

ROBERT PARK'S HUMAN ECOLOGY AND THE EXPANSION OF HORIZONTAL CLOSED CONDOMINIUMS IN THE CITY OF MOSSORÓ/RN¹

A ecologia humana de Robert Park e a expansão dos condomínios horizontais fechados na cidade de Mossoró/RN

El human ecología de Robert Park y expansión la los condominios de horizontales cerrados en la ciudad de Mossoró/RN

Joao Paulo SANTOS – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte(UFRN), Brasil.
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3723-5463>
URL: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/1998443990140968>
EMAIL: joaozx@yahoo.com.br

ABSTRACT

From the emergence of social sciences, issues related to forms of housing in large cities in the 19th century became prominent. The reports of Friedrich Engels' work, "The Condition of Working Classes in England", from 1884, raised new thoughts on the question. At the beginning of the 20th century, ways to solve the problems highlighted by Engels were devised. Urban planners such as Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Georges-Eugène Haussmann and Le Corbusier stood out in the search for solutions for the implementation of less unhealthy housing spaces. In contrast, the form of organization of urban housing and ways of life in the city were not only related to urban issues. Robert Ezra Park developed theories about the interaction processes between individuals and communities in the city. Based on Park's concepts of moral zones and natural areas and on the current reality of the expansion of closed horizontal condominiums in the city of Mossoró, this study aims to identify the possibility of using the author's theoretical concepts to understand the spread of these projects in the city. Exploratory in nature, this study has bibliographic sources as a database. Park's conceptions, intrinsically, do not have enough weight to promote understandings about the phenomena involved in the determination of housing locations in the urban environment of Mossoró. The phenomenon of the spreading of closed horizontal condominiums in the city is more related to speculative forms of negotiation of urban land than to subjectively cultural choice.

Keywords: City; Moral Regions; Natural Areas; Segregation.

RESUMO

A partir do surgimento das ciências sociais as problemáticas relacionadas as formas de moradia nas grandes cidades do século XIX tornaram-se destaque. Os relatos da

¹ This article is the result of the academic concerns promoted in the mandatory discipline "Approaches to Cities and Urban Dynamics" of the Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Studies (PPEUR), at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte.

obra de Friedrich Engels, "The Condition of Working Classes in England", de 1884, fez surgir novos pensamentos sobre a questão. No início do século XX, foram idealizadas maneiras de resolver os problemas evidenciados por Engels. Planejadores urbanos como Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Georges-Eugène Haussmann e Le Corbusier destacaram-se na busca por soluções para a implantação de espaços habitacionais menos insalubres. Em contraponto, a forma de organização das moradias urbanas e os modos de vida na cidade não foram somente relacionados com questões urbanísticas. Robert Ezra Park desenvolveu teorias sobre os processos de interação entre indivíduos e comunidades na cidade. Com base nos conceitos de zonas morais e áreas naturais de Park e na atual realidade da expansão dos condomínios horizontais fechados na cidade de Mossoró, este estudo pretende identificar a possibilidade de utilização das concepções teóricas do autor para o entendimento do espraiamento desses empreendimentos na cidade. De caráter exploratório, este estudo possui como base de dados fontes bibliográficas. As concepções de Park, intrinsecamente, não possuem lastro suficiente para promoverem entendimentos sobre os fenômenos envolvidos nas determinações dos locais de moradias no ambiente urbano de Mossoró. O fenômeno do espraiamento dos condomínios horizontais fechados na cidade está mais relacionado as formas especulativas de negociação das terras urbanas do que com a escolha subjetivamente cultural.

Palavras-chave: Cidade; Regiões Morais; Áreas Naturais; Segregação.

RESUMEN

Desde el surgimiento de las ciencias sociales, las cuestiones relacionadas con las formas de vivienda en las grandes ciudades del siglo XIX se hicieron prominentes. Los relatos de la obra de Friedrich Engels, "La situación de las clases trabajadoras en Inglaterra", de 1884, dieron lugar a nuevas reflexiones sobre la cuestión. A principios del siglo XX se idearon formas de solucionar los problemas señalados por Engels. Urbanistas como Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Georges-Eugène Haussmann y Le Corbusier destacaron en la búsqueda de soluciones para la implementación de espacios habitacionales menos insalubres. En otro polo, la forma de organización de la vivienda urbana y las formas de vida en la ciudad no solo estaban relacionadas con cuestiones urbanas. Robert Ezra Park desarrolló teorías sobre los procesos de interacción entre individuos y comunidades en la ciudad. Con base en los conceptos de Park sobre zonas morales y áreas naturales y en la realidad actual de la expansión de condominios horizontales cerrados en la ciudad de Mossoró, este estudio tiene como objetivo identificar la posibilidad de utilizar los conceptos teóricos del autor para comprender la difusión de estos proyectos en el ciudad. De naturaleza exploratoria, este estudio cuenta con fuentes bibliográficas como base de datos. Las concepciones de Park, intrínsecamente, no tienen el peso suficiente para promover la comprensión de los fenómenos involucrados en la determinación de las ubicaciones de las viviendas en el entorno urbano de Mossoró. El fenómeno de la expansión de condominios horizontales cerrados en la ciudad está más relacionado con formas especulativas de negociación del suelo urbano que con una elección subjetivamente cultural.

Palabras-clave: Ciudad; Regiones Morales; Espacios Naturales; Segregación.

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of social sciences, analyzes of people's ways of living in cities have been in evidence (DE MATOS, 2001), especially after the emergence of industrial society based on the intense social division of labor. Tothe precarious housing conditions of most people in the large industrial urban agglomerations of the end of the 19th century,

aggravated and opened up the face of unhealthy housing that the poorest working class in European cities already knew well.

In London, in the year 1880, the question of housing was the main social problem (HALL, 2007). The city was experiencing a real social upheaval that gave rise to the fear of a revolution coming from the workers. The issue of housing for the poor and the ills caused by poor living conditions was the central point of this issue (HALL, 2007).

Before, Engels had already made a great effort to elucidate the level of precariousness of the housing and way of life of the working class that lived in the biggest European industrial cities of the end of the 19th century. The reports described in the work published in 1844, *The Condition of Working Classes in England*, demonstrated the core of the problem which, after being exposed, gave rise to new ways of thinking about the problem of urban housing.

Already in the 20th century, in Europe, but specifically in England, as well as on the other side of the Atlantic, in the United States, several ways were devised to solve the housing problem of the working masses in the big cities of these countries. The actions had as a central point, the understanding that it would be appropriate to relocate the poor in places farther from the center of urban agglomerations, eliminating the slums that were the maximum expression of unhealthy housing and the generation of social problems in large cities (HALL, 2007).

For Peter Hall (2007) these initiatives can be associated with the emergence of urban planning. The author understands that this intellectual movement was directly linked to a form of society's reaction against the problems experienced in cities in the 19th century. In this context, the concepts of garden city emerged² conceived by Ebenezer Howard, regional city³ developed by Scottish biologist Patrick Geddes, from the monumental city⁴ applied by

² Ebenezer Howard, in 1898, through the work *To-morrow: A peaceful path to real reform*, aiming to solve the problem of unhealthy conditions in the Victorian city (London at the end of the 19th century), defended the exportation of people and jobs from the great centers, from urban to lean cities planned in rural areas that integrated urban and rural life (HALL, 2007; SILVA, 2014).

³ Patrick Geddes, in 1920, proposed that the solution to the dense population concentration of large cities would be the implementation of an urban planning program at the regional level where each sub-region could develop through the use of its natural resources, considering the balance environment and the renewal of exploited resources. For Hall (2007), in this perspective, the growth of cities, both metropolises and new cities, would be subordinated to regional conditions.

⁴ Based on the city's monumental tradition, it was modernly represented by the major urban reforms implemented in Paris from 1853 onwards. For Hall (2007) this movement, which established the great boulevards and wide strips of public sidewalks, gave rise to the City Beautiful movement, which prioritizes urban planning without considering social purposes, creating areas of segregation in cities.

Georges-Eugène Haussmann in Paris and the city with high density⁵ by the Swiss architect and urbanist, living in France, Le Corbusier (HALL, 2007).

In these visions, the question of improving the allocation of people in cities was central due to the urgency of eliminating or avoiding the social evils (crimes, prostitution, infant mortality, low life expectancy, alcoholism, etc.) verified in places of “bad reputation”. Engels (1975) empirically showed that these urban spaces reflected the precariousness of living conditions of the working class by the holders of the means of production. The proletariat was concentrated in the most unhealthy areas in the cities, as it was only in these places that industrial workers could live according to their financial conditions (ENGELS, 1975). From this, urban planning gained strength to solve the problems of working-class housing. However, because they occurred within a capitalist ideology of profit, arising from income of the land, the initiatives did not remain within the reach of the majority of workers since the poorest people could not afford housing costs (HALL, 2007).

In this way, through several changes in the original models proposed by creators such as Howard, Geddes, Haussmann and Corbusier, urban planners of the 20th century began to seek urban solutions for the implementation of housing areas, amid the great diversification of ways of life and the conflicts that these movements caused in the cities⁶.

In contrast to this process, the form of organization of urban housing and ways of life in the city were not only related to urban issues to control the problems of cities. Robert Ezra Park (1864-1944), American sociologist who was one of the exponents of the Chicago Ecological School, developed theories about the processes of interaction between individuals and communities in the urban environment. In his main work, *Human communities: the city and human ecology*, published in 1952, Park considers that the city is a social laboratory since it integrates natural physical elements, artificial physical structures, individual spiritual manifestations, orders and moral rules. For him, the urban is structured in a type of association between its elements. Ecologically, the city is the habitat of man who emancipated himself from barbarism and became civilized.⁷ (PARK, 1952).

⁵ Le Corbusier claimed that the evil of modern cities was their high density. For him the solution was, as Hall (2007) states, “perversely”, to increase density through the demolition and replacement of existing urban structures by tall towers of buildings erected in the midst of green areas.

⁶ Hall (2007) describes conflicts related to initiatives to implement housing areas and urban reform projects in cities on countries such as England, France, Germany and the United States.

⁷ The term “civilized” in this work points, considering Robert Park's theory, to the question of the existence of a human culture associated with an urban habitat. For him, the city is a phenomenon that encompasses civility, since in its content the ideals of nation, government, politics and religion can be identified, which are only possible to exist through the existence of a human community (PARK, 1915).

Park's (1952) conception of the city reveals that it is formed by several compartments or regions that have non-unique functions and compositions, but that have the neighborhood as a similarity. For the urban sociologist, this is the simplest and most fundamental spatial and social component that exists in the space of the city. It is from the neighborhood that the formation of the city as an organized structure begins. In Robert Park's thought, the neighborhood is the unit of social and political organization that has the smallest size and that is formed even without the need for an institutional organization (PARK, 1952).

Still in Park, interconnected with these ideas, another one that attracts two ways of visualizing urban dynamics and their consequences on forms of housing is the theorist's understanding of the process of segregation of populations in certain parts of cities. One of them is the determination of places called by Park "moral regions". The other is the concept of "natural areas"⁸ (PARK, 1952; EUFRASIO, 1999). The approach in which Park develops the two concepts, undertakes, at the beginning of the 20th century, new ways of carrying out analyzes on the issues involved in people's ways of life in the urban environment and in the problem of housing in large cities. In this context, based on a return to conceptions related to the development of urban studies, it is possible to question whether the ways of understanding urban phenomena created by Park, more specifically those related to housing, would have the current potential to increase understanding of the subject in question. In a city like Mossoró, located in the western region of the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

Mossoró is currently classified in the national urban network as a "C" regional capital (IBGE, 2020). Its population was estimated at more than 300,000 people in 2020 (IBGE, 2021). The urban pole is the driving force of an Immediate Geographical Region⁹ which encompasses 17 municipalities existing in its intermediations. The city presents itself in region as an intermediary of flows that connects, through road accesses, existing urban spaces in the extreme northeast of Brazil, from national metropolises to the smallest cities (SANTOS; MOURA; KNOX, 2021).

⁸ Conceptualizations will be presented in section 2.3.

⁹ The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) developed a new model of official territorial regionalization for Brazil in 2017. Regional conjunctural forms were determined considering two types of territorial scales that articulate the material and immaterial flows of the country and connect the various points of the national network of cities. The new regional scales determined by the IBGE are the intermediate geographic regions (RGIN) and the immediate geographic regions (RGIM)(IBGE, 2017).

Mossoró has a wide regional influence (in the west of Rio Grande do Norte, in the extreme east of Ceará and in the north of Paraíba) that makes it the target of a diversity of flows related to the new regional and national productive dynamics implemented by the advancement of the technical-scientific environment -informational in peripheral areas of Brazil (SANTOS, 1993; SANTOS; MOURA; KNOX, 2021;). Being a non-metropolitan inland urban space, but prominent in the northeastern urban network, the mossoronian section presents itself as a suitable place to study the conditions and factors related to the issue of housing in urban spaces located in the semi-arid northeastern region.

That said, this work aims, considering the concepts of natural areas and moral regions and going beyond the ecological determinism present in Park's work (DIAS, 2017), to identify the possibility of using the author's theoretical conceptions for the understanding of related constraints the question of the spread of closed horizontal condominiums in the city of Mossoró as a new form of housing. Therefore, this study has an exploratory character and is based on information collected in bibliographic sources.¹⁰

For the realization of the proposal, key concepts such as moral regions and natural areas were rescued in the works of Robert Park. Starting from the identification of Park's main theoretical contributions related to the issue of housing in cities, the author's understandings were related to quantitative and qualitative data extracted from research published in scientific articles, books, dissertations and theses that deal with urban development and housing models implemented historically in Mossoró. The Study emphasizes the time frame of the last two decades of the 21st century, as in this period there was a continuous installation of the highlighted types of real estate projects.

2 HUMAN ECOLOGY AND THE CITY IN THE WORK OF ROBERT PARK

The theory of human ecology and habitat forms developed by Robert Park has a logical interconnection which is the assertion that the habitat of "civilized" man is the city. In this understanding, the author develops his explanations about human ecology and consequently the city. The ideas highlighted in this section on human ecology and its conception of the city, considering the concepts of moral regions and natural areas, will be those that are related and that can help the process of approaching Park's vision about the new forms of housing in Mossoró. In this way, it is not the aim of the discussion to carry out

¹⁰ The discussion contained in this work was improved from the valuable contributions of the Geotemas Magazine evaluators.

a critical analysis of the ecological conceptions of the city, but essential criticisms about these conceptions will be pointed out during the later sections.

2.1 Human ecology

The work of the theorist from Chicago's Ecological School seeks to investigate social phenomena in large cities in the United States in the first half of the 20th century. For this, he approaches physical and moral issues in an attempt to explain the urban phenomenon and the functioning of cities and their social dynamics, within an ecological perspective (DIAS, 2017). In his book, *Human communities: the city and human ecology*, published in 1952, Robert Park relates characteristics of plant and animal communities with the human one, considering the concept of habitat developed by ecologists. The "ecology" that served as the basis for Park's theory was the one that seeks to determine the distribution of animals and plants over the natural regions of the earth.

At first sight it may seem simple, but the formulation of the concept does not consider that the ecology of plants and animals can be fully applied to human beings. Human ecology does not only consider man's relationship with the part of the planet's surface on which he lives. It has as its main theoretical basis the relationship of individuals in the human community in their modern and "civilized" habitat, the city (PARK 1952). In this conception, the existing relationships between men and their ecology are only possible to be compared with the interrelationships of animal and plant life forms. Therefore, carrying out analyzes of human communities considering the same relationships existing in other non-human communities is not part of the social ecology proposed by Park.

Man is not totally dependent on just one physical environment like other organismal communities. The existence of the territorial division of labor and the exchange of goods and services, in the parkean view, emancipated the human being from dependence on just one ecological habitat. Man's creative capacity gave rise to technical devices that increased the possibilities of the species to react to its habitat and also to remake it. Allied to this, human ecology associated its theoretical formats with institutionalized structures based on customs and traditions transmitted by generations of its members (PARK, 1952).

One more difference between human communities and that of other types of organisms is in relation to the organizational structures of functioning of animal and plant communities. In these, the division of labor and its social organization has only a physiological and instinctive basis. But in human societies, the organizations that form the

community are influenced by customs, by the consensus of individuals and through competition between them (PARK, 1952). Human ecology for Park is related to a type of limitation of competition and freedom of individuals who are part of the community (PARK, 1952). The social order of human ecology is more tied to competition than consensus. Park considers that competition between human societies is limited. It finds blockages in customs and culture.

In a synthetic way, Park elucidates that the elements of the human community basically consist of a population and a culture. The term “culture” is understood as a set formed by two poles. Customs/beliefs (non-material culture) and artifacts/technological devices (material culture). To these two elements, Park inserts the natural resources of the habitat as being those that integrate the human community (PARK, 1952).

From the mode of interaction existing between the elements (population, culture and habitat resources) it is possible to reach and maintain the biotic and social balance of the community (PARK, 1952). The conceptualizations that Park makes from these considerations are complex and it was exactly for this reason that the theory of human ecology, considering the city habitat, succeeded in answering questions that social scientists in the United States debated in the first decades of the 1900s.

Marafron (1996) understands that the Human Ecology of the Chicago School is the result of the search for explanations of the social phenomena existing in large cities and North American metropolitan areas in the early twentieth century, when there was an intense process of urbanization due to the advance of industrial capitalism. The studies carried out from the point of view of human ecology can be understood as investigations into urban ecology since their results identified processes and concepts that are still used in urban studies such as urban community, mobility, fluidity, concentration, centralization and segregation (MARAFRON, 1996).

However, for Marafron (1996), even with the development of a theoretical-methodological framework for analyzing urban phenomena, the methods of the Chicago School were identified as limited. The main criticism falls on the use of naturalistic biological models to seek understanding of the issues involved in urbanization. The understanding that the social environment could be studied using techniques related to the natural environment, in an ecological conception, was the basis of the questions directed to the Chicago School's methods of investigation, since the studies arising from human ecology inserted cultural factors into first plan. In scientific analyzes of human ecology the State and general social

processes such as class conflict, forms of power and the socioeconomic dynamics of capitalism were secondary (MARAFFON, 1996).

2.2 The city in human ecology

Park's view of the city and what constitutes it is broad and considers the existence of several factors for its formation such as natural, economic, cultural, labor, historical and more individual aspects such as feelings and behavior of individuals. It is noticed that the author has general ideas related to those of Durkheim (1999) (city as a place of symbiosis or organic solidarity). There are associations between Park and Durkheim, since the two theorists share an organic vision, related to the cooperation between forms of life, to explain the society experienced in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Robert Park's view of the city is related to what Durkheim (1999 understands as organic solidarity¹¹, which for both, reminiscent of items from Darwin's theory of evolution of organisms, is based on an intense development of the division of labor. For them the social division of labor is the source of man's civility. The division of labor, together with the appropriation of the territory and its resources, culture, morals and legal norms are the factors that give human societies, in their habitat, an organic unit similar to a superior organism, which can be apprehended, considering the conceptions of the authors, as being the city.

Considering Durkheim's ideas, Park advances in sociological analyses. He translates the city as a product of human nature. It is not just a conjunction of men and their individualities, of streets, buildings, transport and lighting systems, enhanced by community and social conveniences. His understanding goes beyond interconnected visions, institutions and administrative methods that organize and impose themselves in the urban space. The city is formed, in addition to these items, by traditional customs, feelings and community and individual behaviors that are passed on to generations according to tradition (PARK, 1952).

The city is not understood only as a geographical and ecological construction. It presents itself simultaneously as an economic unit. The city's economy is supported by the

¹¹ In Durkheim (1999) it is possible to apprehend that social organic solidarity is similar to that existing in the organic function of higher animals where each of their organs has particularities of forms and functions that, together, play the role of maintaining the unity of the organism. In society, organic solidarity is the result of the social division of labor. Durkheim understands that advanced forms of division of labor are essential for the material and intellectual advancement of civilization.

division of labor. But behind that are the primary factors of the ecological organization of the city, which for Park are the means of communication (telephones, newspapers, advertising), forms of transport, constructions and inventions that urban man has created. These factors are what provide greater mobility and concentration of the urban population in their habitat (PARK, 1952).

Considering the city as a junction of place, people, machines and administrative guidelines Park infers that these items are organically interconnected and that they generate a psychophysical mechanism where private and political interests produce at the same time a collective and corporate organization. The spatial organization of the city (streets, houses, buildings, railways, etc.) for Park those are artifacts since they can only be related to the living city insofar as they are used by man. The vital strength of individuals and the human community is what makes the city structure useful (PARK, 1952). The city is characterized by its own type of culture formed by community, economic and political institutions that are distributed in a more or less defined way. This distribution depends on geographic characteristics, the lines of communication and transport and the price of land. This process is called community ecological distribution by Park. In this sense, the ecological standard of the city and the functionalities of each of its areas are constituted (PARK, 1952).

The growth of the city in the ecological conception is understood as a type of aggregation. It is considered that when there is an increase in population in any part of the urban area, all the others are affected. The power of interference in other locations in the city is related to the local transport system. Park considers that the multiplication of transport possibilities and the increase in connection with the urban periphery causes several reflections in the city areas such as the increase in land values, the increase in the height of buildings, congestion and the movement of people in the urban commercial center (PARK, 1952).

For Robert Park the city, as a complex structure that expresses human nature¹², can be understood as an aggregate of three distinct individual associations which are the territorial, the economic or competitive and the cultural. The territorial association is, in a broader conception than just the outline of a city, related to the territorial organization of society. About it, the theorist states that the arrangement of a society in a territory should be considered essential since it is related to the fact that the relationships between social

¹² For Park (1915) the city is shaped according to people's habits and customs. In this way it is a moral and physical organization. These two organizing elements interact dialectically to constantly change.

members are affected by physical distances. In addition, the establishment of “roots” in the soil generates social stability because the continuity in a territory contributes to the maintenance of customs and beliefs (PARK, 1952).

The economic or competitive association dealt with in the ecological conception is related to a type of competition that generates cooperation and that is understood in human societies as forms of exchange of goods and services. In this understanding, economic relations are, in themselves, products of competition that results in cooperation between members of society (PARK, 1952). For Robert Park this process makes mass production and distribution possible. He associates, considering the technological progress of transport and communication, the competitiveness/cooperation duality, to the emergence of the basis for the formation of a world political society (PARK, 1952).

Finally, the cultural association makes the city a place that cannot be understood only considering its population, geographic, economic or political characteristics. For this, one must consider the moral order, customs, conventions and laws (PARK, 1952). In human society, the existing relationships between its individuals are limited by tradition, culture and legal norms, and never by instinct. In this way individual organisms occupy the same habitat (the city) and live a common life. At the same time, the city is considered the center of most problems related to a civilized life. In Park's (1952) conception, culture, in the form of a superstructure, imposes itself, controls and directs the biotic substructure. The interaction between the cultural association (in its material and immaterial form), the population and resources of the habitat, when existing, simultaneously promotes social and biotic balance of the human community in the city.

2.3 Moral regions and natural areas in human ecology

In an article published in 1915, in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Park begins his trajectory of interest in sociological issues facing the city of Chicago. The article can be considered the initial exposition of a way of studying the urban through the theory of human ecology. For Eufrazio (1999) this perspective led Park and his followers to develop studies on the spatial processes involved in promoting relationships between city areas and their differentiations, as well as on identifying the driving forces behind the dynamics of urban space. These studies provided the basis for carrying out interpretive analyzes on areas of cities and the communities that inhabited them.

In this scenario, the concept of “moral regions” emerged, which can be understood as places in cities (neighborhoods, squares, clubs, sidewalks, etc.) where people share the same moral code (DIAS, 2017). For Park, the result of moral sharing is that urban life, in the historical moment of its theoretical considerations, spontaneously assumes¹³ a trend of segregation of the population in certain places. For him, the phenomenon does not occur only because of common interests, but jointly with the individual impulse to pursue certain lifestyles. The formation of “moral regions” has as its central point a conjuncture between psychological and moral aspects that result in similar individual temperaments (PARK, 1915; VALADARES, 2018).

In Park's theory (1952), neighborhoods or places that are not necessarily residential, such as meeting places, places with structures for taking advantage of vacations or corners of "vices", can be associated with the concept of moral region since they tend to cause a distribution populations in the city, causing a type of segregation in certain places. The author believes that moral regions may not be essentially caused by operational or economic conditions, since the moral codes involved in structuring these places can go beyond these circumstances (PARK, 1915; VALADARES, 2018).

In Park's work, another form of segregation of the population into city areas is what he considers “natural areas”. The understanding is that, through the expansion of the city, the segregation of the population occurs in specific areas, in a natural way, since each individual selects, according to his possibilities, the place he can or should live¹⁴. In this conception, in the long term, the ecological organization of the human community becomes the reflection of the relations of the social division of labor and the historically constructed cultural order. This process causes a type of “social selection”, creating and segregating groups of people in natural areas of the city (PARK, 1952).

In human ecology, the city is a cluster of natural areas. They are places that result from a natural history of occupation. Each plays a role in the urban economy and in determining its general characteristics. For Park, in an allusive way, these conditions can be

¹³ The spontaneous mode of segregation fits only the culturalist view of urban ecology in the early 20th century. In contrast to this consideration, Castells (1975) understands that socio-spatial segregation, in the capitalist system, is a reflection of the spatial distribution of social classes caused by socio-political and economic conditions and ideological factors.

¹⁴ Park's organic conception (1952) that socio-spatial segregation occurs naturally (1952) does not consider the integration and interaction between the State, politics and economics, nor the social conflicts that are involved in the occupation of space urban (CASTELLS, 1975; GONÇALVES, 1989).

related to the functioning of a superior organism where each organ performs a specific task to maintain the unitary functioning of the being (PARK, 1952).

From the considerations it is possible to understand that the segregation in the city understood by Park is related to a type of natural selection influenced, primarily, by cultural issues. From the distinctions between ways of life and types of individual temperaments, people allocate themselves in natural areas where they should or can. In this proposition, the dynamics of selection of housing locations is secondarily influenced by economic and political factors (MARAFON, 1996).

3 HOUSING IN MOSSORÓ AND HORIZONTAL CLOSED CONDOMINIUMS

For Nascimento (2013) the city of Mossoró experienced two distinct moments of expansion of housing sites. The first began in the 1960s and lasted until the 2000s. During the period there was a high growth rate in the construction of housing units financed by the National Housing Bank (BNH). In the city, between 1968 and 1996, 17 housing complexes were installed, housing 7,753 homes.

Interconnected to the housing constructions, in the urban area of the municipality, equipment and institutions were installed that promoted important transformations in the socioeconomic and spatial dynamics of the city. Between 1970 and 1980 there was the installation of the campus of the State University of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN)¹⁵, from the then Higher School of Agriculture of Mossoró (ESAM)¹⁶, the Hotel Thermas and equipment such as elementary schools, large avenues, tree-lined squares and hospitals (NASCIMENTO, 2013).

But, even with a large number of houses built and with an outstanding socioeconomic dynamics in the western region of Rio Grande do Norte, amid the large volume of people¹⁷ who migrated from the countryside to the city, the housing policy of the first period was not enough to eliminate the housing deficit in Mossoró. The main factor involved in the setback

¹⁵ The State University of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN), emerged in 1968, under the name of Regional University of Rio Grande do Norte (URRN), through municipal law Municipal Law No. 20/68. It was initially linked to the Regional University of Rio Grande do Norte Foundation (FURRN). In 1987, the institution was state-owned through State Law No. 5,546 (UERN, 2021).

¹⁶ Institution founded under the name of Escola Superior de Agricultura de Mossoró (ESAM) in 1967. In 2005, ESAM, through the enactment of LAW No. 11,155, became the Federal Rural University of the Semi-arid (UFERSA) (UFERSA, 2021).

¹⁷ Mostly in the condition of migrants without income to fit in as consumers of housing units. Most of the people who arrived in the city settled in informal areas on the outskirts of the city. (QUEIROZ, 2018).

was the formation of a real estate market, based on speculation, which made it difficult for most of the population to access real estate (SOUSA, 2016; BESERRA, 2017). The result of the process was the emergence of slums, which occurred simultaneously with the construction of housing complexes. The occupation of areas by adapted housing intensified from the 1980s onwards. In 1990 there were 23,000 people living in precarious and illegal housing (NASCIMENTO, 2013).

At the other extreme, the people contemplated and who could pay for the properties built in the housing complexes did not have an easy life because they were built in places far from the areas of the city that had health, education, security, commerce, leisure and sanitation services. Individuals who obtained housing through housing policies were displaced to peripheral areas of the city (NASCIMENTO, 2013).

Pequeno and Elias (2010) indicate that the low cost of land was the justification for the implementation of housing complexes in areas around the city. During the period of expansion of the housing complexes, the pattern selected for the execution of the process was linked to the speculative logic of the land market accompanied by the intervention of the municipal public power, which, from 1970 onwards, began to define the areas to be purchased for housing construction, favoring landowners peripheral areas of the city (PEQUENO; ELIAS, 2010).

According to Nascimento (2013), the housing complexes installed in Mossoró implemented fragmentation and spatial segregation in the city since, due to the discourse of high land prices in the central area and adjacent areas, families that needed housing were displaced to peripheral areas. After the end of BNH resources, throughout the 1990s, the expansion of areas for housing in Mossoró occurred through the private subdivision of peripheral areas (NASCIMENTO, 2013).

From the 2000s onwards, the real estate market began to become dynamic again due to the visualization, by national, regional and local builders and developers (Alphaville, MASSAI, TBK, GTW), out of the possibility of extracting from the growing income level of city profits from enterprises (NASCIMENTO, 2013) aimed at social classes with medium and high incomes.

Between 2003 and 2011, the real estate market, after its restructuring, implemented an accelerated pace of construction. In the period, subdivisions, vertical and horizontal closed condominiums and new housing complexes built under the Minha Casa Minha Vida Program (NASCIMENTO, 2013) emerged. Table 01 summarizes the trajectory of the socio-

spatial evolution of the city of Mossoró from the 19th to the 21st century, according to the division of the city's historical economic dynamics.

Table 01 -Socio-spatial evolution of the city of Mossoró between the 19th and 21st centuries.

PERIOD	ELEMENTS OF SOCIO-SPATIAL DYNAMICS
19th century - Commerce and Export.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentration of commerce, public buildings and housing people with greater purchasing power in the city center; - Widening of the streets of the traditional center to enable the business; - European standard for embellishment in public buildings and in the elite housing gave a new look to the city.
20th century - Specialization agroindustrial and salt refineries in Mossoró.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of working-class neighborhoods around the railway line, where inhabited the workers of the railroad, agribusiness and salinoculture, homogeneous neighborhoods from the social point of view; - First housing complex for affordable housing in Alto de São Manoel block (1960); - Unemployed workers build mud houses, giving rise to peripheral neighborhoods, such as Baixinha, Barrocas and part of Paredões; - Public bodies, squares, equipment for collective use and residences of the more affluent classes continued to be concentrate in the central area of the city, as had been the case since the colonial; - Formation of slums; -Financing of housing through financial agents – COHAB, Caixa Econômica Federal and BNH, serving different income levels; -Delimitation of neighborhoods for different income segments: the Nova Betânia neighborhood for the elite, and Abolição for popular housing; -Zoning with specification of uses and soil occupation parameters in each zone. Little expression in relation to the differentiation of space due to the inexpressive private production of real estate.
20th Century – Activity oil company/Function tertiary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased demand for housing leads to an expansion of the real estate and allotment market; - Proliferation in the central area of the city of buildings linked to its new tertiary function, such as: banks, offices, clinics, hospitals, public bodies and institutions. The traditional center continues to be a valued and differentiated area in the city, now also due to its proximity to service providers; -Expansion of the Alto de São Manoel neighborhood, where Petrobras was initially installed, and, later, the Planalto 13 de Maio and Alto do Sumaré neighborhoods, in order to meet the demand of company employees for housing and services; -Construction of new leisure spaces (Estação da Artes Eliseu Ventania) in the central area of the city
21st Century Expansion of Tertiary activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Construction of new spaces for consumption and leisure (Corredor Cultural de Mossoró, Shopping Center) that lead to the creation of axes that express centrality; -Construction of housing in peripheral areas of the city with funds from the Minha Casa Minha Vida Program; -Production of closed residential spaces.

Source: Adapted from Sousa (2016).

From the expansion and intensification of flows related to tertiary activities (SOUSA, 2016), more rapidly in the first two decades of the 21st century, the constant installation of closed horizontal condominiums presents itself as a new form of housing that has high valuation within the real estate sector of the city of Mossoró.

According to Becker (2005) this type of condominium can be understood as residential areas that make available to their local residents for leisure, entertainment and commerce. The basis of its structure are single-family dwellings. The environment of these places of residence, characterized by strong access control to its internal dependencies, causes a feeling of safe, private environments and that have beautification and leisure structures that promote community life (BECKER, 2005).

Hall (2007) states that these exclusive housing spaces, closed with walls and gates, have proliferated since 1980. For the author, they are the result of a movement coming from the North Americans, caused by the fear of forms of violence and urban crimes. In Mossoró, the expansion of this type of housing project took place in 2004. For Sousa and Da Silva Júnior (2017) the process was stimulated by the increase in capital levels in the city and in the real estate sector. In a survey carried out by Sousa (2010), six neighborhoods in the city are intensely occupied by these housing structures (Table 01).

Table 01 -Presence of closed horizontal condominiums in areas of six neighborhoods of Mossoró.

Enterprises	Location (district)	Total area (m ²)	Area percentage from the neighborhood
veronique	Dix Sept Rosado	5,306,204	85.1%
ecoresidencial Genesis	Dom Jaime Camara	3,783,084	73.9%
Bosque do Sumaré	Alto do Sumare	8,891,148	56.9%
Ecoville / Portal de Mossoró / Residential Nest	Rincão	5,154,298	52.7%
isla verde	Santo Antônio	4,194,827	42.3%
Alphaville / Quintas do Lago / Jardins de Mossoró / Sunville / Green Park / Portal da Lagoinha	Abolição	6,576,386	42.1%

Source: Adapted from Sousa (2010) apud Sousa and Da Silva Júnior (2017).

Authors who analyzed processes related to housing and the real estate market in Mossoró (OLIVEIRA, 2013; NASCIMENTO, 2013; SOUSA; DA SILVA JÚNIOR, 2017) consider that areas occupied by gated communities accentuate spatial segregation. The developments induce a process of self-segregation and social selectivity in the occupation of areas, as only residents or landowners can enjoy their amenities. For them, these new conditions altered the urban structure of Mossoró by promoting a growing implementation of this housing model both in peripheral areas (Alto do Sumaré, Rincão, Dix Sept Rosado and Abolição neighborhoods), as well as in places where there arrived large establishments (malls, universities, chains of wholesale stores and commercial buildings), as is the case in the Nova Betânia neighborhood, after the extension of Avenida João da Escóssia.

In this context, the closed horizontal condominiums existing in the city of Mossoró are interconnected with the idea that they constitute instruments for the intensification of spatial segregation and can be called “fortified enclaves” with privatized, closed and monitored spaces to be used as place of residence, leisure, consumption and work (DO RIO CALDEIRA, 2000).

Thus, in agreement with Lefebvre (2001) the consumption of closed horizontal condominiums in Mossoró, in theory, can be associated with a vision that goes beyond just a house, but a new way of life, a happy house where daily life is positively transformed. Thus, a “new lifestyle” emerges, where living in the city becomes an “art” within spaces of self-segregation.

4 HOUSING IN HORIZONTAL CLOSED CONDOMINIUMS IN MOSSORÓ AND THE IDEAS OF ROBERT PARK

Medeiros, Valadão and Pereira (2011) understand that in modern society, due to the inefficiency of public policies to protect citizens, people began to segregate in condominiums. They understand that these housing layouts are a kind of high luxury ghettos. The places of residence are constituted as living spaces for people of similar social class, income and consumption power. For the authors, the people who inhabit these developments have the same concerns about security, privacy, the desired infrastructure and quality of life. The option for this type of housing is associated, in addition to security, to the return of appropriation of use of collective spaces such as sidewalks, streets and

common leisure areas such as squares, playgrounds and other equipment (DO RIO CALDEIRA, 2000).

Harvey (2008) argues that the walls that divide the daily life of cities from closed horizontal condominiums do not separate the aspirations to seek satisfactory ways of life of the residents of both places. But for him, the socially constructed environment inside the walls is considered more qualitative. Possibly for this reason, living in these places becomes desirable, even by owners of residential properties located in privileged areas of the city.

Sousa and Da Silva Júnior (2017) carried out a survey with the objective of verifying the profile and perception of residents of the Veronique condominium in Mossoró. They interviewed a total of ten people. The authors found that the occupation of the researched enterprise is given by individuals who have a high level of income to finance the desire to live in a place that has characteristics such as a higher level of security, privacy and quality of life. In the research, it was identified that 90% of the residents interviewed had an income of five to ten minimum wages and 10% with income between 2 and 4 minimum wages. Regarding the previous place of residence, the people who chose the condominium to live in previously lived in houses and apartments located in "elite" areas of the city, but even so, looked for the condominium housing.

The most cited reasons for seeking housing in the development were security, privacy and quality of life, respectively. Regarding the perception of the internal security of the condominium, 70% of the residents interviewed considered it good or excellent. The perception of the interviewees about the peace and tranquility in the place indicated that 90% of the participants considered the items as good or excellent. Among the interviewees, 90% said they were fully satisfied with the housing in the condominium.

Returning to Robert Park's ideas, considering that the current condominiums in Mossoró intensified the spatial segregation caused by the increase in land prices in the urban area of the municipality, this process can be theoretically associated only in part with what Park calls moral regions and natural areas since the high prices of urban land printed by the real estate market blocks the condition of free access and individual selection of housing areas.

Only people who have enough income can select horizontal gated communities to reside. At the other pole, people who do not have income levels compatible with the land prices of private developments do not have the option of setting up their homes in these places. Thus, for the population with low income levels, closed horizontal condominiums may even be inserted within a conjuncture of desires associated with a better quality of life

or a higher level of security, but become inaccessible due to the continuous process of real estate speculation of the existing land inside the undertakings.

In the urban space of Mossoró, the real estate market, with its constant dynamics of rising land prices, presents itself as an obstacle to empirical consolidation of natural areas theorized by Park (1952). Therefore, the areas selected by individuals to install their homes are increasingly associated with the place where they “can live” and not where they “should live”.

Even with these caveats, it is possible to link the phenomenon of the spreading of closed horizontal condominiums in Mossoró with Robert Park's theory. Firstly, it can be viewed as a result of social relations placed in the urban habitat and which are influenced by economic and social factors such as the search for security, privacy and quality of life. Connected to this is the question of the order established in society by the social division of labor and the interference of cultural forms, which in Parkean theory are customs, beliefs, artifacts and technological devices. This process causes what Park understands as social selection. In his understanding it is one of the forms of segregation of people in natural areas.

The closed horizontal condominiums, spread across several neighborhoods of Mossoró city within Park's vision, can be understood as one more event in the natural history of the occupation of civilized man in his habitat. They change old functionalities associated with traditional forms of occupation and appropriation of space. They insert new dynamics in the areas of the city, changing functions of the places where they and their neighborhoods were established. In addition, the phenomenon of closed housing developments acts in the process of growth/aggregation of the city, as they cause an increase in the urban population in certain areas where the population level was not high before.

From this, all areas of the city undergo changes and consequences associated with the increase in land values. An example of this in Mossoró was the creation of a new centrality around the gated communities Alphaville, Sunville and Quintas do Lago. Next to these developments, a new area was created to attract people in the city, as wholesale chains, a mall, private universities and commercial buildings were installed in the region (OLIVEIRA, 2013).

Comparing Park's theory to this discussion, it is possible to enter another way to evaluate the segregation caused by closed horizontal condominiums. The trail pointed out by Park can be used in the search for understandings about moral requirements linked to people's dwelling places, as well as in the investigation of individual issues associated with

the model of life intended by each inhabitant and the places where individuals live in the urban habitat. However, the application of Park's theories on the issue of housing in urban areas such as Mossoró must consider primarily that the “natural selection” of areas for housing is influenced more by economic and sociopolitical issues, and not only by an individual choice of its inhabitants.

In view of this, the ideas involved in the theoretical conception of moral regions, even though they are not considered essentially as places where people live, encompass the forms of coexistence of people in neighborhoods, squares, clubs and sidewalks. Applying this conceptualization to the models of closed horizontal condominiums implemented in Mossoró, it is possible to understand that they are places typically associated with the idea. Many of them can be considered neighborhoods within neighborhoods as they encompass large areas. Within its walls there are structures with wide streets, sidewalks and equipment typical of a club such as swimming pools, playgrounds, green areas, sports and leisure equipment (figures 01 and 02).

Figure 01 -Clipping of an aerial view of the Ninho Residencial condominium.



Source: Fernandes (2017).

In these places, as identified by Sousa and Da Silva Júnior (2017), there is a rescue of neighborhood relations that occur in the common areas inside the developments. This process is related to Park's understanding of the neighborhood, which for him is the most common spatial and social item in the natural areas of cities. This condition intensifies the daily experience among people in closed horizontal condominiums, providing opportunities for the aggregation of residents in a situation that goes beyond the income conditions and

the type of work of each one of them, achieving the sharing of a moral code and ways of life based on what horizontal condominiums offer to their inhabitants.

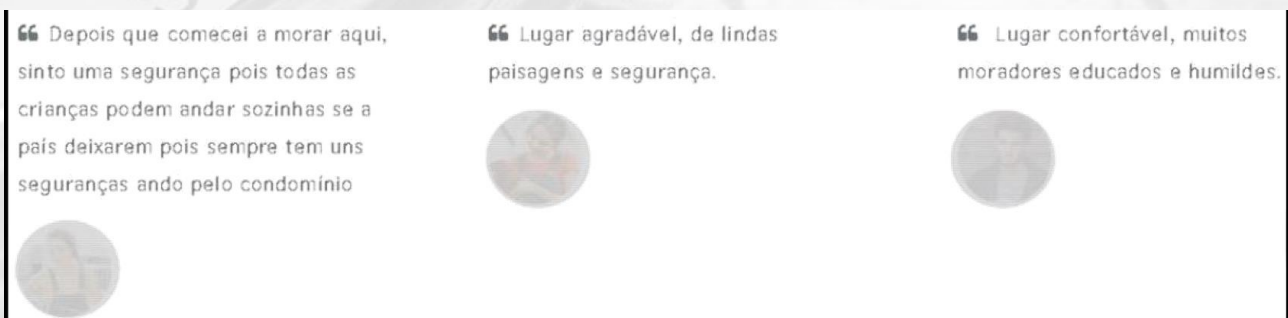
Figure 02 -Clipping of an aerial view of the Alphaville condominium.



Source: Alphaville Mossoró (2020).

On the Alphaville Mossoró condominium website it is possible to identify testimonials from people who apparently live in the place or who were inserted by real estate marketing methods (figure 03). Without considering whether the comments about the condominium really portray the vision of some of its residents, it is important to see that the descriptions contained on the website are associated with concepts that are related to how these developments are advertised to be marketed. The alleged testimonies emphasize the issue of safety, free space for children to play, beautiful landscapes and coexistence with educated and humble people.

Figure 03 -Supposed testimonials from residents on the Alphaville condominium website.



Source: Alphaville Mossoró (2020).

The described opinions about Mossoró's Alphaville promote the idea of a private place where individuals live harmoniously among themselves without worrying about the "problems" that exist in the rest of the urban area. In this way, it can be seen that the existing ideas in the texts, which demonstrate satisfaction for owning housing in the development, are aligned with the conception that Lefebvre (2001) describes as the urbanism of sales promoters, since the place of residence is associated with a wonderfully positive, within a chaotic urban area. Sales promoters do not sell a property, but a new urban way of life:

They conceive and carry it out, without hiding anything, from the market, aiming at profit. The new, recent fact is that they no longer sell housing or real estate, but rather urban planning. With or without ideology, urbanism becomes an exchange value. The project of sales promoters presents itself as a privileged occasion and place: a place of happiness in a miraculous and wonderfully transformed daily life (LEFEBVRE, 2001, p. 32).

Considering these conceptions, in the Mossoró city, the structure of some horizontal condominiums (Alphaville, Ninho Residencial, Ecoville, Quintas do Lago and Veronique) seem to abstract a little from the ideas of urban organization (eliminating the socially communal conceptions of the proposal), of the city -garden or garden suburb, formatted by Ebenezer Howard, considering the proper proportions (HALL, 2007). In fact, on a smaller scale, many of these condominiums express the same ideas as Howard's original project, such as low population density, good housing, wide avenues and the presence of green areas. But unlike what was seen at the time of urban planning designed to "unburden" the cities of the 19th and 20th centuries from precarious housing and large numbers of people,

It is important to point out that, even within the group of people who live in closed condominiums, there is variation between income levels. Sousa and Da Silva Júnior (2017) identified that there is a variation between 2 and 10 minimum wages among the residents interviewed in the Veronique condominium. In addition, not all the people who were approached by the researchers expressed complete satisfaction in living in the condominium and therefore intend to leave. Thus, the process of migration of residents from traditional neighborhoods to condominiums (NASCIMENTO, 2013) is not effective for all people who settle in these enterprises.

In the clipping, even people having income levels to acquire a lot for construction or a house already ready in these condominiums, many of them may not share the moral codes and the general format of the ways of life that are shared by the majority of the residents of the horizontal closed condominiums. It can be understood that the feeling that Park had

about the segregation of populations in areas of the cities presents elements that are associated with the theme of closed horizontal condominiums and that go beyond the view that segregation is caused by these structures only by the income factor of people.

The Parkean understanding of moral zones and natural areas, related to the theme of closed horizontal condominiums, points out that the community base of these developments can be related to the sharing of a moral code and a model of life based on a high sense of security, of greater privacy, expansion of freedom and communal coexistence, guided by a similarity of temperament and individual immediate interests of the residents. However, individual sensations related to housing in gated communities are not only related to the desire to inhabit an area with these qualities. these perceptions are also the result of new ways of promoting urbanism developed by real estate dynamics that create private places with “privileges” for those who can pay for these “perks” within a “chaotic” urban area.

Because it is closely related to cultural aspects, the theories expounded by Park and his followers at the Chicago School during the 20th century were the target of fierce criticism. The Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells was one of the exponents who took part in this critical process. One of Castells' interventions in Park's theory rejects the view that the analysis of urban space is focused on the culture that exists in cities without emphasizing the issue of society's relations with the modes of production. For Castells, the analysis of the social structure of cities must essentially consider the economic, political, ideological systems and the social conflicts that are involved in the apprehension of urban space (CASTELLS, 1975).

More general questioning of the views of urban ecology of the Chicago School were carried out due to the attempt by North American theorists to apply an analysis methodology derived from the natural sciences with analogies to ecological and biological conceptions. Criticisms were imposed due to the absence, in the analytical forms of the method, of the State and of more general social processes. The description of human ecology of the city as a totality formed by several compartments that touch each other, but that do not interpenetrate, was also contested since the economic, social, political factors and the conflicts present in the cities are capable of causing an interpenetration of the mosaics that form the cities (MARAFON, 1996).

Regarding this point of Park's theory, even viewing the condominiums treated in this document as sources of segregation and forms of private and exclusive apprehension of space, the characteristics of these developments are not enough to block the interpenetration of socioeconomic, political and cultural variations and social conflicts that

occur in other regions of the city. The consideration of this non-interpenetration between the zones that form the city as a mosaic can be understood as a contradiction of Park's theory since this determination is at odds with the conception of growth/aggregation of the city where the fluctuations of people in the zones and cities areas are capable of causing changes in other urban locations.

Even in the face of criticism, as seen throughout the theoretical approach and the empirical condition of the reality of the sprawl of closed horizontal condominiums in Mossoró, the use of existing analyzes and concepts in Robert Park's work demonstrates some level of aptitude to explain spatial and social phenomena that are present in questions related to the appropriation, use, negotiation and revaluation of urban spaces and their peripheries.

However, the use of the concepts of "natural area" and "moral region" currently does not have fullness to explain by itself the phenomena involved in determining the places of residence of individuals in the urban habitat in Mossoró. In order for the scope of the analyses, which involve Robert Park's perspectives and concepts, to be linked to the current reality of capitalist cities, it is necessary to imprint other constraints on the approaches (economic, political, social and the conflicts generated by disputes over intra-urban spaces). In order to use Park's theories, it is necessary to make a connection between them and the elements that make up the current urban dynamics, within an extensive perspective (MONTE-MÓR, 2005).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The emergence of large industrial cities in the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and the United States caused a multitude of problems. The big Bourgeois urban areas were experiencing a veritable social upheaval that gave rise to the fear of revolution. The issue of housing for the poor was the central point of this problem (HALL, 2007). From this, a search for solutions to the housing problem began. Urbanistic forms began to be idealized for the implementation of housing spaces, in the midst of the great diversification of ways of life and the conflicts that these movements caused in cities. Logically, within a capitalist ideology of profit arising from land rent, the initiatives did not reach all working classes (HALL, 2007).

In the 20th century, proposals for solving the problem emerged. From exponents of urban planning, such as Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Georges-Eugène Haussmann and Le Corbusier, several thinkers who closely saw the reality of housing conditions in cities developed theoretical ways to understand how people selected their places of residence. In

this whirlwind is the theory of Human Ecology developed by the Chicago School, strongly influenced by the contributions of Robert Park.

Human Ecology, even with deficiencies related to essential variables for understanding the socio-spatial logic of capitalist cities, achieved success in developing important concepts for current urban studies such as urban community, mobility, fluidity, concentration, centralization and segregation. The application of the methods developed in the Chicago School turned the big cities and metropolises of the United States in the beginning of the 20th century into laboratories for the application of Human Ecology theories (MARAFON, 1996).

The advance of the capitalist urbanization process coming from central countries, as the very engine of the capitalist process (SANTOS, 1994), driven by the spread of industrial society, extended housing problems in cities to other areas of the world such as Brazil and its regions, including the North East. In the midst of this dynamic, in all urban areas under the aegis of capital, a market specialized in transforming land into a commodity with an exchange value that is constantly growing has emerged (LEFEBVRE, 2001).

In this context, closed horizontal condominiums are involved, which in the city of Mossoró, are identified as places of spatial segregation of the population. This spatial segregation, which began with the construction of the first housing developments in the city, cannot be the same as that related to Park's work. It is currently not possible, given the dynamics of the real estate market installed in Mossoró, to associate the segregation of the city's population with the concept of "natural areas" where each individual selects, Considering to their moral or temperamental subjectivities, the place where they can or should live in the urban area. This spontaneous mode of segregation, as it does not intertwine socioeconomic and political processes and their respective conflicts, in isolation, cannot explain the conformation of housing locations in the city of Mossoró related to closed horizontal condominiums.

In order to elucidate the reality involved in the relationship between housing in the city and the presence of closed horizontal condominiums, it is necessary to consider that socio-spatial segregation, in the capitalist system, is a reflection of the forms of spatial distribution of social classes caused by socio-political, economic, as well as ideological factors (CASTELLS, 1975).

The concepts existing in Robert Park's theories currently do not have enough ballast to promote, by themselves, real understandings about the phenomena involved in the determination of people's housing locations in the urban environment. For that, it is

necessary to associate to Park's concepts conditions that prioritize the existing socioeconomic and political relations in the current phase of urbanization and that consider the urban reflexes of the flexible form of production, the financialization of the real estate market and the intensification of the precariousness of working conditions.

The explanation for the sprawling phenomenon of closed horizontal condominiums in Mossoró is, above all, related to the speculative forms of management and negotiation of land in the capitalist city and not the individual, subjectively cultural choice of each of its inhabitants. The urban planning of sales promoters (LEFEBVRE, 2001) is a key part of this process. The urban "created" to be sold as a new way of life, within the urban area of Mossoró, finds people who have enough income, who are apprehended by the privileges and facilities offered in the developments and who are willing to bear the high costs of the lands inserted within them.

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