

Review of Master Plans in advanced neoliberalism: the case of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul

Revisão de Planos Diretores no neoliberalismo avançado: o caso de Porto Alegre/RS

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Abstract

On the 20th anniversary of the City Statute, a national phenomenon is perceived: the review of master plans. The study aims to investigate the effects of advanced neoliberalism on master plans based on the experience of Porto Alegre/Rio Grande do Sul. The methodology is a case study informed by participant observation and consultation of documents and media. Systematization was carried out through temporal reconstruction and content analysis. The theoretical framework explores the neoliberal state and project-based planning. The results indicate the implementation of the minimal state; focus on the productive city under financialization; the socio-environmental tone of the 2030 Agenda; authoritarianism and the planning of trends and leverage applied by project-based planning, producing the fragmentation of the master plan.

Keywords: neoliberal state; urban planning; neoliberal planning; master plan; Porto Alegre.

Resumo

No marco dos 20 anos do Estatuto da Cidade, constatou-se o fenômeno nacional de revisão de planos diretores. O objetivo, aqui, é investigar os efeitos do neoliberalismo avançado nos planos diretores a partir da experiência de Porto Alegre/RS. A metodologia é de estudo de caso, a partir de observação participante e consulta de documentos e mídias. A sistematização é de reconstrução temporal e análise de conteúdo. O aporte teórico explora o estado e o planejamento neoliberal por projetos. Os resultados apontam: a implementação do estado mínimo; o enfoque na cidade produtiva sob a financeirização; a roupagem socioambiental da Agenda 2030; o autoritarismo; o planejamento de tendência e de facilitação aplicado pelo planejamento por projetos, resultando no fatiamento do plano diretor.

Palavras-chave: estado neoliberal; planejamento urbano; planejamento neoliberal; plano diretor; Porto Alegre.



Introduction

A national phenomenon observed in cities lies on Comprehensive Plan reviews in the year of City Statute's 20th anniversary. Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Natal, Florianópolis and Porto Alegre are some of the state capitals undergoing this process or that have recently accomplished this task. However, this phenomenon is not limited to state capitals; it is now extended to Brazilian cities housing more than 20 thousand inhabitants, which must join the review board every 10 years.

The City Statute was approved in 2001, 13 years after the 1988 Federal Constitution was enacted and 1 year before Fernando Henrique Cardoso finished his first term (1995-2002). At that time, neoliberalism became the economic model adopted by the Brazilian State. Therefore, this period stood out for adopting policies aimed at opening the country for the international market, for internal market deregulation, public expenditures' reduction, privatization of public capital corporations and for outsourcing contracts and decentralized public management. On the one hand, City Statute approval was a victory for social movements and civil society but, on the other hand, it introduced neoliberal ideas in cities' production. Thus, the publication *Cidades em disputa* [Cities in Dispute] (Silva et al., 2021) addressed the hard time implementing Master Plan's review and participatory elaboration in current Brazil, from a new perspective.

Currently, the City Statute's framework highlights two core matters: (1) decentralized urban planning responsibility, since it is now on the hands of municipal administration; and (2) Comprehensive Plan as ultimate

defining instrument for local urban policies. Accordingly, municipalities' autonomy currently follows the logics of competition between cities at the time to attract investments and to seek favorable positions in the ranking of national and global cities, due to Brazil's (re)democratization process.

However, Brazil no longer lived the neoliberal State at the early millennium, but its update represented by managerial and entrepreneurial practices' expansion and deepening, as well as by deeper social inequalities. Thus, the aim of the present article was to investigate the effects of advanced neoliberal ideas on Comprehensive Plan reviews in Brazil based on Porto Alegre experience – Rio Grande do Sul State.

Single case study was the adopted research strategy, which is known as "empirical investigation to asses a contemporary phenomenon within its real context and, most specifically, when the edges between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined" (Yin, 2002, p. 29). Porto Alegre is an instrumental case (Stake, 1995) because it opens room for questions regarding this topic. Thus, Porto Alegre is a secondary-interest case because it substantiates the understanding of a given phenomenon that extrapolates itself.

Porto Alegre was chosen for this study given its pioneering position on the national scene, since it implemented agendas by the National Movement for Urban Reform (MNRU) between 1989 and 2004, and consolidated the neoliberal planning from 2005, onwards. The period between 1989 and 2004 stands out for the Participatory Budget (PB) experience, for housing the World Social Forum (WSF), for urbanizing favelas in downtown areas and for implementing the Master Plan for Urban

Environmental Development (PDDUA), in 1999. PDDUA anticipated the use of instruments deriving from MNRU discussions that were further consolidated by the City Statute.

Managerial and entrepreneurial practices were in the mainstream from 2005 onwards, mainly during the city's preparation and adaptation to host games of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. This mega event spread the city's image to the world, and outspread a market-based approach for urban space production. There has been temporary PB cancellation since 2014, as well as social participation limiting; moreover, PDDUA reviews have not been consolidated, although important steps have been taken by municipal administrations, which will be herein explored.

Participatory observation in meetings, working groups and seminars with civil society, technicians from Porto Alegre City Hall (PMPA) and advisors from the Municipal Council for Urban Environmental Development (CMDUA) was adopted for data collection purposes, as well as data collection in hearings at Rio Grande do Sul Public Prosecutor's Office (MP-RS). Documents and official websites, media and social networks were also accessed for this purpose. The research was carried out from 2016 to 2022.

Data collection was based on creating a timeline and on pointing out the topics the collected facts referred to. Content analysis focused on featuring the events and their pace (Lefebvre, 2007) was carried out. These events were defined by (a) repeated moves, gestures, actions, situations and differences; by (b) interferences with linear or cyclic processes; and (c) by the birth, growth, peak, decline and end.

The article was divided into two parts in addition to the introduction and the final considerations. The first section introduces the theoretical contributions on neoliberal State, neoliberal planning and planning through projects. Foreign authors were chosen because this is a global phenomenon that echoes on the local sphere. The second section presents the case study, which discusses the effects of ideas applied to Porto Alegre City.

Neoliberal planning and planning by project

The neoliberal State derives from the formulation of new capitalism basis in opposition to the Keynesian Welfare State. According to Paulani (2006, p. 71), the formulated prescription "would not involve developing and/or improving an economic theory likely used as weapon to show market superiority and the society it forged". Based on Harvey (2008, p. 75), in theoretical terms, the neoliberal State "should deeply reinforce the individual right to private property, to the rule of law and to free-functioning market institutions and free trade". These factors are essential institutional arrangements to ensure individual freedoms" since the free market would assumingly rule out poverty at local and global scale.

However, the aforementioned author disclosed the contradictions and tensions between theory and practice. The first of these contradictions concerned the search for technology and innovation: "the belief, according to which, there is a technological

remedy for each and every condition” (ibid., p. 79). Competition and entrepreneurship are based on the constant need of creating new products and production forms, even by destroying pre-existing markets and organization forms, whenever necessary. The idea of smart cities (Townsend, 2013) and the ‘uber-like’ profile of urban services based on citizens as customers highlight the abyss between those who have financial means to access such services and those who do not.

The second tension deserving attention is the “contradiction between the seductive but alienating possessive individualism, and the will for a collective life filled with meaning” (Harvey 2008, p. 80). The small entrepreneur is isolated by its own freedom, and it also disrupts workers' unions and community organizations. Accordingly, it is necessary disrupting democratic governance through the actions of different agents, unions, entities, neighborhood associations, among others, for the neoliberal project to succeed. This tension has straight impact on debates about Master Plan reviews carried out through participatory processes, as provided on the City Statute.

The third tension regards associating democracy to authoritarianism. According to Harvey (ibid., p. 80), neoliberals prefer to rely on “non-democratic institutions that are not accountable to anyone (such as FED and the International Monetary Fund) at the time to make essential decisions”. International agencies, such as the IMF, play key role in outspreading neoliberal practices worldwide,

mainly in peripheral countries. The actions by the World Bank, by the Ibero-American Development Bank (IDB), by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), among others, stand out when it comes to urban development.

Finally, the association among minimum State, weak State and strong State stands out. According to prescriptions, the State must support lack of constraints and impositions, as well as reduce the size of the State and public expenditures with infrastructure and technical staff in order to have free market and free trading. After all, the minimum State reduces regulatory performance. Thus, the weak State opens room for free trade and for class power restoration achievement. A weak State leads to political and economic instability, and it benefits businesses and flexible accumulation (Harvey, 2011) at capitalism’s current stage. Therefore, a strong State holds the means at its disposal to repress democratic wills and financial endurance to help banks and large companies that may go bankrupt, due to their speculative search for economic growth (Harvey, 2008).

Not by chance, Harvey (ibid., p. 92) points to neo-conservative actions as the answer to the neoliberal State, since it “matches the neoliberal program aimed at elite governance, democracy distrust and market-freedom maintenance”. This movement can be seen in several countries through the rise of an extreme right associated with neo-conservatives who seek to restore:

[...] moral values centered on cultural nationalism, moral rectitude, Christianity (of a certain evangelical modality), family values and issues of the right to life, as well as antagonism to new social movements, such as feminism, homosexual rights, affirmative action and environmentalism. (Ibid., p. 94)

Harvey's (2008) words seem to be an accurate description of moral values advocated by former president Bolsonaro's supporters in Brazil. However, he formulated such questions based on alliances made during the Reagan administration in the 1970s, in the USA.

It was also in the 1970s that public administrations started applying business practices known as *managerialism*,¹ based on the Reinventing Government movement, which has Osborne and Gaebler (1993) as its main authors.²

According to Osborne and Gaebler (1993), some features necessary for reinventing governments stand out, namely: (1) catalytic government, which leads and guides rather than provides services – privatization, outsourcing and public-private partnerships (PPPs); (2) competitive government based on introducing competition in service provision to encourage innovation and quality, as well as to strengthen organizations; (3) government guided by missions, flexibility and strategic planning; (4) government based on results and financing results (rather than on resources); (5) entrepreneurial government to generate revenues rather than expenses; and (6) market-oriented government to induce changes through the market, since cities are vast and complex aggregates of people where each individual adjusts itself to the behavior of

others based on incentives and information. Therefore, governments must be structured as markets (ibid.).

The transition from the Fordist system to advanced capitalism based on floating capital and tertiary-sector activities has changed the role played by cities, since they no longer support the development of productive activities, but are raw materials for capital accumulation (Harvey, 2006). Similarly, Logan and Molotch (1993) stated that space is raw material for wealth and power generation by those who hold it. This statement follows the logics of a growth-machine capable of both increasing aggregate income and ensuring wealth for the elites, which use the growth consensus to rule out any alternative organization view. Cities financing in association with a flexible accumulation model (Harvey, 2011) points out other investment forms and added value generation based on urban space.

According to Harvey (2006, p. 174), the attitude adopted by the entrepreneurial government leads to an environment favorable for business, since it prescribes “positive benefits to cities adopting an entrepreneurial attitude towards economic development” (ibid., p. 176). It is worth highlighting that there is consensus on his statement about the formula for success, which is understood in environments witnessing different political parties and ideologies.

Therefore, it is necessary reasoning about urban planning within the neoliberal State context. Is it possible talking about neoliberal urban planning or would urban planning be facing a crisis and losing its relevance? The

definition of planning by Matus (in an interview with Huertas) was taken into account to think about these questions:

[...] planning means thinking before acting, thinking systematically, with method; explaining each possibility and analyzing its respective advantages and disadvantages; proposing goals. [...] Planning is the tool for thinking and creating the future [...] it works as support for everyday decisions: feet on the present and eyes on the future. Therefore, it is a vital tool. Either we know how to plan or we are condemned to improvisation. It is the visible hand that explores possibilities in circumstances whose *'invisible hand'* is incompetent, or does not exist. (Huertas, 1996, p. 12; our emphasis)

Matus, in this excerpt, clearly addresses planning as visible hand, as opposed to the invisible hand of the market advocated by neoliberals. From this viewpoint, market is not planned in neoliberal States, but it is organized to maximize profit, it is related to speculative practices often followed by security guarantees for the private sector.

Baeten (2018) highlighted that neoliberal urban planning means understanding regulatory forms related to the neoliberal State, including

disrupting urban regulations imposed on market construction. He addresses different authors to seek a definition of neoliberal planning, which was herein summarized as hegemonic ideology encouraging the superiority of market solutions. Thus, it operates to restructure the relationship between private capital owners and the State by prioritizing urban development linked to economic growth. This process is based on beliefs about market virtues and the limits of State interventions.

Souza (2010) dealt with these issues based on Brindley, Rydin and Stoker (2004), who referred to market planning by dividing it into three subtypes, namely: trend planning, facilitation planning and private administration planning, as shown in Chart 1.

According to Souza (2010, p. 136):

[...] all three [subtypes] break with the regulatory spirit still openly hegemonic in the 1970s, since they stop trying to domesticate or discipline the capital, and, on the contrary, to better adjust themselves to its interests, including the immediate ones.

The private sector participates in partnership with the public sector, but social participation and state presence in urban planning and management has decreased.

Chart 1 – Marketing planning subtypes

Trend planning	Although it is based on regulations, such regulations must meet private interests and land use policies by fulfilling trends and market forces.
Leverage planning	The public sector must encourage weakened markets by reducing taxes and fees, donating land, and selling land at below-market prices.
Private administration planning	The public sector transfers the management of urban renewal processes in specific areas to the private sector.

Source: elaborated based on Brindley, Rydin and Stoker (2004).

Accordingly, planning changed to planning-in-parts due to urban projects seeking specific and speculative results. According to Avitabile (2005), planning by project is progressively associated with the sense of urban strategy and PPP, because it seeks immediate results, besides valuing the ability to undertake. Yet, it relies on a city project focused on integrating urban forms and landscape, since these categories are still missing in regulatory planning. In other words, although there is a broader project of city, urban projects (or Large Urban Projects) are developed for specific city areas; moreover, their effects are expected to cover the territory as a whole, or part of it.

Urban design is understood as core urban intervention practice for neoliberal city creation, because it renews and creates the means to expand space instrumenting to support capital accumulation. Thus, expectations about benefits exceeding urban design specific territories is a completely speculative field, since there are no activities aimed at monitoring, controlling and reducing damage during its elaboration (Oliveira, 2018).

Ascher (1992) pointed to planning, according to which cities are thought of in separate and for short periods-of-time, because long-term projects can out step market interests. Likewise, Borja and Castells (1997)

criticize strict urban planning instruments, such as regulatory plans that no longer correspond to current economic and social needs. They observed that the State must implement urban projects based on strategies, such as making standards to accelerate the approval of flexible urban-architectural projects, rather than wasting opportunities highlighted by the market. Therefore:

[...] neo-urbanism favors the goals and results to be reached, and encourages public and private actors to find ways to accomplish these goals, which are the most efficient for the community and for the group of agents. This [process] demands new ways of formulating and regulating projects. (Ascher, 2010, p. 94)

Therefore, the sense of planning by project or results opposes the sense of master and integral planning, which focuses on the search for balance in territory performance, infrastructure, density and occupation, to provide a fair and equalized life in cities.

Porto Alegre case

Porto Alegre case study description and analysis are organized as follows: initial PDDUA review cycles, universities and international agencies' participation; social participation difficulty.

Initial PDDUA review cycles

Porto Alegre accounts for several frustrated attempts to trigger PDDUA review processes. Chart 2 presents their cyclical pace at yearly frequency scope (except for 2018), based on

moments that have called society's attention to this task. Among them, one finds holding public seminars, online consultations, Normative Instructions (NIs), signing memos and letters in agreement with Pnud, call for civil society to form Working Groups (WGs) and hiring a consultancy.

Chart 2 – Initial pddua cycles (2016-2022)

2016	DEC. 1 TH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SEMINAR. Organized by CMDUA technicians and advisors. It took place in the last month of the ending administration and addressed the necessary MP review for the next administration. A historical review of Porto Alegre's planning was carried out at the event.
2017	OCT. CMDUA DEFINES PRIORITY TOPICS. DEC. PROMISE TO START THE REVIEW. The secretary points out the relevance of using UNs Sustainable Development Goals to access lines of credit for hiring a consultancy during a meeting at the Health and Environment Committee (Cosmam) of the Chamber of Councilors..
2018	NO RECORDS OF ACTIVITIES
2019	AUG. PMPA and UN-Habitat sign the Understanding Memo. Pacto Alegre agreement. AUG.-DEC. GT IN CMDUA ENTITIES, RS PUBLIC PROSECUTORS OFFICE AND UNIVERSITIES. SEP. 1 TH ON-LINE CONSULTATION VIA DIGITAL PB. It counts on 126 respondents. OCT.-NOV. TERRITORIAL WORKSHOPS. Holding only one workshop per Management Region and CMDUA Planning (RGP); eight workshops, in total. DEC. SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT LETTER BETWEEN PMPA AND PNUD, Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE). Technical cooperation agreement to prepare the PDDUA review. Contract value worthy R\$11 million, and 30% of services were on the hands of Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) and 70% of private consultants were from Pnud, in compliance with the International Technical Cooperation Project (PCTI).
2020	MAR. BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN PORTO ALEGRE. MAR. Public Prosecutors Office recommendations. Temporary suspension of the process as long as the health emergency lasted due to the pandemic. JUN. NORMATIVE INSTRUCTION (NI) 15/2020. Stopped all review activities, except for activities under the responsibility of the Municipal Administration. (Porto Alegre, 2020). DEC. 2020 DEADLINE FOR THE MASTER PLAN REVIEW. It must take place every 10 years, according to the City Statute.
2021	FEV. NORMATIVE INSTRUCTION 04/2021. Established the procedure to review the PDDUA (Porto Alegre, 2021).
2022	MAY NEW CONSTITUTION OF THE ADVISORY WORKING GROUP (WT) AT CMDUA. NI 04/2021 downgraded the role of the Council from Deliberative to Advisory regarding WTs. AUG. RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES through an interactive exhibition: outcomes of the 8 territorial workshops held in 2019. AUG.-OCT. 2 TH ON-LINE PUBLIC HEARING. SEP. ERNEST YOUNG (EY) HIRED BY PNUD to support the review work NOV. MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MP REVIEW ADVISORY WT. At the time, there was talking about land regularization, but based on maps that did not identify informal settlements in Porto Alegre (PoA). NOV. SEMINAR to introduce Pnud and EY. Priority for technicians' registry. There was no room for debate, only for questions asked in writing.
2023	AUG. NEW DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE REVIEW.
2024	JUN. NEW DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE REVIEW.
2025	2025. THIS IS THE NEW DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE REVIEW, without a defined month.

Legend: **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION** **PMPA** **MP** **COMPLETION DEADLINE**

Source: elaborated based on the Master Plan (2022), Porto Alegre (2021), Prefeitura (2022), Rio Grande do Sul (2020), Scomazzon (2017), Smams (2022) and Suptitz (2022a).

Despite the number of events over the last six years, little progress can be seen, since seminars, online consultations and WT trainings took place without a methodology for results chain; therefore, social participation in this process has decreased. Review stage birth, growth, peak and end cycle was not carried out; not even the diagnostic stage was completed.

The years of 2019 and 2022 stood out as times of greater efforts that allowed assuming that the review would, in fact, take shape. In 2019, the review process was promised to start within 1 year. It was done to make sure that it would be approved by the councilors in office, since the administration in term, at that time, would end in 2020. However, at early 2020, COVID-19 cases were detected in Porto Alegre, and in-person activities were suspended.

CMDUA meetings were held remotely. The Public Prosecutors Office issued a recommendation to suspend activities involving social participation, which reinforced the work done by the Municipal Administration (Rio Grande do Sul, 2020). Surveys and technical analyses to prepare the diagnosis could have been carried out without harming the review's schedule; however, these procedures were not put in place. In 2020 and 2021, public executive activities were almost null, because the strategy lied on focusing efforts on developing other plans and projects, as observed below. Finally, in 2022, expectations for launching the review were renewed, mainly because the international consultancy firm 'Ernest Young' (EY) was hired for this enterprise.

It is possible identifying several reasons for successive delays in starting the review: lack of political motivation - the 2017-2020 administration took two years to start the process and abolished the Secretariat of Urban Planning, which gave birth to the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainability (Smams) and to the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Mobility (Smim) -; technicians' devaluation by the 2017-2020 management and application of minimum state precepts (Harvey, 2008); the city hall team involved in the plan review only counted on 7 technicians; priority was given to hire an international consultancy and to commission positions rather than public investments in restructuring the municipality's technical staff; finally, the pandemic played significant part in disrupting this process. However, 2020 should have been the year to finish the process, not to start it.

By late 2024, the mayor postponed the PDDUA review completion to 2025 – with no defined completion month – due to the municipal elections.

Universities' participation and international agencies

In 2017, the City Council Cosmam (Health and Environment Committee) invited the Executive Power to debate about PDDUA review at the end of the first year of the municipal and council management. At that time, the secretary in office highlighted the

likely alignment between MP review and UN's 2030 Agenda SDGs as strategy to access investment lines.

After one year and a half of negotiations, R\$10.64 million financing was approved by the Regional Development Bank of the Far South (BRDE). The resources were allocated to the International Technical Cooperation (ITC), which was signed with UN's Pnud, which was consolidated a few months earlier (Carneiro, 2020). The project POA, *Inovador, Integrado, Resiliente e Sustentável*, from 2003, was signed by PMPA, Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) and UN-PNUD to:

[...] subsidize improvements in urban planning management and to promote integrated and sustainable municipal development based on New Urban Agenda principles and on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainly SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities. (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2019a)

According to Brazilian ambassador Rui Pereira, "Pnud is one of Brazil's main, if not its main, partners in international cooperation" (Speech..., 2019). He added:

UN-Habitat is the United Nations' agency specialized on urban issues. It would be very difficult for any Brazilian metropolitan area to find better qualified partners to develop this project. (Ibid.)

At that time, the ambassador explained that Porto Alegre adopted an innovative position in comparison to other metropolitan areas in Brazil by aligning the 2030 Agenda with the PDDUA review. He stated that "Academy

addition through UFRGS is also an element of quality assurance to the work to be done" (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2019b).

The university was mentioned because the PCTI (Science, Technology and Innovation Project) signed by PMPA and Pnud provided on UFRGS as accountable for by-products that corresponded to 30% of the total PCTI value (Brasil, 2019). At that time, UFRGS presented two propositions elaborated by different teams of professors. The team rejected by PMPA held professionals with experience in social participation and technical city reading, whereas the winning team mostly comprised professors who are *Pacto Alegre* members.³ *Pacto Alegre* coordinator was also in charge of coordinating the winning team, and he became secretary of innovation months before the Academic Interaction (IAP) between Pnud and UFRGS was cancelled.

Pacto Alegre counts on two on-going projects that are closely related to the Master Plan. The first project, Express Licensing POA, deals with digitalizing the licensing process for construction projects. It suggests an inversion of values, as it accepts these constructions and their subsequent inspection – entrepreneurs are accountable for the whole process. The second project, Innovative Urban Guidelines – Interaction with the Master Plan -, aims at providing technical support for PDDUA review (*Pacto Alegre*, 2022).

Thus, it is possible stating that *Pacto Alegre* represents the University's coalition for growth (Logan and Molotch, 1993), in which the State, elites, the media and universities come together to adopt an entrepreneurial attitude towards economic development. From the beginning, PMPA was expected to set

Chart 3 – Negotiations among PMPA-PNUD-UFRGS-EY

2017	DEC. PROMISE TO START THE PDDUA REVIEW. In a meeting at Cosmam, the secretary highlighted the relevance of using UN SDGs to access credit lines for hiring a consultancy.
2019	AUG. PMPA and UN-Habitat signed the Understanding Memo. Pacto Alegre support. AUG. PACTO ALEGRE PROMOTES THE 1st MEETING of the project integrated to the Master Plan. DEC. SIGNATURE OF THE LETTER OF AGREEMENT AMONG PMPA AND Pnud, ABC AND MRE. Technical cooperation agreement to prepare the PDDUA review. Contract worth R\$11 million, and 30% of services were under the responsibility of UFRGS and 70% of them were on the hands of private consultants by Pnud, according to PCTI.
2020	JUN. BRDE FINANCING APPROVED to hire consultancy worth R\$ 10.64 million. NOV. INTERNAL CALL AT UFRGS for those interested in forming IPA teams in POA 2030, <i>Inovador, Integrado, Resiliente e Sustentável</i> .
2021	JAN. UFRGS HANDS OUT 2 PROPOSITIONS TO PMPA to carry out IAP corresponding to 30% the PCTI signed by PMPA and Pnud. FEV. 1 st SIGNIFICANT PCTI REVIEW. MAR. PMPA DEFINES THE WINNING TEAM, which presented work scope different from that defined in PCTI. This factor needs to be reviewed at different instances, including at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since it is an international cooperation. JUN. IAP BETWEEN UFRGS AND PNUD WAS ISSUED. NOV. 2 nd PCTI SIGNIFICANT REVIEW
2022	APR. UNIVERSITY COUNCIL (CONSUN) REPROVES ONE OF THE UFRGS PROPOSITION and sends it to the Faculty of Architecture for merit assessment. APR. PMPA DECIDED TO REMOVE UFRGS FROM THE REVIEW PROCESS. APR. VICE RECTOR DENIES THE DELAY and asks the mayor to reconsider the withdrawal of UFRGS from the process. Secretary of Smamus reiterates PMPA's decision. SEP. ERNST YOUNG HIRED BY Pnud to support review work. NOV. 1 st POA 2030 SEMINAR presenting Pnud and EY. Priority for registering technicians. There was no room for debate, only questions asked in writing.

Legend: **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION** **PMPA** **PNUD-UFRGS**

Source: Authors, based on Brasil (2019), Brasil (2021a), Brasil (2021b), Brasil (2022), Carneiro (2020), Pacto Alegre (2022), Prefeitura (2022), Scomazzon (2017), Suptitz (2022a), Suptitz (2022c) and Suptitz (2022d).

partnerships with the UFRGS linked to Pacto Alegre.³ The procedures and cancellations shed light on this intention and pointed out how municipal management aimed at the new Comprehensive Plan.

As shown in Chart 3, the Executive Power made the option for cancelling the agreement after the procedures between UFRGS and PMPA, and this action was justified by the University's slowness. However, the cancelling took place shortly after the University Council (Consun) rejected the IAP proposed by the team chosen by PMPA. This

rejection resulted from lack of equality in the treatment of the proposing teachers and from lack of representativeness by professionals from different knowledge fields in the winning team, who are expected to participate in urban planning actions (Brasil, 2022).

Pnud sought to hire a consultancy team after concluding the negotiations among Pnud, PMPA and UFRGS. The body of representatives hired pre-qualified companies: Accenture, Ove Arup and Partners International, Atos IT Services, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Ernest & Young et Associates, Everis, KPMG Advisory,

Prince Waterhouse Coopers. According to Pnud presentation at the 2022 MP Review Seminar, these companies work in the following fields: management consultancy in the public sector, organizational change management, bidding and supply chain, program and project management, health, environment, finance, audit and guarantees.

EY was the only candidate. Urban planning service was not available on this British company's website. The "government and public sector: building a better world for the government and citizens" line was the closest service to the expected one (Ernst Young, 2022). The Urban Planning coordinator stated that "hiring an internationally renowned company, experienced in working with similar procedures in complexity and size, points to a successful path and to good prospects for urban planning in Porto Alegre" (Bisol, 2022).

A collective of entities organized to discuss the PDDUA review during the 1st 2030 PoA seminar "ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS", handed

out a set of documents with the demands and propositions by organized and mobilized civil society in Porto Alegre to EY and UNDP. It was publicly announced that both Pnud and EY would have no contact with Porto Alegre society. The stage (Figure 1) presented cubes representing the 2030 Agenda SDGs; however, the speeches stressed the Comprehensive Plan as basis to create a productive city appreciated by the real estate market.

EY responded to what a productive city on the periphery would be like by highlighting the experience with renewing *Centro Histórico*, including social housing through the real estate market. The mayor addressed the needs of just one civil society entity, "Civil Construction Union (Sinduscon)", in the opening speech of the Seminar, he highlighted the society sector he valued and with whom he dialogued. In other words, all paths crossed the production of a favorable environment for this sector, but the city peripheries remained without answers.

Figure 1 – 1st 2030 PoA Seminar



Source: authors' files.

Therefore, the following issues have risen: (1) SDGs, although being part of this scenario, were not added to the discourse and to the real aims of the plan, they worked to justify the access to resources; (2) PMPA relied on non-democratic institutions that are not accountable to society by signing an agreement with Pnud and EY (Harvey, 2008, p. 80) when the process was expected to be essentially participatory; (3) evidence of neoliberal planning (Baeten, 2018), since it provides on the mainstream role of market actions aimed at prioritizing urban development linked to the economic growth of selected partners.

Social participation difficulties

Social participation difficulties predate UNDP and EY entry. Oliveira, Marx and Oliveira Filho (2021) highlighted delays in the review, social participation restrictions and social actors mobilized to fight for the right to the city, with emphasis on the collective 'ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS' and the implementation of People's Borough Action Plans (PBAPs).⁴

In 2019, PMPA only held one territorial workshop per RGP due to pressure put by PBAPs. Some traveling exhibitions were held in these regions after participatory post-pandemic processes were resumed, and posters were used to demonstrate the outcomes.

In May 2022, 24 workshops were announced to take place between August 2022 and March 2023 (Czarnobay, 2022). PMPA took these exhibition events as part of participatory

workshops. Thematic and territorial workshops were held in WT's and they were organized based on recommendations by the Public Prosecutors Office. (Suptitz, 2022b)

These WT's were divided into two categories: Technical Advisory (GT-CT) and Planning Regions Working Group (GT-CR). Both were originally trained as CMDUA advisors, although they were open for new representatives. This action resulted in loss of counselors' relevance, as they occupied the same space as people without representative roles, and their role was downgraded from deliberative to consultative. The following critiques were made to WT's' conduction: online format during working hours, systematic repetition of presentations, lack of participatory methodology during the meetings, lack of result-systematization indicators.

Pnud and EY involvement was resumed. Originally, the PCTI between PMPA and Pnud provided on structuring participatory processes based on communication strategies for social mobilization, on methodology development, and on workshops' organization and reporting (territorial, technical, thematic and internal), on online consultation, and on public hearings and conferences (Brasil, 2019, p. 10). UFRGS was responsible for these by-products before the agreement was cancelled. Currently, the PMPA technical team is responsible for them.

CMDUA advisors were called to meet the hired experts after EY announced that it would not have any contact with the company. At that time, EY announced its work agenda with PMPA technicians, investors and influencers. Advisors

Chart 4 – Social participation and social mobilization strategies

2016	DEC. 1 ST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SEMINAR. Organized by technicians. It took place in the last month of the administration that was about to end. It guided the necessary MP review for the administration that was about to start its term. There was a historical review of Porto Alegre's planning at this event.
2017	OCT. CMDUA DEFINED PRIORITY TOPICS. Social Interest Housing (HIS) was not part of it. NOV. MAYOR'S DECLARATION: "It will be none other than the communication elite, the business elite and the political elite who will carry out the much-needed reforms. Delegating this to 'John Do' and 'Jane Do' is irresponsible".
2018	MAR. ELECTIONS FOR CMDUA 2018-2020 ADMINISTRATION. JUN. INSURANCE OF 2018-2020 CMDUA BIENNIUM MEMBERS, AFTER MONTHS OF DELAY. NOV. BEGINNING OF PEOPLE'S BOROUGH ACTION PLANS. Technical assistance action in urban planning. Five of the eight RGP's participated in the process. Six workshops were held per region, on average; in total, approximately 30 workshops were held.
2019	AUG.-DEZ. WT WITH ENTITIES FROM CMDUA, PUBLIC PROSECUTORS OFFICE AND UNIVERSITIES. SEP. 1 ST ON-LINE CONSULTATION VIA DIGITAL PB. Only 126 respondents. OCT.-NOV. TERRITORIAL WORKSHOPS. Holding only one workshop per RGP; total number of eight workshops. DEC. CREATION OF 'ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS': for the right of 'todxs nós'.
2020	MAR. BEGINNING OF CONCILIATION HEARINGS VIA Prosecutors Office BETWEEN ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS and PMPA. OCT. LAUNCHING THE PLATFORM ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS AND PMPA. OCT. CONCLUSION OF POPULAR REGIONAL ACTION PLANS.
2021	MAY EXECUTIVE EXTENDS MANAGEMENT OF THE 2018-2020 BIENNIUM UNTIL MAY 2022, after one-year delay in calling CMDUA elections. SEP. PROSECUTORS OFFICE RECOMMENDATION: RESUME OF THE MP REVIEW AND RESPECT OF DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT.
2022	MAY NEW CONSTITUTION OF ADVISORY WG AT CMDUA. NI 04/2021 downgraded the role of the Council from Deliberative to Advisory, with regard to WTs. MAY MANAGEMENT TERM OF THE 2018-2020 BIENNIUM CLOSED, without calling for new elections. JUN. PUBLIC CALL for entities interested in joining the Consultative WT. AUG. RESUME OF IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES with interactive exhibition: results of the eight territorial workshops held in 2019. AUG.-OCT. 2 ND ONLINE PUBLIC CONSULTATION. OCT. EXPANSION OF ENTITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE ADVISORY WT. NOV. MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MP REVIEW ADVISORY WT. At the time, there were talks about land regularization, but with maps that did not identify informal settlements in PoA. NOV. 1 ST POA 2030 SEMINAR presenting Pnud and EY. Priority for registering technicians. There was no room for debate, only questions asked in writing. NOV. ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS delivered, at the seminar, documents and priority topics for Pnud and EY. The topics were: HIS, the place, environment, management and participation profiles. DEC. THERE HAS BEEN NO CALL FOR ELECTIONS FOR CMDUA YET. The administration should have ended in June 2020. The Public Prosecutors Office indicated that it assessed the postponement of elections due to the pandemic as positive, but it recommends resuming work in September 2021. After the recommendation, CMDUA spent 14 months without calling elections. DEC. CMDUA MEETING WITH EY. Advisors were invited to meet the team of experts who will work on consulting for the review.
2023	OCT. AFTER POPULAR ACTION, THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF RIO GRANDE DO SUL (TJ-RS) DETERMINES SUSPENSION OF CMDUA'S OPERATION AND NEW ELECTIONS WITHIN 90 DAYS. NOV. CONFERENCE UNDER JUDICIAL DETERMINATION OF NON-VALIDITY on the occasion of the suspended CMDUA and still no elections. DEC. MAYOR ANNOUNCES POSTPONEMENT OF THE REVIEW TO 2025. It indicates halt on the occasion of the municipal elections.
2024	JAN.-MAR. CONDUCTION OF CMDUA ELECTIONS. The Council had been without elections for four years. MAR. ENTITIES FILE COURT ACTION FOR TRANSPARENCY IN ELECTIONS AND RESPECT TO THEIR COMPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Legend: **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION** Public Prosecutors Office **POPULAR PRESSURE** PMPA

Source: authors, based on ATUA POA – TODXS NÓS (2019), Brum (2018), In a hearing... (2018), Entities... (2018), Czarnobay (2022), Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil. Departamento Rio Grande do SUL – IAB/RS (2020), Note... (2018), Oliveira, Marx and Oliveira Filho (2021), Master Plan (2022), Porto Alegre (2021b), Smams (2022) and Suptitz (2022e).

from Planning Region 1, IAB-RS and CAU-RS requested a meeting with the experts, but they did not get any response. It is noteworthy that the meeting with CMDUA had informational profile and did not feature a meeting to provide subsidies for the review. EY met representatives from the industry and the construction sector (Smamus POA, 2022a) in the following day and announced that:

[...] the technical visits and meetings with municipal public entities and bodies allowed establishing a cooperative relationship to carry out the Plan. Now, the company will gather all the necessary information to produce the instrument to advise Smamus technicians. (Smamus POA, 2022b)

In other words, subsidies and cooperation only happened between selected partners – those of interest to the market. Months later,

EY and PMPA held a meeting with the Brazilian Association of Architectural Offices of Rio Grande do Sul (Asbea RS), IAB-RS and CAU-RS. The city's reading methodology was requested, but there was no response from EY or PMPA.

EY stated that it would develop a Comprehensive Plan to create the conditions for the real estate market through “flexibility with predictability”. Since EY does not act straight in the urban planning field, *Forma Urbana* office (Argentina) is part of its team. This Office is known for its experience in architecture, urban projects and consultancy for the real estate market, as depicted in images publicizing its participation in events promoted by its owner – an architect (Figure 2).

Finally, it is noteworthy that CMDUA did not hold elections for four years. The 2018-2020 administration was in power for six years, even after several demonstrations

Figure 2 – Disclosure of participation in forma urbana office events



Source: Oficina Urbana, in 2022.

by councilors who disagreed with delayed elections. Rio Grande State Court of Justice (TJ-RS) ordered PMPA to hold elections within 90 days after popular claims. Accordingly, the 2nd MP Review Conference presented propositions for the new MP, but it did not have legal effect, because activities had to be suspended as long as CMDUA did not have a new composition.

Thus, one can observe (1) democratic governance disruption (Harvey, 2008) through lack of qualified and effective participation, not just by those comprising CMDUA, but by everyone who joined the WTs, later on; (2) closeness to authoritarianism (Harvey, 2008) by downgrading the role of CMDUA counselors in WTs to a consultative nature and delayed council elections; (3) the presence of a strong State to repress democratic wills (*ibid.*) by disregarding resources' investment to develop participatory methodologies; and (4) support from non-democratic institutions (*ibid.*) by making the option for lack of methodological dialogue between participatory processes used to read the city to be developed by EY, as well as not having contact with the general society, but just with selected partners.

Dividing the Comprehensive Plan: planning by project

PMPA chose to withdraw the work team's focus from plan reviewing to make efforts aimed at preparing two plans for special economic-interest parts in Porto Alegre: Centro Histórico neighborhood and the 4th District Region, due to the Prosecutors Office's decision to suspend participatory processes.

Chart 5 shows the evolution of these two plans. The one set for Centro Histórico was approved in 2021, and that set for the 4th District, in 2022. In both cases, there was immediate request for architectural projects' approval, in compliance with the new defined parameters. Repeated actions and the speed of projects suitable for this procedure highlighted the plans' interests and the logics of the business desk in its formulation.

Overall, both cases provide on (1) releasing the urban planning regime to reach full flexibility, as they may be defined by decree; and (2) creating new created-land indices (synonymous with onerous grant) to broaden resource collection. Actually, construction and

Chart 5 – Dividing the master plan

2016	MAY HIRING THE Urban Technology Center (NTU-UFRGS) for the 4D Master Plan development.
2017	MAR. COMPLETION OF THE PORTO ALEGRE 4D MASTER PLAN. DEC. PROMISE TO START THE PDDUA REVIEW. The secretary highlighted the relevance of using UN SDGs to access credit lines to hire the consultancy during a meeting at Cosmam.
2020	MAR. INÍCIO DA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19 EM PORTO ALEGRE. MAR. RECOMMENDATION BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTORS OFFICE. Temporary suspension of the process, as long as the state of health emergency due to the pandemic lasts. JUN. NORMATIVE INSTRUCTION 15/2020. Suspending all review activities, except for those under the exclusive responsibility of the Municipal Administration (Porto Alegre, 2020).
2021	FEB. NORMATIVE INSTRUCTION 04/2021. It established the procedure for PDDUA reviewing. APR. INTRODUCING STUDIES BY THE HISTORICAL CENTER PROGRAM, AT CMDUA. SEP. RECOMMENDATION BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTORS OFFICE: RESUMING THE MP REVIEW AND RESPECT TO DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT. SEP. RECOMMENDATION BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTORS OFFICE: FOLLOWING THE MP RESERVATION PRINCIPLE. NOV. REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR CENTRO HISTÓRICO (CH) APPROVED. JAN. PRIVATE SECTOR PRESENTS SEVEN PROJECTS FOR CONSTRUCTION IN CH.
2022	JAN. PRESENTATION OF STUDIES FROM THE 4 TH DISTRICT PROGRAM, AT CMDUA. AUG. 4 TH DISTRICT PROGRAM APPROVED. AUG. APRESENTING THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT OF A BUILDING 130 m IN HEIGHT. OCT. MAYOR SANCTIONS THE 4D PROGRAM LAW. OCT. PMPA APPROVES THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING (117 m, in height).
2024	JUN. NEW DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE REVIEW.
2025	NEW DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE REVIEW.

Legend: **PMPA** Public Prosecutors Office **COMPLETION DEADLINE** **CENTRO HISTÓRICO** **4TH DISTRICT**

Source: authors, based on Bueno (2018), Empreendimento... (2022), Melo... (2022), Porto Alegre (2020), Porto Alegre (2021a), Rio Grande do Sul (2020), Rio Grande do Sul (2021), Scomazzon (2017) and Suptitz (2022f).

population densification was predicted and investments in infrastructure were assessed later on, since these investments will only take place by applying resources coming from land created by enterprises that chose to install themselves in the program region. It is important being aware that this format is unfeasible; therefore, PMPA sought financing for infrastructure investments in international banks. It is noteworthy that none of them was called Neighborhood Plan or Region Plan. Option was made to call them Rehabilitation Program for Porto Alegre's Centro Histórico (PRCHPA) and Urban Regeneration Program

for the 4th District of Porto Alegre (PRU4DPA), although both of them present changes in both urban parameters and created-land availability.

The Public Prosecutors Office recommended the executive power to comply with the Master Plan reserve when it sends the PRCHPA to the City Council (Brasil, 2021). This legal warning aimed at anticipating the Master Plan review. The media called these programs "Comprehensive Plans" and the mayor himself highlighted that the PDDUA review had to follow the format of these two programs. During an interview, the Mayor stated:

[...] the time to face Centro and the 4th District cannot be 2023, and it explains these two cuts. But there is also an urban vision shared by the mayor and the deputy: I think that the city, although it has a general Master Plan, should have the capacity to have many 'master plans' [...] I am very much in favor of urban consortium operations, and it means having an urban outline and reinforcing these neighborhoods. (Velleda and Gomes, 2022; our highlights)

[...] The idea is that it (the master plan) is "quite liberal" and that it does not stick to high-level discussions, as the debate is said to have been in previous revisions. However, until it is achieved, he says that Centro cannot wait, and this is why it would be forwarding projects that change the current Master Plan, in separate. (Ibid.; our highlights)

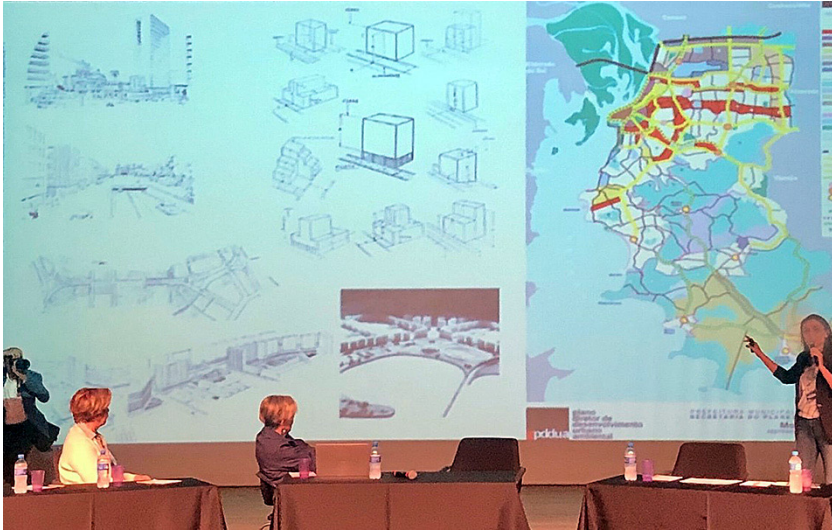
Media debates and statements showed the clear intention of not complying with the Comprehensive Plan reservation. PMPA adopted an entrepreneurial attitude by publicizing a private enterprise at approval stage on its social networks; however, it did not meet airspace control standards, as shown in Figure 3.

On several occasions, PMPA technical team expressed its concerns with both the intermediate scale and the design of public spaces. It even listed the possibility of preparing detailed plans based on the experience of Portuguese urban projects. They claimed that the 1999 PDDUA adopted more generic design forms at the 1st POA 2030 Seminar, and it points out the likely path to value the project to the detriment of the plan (Figure 4).

Figure 3 – The project approved in the +4d program will be the tallest building in the city



Source: Porto Alegre City Hall, 2022.

Figure 4 – Urban projects *versus* Master Plan

Source: authors' files.

The vocabulary used by PMPA and its partners point towards changes in the Comprehensive Plan model. Consortium Urban Operations, Detailed Plans, concern with intermediate scales and a general plan capable of having many Master Plans are planning by project indicators (Avitabile, 2005) or results (Ascher, 1992). Both possibilities focus on urban project development, on the strategic position of entrepreneurship and on local speculation.

An entrepreneurial and result-oriented, market-oriented, government - in Osborne and Gaebler's (1993) terms - was also identified, since the outspread of projects takes place on government networks, as well as on the willingness to circumvent the Comprehensive Plan's reserve rules in order to meet market demands. The Plans/Programs for both

Centro Histórico and the 4th District can be featured as Trend Planning and Leverage Planning (Brindley, Rydin and Stoker, 2004), because they are based on changing the lack of regulation scenario to meet private interests, including fiscal stimuli.

Final considerations

The aim of the present was to investigate the effects of advanced neoliberalism on Comprehensive Plan reviews in Brazil based on Porto Alegre experience, Rio Grande do Sul State. The process was marked by repeated actions, interference by the Public Prosecutors Office with cyclical processes and lack of cycle completions.

Among all the effects, the first detected one was related to minimum State implementation (Harvey, 2008) by disrupting the technical staff of the planning department in the last 10 years. This procedure was associated with the fact that significant resources granted by the Regional Development Bank of the Far South (BRDE) for the MP review were invested in international companies.

The second observed effect was related to the power of the real estate market in this review process. It embodied immeasurable strength within an environment of flexible accumulation (Harvey, 2011). Dialogue with entities in this sector is open and desired, but planning, environmental and community entities, which are activities carried out due to recommendation by the Public Prosecutors Office, remain without qualified participation methodology or still deal with promises. Democratic management and participatory Comprehensive Plan issues have been deserving attention since the rise of the Rule of Law, but closer attention must be paid at a time of advanced neoliberalism.

The third effect regards focusing on a productive city for the capital. Topics, places and social groups that do not support

this production are made invisible and have no space in debates about the new Comprehensive Plan. International agencies and the UN 2030 Agenda support efficiency and socio-environmental concern by approving the adoption of neoliberal ideas. The participation of international actors who do not talk to local communities is the very result of new institutional arrangements and governance forms that do not undergo society's scrutiny.

Finally, effects on urban planning are striking. There is no lack of planning, but a planning forged to meet the interests of specific actors. Trend and leverage planning (Brindley, Rydin, and Stoker, 2004) procedures are fully applied. Planning by project meets this demand by turning the city into pieces of interest for speculative capital, besides turning citizens into customers.

Results deriving from Porto Alegre's Comprehensive Plan review process show the challenges faced by the urban planning field. The effects from financing, updates in new institutional arrangements and democratic governance disruption point to the opposite direction of urban reform struggle ideas, since they never come true. It is urgent taking a new path to value a planning practice linked to the interests of citizens.

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Notes

- (1) According to Murphy (2008, p. 154), managerialism transforms “topics of social life and organizations into a series of discrete problems that can be solved by applying technical expertise”. Based on Parker (2002), managerialism is the generalized ideology of management that, in its turn, has multiple meanings. This concept can be related to a group of executives.
- (2) The outspread and specific differences to the post-bureaucratic movement, to the New Public Management in Anglo-Saxon countries and to the Managerial Public Administration in Brazil, cannot be ignored. However, the government reinvention movement is the most relevant one for the current study.
- (3) *Pacto Alegre* is an “agreement among educational institutions, government, private sector and civil society to encourage collaborative entrepreneurship” (Pacto Alegre, 2022)
- (4) Carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Architects – Rio Grande do Sul Department (IAB-RS), in partnership with *Cidade em Projeto* – Research, Teaching and Extension Laboratory (CPLAB-UFRGS), sponsored by the Council of Architecture and Urbanism (CAU- RS).

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