGE, 2022), gated horizontal condominiums have emerged as expressions of a more recent strategy of production and consumption of the built environment. At the beginning of the millennium, this residential model appeared as an “exclusive” housing alternative for those social segments with the economic means to acquire a high-value housing model. These condominiums materialized within a context of real estate growth in the city, where not only did the urban sprawl expand, but accumulation dynamics also began to find “new” frontiers for capital to accumulate and reproduce in the urban sphere through new developments.

Since the 2000s, we have observed in Campina Grande the emergence of gated horizontal condominiums as a result of a market logic that has incorporated a “model of exclusive housing” into the dynamics of built environment production, offering advantages such as contact with nature, security, tranquility, comfort, and inducing the creation of a “unique lifestyle,” “distanced” from the problems of the city. The gated horizontal condominiums located at the edges of the urban sprawl and outside the most valued sectors seem to correspond to this logic, occupying a prominent place in Campina Grande’s landscape.

Given this context, the central question that arises is: how will the gated horizontal condominiums in Campina Grande organize themselves within the configuration of the built environment as they occupy the city’s fringe? That being said, our central objective is to discuss gated condominiums in Campina Grande as a crucial part of the process of capital accumulation in the urban built environment.

The main methodological strategy used was based on primary sources through field data collection; and secondary sources, through data from the current Municipal Master Plan, digital platforms with socioeconomic data of the municipality, and already developed academic works. With the methodological approach employed, we can analyze the use of urban land in the city by surveying neighborhoods and appreciation axes, based on five variables: 1 – concentration of high-value services; 2 – per capita income per neighborhood; 3 – average salary of residents; 4 – price per square meter; and 5 – Verticalization (most verticalized neighborhoods), resulting in the mapping of the most profitable sectors in the city. Next, we analyzed the strategies used in the formation of gated condominiums to establish themselves “outside” these axes and neighborhoods, while still guaranteeing some profitability with high-value housing in the periphery of Campina Grande.

This work is organized into four parts. The first corresponds to the presentation of the methodological strategies used, considering what was developed as the result of already

completed postgraduate research (Master's). The second part brings a theoretical debate on the formation of the built environment and its configuration as fixed capital within the processes of accumulation that occur in the urban sphere. The third part reflects on housing as a commodity, as a crucial part of this built environment within the logic of accumulation that takes place in the city. The fourth and final part presents the empirical focus, discussing gated horizontal condominiums in Campina Grande as accumulation vectors in the built environment, based on the correlation between the dynamics of urban land use in central areas and the installation of condominiums on the city's fringes. Finally, the concluding remarks present the main arguments that underpin our interpretation in light of the research herein presented.

2 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology described here, as well as the data, maps, and table presented throughout this work, result from postgraduate research (Master's) completed in 2018. The methodological description below is based on two major axes of data collection: one of a secondary nature; the other of a primary nature, and they describe the path through which the graphic elements and data presented here were obtained, in addition to our theoretical/conceptual investigation described throughout the chapters.

Regarding research in secondary sources, we analyzed the Municipal Master Plan of Campina Grande (2006), in force during the analyzed period, aiming to support the reflection on aspects that regulate the use and occupation of land in this city and how land distribution and occupation occur through official regulatory instruments, as well as the works of Costa (2013) and Albino (2016).

2.1 Data and Cartographic Construction

To arrive at the cartography presented in the map of *Gated Horizontal Condominiums and Valued Neighborhoods – Campina Grande – PB* (Figure 02), we worked with five variables, considering the following features and aspects of the territorial cut of neighborhoods: 1 – concentration of high-value services; 2 – per capita income per neighborhood; 3 – average salary remuneration of residents; 4 – price per square meter; and 5 – Verticalization (most verticalized neighborhoods).

The data for variable 1, as well as the location of the condominiums, were obtained

through primary research, with on-site visits (field study) and searches using satellite image tools (Google Earth and Maps). These procedures, referring to the first variable, served to identify the concentration of services such as private schools, universities, hypermarkets, healthcare services, gyms, concert venues, hotels, shopping malls, etc. in the different neighborhoods of the city.

The data for variables 2 and 3, on residents' per capita income and average salary remuneration, were obtained through secondary research, using the digital platform *Observa Campina*, from the Campina Planning Secretariat (SEPLAN), which provides neighborhood-level data for Campina Grande, including the socioeconomic profile of residents.

The data regarding per capita income per neighborhood are classified into four subdivisions concerning the average personal income value in reais. Thus, we have the following ranges: 1 – Less than or equal to R$ 380; 2 – Between R$ 380 and R$ 570; 3 – Between R$ 570 and R$ 800; and 4 – Greater than or equal to R$ 800.

When considering only the highest income classification (greater than or equal to R$ 800), we note that the concentration of these values occurs in a region of the city structured along three axes from the Centro neighborhood, including adjacent areas. In this sense, the neighborhoods with the highest incomes are: Centro, Catolé, Mirante, Sandra Cavalcante, Itararé, Alto Branco, Conceição, Jardim Tavares, Nações, Lauritzen, Prata, Bela Vista, and São José.

The data concerning average monthly salary remuneration per neighborhood are also divided into four classifications: 1 – Less than or equal to R$ 715; 2 – From R$ 715 to R$ 1,038; 3 – From R$ 1,038 to R$ 1,426; and 4 – Greater than or equal to R$ 1,426. Thus, considering only the data with the highest monthly income values (greater than or equal to R$ 1,426), essentially the same neighborhoods stand out: Centro, Catolé, Mirante, Sandra Cavalcante, Itararé, Alto Branco, Conceição, Jardim Tavares, Nações, Lauritzen, Santo Antônio, Prata, and São José.

The average price per square meter per neighborhood was considered based on the data collected by Costa (2013). In this case, the author's methodology was to obtain land prices per square meter by dividing the announced price of lots in newspaper classifieds by the land's measurement in square meters; then the prices per square meter of the lots in each neighborhood were added and divided by the number of Real Estate Transfer Tax (ITBI) guides computed per neighborhood. "This procedure was repeated for all neighborhoods until the average price per square meter for each neighborhood was

obtained" (Costa, 2013, p.131). Prices were divided into five classifications: 1 – up to R$ 50/m²; 2 – more than R$ 50 up to R$ 100/m²; 3 – more than R$ 100 up to R$ 150/m²; 4 – more than R$ 150 up to R$ 200/m²; and 5 – more than R$ 200 up to R$ 320/m².

Considering only the highest price category (more than R$ 200 up to R$ 320/m²), three neighborhoods stand out in Campina Grande: Centro, Catolé, and Bela Vista.

Regarding the verticalization index per neighborhood (variable 5), also obtained through primary research with on-site visits (field study), we considered the total number of buildings with five or more floors per neighborhood. The analysis shows that the neighborhoods near the city center stand out, as they also appear prominently in per capita income, average salary remuneration, and average price per square meter. These neighborhoods are distributed as follows in terms of buildings: Catolé (55), Centro (46), Jardim Tavares (21), Mirante (21), Alto Branco (18), Bela Vista (16), and Prata (14). Other neighborhoods also appear with buildings of more than five floors, but the concentration and number of buildings are relatively lower.

These five variables were combined and allowed the elaboration of the map of *Gated Horizontal Condominiums and Valued Neighborhoods – Campina Grande – PB* (Figure 02). This mapping was important to identify the profitable neighborhoods and axes of appreciation, which placed us before the gated horizontal condominiums located outside these appreciation axes. In this way, it was also possible to compare the average price per square meter practiced inside the condominiums with those in the external area (neighborhood/zone) where the developments are located.

2.2 The Table: Land Values Inside and Outside the Condominiums

To obtain the data presented in Table 01, we used secondary sources from two main fronts:

1 – From data collected in Albino (2016), which presents the minimum and maximum prices of lots inside the gated horizontal condominiums of Campina Grande. With this information, we added the price of the most expensive lot to the cheapest lot and divided by two, obtaining the final value used as the average price per m² for the condominium. Following the same logic, we collected the sizes of the lots sold in each condominium, also presented by Albino (2016), added the size of the smallest and largest lot sold, divided by two, and arrived at the average lot size (in m²) for each condominium.

To obtain the average value per square meter inside each condominium, we divided the average lot price by the average lot size, reaching a final value in reais. For example,

the average price of lots in the Serraville condominium is R$ 130,000, while the average lot size in this condominium is 200 m²; therefore, 130,000 ÷ 200 = 650. The average price per square meter in Serraville is R$ 650.

2 – To obtain the data regarding the average price per square meter of land (neighborhood/zone) where the condominiums are located, we considered the price data collected by Costa (2013), as well as the value of rural lands that appear in the table, since some of these developments are located in rural zones of the municipalities of Campina Grande and Lagoa Seca, according to the Municipal Master Plan.

For the data collection concerning rural land values, we consulted the website of the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), where we obtained data from the *Reference Price Spreadsheet* for settlement project titling and land regularization purposes, which presents the values (minimum, average, and maximum) of bare land per hectare proposed for each region.

The procedures described above enabled the elaboration of products (map and table) which, together with the set of theoretical/conceptual review, point to the overall structuring of this research, about a specific type of residence that feeds into the macro process of accumulation in the urban sphere. In the following chapters, we will address in detail the theoretical and conceptual framework that supported our analysis

3 FIXED CAPITAL AND ACCUMULATION IN THE CITY: THE FORMATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The composition of the city as a built landscape and the very process of urbanization are phenomena driven by the accumulation and circulation of capital. The formation of the city and its material expansion (the built environment) occur through various variables: habits, needs, political forces, production and consumption of commodities, etc.; and accumulation must be considered the main driving force in this process.

Piketty (2013) argues that accumulation is directly related to income[1] and that it is not only an economic phenomenon, but also a process that shapes power relations within society. The author maintains that the accumulation of capital, when unregulated, generates growing inequality, transforming industrial societies into economies dominated by rentiers

[1] Income, according to Marx (2013) and Harvey (2014), is the value in money or goods that a person, company, or country receives over a given period. It may come from different sources, such as wages, profits, rents, interest, pensions, or social benefits.

(mainly through the financial sector).

Botelho (2007) suggests that urban space becomes increasingly relevant to capital, while also being shaped by the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. The author points out that just as capital is fixed in the real estate sector, the built environment and land, once considered immovable goods, begin to be treated as tradable assets. Through property titles, these goods can constantly be converted into money, circulating in the financial market. “Examples of this space produced in consonance with financial capital include the construction of shopping centers, tourism and leisure developments, business centers, large vertical and horizontal condominiums, hotels, and flats” (Botelho, 2007, p. 18).

Santos (2013, p. 19) argues that the capitalist expansion that took place in Brazil from the mid-20th century has an essentially urban character. This implies that the development of capitalism in the country not only resulted in a broad process of urbanization of the territory, but also that urbanization itself was the means by which new areas were continuously integrated into the circuits of production and realization of surplus value. According to the author, urbanization for accumulation appears through:

> The construction of new infrastructures, new services, the possibility of expanding production for a society that was becoming urbanized, the constitution of new markets for raw materials and consumption, a real estate market fueled by the expansion of the economic frontier, the continuous release of labor power and several other factors, all came in the wake of the horizontal expansion of the urban phenomenon (Santos, 2013.p. 20).

According to Coelho (2019, p. 94), the process of accumulation producing and stimulating urbanization can be understood through flexible accumulation[2], which shapes the real estate sector through its increasing financialization, both for production and for consumption. In this context, the real estate sector, despite the slow turnover of capital, stands out as a robust segment, mainly due to its high capacity to absorb variable capital[3]. This dynamism, which combines job creation with access to the built environment, is supported by the credit system (large financial volumes), both for productive purposes (companies producing real estate structures) and for consumption (the purchase of these

[2] Flexible accumulation is a concept developed by David Harvey to describe the changes in capitalism from the 1970s onward, marking the transition from Fordism to a new, more adaptable and dynamic economic model. It is characterized by on-demand production and product diversification, as well as a greater influence of the financial sector over the productive economy, accompanied by the growth of speculative investments.
[3] Variable capital, according to Karl Marx, is the portion of capital invested in the payment of labor power — that is, workers’ wages. It is called “variable” because it has the ability to generate more value than its own cost through human labor.

structures by the final client).

The urban built environment is also revealed through the phenomenon of housing, which, in the urban dynamic of accumulation, becomes a peculiar commodity since, according to Ribeiro (2015), it activates the spatial variable as an important element of its constitution. What is revealed in the residential built landscape is also an environment constructed for production. Here, we will address accumulation through one of its dynamic forms of existence, where capital (expressed as value) is seen as a cyclical model (Harvey, 2013, 2014), confronted with circulation stages interspersed with “pauses” for its expansion (accumulation).

In the classical model, within the Marxist approach, the capitalist applies capital in its Money form (M) in the productive cycle through the purchase of commodities (C) (human labor, machinery, housing, industries, for example). Then, with what was obtained from the surplus, surplus value/profit (M’), the capitalist reinvests part of this profit into new means of production and labor power. This process, presented by Marx (2013), demonstrates the expansion of capital and the reproduction of the capitalist system on an ever-expanding scale (accumulation). It occurs when the capitalist uses the surplus value extracted from the unpaid labor of workers to increase the initial capital, generating a continuous cycle of growth (circulation), expressed by the following formula:

$$M – C – M’$$

Where (M) is the “initial” money applied to production, (C) are the commodities acquired to compose the productive process (labor power, for example), and (M’) is the produced surplus. In this cycle, we have the summarized expression of the dynamics of classical accumulation. It is a cycle of capital valorization in constant expansion.

Beyond what is contained in Marx’s scheme, the character of profit and surplus value generation in the urban built environment (and in urban land) is also related to the aspects of rent and interest that the dynamics of city production carry as a space for accumulation. According to Fix (2011), the connection between the urban land market and the capital market is a characteristic of advanced capitalism in several countries. The land property title can be considered a form of fictitious capital[4], functioning as a legal document granting its

[4] Fictitious capital is the kind of capital that does not directly represent the real production of goods, but rather an expectation of future value. It arises, for example, in the form of stocks, public and private bonds, debts, and so on. It is called “fictitious” because it is not productive capital in itself, but a claim to a portion of future

holder the right to appropriate part of social wealth. An example of this is the appreciation of land or real estate after the execution of a public work, the added value of which is appropriated by the owner in the form of land rent[5].

Thus, land rent guides cities toward a speculative logic and serves as a basis for mechanisms of control over social organization and the development of space and the built environment within capitalism, which transform over time. There is constant market pressure to integrate land into financial capital circuits, allowing its circulation and strengthening the connection with other dynamics of accumulation on other scales, favoring the free movement of capital through traditional production chains, but also through the financial/speculative sector.

The understanding of how an urban built environment is composed within the accumulation cycle must be based on this "macro" movement that capital requires. By assuming that the city (and its composition and material expansion) is part of this cycle, we must identify the mechanisms of this process from the configuration of the urban built environment. The production of an urban geography and the expansion of the city's physical environment are part of and a means by which capitalism moves and expands.

> If capital is defined as 'value in motion,' then we must say something about the spatio-temporal configuration of the world in which this movement occurs. Movement cannot occur in a vacuum. We must abandon the view of value moving without being anchored anywhere and instead see it creating geographies of cities and transportation networks, forming agricultural landscapes for the production of food and raw materials, encompassing flows of people, goods, and information, determining territorial configurations of land values and labor skills, organizing workspaces, government structures, and administration. (Harvey, 2018, p. 129).

The configuration of the urban landscape changes on a larger or smaller scale depending on local realities and external forces acting in the place. Behind the engineering that builds luxury vertical or horizontal condominiums, bridges and highways, ports and the walls of private condominiums, shaping and (de)forming the city's landscape, there is a driving force that compels men and machines to produce the urban: the accumulation of capital.

profits generated by production. In other words, it has no immediate material existence but represents a claim on value that is yet to be produced. (Harvey, 2013).

[5] Land rent is the value (or payment) obtained by the owner of a piece of land simply by virtue of owning it, and not as a result of any productive activity they perform on it. It represents an appropriation of part of the surplus value (the excess value produced by workers), but one that is captured by the landowner rather than by the productive capitalist. (Harvey, 1980).

In cities, this accumulation process is directly related to what David Harvey calls the built environment. It is necessary to understand what the "composition" of this built environment is, considering its condition as fixed capital. More than that, what is the importance and "behavior" of this environment in the face of the general dynamics of accumulation? Harvey emphasizes that "fixed capital is not a thing, but a process of capital circulation through the use of material objects, such as machines" (Harvey, 2013, p. 220). According to Deák (1985, pp. 4–5):

> Fixed capital is the part of capital advanced to ensure the conditions of production for more than one period, while circulating capital is the part advanced for the conditions of production for only one production period, that is, for a period at the end of which the exchange value of the goods produced during this period is realized in monetary form.

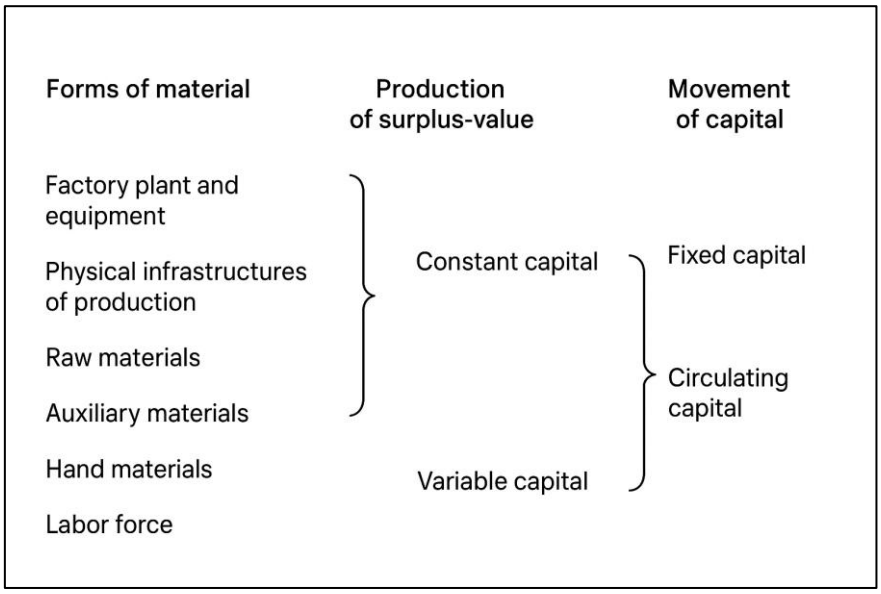
In the classical accumulation scheme presented by Marx (M – C – M'), fixed capital is part of the commodity (C), expressed by machines, warehouses, trucks, highways, bridges, or even a household utensil used in some productive cycle, such as a fork used in a restaurant, for example.

The fork used by the restaurant owner, for instance, acquires the "function" of fixed capital, since it is used multiple times to produce the commodity meal. Note that by being used repeatedly, in different productive cycles of various meals, the fork becomes "fixed" in relation to other parts of meal production. The harvested food, cooked, mixed with other raw materials, and served by a waiter "moves" throughout the cycle of meal production, while the fork does not. The fork is fixed capital, while the raw materials that make up the food are circulating capital, and together they compose the total cycle of producing the commodity meal. Therefore, "fixed capital is 'fixed' in relation to turnover time, and turnover time varies considerably from one industrial sector to another" (Harvey, 2014, p. 131).

In the scheme presented by Harvey, we notice that fixed capital is part of what he calls constant capital (the portion of capital that is "constantly" necessary in the productive process of commodities). In other words, fixed capital is one of the material (physical) forms applied in the productive process, which is classified as a type of "movement" that capital makes—in this case, to remain "fixed" in relation to the production chain (the cycle that the commodity undergoes: from raw material until the product is consumed). We should not confuse this "fixity" with being "immobile" in space.

The following scheme, elaborated by Harvey, shows the location (characteristics) of fixed capital in a production chain:

Figure 01 – Categories within Production



Source: Harvey (2014)

The built environment is characterized by spatial immobility, being understood as a type of immovable fixed capital. According to Harvey (2014, p.137), immobility does not by itself define the character of fixed capital, just as mobility does not eliminate it; however, when the means of labor are rooted in the land, they assume a special role in the economy, since they cannot circulate freely as commodities, although their property titles can be bought and sold.

In this sense, fixed capital materialized in the built urban landscapes integrates the mosaic of the accumulation dynamic, playing a fundamental role in the reproduction of capital. The fixity of these investments paradoxically contributes to the fluidity of the productive process, enabling the circulation and expansion of capital.

Fixity manifests itself in various elements, from machinery and warehouses to highways, ports, and entire cities, composing infrastructures that, although immovable, enable the flow and speed of capital. As Harvey (2014, p.126) points out, part of capital needs to remain fixed for the rest to continue in motion, configuring landscapes of production, circulation, and consumption. In this process, the built environment becomes central in the shaping of cities and urban space, structuring a geography driven by the logic of capital accumulation.

Within this dynamic of accumulation shaping landscapes, Harvey also classifies the built environment in two forms: 1- The structures that compose the built landscape and serve for consumption in everyday use, such as housing and pavements, for example, are defined as the "built environment for consumption." One of their attributes is the use value[6] that composes these structures (housing for the resident, for instance). 2- The other form arises from the use of structures directly for productive purposes, that is, considering their exchange value, whether for individual capitalists or construction companies. This second form is defined as the "built environment for production" (factories, ports, airports, hypermarkets, etc.) (Harvey, 2020).

The flows of capital circulating through the urban built environment (driven by the dynamic of accumulation) are conditioned by processes of the formation of activities, sectors, the emergence of market niches, interests in market expansion, and the emergence of "new" commodities in the city, such as high-end housing outside the traditional central valued zones. In this case, we observe that the city's periphery (urban fringes) changes to meet the logic of accumulation occurring in the built environment. Gated horizontal condominiums emerge as one of the phenomena that combines logics of accumulation with the "needs" of a specific housing model. They act as vectors of accumulation in the built environment.

4 HOUSING AS A MEANS FOR ACCUMULATION

The diversity of the built environment in cities is composed mainly of housing. This is because, over time, urban space has become the chosen living environment for the majority of the population, and thus, housing takes on an essential role in the formation of cities. Urban housing appears through two main fronts: the first relates to the human need for dwelling, understood as a use value; the second as an object of investment in the land market, seen through its exchange value[7], which fuels processes of accumulation in the city. The two fronts are directly related.

According to Ribeiro (2015, p.124), there are two segments of housing production: the capitalist, oriented toward accumulation, and the non-capitalist, marked by self-

[6] Use value is the utility of a good or service — that is, its capacity to satisfy a human need (whether physical, social, or symbolic, etc.). (Marx, 2013).
[7] Exchange value is the quantity of other goods for which a commodity can be traded. It is the form through which the value of a commodity is expressed in the market — in comparison with other commodities. (Marx, 2013)

production aimed at use values. When these dwellings reach the market, their prices do not reflect the productive process, but rather external conditions, especially location. Thus, the price of the housing-commodity is defined less by its physical composition and more by the spatial value of urban land, regulated by the real estate market and by developers' pursuit of profit, which explains the heterogeneity of land uses in cities.

The developer is the main agent in the process of producing housing-commodities, since they occupy a central position in this process, creating links with other agents such as the landowner, the builder, the financier, the State, and the client/consumer. The developer is the agent who transforms a given "piece" of the city into a commodity through its incorporation into the productive process. Whether by building housing or speculating in non-urbanized areas, their actions range from the choice of land to the supervision of construction services (Ribeiro, 2015, p. 94). In some cases, they are also the agent with the greatest profit advantage, as they benefit from circumstances related to location that may favor the emergence of differential rent [8]and surplus profit after the property is built.

The developer's role occurs basically in two moments. The first is through the purchase of land. The second occurs through the transformation of this land into a commodity (M), carried out through subdivision and/or buildings, which will later be transformed into more money (D'), now increased by profit and possibly by surplus profit.

Location is central for developers, since investment in housing production makes capital fixed and "immobile" in space. As Harvey (2013, p.243) highlights, the immobility of the built environment makes its value depend on the place where it is produced and on its relation with other urban elements, since shops, schools, factories, and residences need to be spatially interconnected. Thus, the built environment must be understood as a geographically ordered and complex commodity, and the price of housing, unlike other commodities, derives not only from the amount of labor, but also from the location and the spatial relations that sustain it.

The price will be regulated by land use in relation to location and by the different land uses in its surroundings. In this case, aspects such as local infrastructure, distance from places like beaches, lakes, and other amenities, or proximity to facilities such as schools, hospitals, shopping centers, and hypermarkets, will make all the difference in the final price and in the margin of profit and surplus profit of this type of commodity (Ribeiro, 2015, p. 81)

[8] It is the land rent (the value paid to the landowner) that results from natural or spatial advantages that make a piece of land more productive or more profitable than others. It occurs when different lands generate different profits for the capitalist who exploits them, and the surplus profit (above the average profit) is appropriated by the owner of the more advantageous land. (Harvey, 2013)

adds.:

> The utility of housing as a central unit of consumption is not defined solely by its internal characteristics as a constructed object. Its use value is also determined by its articulation with the spatial system of real estate objects that make up the complex use value represented by urban space. What is sold is not just "four walls," but also a "ticket" to access this system of objects. […] the importance of these locational elements in differentiating the use values of housing increases in direct proportion to the differentiation of space in objective terms—quantitative, qualitative, and locational inequalities of the real estate system of objects—and in subjective terms, the different social and symbolic contents of the various points in urban space.

The form of the built environment in different parts of the city, the arrangement of streets, and the architectural styles of residences reveal, through the heterogeneity of the landscape, how price variations occur across different land uses. This heterogeneity must be understood through the distinct processes that make housing a commodity with complex production, consumption, distribution, and circulation.

We observe that the housing-commodity is a complex type of enterprise insofar as the price regulated by the factor of location is not restricted to the absolute position of this object in space, but rather to its position relative to the surrounding conditions. For this reason, the more the urban fabric expands, the more complex the variation in housing prices becomes in a given city, considering the variations in the urbanization process that affect the production of urban space and its configuration as a built environment. For example, we may cite the impact of appreciation or depreciation of the land and housing market with the installation of a prison, an airport, a shopping mall, etc.

We therefore understand that, just like the price of urban land, the price of housing is determined by monopoly value[9], since locational conditions provide specific advantages to certain points of space and, consequently, to the housing built there. The exclusivity of monopoly in this case appears as a fundamental element for the occurrence of unique advantages exclusive to that particular portion of space.

According to Ribeiro (2015, p.117), the occurrence of this monopoly price presupposes the presence of three factors that influence the price related to the location: 1—micro-location factors, related to the local environment (natural and built), which operate on a more limited scale near the housing site, such as infrastructure quality, for example;

[9] According to Harvey (2013), monopoly value is a price above the normal market value that can be charged for a good or commodity due to the exclusivity or scarcity of a special condition — such as a privileged location or a unique natural feature of a piece of land — which cannot be reproduced or substituted.

2—macro-location factors, related to the neighborhood or homogeneous zone in which a given spatial system is situated within the city; and 3—general factors, linked to the economic situation, population growth, and the conditions of the property itself.

In this way, each point in the city, in the hands of investors, will have some type of monopolistic advantage according to location factors, thereby creating hierarchies of prices with different urban land uses, whether through the construction of the housing-commodity or through spatial transformation aimed at raising those prices. These conditions of spatial transformation may even be promoted by State action through public policies aimed at infrastructure, which in some cases end up benefiting investors in promoting the housing-commodity. In this regard, Ribeiro (2015, p.118) states.:

> The segmentation of the market will make it possible to establish differentiated market prices, not determined by competition among all producers, since each one will be offering differentiated utilities: here "privacy," there "green space," elsewhere the "beach," further ahead shorter commuting time, or, on the other hand, lighter indebtedness.

In this situation, we perceive that the production of urban space functions dialectically as it both conditions and is conditioned by the process of capital accumulation. Investment in the city thus becomes a constant search for profitable assets in urban production, and the incorporation of new spaces "into" this space is an issue to be considered, especially with housing models emerging on the urban fringes. Thus, "urbanization is also a process of transforming land rent into land value, property value, and the value of urban space, given by social labor and by the constitution of an urban real estate market" (Volochko, 2015, p. 101).

The expansion of the urban fringe through the construction of subdivisions and gated communities must be considered from this perspective of urban investments that ideally create "exclusivities" outside the city. Capitalist accumulation finds in the production of space (and in its built environment) its condition for realization. Space is no longer the means of production; it is itself the product of the accumulative process. On this, Lefebvre (2002, p. 142) highlights:

> The development of the world of commodities reaches the continent of objects. This world is no longer limited to contents, to objects in space. Lately, space itself is bought and sold. It is no longer about land, about soil, but about social space as such, produced as such, that is, with this objective, with this purpose (as it is said). Space is no longer simply the indifferent medium, the sum of places where surplus value is formed, realized, and distributed. It

> becomes the product of social labor, that is, a very general object of production and, consequently, of the formation of surplus value.

The creation of “unique spaces” through advertising supports the pursuit of monopolistic advantages in the real estate market, raising prices and transforming peripheral sectors into vectors for appropriation and “exclusivity.” This process occurs through the incorporation of new spaces into the built environment, generating monopolistic conditions favorable to investors. Ribeiro (2015, p.128) identifies three practices in this context: the destruction of areas through urban renewal, the symbolic degradation of certain spaces to enhance the value of others, and the expansion of urban frontiers through the urbanization of previously unoccupied zones.

5 GATED HORIZONTAL CONDOMINIUMS AND ACCUMULATION VECTORS IN THE PERIPHERY OF CAMPINA GRANDE

Gated horizontal condominiums are presented in the real estate market as products associated with *“innovation and exclusivity,”* reinforced by advertising discourses that link them to a *“new way of life”* or *“new lifestyle.”* This valorization seeks to legitimize the commercialization of this type of housing, especially in peripheral areas, where the idea of social distinction and spatial differentiation is created. D’Ottaviano (2008, p.37) points out that this residential model emerged in England at the end of the 18th century, marked by the logic of *“inversion”* between a wealthy center and a poor periphery, promoting the separation between elite residences and commercial, industrial, and working-class areas.

Another aspect identified by the author is the *“marriage”* between the rural and the urban, since these dwellings—although located in peripheral areas and displaying architectural features reminiscent of the countryside—maintained an urban lifestyle due to access to the city’s services and amenities. This pattern also involved the incorporation of low-value peripheral lands for the construction of residences for the wealthy, initially accessible only by private carriages. Today, the same logic can be observed in the condominiums of Campina Grande, now connected to urban centers by highways and major expressways leading to the city’s central areas, reaffirming the continuity of a model of spatial valorization and segregation.

In 19th-century United States, the English model of peripheral housing was adapted with an emphasis on the intensive use of advertising, linking it to an *“American way of life”*

associated with the suburbs of the new wealthy classes. Thus, suburban housing came to represent not only a living space but an idealized lifestyle, sold as the quintessential American housing model (D'Ottaviano, 2008, pp.43–44).

In Campina Grande, Paraíba, this high-value residential typology appears dispersed within the urban fabric, far from traditional axes of valorization, consolidating a center–periphery pattern similar to that of the past, where the built environment in the urban periphery acts as a key vector in the dynamics of capital accumulation occurring within the city.

The accumulation dynamic associated with gated horizontal condominiums seems to diverge from the logic of valorization observed in more profitable central areas, where the characteristics of the immediate surroundings (street or neighborhood) significantly impact housing price increases. In the gated communities of Campina Grande, this pattern does not directly correspond to the price levels and land-use patterns of their surroundings.

Housing within these developments is characterized by a specific dynamic of accumulation: the *"creation"* of monopoly attributes to justify valorization within the condominium space, through the appropriation of natural amenities (lakes, fields, green areas, etc.) and/or the construction of a *"lifestyle"* associated with security, comfort, leisure, and *"exclusivity"* linked to the project. One way to visualize this valorization is through the prices charged for the sale of lots within the condominiums. It is important to note the difference in the price per square meter inside these developments compared to that outside the condominium walls, in the surrounding neighborhood or zone. Table 01 presents these distinctions.

Table 01 – Price per Square Meter in Gated Horizontal Condominiums in Campina Grande – PB (2018)

Condominium	Location	Average Lot Size (m²)	Average Lot Price (R$)	Average Price per m² in the Condominium (R$)	Price per m² in the Neighborhood/Zone (outside the condominium) (R$)
Serraville	Malvinas	200	130,000	650	75
Parkville	Malvinas	240	150,239	625	75
Monteville	Malvinas	240	136,950	570	75
Atmosphera Eco	Rural Area – Lagoa Seca	733.5	211,000	287	0.05

Atmosphera Green	Rural Area – Lagoa Seca	733.5	211,000	287	0.05
Alphaville	Mirante	542	210,000	387	125
Terras Alphaville	Itararé	340	173,350	509	Not identified
Sierra Home Resort	Jardim Tavares	535	400,000	747	125
Nações Res. Privé	Rural Area – Lagoa Seca	487.5	140,000	287	0.05
Campos do Conde	Rural Area – Campina Grande	360	200,000	555	0.05
Reino Verde	Rural Area – Campina Grande	850	94,000	110	0.05

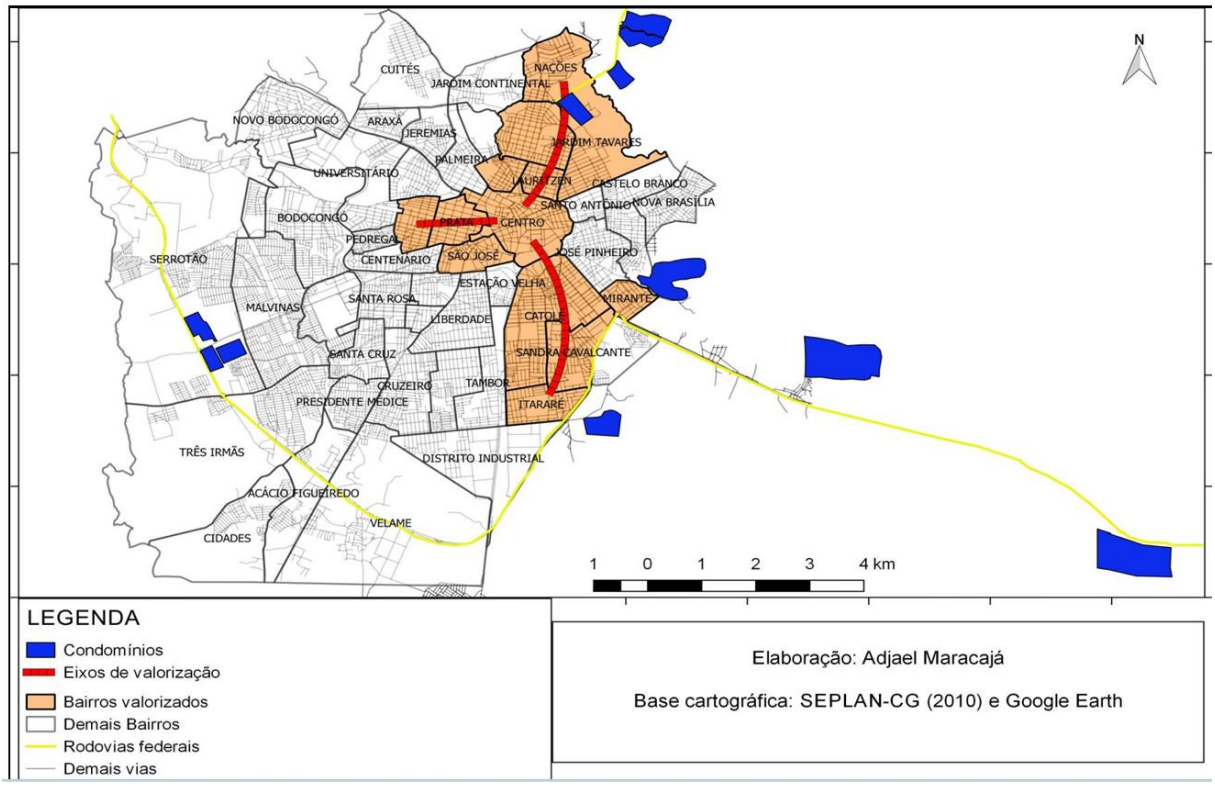
Source: Maracajá (2018)

The high prices identified within the condominiums are justified by the *"created"* characteristics promoted by developers in connection with the project—often through the appropriation of elements from the surrounding environment (natural amenities such as lakes, vegetation, and native fauna)—inviting the client (the end consumer) to live in contact with nature or away from the *"problems"* associated with city life.

The internal attributes of the condominiums guide the valorization of the development as a compensatory measure within the accumulation dynamics of these residences. Figure 02 presents the mapping of the most profitable neighborhoods and the predominant axes of valorization in the city, as well as the location of the gated condominiums. The mapping was produced based on data collection and analyses described in the methodology, demonstrating how these high-value housing units are distributed *"outside"* the city and how they remain connected through major expressways providing rapid access to central areas.

The relative distance of these developments from the central area and from the sectors of highest valorization appears in two ways within the logic of accumulation in the built environment through these *"outside-the-city"* vectors. The first relates to the *"loss"* of locational advantages associated with the central part of the city. Time spent in traffic and the *"lack"* of nearby services, for instance, could be seen as negative aspects in this context. However, the second aspect compensates for this, as it is connected to the possibility of *"creating"* new monopoly advantages. What is lost due to distance from the center can be offset by proximity to greenery and nature, as well as by exclusivity, security, comfort, and leisure offered within these spaces.

Figure 02 – Gated Horizontal Condominiums and Valued Neighborhoods – Campina Grande – PB (2018)



Source: Maracajá (2018)

It is evident that valorization—and consequently, the dynamic of accumulation—will follow a distinct logic in the correlation between these housing units and the city, where two characteristics prevail: 1. The *micro spatial characteristic*, limited to the internal composition of the condominiums, that is, what they can incorporate and create through valorization attributes such as security, leisure, privacy, comfort, etc.; 2. The *macro spatial characteristic*, related to the broader context of the commercial dynamics of the city's central sectors—that is, what happens in the downtown area and the most valued neighborhoods, facilitated by the connection through expressways.

The *meso spatial dimension*, corresponding to the immediate surroundings of the developments (the neighborhood or zone), is *"lost"* in this context, since the location of the developments is not advantageous in terms of urban land-use dynamics or accumulation processes in the built environment around them.

These developments therefore have the capacity to create a unique, segregated micro-urban environment, differentiating themselves from the traditional dynamic of strategic urban land use related to their immediate surroundings. These fragments of the built

environment function, to some extent, as *"anomalies"* within their spatial context, since they neither depend on the surrounding land-market dynamics nor necessarily generate any significant impact on valorization in the sector where they are located.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The gated horizontal condominiums demonstrate a dynamic of "escape" through a pattern in the organization of accumulation within the built environment, detaching themselves from the immediate location context where they were installed, and functioning as accumulation vectors toward peripheral areas, expanding their networks outward from these spaces. The main characteristic of these developments lies in the significant increase in profits for the developer/incorporator, as they invest in relatively cheaper land and sell it at prices comparable to those of highly valued upscale areas. In this way, the condominium becomes a very advantageous residential typology for the developer, since the profit and surplus profit are higher than those of other properties marketed in the city—precisely because they are located in areas with low raw land values.

We therefore consider that housing in gated horizontal condominiums ends up becoming relatively more expensive, since if the price of the land acquired by the developer is far below the market prices of the city's "noble" land areas, the final selling price of these condominium homes becomes quite high when compared to residential typologies located in other areas with higher land prices and relatively privileged locations.

The context of "exclusivity" is directly related to the valorization attributes found in the advertising of these developments—such as privacy (due to the walls surrounding the condominiums), "security" (thanks to the technical devices available in these areas), leisure (offering services such as playgrounds, swimming pools, natural lakes, jogging tracks, woods, etc.), and "comfort" (through the possibility of living far from the problems of the city while still having quick access to central services through large access roads).

The location factor (long distances) in this type of development is a fundamental characteristic for understanding its commercialization dynamics. It can be observed that these housing units are always connected by a major expressway, allowing residents to maintain feasible connections with the city's central services. In this case, access via these routes becomes an essential factor for the occurrence of such residences, since these developments still depend on a valuation logic linked to the city's central services. Even

though they are “distant,” these connecting roads are elements that enable the exchange and consumption relationship between these residences and the central areas of Campina.

We also observe that the microlocation factor (the internal area of the condominiums), oriented “inward” within the four walls, is the most important aspect for the realization of accumulation through this residential typology. It follows a logic centered on an “exclusive lifestyle” that combines nature, comfort, security, privacy, leisure, and detachment from the city within the same space. However, it is important to note that, since these developments are not completely isolated from the urban dynamics of accumulation, they still depend on general productive processes occurring in the city (services). Thus, they adopt a bivalent logic—while they “deny” the city by distancing themselves from it, they also depend on it to anchor their emergence, indicating that what is being sold is not only what lies within the walls but also the city and its services.

As a fundamental part of the built environment, housing as a whole is not merely a spatial section created to meet the need for shelter; it also represents the demands of production and consumption within the large market of land and structures that constitute the city itself. The complexity resulting from this appears in the urban landscape through the different residential typologies that emerge in various parts of the city: high-standard gated houses, apartments in tall towers, informal housing occupations in less valued areas, and others—all of which are expressions of a landscape shaped by the scale that links the urbanization process to accumulation dynamics, increasingly inseparable from one another.

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