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# Spatial practices of the school community in the context of the covid-19 pandemic in the city of Maringá/PR

Práticas espaciais da comunidade escolar no contexto de pandemia da covid-19 na cidade de Maringá/PR

Prácticas espaciales de la comunidad escolar en el contexto de la pandemia de covid-19 en la ciudad de Maringá/PR

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# **ABSTRACT**

Goal: This article aims to analyze the spatial practices carried out in the city of Maringá/PR by the school community in light of the measures decreed by the City Hall in the context of Covid-19. Methodology/approach: The research is qualitative and descriptive and involves collection of primary and secondary data. The data were interpreted using the hermeneutic-dialectic analysis technique. Originality/relevance: In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted schools to adapt to state and municipal decrees. This study views the city as an organization shaped by power relations, focusing on the spatial practices of the school community through their demands and demonstrations. Main findings: The study revealed the spatial practices of territorialization in a strict sense, in a broad sense and the construction of spatial networks by the school community. These spatial practices are territorialization actions resulting from the demonstrations that took place in the city-organization. Theoretical contributions: The study broadens the understanding of spatial practices as forms of territorialization, highlighting the city as a space of power relations, resistance and dispute, and reinforcing the vision of the city as an organization formed by social interactions, conflicts and multiple territories. Management contributions: The research demonstrates how social groups, such as the school community, use urban space to resist government measures. This offers valuable insights for public managers on how power dynamics and mobilizations influence policies and decisions in times of crisis.

Keywords: City. COVID-19. Spatial practices. School community.

# **RESUMO**

Objetivo: Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as práticas espaciais realizadas na cidade de Maringá/PR pela comunidade escolar à luz das medidas decretadas pela Prefeitura Municipal no contexto da Covid-19. Metodologia/abordagem: A pesquisa é qualitativa e descritiva e envolve coleta de dados primários e secundários. Os dados foram interpretados por meio da técnica de análise hermenêutica-dialética. Originalidade/relevância: Em 2020, a pandemia da COVID-19 impulsionou as escolas a se adequarem aos decretos estaduais e municipais. Este estudo considera a cidade como uma organização moldada por relações de poder, com foco nas práticas espaciais da comunidade escolar por meio de suas demandas e manifestações. Principais resultados: O estudo revelou as práticas espaciais de territorialização em sentido estrito, em sentido amplo e a construção de redes espaciais pela comunidade escolar. Essas práticas espaciais são ações de territorialização resultantes das manifestações ocorridas na cidade-organização. Contribuições teóricas: O estudo amplia a compreensão das práticas espaciais como formas de territorialização, destacando a cidade como um espaço de relações de poder, resistência e disputa, e reforçando a visão da cidade como uma organização formada por interações sociais, conflitos e múltiplos territórios. Contribuições da gestão: A pesquisa demonstra como grupos sociais, como a comunidade escolar, utilizam o espaço urbano para resistir a medidas governamentais. Isso oferece insights valiosos para gestores públicos sobre como dinâmicas de poder e mobilizações influenciam políticas e decisões em tempos de crise.

Palavras-chave: Cidade. COVID-19. Práticas espaciais. Comunidade escolar.

# **RESUMEM**

Objetivo: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las prácticas espaciales realizadas en la ciudad de Maringá/PR por la comunidad escolar a la luz de las medidas decretadas por el Avuntamiento en el contexto de la Covid-19. Metodología/enfoque: La investigación es cualitativa y descriptiva e implica la recolección de datos primarios y secundarios. Los datos se interpretaron mediante la técnica de análisis hermenéutico-dialéctico. Originalidad/relevancia: En 2020, la pandemia de COVID-19 impulsó a las escuelas a adaptarse a los decretos estatales y municipales. Este estudio considera la ciudad como una organización moldeada por relaciones de poder, centrándose en las prácticas espaciales de la comunidad escolar a través de sus demandas y manifestaciones. Principales resultados: El estudio reveló las prácticas espaciales de territorialización en sentido estricto, en sentido amplio y la construcción de redes espaciales por parte de la comunidad escolar. Estas prácticas espaciales son acciones de territorialización resultantes de las manifestaciones que tuvieron lugar en la ciudad-organización. Contribuciones teóricas: El estudio amplía la comprensión de las prácticas espaciales como formas de territorialización, destacando la ciudad como un espacio de relaciones de poder, resistencia y disputa, y reforzando la visión de la ciudad como una organización formada por interacciones sociales, conflictos y territorios múltiples. Contribuciones a la gestión: La investigación demuestra cómo grupos sociales, como la comunidad escolar, utilizan el espacio urbano para resistir las medidas gubernamentales. Esto ofrece información valiosa para los administradores públicos sobre cómo las dinámicas y movilizaciones del poder influyen en las políticas y decisiones en tiempos de crisis.

Palabras clave: Ciudad. COVID-19. Prácticas espaciales. Comunidad escolar.

# INTRODUCTION

This work aims to contribute to the studies on city, territory, and spatial practices in Organizational Studies. The city began to be considered an object of analysis in Organizational Studies in the 1990s, with the emergence of the first studies in Brazil (Honorato & Saraiva, 2016). Fischer (1996) was one of the pioneers in this process, defining the city as a highly complex social organization. Her studies paved the way for other researchers to discuss the city from this perspective. According to the author, the city can also be understood as a constantly changing flow, which is a metaphor for an organization of undeniable and challenging complexity, where it is necessary to better understand it as an organization to provide some resources for better management, and this is what studies on the city as an organization can offer (Fischer, 1997).

In this same perspective, Mac-Allister (2001) also contributed to Organizational Studies by discussing the city as an organization: the city-organization. According to the author, assuming the city as an organization allows for understanding its complexity and collectivity and incorporating its processes and culture, resulting in a cultural identity relative to the city and its management. Mac-Allister (2004), advancing the concept of city-organization, defines it as a set of social organizations and unorganized individuals situated in time and space.

The approach to city-organization observed in Saraiva and Carrieri's (2012) work proposes a conceptual advancement based on the concept addressed by Mac-Allister (2001; 2004). According to Saraiva and Carrieri (2012), the notion of city-organization allows for an organizational view of urban dynamics, which presents possibilities for observing organized social life. In this sense, the practices of multiple actors are present within the city-organization in different ways.

To analyze social actors in these spaces, it is necessary to understand the city as a territory where various actors with their spatial practices inhabit. Souza (2012) defines territory as a space delimited by power relations and affirms the existence of multiple territories, especially in large cities. According to Raffestin (1993), territory is an inter-spatial power relationship, not only that of borders guarded by the State, in a top-down power that comes from above but beyond the Nation-State.

In this perspective, Souza (2005) asserts that the city constitutes a center for territory management, considered not only as a space to produce goods, commercialization, and consumption but also as a place where people organize and interact according to their interests and values, forming affinity groups. The author defends that space conditions social relations, materially speaking, as well as power relations outlined in space, considering this as territory and the cultural values and symbols inscribed in space. Thus, this research considers the city beyond its materiality in the practices of the social actors who inhabit it and their power relations.

Regarding practices in the production of urban space, Souza (2010) also contributes by proposing a typology of spatial practices. These practices

encompass six categories: territorialization in a strict sense, territorialization in a broad sense, refunctioning/restructuring of material space, resignification of places, the construction of spatial networks, and the construction of alternative economic circuits (Souza, 2010).

Therefore, such an approach allows for the analysis of spatial practices expressed by the school community in the city of Maringá, PR, which is the objective of this study. These spatial practices of Souza (2010) will be used in this study to unveil the spatial practices of the school community and thus understand how the occupation of the city by these social actors occurs. Among the surveyed schools, some private ones are represented by the Union of Private Teaching Establishments of the Northwest of the State of Paraná (Sinepe/NOPR), which offer Elementary Education. The focus on private schools was due to the spatial practices expressed by the school community in Maringá, mainly carried out by parents and guardians of students enrolled in private schools.

According to Souza (2010), spatial practices are social practices in which spatiality is a component evidenced in the form of organization, expressing dissatisfaction, resistance, and protest since spaces are territorialized, that is, appropriated, under the control of a specific group, and materially restructured (Souza, 2015). Souza (2021) states that territorialization actions stand out among spatial practices. In this sense, it is possible to consider that the city-organization is constituted by different territories in which distinct groups experience, appropriate, and dispute them (Costa et al., 2022).

Raffestin (1993) defines territory as a space where work has been projected, which may be energy and information, that reveals power relationships. The concepts of territory have recently been incorporated into the field of Organizational Studies. For example, Guarnieri et al. (2018) analyzed some residents' territorialization of daily life with the implementation of Senior Citizen Academies (ATIs) in a square in their neighborhood. The process of territorialization is understood through daily life, as it is in the built and practiced space that manifestations of domination and appropriation are perceived (Guarnieri et al., 2018).

In addition to the approach to territory, there is also an advancement in Brazilian Organizational Studies of urban themes involving the practices of social actors, such as graffiti practices in cities (Viegas & Saraiva, 2015); the homeless population (Costa & Oliveira, 2019; Honorato & Saraiva, 2016); spatial practices of ruptures in an art exhibition (Bezerra et al., 2019); organizational practices of resistance in an occupation and removal (Paulo et al., 2020).

In this context, the relevance of conducting studies in cities, studying their inhabitants, and the practices expressed by these subjects in the city, involving conflicts, disputes, and power relations, is perceived. Understanding how the city constitutes the lives of these subjects, among many spatial practices, which, according to Souza (2010, p. 13), are "dense social practices of spatiality."

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a public health emergency of international concern due to the spread of a new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. As a measure to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, starting from March 20th, 2020, the government of the state of Paraná suspended classes in public and private schools, including those affiliated with the State of Paraná,

and in public universities, according to State Decree no. 4.258/2020 (Public Prosecutor's Office of Paraná, 2020).

As a result, there were several social impacts, such as interrupted learning, confusion, and stress for teachers, parents, and guardians unprepared for home education, maintenance, and improvement of teaching in remote mode, gaps in childcare, and high economic costs (Oliveira & Santos, 2020). According to the authors, in addition to these impacts, there was also an increase in dropout rates, greater exposure to violence and exploitation, and challenges in measuring and validating learning.

In this panorama, new decrees emerged at state and municipal levels to contain the spread of COVID-19. The city hall of Maringá, to combat the advancement and proliferation of the coronavirus, issued Decree No. 436/2020 on March 17th, 2020. The decree provided some adopted measures, including suspending some activities for 30 days. Article 6 of this decree, as collective prevention measures, includes suspending classes in public and private schools at the municipal level, with the schools being guaranteed to operate until March 20th, 2020 (Maringá's City Hall, 2020).

From then on, some mobilizations of various segments in the city began, whether in favor or against municipal decrees. Among these segments is the education sector, where there were protests from the school community, with groups both in favor and opposed to the return of in-person classes in the city. The school community in this research comprises directors, coordinators, teachers of private schools, union representatives, and student guardians. These mobilizations aimed to seek better alternatives, whether in favor or against the decrees and actions of the Municipality.

This article begins with a theoretical review of the city as an object of study and field of struggles. Next, discussions are held on city, territory, and spatial practices. The methodological procedures used in the research are then described. Subsequently, the actions of the Municipal Administration are described, and the spatial practices in the city of Maringá are analyzed. Finally, the conclusions of the study are presented.

# THE CITY AS OBJECT OF STUDY AND FIELD OF STRUGGLES

In organizational studies, the city is discussed from different perspectives. According to Martins (2021, p.52): "[...] some focus on management, others on organized social life, and there are still those who look at it based on images and representations." The author clarifies that some debate the city from the perspective of class struggles, and others highlight urban entrepreneurship. Thus, regardless of the approach, the city is the stage for interactions between the different (Honorato & Saraiva, 2016).

Building on the contributions of Fischer (1997) and Mac-Allister (2004), the city has come to be understood as a real and virtual mega-organization, both concrete and symbolic, composing multiple complex organizations with diverse social actors and interests, thereby producing conflicts (Piveta, 2020).

Other authors like Saraiva and Carrieri (2012) approach the notion of city-organization as an organizational perspective of urban dynamics, opening possibilities for observing organized social life. In a city-organization,

individuals and their social groups interact, producing dynamics in the space where they live (Moreira & Marquesan, 2019). Thus, these recent studies on the city-organization consider complexity, diversity, singularity, contradiction, and ambiguity, in addition to its formal and informal, material and immaterial characteristics, and above all, as a field of struggle where different conceptions and projects of the city are contested (Paulo et al., 2020).

Therefore, the city is understood as a field of struggles, in which "field" is defined as "a structured space in which agents interact and compete for a position that allows them to exert power" (Carneiro, 2006, p. 44). Due to the history of struggles among social actors, the field is a space for conflicts to subsist and reproduce materially and symbolically (Carneiro, 2006). The city, in Harvey's view (2012), is a stage of struggles where citizens, to secure their rights, must consider the possibility of conflict and not necessarily avoid it.

In this sense, analyzing the city as an object of study in Administration allows us to perceive the collective organizing practices present in its spaces and to envision how the city is organized and governed, opening pathways for it to be understood as a place of production of deviations in direction and a stage for struggles and demonstrations (Schuhardt & Chagas, 2020).

In discussions about the appropriation of spaces, the concepts of territory and territoriality can be imagined (Saraiva, 2019). Discussions about territory can contribute to interactions and relationships among people and provide identification between individuals and the city (Piveta, 2020). Therefore, the concepts of city and territory need to be articulated to analyze the practices of social actors in these spaces, as will be described in the next section.

# ■ CITY, TERRITORY, AND SPATIAL PRACTICES

The city is inhabited by people belonging to diverse social groups, and concretely, the various urban groups experience it differently (Saraiva, 2019). Thus, the city "[...] constitutes a specific space full of situated and symbolically perceived places, and numerous territories in dispute by those who inhabit it" (Saraiva, 2019, p. 22). Therefore, the city can be understood as one territory with multiple territories inside.

According to Souza (2005, p. 28), the city is defined as "a center for the management of the territory, not only as the headquarters of companies (private and state-owned) but also as the headquarters of religious and political power." The author clarifies that the city cannot be merely a space for producing goods, trade, and consumption but a place where people organize and interact according to their interests and values, forming affinity groups.

Souza's (2012) conceptualization of territory is associated with the exercise of power. Thus, a territory can present various territorializations by social actors through the appropriation of urban space. According to Souza (2021), territorialization actions are present in spatial practices, understood as social practices, i.e., social actions carried out by collective social actors. These actions usually materialize over a short-term temporal scale and are marked by confrontation with the State apparatus (Souza, 2021). Thus, this work sees territorialization as a spatial practice expressed by social actors in urban space.

Within a process of domination and appropriation, territory and territorialization must be approached in the multiplicity of their manifestations, as these are multiplicities of powers incorporated into them through multiple social actors involved (Haesbaert, 2010). In this sense, the author refers to both hegemonic struggles (which defend a standard/dominant territorial logic) and resistance struggles (which defend multiplicities and distinct territorialities) since power without resistance. However, as minimal as it may be, it does not exist (Haesbaert, 2010).

Spatial practices that enable discontent, resistance, and protest have always existed because spaces are "territorialized (conquered, appropriated, put under the control of a specific group), materially refunctionalized or restructured, endowed with new meanings to fit new identities and new purposes" (Souza, 2015, p. 207). All spatial practices are social, in which spatiality is a highlighted component of organization form, means of expression, and desired objectives (Souza, 2021). Social relations are concretely realized as spatial relations, thus constituting practical activities (Carlos, 2009). From this perspective, reflecting on the city is a reflection on socio-spatial practice, which concerns "the way life is realized in the city, as forms and moments of appropriation of space as a constitutive element of the realization of human existence" (Carlos, 2009, p. 11).

The State is an essential agent of urban reform, as it ensures the creation of regulatory frameworks, laws, and norms to control the actions of other social actors (Souza & Rodrigues, 2004). According to the authors, the State is a field of power, continuously contested by different groups and social classes, and is constantly being influenced and subjected to pressure, including from popular sectors. Civil society plays a vital role in urban reform and is composed of various groups, organizations, and movements with different political orientations, which often have different and conflicting interests (Souza & Rodrigues, 2004).

Souza (2010) presents a typology of six different insurgent spatial practices: territorialization in the strict sense, which concerns the control of space with the physical presence of actors and tend to be noisy, such as protests, whistle-blowing, and banging pots, and are open, conducted publicly; territorialization in the broad sense, which deals with the appropriation of space without necessarily requiring the lasting physical presence of actors; the refunctioning/restructuring of material space, which corresponds to adjustments or modifications in material space, to new needs, due to new social relations; the resignification of places, which deals with interpretations of other meanings to spatial forms of urban space; the construction of alternative economic circuits, which concerns emancipatory movements that have invested in developing alternatives to the capitalist market; and finally, the construction of spatial networks, which deals with the formation of spatial networks corresponding to the implementation of multi-scalar practices, integrating various experiences of local or regional resistance (Souza, 2010).

This typology, according to Souza (2010), consists of comparing different experiences from different regions, countries, and continents, providing a systematic overview of emancipatory social movements' responses to heteronomous power and alternatives to conformism, which can serve as inspiration for other movements in the future; and finally, because it contributes to reflections "about the possibilities, weaknesses, limits, contradictions, and legitimacy of these manifestations of resistance" (Souza, 2010, p. 28).

Hence, Souza (2010) asserts that spatial practices have always been important for social movements and activism. He states that the spatial practices previously presented, from a tactical point of view, have proven effective to a greater or lesser extent. Moreover, these practices have often been combined within the scope of complex socio-spatial strategies (Souza, 2021).

These studies on spatial practices, territory, and territorialization addressed by Souza (2005, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2021) and other authors discussed in this research, contribute to debates about the city in the field of Organizational Studies, aiming to understand how the physical and symbolic occupation of the city occurs, as individuals, groups, and organizations have occupied the city at different times and also organized themselves for non-physical interventions (e.g., legal) so that their demands were heard or attended to. Thus, it will be possible to understand the spatial practices involving the school community facing the measures decreed by the City Hall in Maringá.

Therefore, territory is an affective place marked by power relations that constantly demand new articulations and possibilities of influence and appropriation that cannot be reduced to physical spaces or material resources (Saraiva, 2020). According to the author, territory incorporates a political problematization of tension and dispute, in which this dispute reflects coexistence with other groups over a certain time.

According to Costa et al. (2022), social relations play an essential role in the processes of territorialization for the formation of the organizational space of the city. In the process of territorialization, the everyday practices of the constitution of the organizational space highlight the multiple territorialities of social actors, as various types of practices constitute territoriality (Costa et al., 2022). Thus, the city (re)produced in Organizational Studies is "something that exists from the reciprocal action of the interaction between the practices of individuals and the organizational practices of/in cities in different territories in constant tension" (Gomes et al., 2021, p. 59).

Next, the methodological procedures used in this study are presented.

#### METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The present study aimed to analyze the spatial practices carried out in the city of Maringá/PR by the school community in light of the measures decreed by the City Hall in the context of Covid-19. The present study has a qualitative nature. According to Triviños (1987), qualitative research aims to capture not only the appearance of the phenomenon but also its essence. For Minayo (2002), qualitative research cannot quantify a level of reality, as it seeks to understand the reality of social actors more profoundly. The author emphasizes that the qualitative approach delves into the world of meanings of human actions, addressing particular questions. Qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, beliefs, values, and attitudes, corresponding to a deeper space of human relationships, processes, and phenomena (Minayo, 2002).

The primary sources of this research were semi-structured interviews, field diaries, and direct non-participant observation. Secondary sources involved research in documents, articles, reports, social media, and websites. Five private schools that offer elementary education in Maringá were

selected for this research. Three criteria were used to select the schools for the study: 1) being affiliated with Sinepe/NOPR; 2) presenting different sizes (number of enrolled students); and 3) having diversity in location, to include both schools located in the city center and the outskirts. Figure 1 below presents the characteristics of each school, such as size and operating time, according to data from Inep (National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira).

Figure 1
School's Characteristics

School	Size of the school	Time since opening
Υ	Between 201 and 500 enrolled students.	20 years
Α	Between 501 and 1000 enrolled students.	28 years
Z	Between 501 and 1000 enrolled students.	37 years
X	More than 1000 enrolled students.	34 years
В	More than 1000 enrolled students.	64 years

Note. Average number of students enrolled and operating time.

School B is near the downtown area, a neighborhood called Zone 2, near the Metropolitan Cathedral of Maringá, one of the city's tourist attractions. School Z is in Zone 4, School X is in Zone 8, and Schools A and Y are in the northern part of the city.

Data was collected through semi-structured individual interviews with 19 respondents, including directors, coordinators, teachers, parents/guardians of students from these schools, and members of the private schools' unions. The interviewed subjects were selected using the snowball technique, in which the respondents themselves suggested a new person to be interviewed (Veiga & Gondim, 2001). Thus, parents/guardians indicated a coordinator or school director and another parent available to grant the interview. Some of these parents/guardians participated in the protests held in the city. Regarding the union representatives, it was observed that they were present in a large portion of the protests. The number of interviews was based on the "saturation point" method, which operationalizes the selection of new interviewees, ending when new responses only confirm the already established information without adding anything to the interpretation of the content (Bauer & Aarts, 2008).

The chosen method for data analysis in this research was the hermeneutic-dialectic method. This method was initially employed in the context of qualitative health research in Brazil by Minayo (2002, 2004) and subsequently in educational research (Oliveira, 2001). Recently, it has been used in qualitative research in Administration as a technique for data analysis (Cardoso et al., 2013). According to Minayo (2002), in this method, the speech of social actors is situated in their context to be better understood. The steps for operationalization, according to the author, are (a) data ordering, mapping the data obtained in the field; (b) data classification, constructed based on questioning with a theoretical foundation; and (c) final analysis, establishing

connections between the data and the theoretical framework of the research, answering the research question based on the objectives (Minayo, 2002).

In this research, following the steps proposed by Minayo (2002), the data obtained in the field were mapped, the narratives of the subjects were listened to, the interviews were transcribed, the data were classified, and the analysis was articulated between the data and the theoretical framework, going beyond the speeches, and described facts, as advocated by the hermeneutic-dialectic method. Minayo (2004) highlights that the central dilemma of qualitative research researchers is to overcome formal interpretive schemes (functionalism) and that the hermeneutic-dialectic method is the most capable of overcoming these formalities and providing an interpretation closer to reality.

The data found in the research sources were separated, organized chronologically, and analyzed. Initially, documents, city reports, municipal websites, and social media were searched for. Then, based on the reading of the collected material and the conducted interviews, a screening was performed to select the material for this research.

# ACTIONS OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND SPATIAL PRACTICES IN THE CITY OF MARINGÁ

In March 2020, a state of public calamity was declared by the Municipality of Maringá when the first case of COVID-19 was registered in the city. In this study, the starting point is assumed to be the decree n. 436/2020, published by the municipality of Maringá on March 17th, 2020. This was the first decree to contain the spread of the virus in the city. Among the decreed measures was the suspension of activities and events with 50 people or more for 30 days. This decree also informed that the operation of both private and public schools would only be held until March 20th, 2020.

The day after represented another significant milestone: municipal decree n. 445/2020, dated March 18th, 2020, suspended classes and face-to-face attendance in educational institutions, both public and private, for 30 days starting from March 20th, 2020. Additionally, it suspended the operation of some establishments and activities, such as retail and wholesale commerce, religious services and activities, restaurants, bars, and cafeterias, among others.

With all these measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, some practices were expressed by social actors who gathered to request the reopening of suspended activities, from entrepreneurs presenting their proposals for the resumption of economic activities to schools organizing for the return of face-to-face classes.

Thus, the city begins to have territories by appropriating and dominating social actors in urban spaces. The territorialization of these spaces represents the contradictions and conflicts of social actors in the face of measures decreed by the government. Therefore, territorialization can be lasting and ephemeral (Souza, 2021).

Days later, with Decree n. 566/2020, dated April 18th, 2020, the city's economy resumed gradually. Restaurants, bars, and cafeterias were authorized to operate in person until 11:00 PM with Decree n. 1360/2020 dated

September 15th, 2020. However, the in-person activities of schools still did not have authorization to return, and students continued to attend classes remotely. It was noted that until the first semester of 2020, there was greater acceptance from the school community regarding the restrictive decrees published by the Municipality. However, in the second semester of 2020, there was an increase in protests requesting the return of face-to-face classes, mainly due to other activities (commercial, industrial, and service provision in general) being able to operate, with some restrictions.

On September 20th, 2020, a protest organized by Sinepe/NOPR took place in the city. Although it was not the first protest held in Maringá, the protesters followed the example of other cities. They set up a symbolic classroom at the Cathedral Square, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2
Protest at Maringá's Cathedral Square (09/20/2020)



Note. Author's collection (2020).

This protest demonstrated mourning for education, as depicted by interviewee E4: "We brought desks, black balloons, we were in mourning for education." The representative institutions took the lead in organizing themselves. As spatial practices, in Souza's perspective (2010), there is prominence for territorialization in a broad sense, in which spatial rules imposed by the State are challenged without the lasting physical presence of the demonstrators. Often, these are silent spatial practices (Souza, 2021).

The following month, on October 8th, 2020, the school community, in favor of the return of face-to-face activities, held a car caravan requesting the resumption of educational activities, as shown in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3
Protest at Willie Davids Stadium (10/08/2020)



Note. Author's collection (2020).

This protest occurred at Willie Davids Stadium, a soccer stadium in downtown Maringá. Parents of students from private schools requested the optional resumption of educational activities. The municipal government did not respond to this demonstration.

The father of a student from School A (E7) said he did not participate in the protests, but other parents of students from this school did: "My opinion was in favor of the return. I saw parents driving cars and posting photos in groups with balloons and a gathering at the Cathedral."

According to Souza (2010), most explicit forms of protest are noisy in some sense, in which social actors shout and express their dissatisfaction loudly. This was the case with the car caravans held in the city by the school community, which, in Souza's perspective (2021), are practices of territorialization in a strict sense, with the appropriation and control of space through the physical presence of actors and conducted publicly.

The municipal government initially acted responsibly at the beginning of the process concerning complying with the measures of the World Health Organization. However, with the pressures exerted, including demonstrations by business owners in the city and region, decision-making began to change (Töws et al., 2020). However, on October 19th, 2020, the Paraná State Department of Education authorized the gradual return of in-person extracurricular activities throughout the state. This authorization was granted for institutions in the state, municipal, and private networks and followed a trend of relaxing restrictions already applied elsewhere in the country.

Maringá is an essential hub for economic activities and services, especially education and health (Töws et al., 2020). In the education sector, Maringá is a relevant university hub in the region, as it is home to the head-quarters of the State University of Maringá and several colleges and university centers (Töws et al., 2020).

In January 2021, the number of COVID-19 cases was reduced compared to those reported in November and December 2020 (Municipality of Maringá, 2021). In this context, the Maringá City Hall began relaxing the de-

crees and rereleasing various activities. However, more restrictive measures were taken to contain the new virus surge by the end of February. Consequently, there were more mobilizations for the return of face-to-face classes.

On January 16th, 2021, the Support Your School movement organized a car caravan to request the return of face-to-face classes. This movement unites parents, schools, teachers, and other professionals to support the return of school activities. The movement's announcements were made through its social media, encouraging the participation of several cities under the title "National Car Caravan for Education."

This movement also took place from Willie Davids Stadium and toured the streets of downtown Maringá. In this national-level mobilization, using Souza's typology (2010), it is possible to identify, in addition to spatial practices in a strict and broad sense, the spatial practice of building spatial networks, where multi-scale strategies are integrating various local or regional resistance experiences, which allows synergies to be achieved in terms of public visibility of demands and protests (Souza, 2010). Thus, according to the author, these spatial practices contribute to a reflection on the possibilities, weaknesses, limits, contradictions, and legitimacy of these resistance manifestations.

The coordinator of School A (E5) reports that she heard about car caravans from parents of students from this school: "I heard there were some car caravans from parents asking to return, just as there were those who did not want it to return. It was all very uncertain, difficult to make a decision, it was really complicated." Thus, it is evident that in 2021, resistance practices continued to be expressed throughout the city through the school community. The movements seemed to gain more strength as they had been without classes for a year.

On January 25th, 2021, the municipality issued Decree No. 354/2021 authorizing in-person school activities. However, due to the increase in the number of confirmed cases and deaths at the end of February 2021, the Municipality announced Decree No. 546/2021 on February 22nd, 2021, suspending in-person classes in public and private educational institutions starting from February 24th, 2021 (Municipality of Maringá, 2021).

With these actions decreed by the municipality, there were more mobilizations in the education sector. One day after the publication of Decree No. 546/2021, employees and people opposed to the return of unsafe in-person classes protested in front of the City Council on February 23rd, 2021. The employees and people opposed to the return of in-person classes advocated for the continuation of remote classes and requested that the councilors reject the bill that makes Education activities essential in the city (Union of Municipal Public Servants of Maringá - SISMMAR, 2021). After a quick mobilization of the Education category and SISMMAR, on this day, the Maringá City Council removed from the agenda the bill that proposes to classify municipal education as an essential service.

E4 (Representation institution) reports on this opposition to the return of in-person classes: "One thing I heard a lot and saw, the teachers' union, a photo of them on Instagram: 'Closed schools, lives preserved.' Will the world of work absorb a professional who has been practically taking remote classes for two years?"

On the same day, in front of the City Council, but on the opposite side, a group in favor of in-person classes advocated for the return of classes

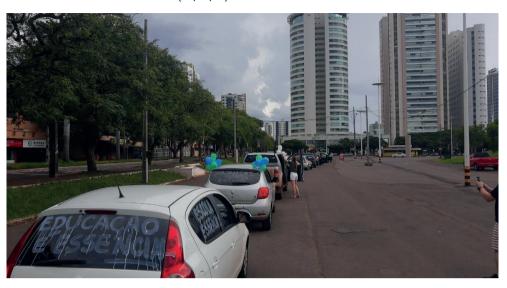
in a hybrid model with in-person activities. In this demonstration, parents and guardians said that the classroom is safe and that students are losing a lot with the suspension of in-person classes. The mother of a student from School Z (E8) was present at this demonstration: "I participated in a mobilization to have the school considered an essential activity. So, we participated in requesting the return of classes since the children's losses were much greater than if they returned to school."

Many contradictions are evident in this mobilization, with one group in favor and another against the return of in-person classes. In addition to the contradictions, the school community also expressed spatial territorialization practices strictly and broadly. Thus, the social actors who produce territories are linked to the State or organization and ordinary social actors who territorialize space (Raffestin, 1993; Costa et al., 2022). Thus, territorialization occurs through space appropriation, which is marked by power relations (Raffestin, 1993).

In this context, the Municipality continued its actions against COVID-19. It maintained surveillance in public and private spaces, observed safety measures such as mask use and social distancing, and complied with the Municipal Decrees related to COVID-19 in the city (Municipality of Maringá, 2021).

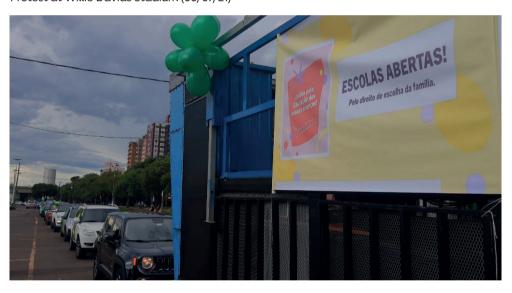
Moreover, shortly after the publication of Municipal Decree No. 546/2021, other resistance practices were requesting the resumption of in-person classes in the city. On March 7th, 2021, there was a car caravan by the United for Education movement, requesting the return of in-person classes. This mobilization started at Willie Davids Stadium and toured the streets of downtown Maringá. The cars were decorated with balloons in the colors of the Brazilian flag, with writings on the windows and some posters requesting the return of in-person classes. The first vehicle of the caravan was a truck that broadcasted a recording saying: "We cannot wait another year without school; the children are without routine and irritated. Our children need school, and schools with protocols are safe" (Field Diary, MARCH 7th, 2021). Figures 4 and 5 below show the start of the car caravan at Willie Davids Stadium in Maringá.

Figure 4
Protest at Willie Davids Stadium (03/07/21)



Note. Author's collection (2020).

Figure 5
Protest at Willie Davids Stadium (03/07/21)



Note. Author's collection (2020).

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the right of choice for families and the name of the movement, United for Education. Social actors dynamically appropriate these spaces in a car caravan or protest march, grounded in a territorial practice marked by power relations. The space occupied by a protest is constituted of conflicts involving the actions of the municipal government and the need for the school community to express dissatisfaction with these actions.

A day after this mobilization, the municipality announced Decree No. 632/2021 on March 8th, 2021, which kept in-person classes suspended in public and private educational institutions. Also, in March, the Municipal Health Department recorded more cases, surpassing December 2020, leading to new Decrees published by the municipality for population control.

As Souza (2010) asserts, power has a face linked to domination or hierarchy/verticality and another associated with horizontality, which can be exercised in public space. Therefore, the construction of popular power, as counterpower, cannot be dissociated from resistance against an oppressive power; it is the power that emerges from popular rebellion (Souza, 2010).

Analyzing the actions of resistance and protests by the school community, especially parents and guardians of students enrolled in private schools, it is noticeable that among the spatial practices, territorialization actions stand out. These actions often materialize on a short-term temporal scale and are always marked by instability, often by violent confrontation with the State apparatus (Souza, 2021). In this last mobilization, spatial practices, according to Souza (2021), are noticeable in both strict and broad senses, with various posters and writings on car windows. Thus, spatial practices frequently constitute a fluid reality; for example, a single practice may combine "noisy" and "silent" aspects (Souza, 2010), as is the case with this demonstration and others expressed by the school community.

Thus, territorializations occur in various ways based on different objectives and motivations, such as protests, which are forms of territorialization expressed by the school community. According to Raffestin (1993), territorialization occurs through the appropriation of space, and power relations mark this appropriation. Saquet (2017) advances this discussion by arguing that territorialization is one of the socio-spatial products of movement and social contradictions under economic, political, and cultural forces, which produce distinct territorialities in time and space. In this sense, the occupation of the city, manifested by the protests carried out by the school community, is the appropriation of urban space (territorialization) that is continuously made and undone over a specific time. In a society marked by conflicts and contradictions, the oppressed also develop and possess knowledge, exercise (counter) powers, and create (counter) projects, and the State may present internal contradictions that offer vulnerable points and potentialities to be eventually exploited by social movements (Souza, 2010). In this sense, with the inconsistencies between the measures imposed by the State and the Municipal Government, the schools' representation institutions filed lawsuits, aiming for the Municipal Decree to follow the State's.

Thus, an injunction was issued on March 12th, 2021, authorizing the schools affiliated with the representation institutions to resume in-person classes. E4 (Representation Institution) reflects on this action: "We won at the beginning of this year after talking and not being heard. We went to court, and on March 12th, we won our action against the Municipality of Maringá." The State had already allowed the return of in-person classes, but the municipality had not.

Therefore, with the authorization to return in-person classes through this judicial action, some private schools resumed in-person classes on March 16th, 2021. This action, granted on March 12th, 2021, was based on State Decree No. 7,020/2021, which authorized the resumption of in-person classes in the private network from March 10th, 2021, in Paraná. In this sense, the union requested the injunction because the state legislation attributed an essential nature to in-person educational activities and authorized the resumption of in-person classes, a right not being fulfilled in Maringá. This judicial action demonstrated the resistance expressed by the school community.

Only on May 13th, 2021, the councilors of Maringá approved the bill that considered education an essential activity in the municipality. According to the report by RPC Maringá (2021), the approved text is a milder version that opens the possibility of new suspensions of in-person classes.

In this sense, resistance becomes a mandatory act to live in the city, being a way to establish individual or collective interests against impositions from hegemonic social actors (Paulo et al., 2020). The authors state that these resistances can be visible or not, planned or spontaneous, and endowed with contradictions, as they are linked to the process of individuals' consciousness.

In private educational institutions, classes remained in a hybrid format, which was an alternative to meet the demands of both groups: those who favored a total return to in-person activities and those who favored maintaining the suspension of these activities. The Municipality of Maringá only allowed the return to in-person classes starting in July 2021 with Decree No. 1406/2021. In this sense, parents or guardians of students needed to sign a responsibility agreement with adherence or non-adherence to the staggered class format (teaching with in-person and non-in-person classes). According to this decree, each class should be divided into at least two groups (Group A and Group B), respecting a minimum distance of 1.5 meters between students (Municipality of Maringá, 2021). Students in the municipal education network of Maringá had been without in-person classes for a year and a half, only with remote learning and activities at home.

Spatial practices ensure various projects and territory management methods (Corrêa, 1995). Thus, according to the author, spatial practices are a set of spatially located actions that impact space. They result in a certain configuration in space, or as Souza (2010, p. 13) states, they are socially dense spatial practices.

Seeking to understand spatial practices, figures 6 and 7 below represent some municipal decrees from 2020 to 2021, the mobilizations of the school community, and the spatial practices expressed by these social actors in the city of Maringá.

Figure 6
Summary of Decrees/demands and spatial practices in the city of Maringá (2020)

Municipal Decree No. 436/2020 dated 03/17/20	Municipal Decree No. 445/2020 dated 03/18/20	Municipal Decree No. 566/2020 dated 04/18/20	Municipal Decree No. 1360/2020 dated 09/15/20
Suspension of activities and events with 50 people or more for 30 days.	Suspension of classes and in-person attendance at educational institutions, public or private. 30-day suspension of the operation of establishments and activities in the city.	The gradual recovery of the economy in the city; face-to-face classes remain suspended; mandatory use of masks;	Authorization of sports activities starting from 10/01/2020; authorized the operation of bars, restaurants, and snack bars with in-person service until 11:00 PM.
Demands		Spatial Practices	
On 08/07/2020: Unions held a co the return to in-person classes.	ır caravan in Maringá against	Spatial practices of territorialization in a strict sense and in a broad sense.	
On 09/20/2020: There was a der Square of Maringá, requesting than optional basis.	nonstration in the Cathedral ne return to in-person classes on	Spatial practice of territorialization in a broad sense.	
On 10/08/2020: There was a car resumption of educational activ	, ,	Spatial practices of territorialization in a strict sense and in a broad sense.	

Note. Decrees, demands and spatial practices.

Figure 7
Summary of Decrees/demands and spatial practices in the city of Maringá (2021)

Municipal Decree No. 354/2021 dated 01/25/21	Municipal Decree No. 546/2021 dated 02/22/21	Municipal Decree No. 632/2021 dated 03/08/21	Municipal Decree No. 1406/2021 dated 07/22/21
School activities are allowed to take place in person, in accordance with Decree No. 6637/2021 issued by the State Government of Paraná.	In-person classes in public and private educational ins- titutions are suspended from 02/24/21 until 03/07/2021.	In-person classes remain sus- pended in public and private educational institutions, ex- tending Article 4 of Municipal Decree No. 546/2021.	Authorized the return to in- -person classes in public and private education networks starting on 07/28/2021. The Learning Plan is staggered and non-presential.
Demands		Spatial Practices	
On 01/16/2021: the national move	ment Cuppert Vour Coheel calls	Spatial practices of territorialization, in a strict sense and in a broad sense, and the construction of spatial networks.	
for the return to in-person classe			
	es through a car caravan.  Nity protested in front of the		on of spatial networks.

**Note.** Decrees, demands and spatial practices.

It is noticeable that the school community intensified its mobilizations in the second semester of 2020. In 2021, a few days after the car caravan on March 7th, the representation institutions of private schools won a judicial action to return to in-person classes, which resumed starting on March 16th. During this period, the State had already authorized the resumption of in-person classes, but in the city of Maringá, there was still no authorization from the municipal government.

In these manifestations of the private school community, there was also resistance, conflicts, and contradictions involving power relations be-

tween the community and the municipal government. In one of the demonstrations, it was possible to perceive a group of protesters against the return of in-person classes and another in favor of in-person classes, demonstrating how these groups took opposite paths. Thus, these mobilizations in these city spaces demonstrated the dispute over the privatization of education in the municipality and the forms of resistance against the measures decreed by the municipality, which gained strength alongside the private schools' union to appeal for their rights in court.

In this sense, the judiciary's role in this dispute was mediator and decision-maker. The conflict between the municipal government and the private school community was resolved in the judiciary, which based itself on the state decree, thus favoring economic power. The state of Paraná attributed essential nature status to in-person educational activities, and the judiciary, considering the measures decreed by the state, authorized the return of in-person classes for private educational institutions in the municipality in March 2021. With this, the judiciary played an essential role in this pandemic, deciding on the return of in-person classes in Maringá, favoring the private school community.

# FINAL REMARKS

The present study aimed to analyze the spatial practices carried out in the city of Maringá/PR by the school community in light of the measures decreed by the City Hall in the context of Covid-19. The school community, through its territorialization in the city, showed its important role in seeking to promote education as an essentiality, in addition to following all safety protocols in this context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this sense, the objective of the research was achieved, since this study contributes empirically by deepening the analysis of spatial practices in the city, showing that urban space can be occupied by different groups, that it can be the stage for demonstrations and protests against or in favor of hegemonic power. And that power is also present in social movements, as a counterpower, an autonomous power. In this sense, spatial practices express both domination, with laws and norms that regulate society, and autonomy, in pursuit of the interests of a group or society.

As an object of study in Administration, the city is understood as a vast territory and a city-organization full of conflicts, disputes, and contradictions. It is formed through interactions among social actors and spatial practices expressed in different territories. Thus, this work sought to understand how the school community occupied the city through these spatial practices expressed in Maringá, Paraná.

In the demonstrations in Maringá by the school community, it was possible to identify the spatial practices of territorialization, strictly involving the appropriation and control of space with the physical presence of various social actors. Regarding temporal scale, territorializations were short-lived, expressing themselves in the city for a few hours. They were mainly noisy, accompanied by protests and honking, and were conducted publicly.

The spatial practice of territorialization in a broad sense was also observed, without the lasting physical presence of social actors and is often considered a silent spatial practice, such as the posters and the symbolic

classroom that was organized in the Cathedral square of the city of Maringá. And finally, the construction of spatial networks was identified, which are multi-scalar practices integrating different experiences of local or regional resistance. This integration occurred in one of the demonstrations that was at national level, achieving synergies in the issue of public visibility of demands and protests.

In addition to these spatial practices identified in the school community, the objective of this research, there was also resistance, conflicts and contradictions, involving power relations between the school community and municipal public authorities. In one of the demonstrations, it was possible to see a group of protesters against the return of face-to-face classes and another in favor of face-to-face classes, demonstrating the contradictions that exist in these spaces.

Ultimately, this research aimed to contribute to other studies that understand the city as an organization from the perspective of spatial practices regarding the mobilizations that occurred in Maringá by the school community. Thus, according to Souza (2010; 2021), it was possible to apply the concepts of territory and spatial practices of territorialization to understand the mobilizations that took place in the city and how these concepts are interconnected with the concept of city-organization presented by Mac-Allister (2004).

In this sense, it was possible to contribute to advancing studies in the field of Administration that view the city as a space marked by power relations, with the city being constituted by multiple territories in which different groups appropriate and dispute their interests against measures decreed by the government. Thus, the city is a field of struggles, where conflicts and contradictions occur among its inhabitants.

As a suggestion for future research, the need to conduct studies on spatial practices in other cities beyond the educational sector is pointed out since these spatial practices can be expressed by different groups and in various regions.



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