

"A city in the shadows": The world of *bas-fonds* (Porto Alegre – mid 1950)

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Abstract: Crime, addiction and poverty is a triad that can be associated with the dirtiest, lowest, most immoral, devastated, disgusting and despicable part of a city. The understanding of this universe refers to the idea of *bas-fonds*, which first understood as the places that characterize them: cabarets, rendezvous, hells, spells, tenements as well as prisons and nursing homes. The idea still refers to the individuals who attend and/or live there and are subjected to these scenarios of "horror" of urban life. The central region of the city of Porto Alegre, in the mid-1950s, had its landscape transformed. There is a contrast of light and shadow. As "modernity" advances through the streets of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, "social and moral decay" invades these same streets. One region, which until nowadays, is present in the social imagination of Porto Alegre is Rua Voluntários da Pátria - recognized as a "red-light zone". To understand this world of *bas-fonds* we resorted to the analysis of the local press, especially the Daily News, between 1954 and 1960. In addition, the investigation also includes some cases of seductive sexual crimes that reached the police and the Justice.

Keywords: *Bas-fonds*, *New American*; Harlotry, New; I'm sorry, Police.

Initial considerations

The 1950s marked the city of Porto Alegre. This period saw the capital of Rio Grande do Sul verticalize. In the shadows of the "skyscrapers" of the Center, the metropolis pulsed intensely. The movement of people, trams, cars and buses formed a real "human anthill". If during the day the Center saw an orderly chaos, marked by the "in and out" of the department stores and offices, at night the "movement" was different. The modernity of the day gave way to the "decay and immorality" of the night. In the police columns of the daily Newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, crime, addiction and poverty paint another Center.

The "*bas-fonds of the Center*", with their rites and their characters, appear as scenarios in crimes present in the judicial documentation – police investigations and criminal proceedings. However, other regions, throughout the 20th century, were famous as socially

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degraded areas, such as Rua Cabo Rocha. This region, in the 1950s, underwent a process of urban hygiene, causing many of its cabarets to be closed, or transferred to other neighborhoods and even outside Porto Alegre. This change caused the Center to gain greater attention from law enforcement and the local press.

The newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, analyzed between 1954 and 1960, had two columns "police" – "Rosa dos Ventos Maus" and "Nos Quatro canto da cidade". These columns favored cases solved by the police institution, or that its agents were involved. Being notorious a "kind of persecution" of the houses of prostitution of the Center. The DN published manifestos of citizens demanding changes and greater supervision of the Central Zone of Porto Alegre. These subjects, men and ladies of "well", did not want to be confused with the characters of this universe of *bas-fonds*, such as the thieves, punkers, harlots " and "degenerates" of all species.

This article investigates the construction of the imaginary about The Street Voluntários da Pátria, finding reference in cases of sexual crimes, which would have as ambihotel rooms and pensions, considered clandestine. This hiding is due to its location, in a region that was if constituted As A "prostitution zone." In this way, we seek to understand the discourses given by the Judiciary in the pages of the documentation produced by them. These exemptions use the social imaginary, elaborated on the region of Rua Voluntários da Pátria, at the time of delivering conclusions on the cases tried.

"The city that advances and recedes"

In the city of Porto Alegre, specifically its central region throughout the 1950s, there were visible transformations in its urban landscape and also in the transit of people. The center of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul is not exactly its geographical center, as it is located on the banks of the Guaíba. The port region, with its hydrographic barrier forces the expansion of the city to the north, south and east regions. In the words of historian Rodrigo Weimer (2017, p. 4), "the urban development of Porto Alegre was due to concentric waves – the map of the city resembles a fan, or semicircle, at whose apex is located the peninsula where the Historic Center is located". The expansion of these cardinal axes is accompanied by an increase in demographic indices.

The 1950 census survey and the 1960 Census, both conducted by IBGE, show a population growth of around 61%. In the 1950s, the population of Porto Alegre was 394,151 inhabitants, divided into 187,414 men and 206,737 women. In 1960, the Census found a considerable increase, totaling 635,125 inhabitants, including 302,340 men and 332,785

women. These indices can be justified through the establishment of industrialization and economic growth, which began since the first half of the 20th century. The city, and its neighboring municipalities, start to receive subjects from the interior of the state who arrived in search of new opportunities for work and lives. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Porto Alegre, having reached the main Brazilian cities, such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which began to concentrate an increasing number of subjects.

What's more, in the second half of the 20th century, the notion of modernity expands, both in habits as in the forms of consumption, Multiplies Calling-if sociability spaces (such as cinema), of new technologies (such as radio), Having, in return, "accelerated growth and the urban infrastructure crisis" (MONTEIRO, 2004, p. 59). In Porto Alegre, this reality is explicit in the neighborhoods e In Villages further away as of the Center, places that Lacked sanitation, opening of patios, pavement, public transport lines, among others. O historian Cláudio Pereira Elmir (2004) presents in its studies a series of articles published in 1958, which demonstrate the reality of Porto Alegre's infrastructure. Published by reporter Ruy Pratini, from the daily newspaper Diário de Notícias, The Matters receive the title "The drama of our marginal populations" and report the dimension of the social issue in the city. As Pratini, at the time, there were 73,000 people living in precariousness in "33 huts nuclei; 30,000 abandoned minors who reveal not only material misery. But the Misfortune family morale, with a high rate of single mothers; 62% mortality rate for children up to one year living in these villages" (ELMIR, 2004, p. 114). The reality demonstrated by the Journalist of the DN also political debates in the Legislative Houses.

The journalist, the deputies, the councilors, when they talk about life in the city are frightened to realize that the city of Porto Alegre is not one; it is a plural city in the worst sense that we can attribute to this expression; that is, a city that is capable of producing segregation. This region (Mato Sampaio), which was inhabited in the early 1950s, through the transfer of families who lived in the Doca das Frutas, Seca, Campo do Polo, Korea and Dona Teodora, is called by Ary Veiga Sanhudo at this very moment as an "underworld of surroundings of the capital", "almost an 'enemy country', although neighbor of the city", "lost place", "hidden and secret cancer", "great lost village", "underworld", "subcity" (Sanhudo, 1975, p. 152-157); expressions that carry at the same time the contempt and dread of a place that does not want to be recognized as part of Porto Alegre (ELMIR, 2004, p. 115).

In this sense, the contrast of the neighborhoods of Porto Alegre, highlights the disparity of modernity among them, because the transformations brought by the time were concentrated, above all, in the landscape of the Center. It was there that we could see the rapid changes of those years, the city verticalized with buildings that exceeded more than 30 floors, making it increasingly necessary to use elevators. These architectural constructions mark a period in which Porto Alegre reaches a status of metropolis.

Beyond the skyscrapers, other changes that impacted a Landscape of the Center are the intense movement of people, motor vehicles such as buses, trams and private cars and services. Being, too, Located, the stations by train, in the vicinity of Avenida Voluntários da Pátria, And the Port Wharf. The greater flow of subjects occurs due to this concentration of mobility possibilities, necessary to meet the Demands of jobs and Services. The area Central is also concentrated most of the citizen's trade. One area of great Movement, at day and at Night, may be Subject to present the biggest social problems. Notably, poverty, crime, marginality and the "ghost" of prostitution are growing, social problems aggravated by this framework of urban development.

The chronicler José Rafael Rosito Coiro tells, in the second volume of his memoirs, "The Golden Years of The Customs Square" (1995), that the young men of the middle and upper classes of Porto Alegre, were cabaret regulars such as *American Boite*, *Marabá* and *Maipu*. These three places were seen as environments of refinement and lust, and their first owners were known by the pronoun "Madame", referring to a "French" of this type of space (RAGO, 1990). Rosito Cairo suggests that the billing of these cabarets was exclusively in the sale of drinks. The entertainment was made by the shows of dancers, dancers and ballets of foreign attractions from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The nights were showered with "French champagne" and *Cuba Libre*, the drink of the time in the 1950s. The beautiful women were "imported" from different locations, being their clothes perfect and impeccable, "never repeated the same dress". These environments also referred to an idea of modernity imported from Europe and the United States. It is important to remember that since the 1940s, the American influence on behaviors and customs are the references in accordance with a young and cosmopolitan culture. Like "*Broadway*", these "high-level" cabarets imported and produced their shows, champagne gave them "glamour" and a class distinction over the vis "*rendezvous*", frequented by the subjects of the popular layers.

Of the three sites highlighted by Rosito Cairo (1995), as the best "distraction and entertainment men", *Maipu* was considered a second-rate cabaret. The same was located at the beginning of The Street Voluntários da Pátria, the women were beautiful, but did not

compare the "exuberant and perfect" ladies of the *American Boite*. The change of owner of Maipu instituted the rental of rooms on the upper floor of the building, making it similar to other locations with this feature. This second moment of Maipu represents the beginning of its "decay", because its profit is no longer exclusively derived from the sales of beverages and tickets for the shows. Prostitution is now exploited as a business, making its enclosure more heterogeneous and less exquisite than in previous years.

A region present to this day in the social imaginary of Porto Alegre need is the area of Rua Voluntários Of Homeland. This street, which by the end of the 19th century, it was called the New Way, Connects the city center to North Zone. As mentioned, Porto Alegre grew in three axes and the Street Voluntários da Pátria Was one of these Paths. The street was "one of the main commercial and industrial arteries of the city, connecting the port area to the central train station" (MONTEIRO, 2006, p. 267). However, before to stop the configuration of the space of Rua Voluntários da Pátria, it is important to understand another region da City. It is Rua Cabo Rocha, near Azenha – neighborhood next to the Center. This region, since mid-1930s, became known as an area of Intense prostitution of the city. Was in Region that concentrated the main cabarets and "lower" hostels from Porto Alegre, Local Where Supposedly, circulated the individuals "of the worst kind".

In the "infamous Cabo Rocha" there was "fights" between drunk men and cabaret regulars, such as "Galo", who reached the police, more precisely to the 2nd Police Station, located in the same region. On May 16, 1954, the DN reported the disorders caused by a military; a soldier from the Preparatory School of Porto Alegre was armed with a dagger causing other people who passed by Rua Cabo Rocha, around 3am. The individual was arrested "after much cost" by the police of the 2nd D.P. duty and presented to the 3rd Cia. of Army Police, where it was collected. The street was also the scene of gambling, as in the case of "Carpetas", reported on July 1, 1954. The DN reported that three men were detained by the 2nd D.P., because they "were throwing bone" on a Sunday afternoon in Cabo Rocha. "The Carpetas" were seized carrying "one bone and two dice", and still a sum of money.²

So, the Cabo Rocha area can be read through the notion of "*bas-fonds*" developed by the French historian Dominique Kalifa. This notion is built on the Kalifa from their meanings, "which first of all are places", both The Topographic, how much in his social sense.

¹ NEWS JOURNAL, 16/05/1954. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/1722 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

² NEWS JOURNAL, 01/07/1954. Available in http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/2330 Access on 17 Sep. 2019.

In the topographical meaning, the history uses the French dictionaries of the centuries XVII and XVIII, in which the term was related to the universe Maritime: "it is based on a bottom in which there is little water, which is dangerous, in which it is easy to sink." From the nautical sense, it's going on a Definition social that, Second the author, emerges from the 19th century and is conditioned to a "class of men degraded by addiction and misery" (KALIFA, 2017, p. 12). The *bas-fonds* Cabo Rocha remained in a social imaginary until, by the way, at least, the 1960s, even after the Renaming from the patio to "Professor Freitas e Castro"³ (name that remains to this day).

Cabo Rocha is represented within a system that gives it an identity as a "crime zone, addiction and poverty". Its inhabitants could be none other than "the poor, the thieves, the prostitutes", categories of social individuals identified by Kalifa (2017), as well as being, themselves, the *bas-fonds*. The French historian says that "prisoners and gypsies" are also part of the "repertoire of figures and collective identities" (KALIFA, 2017, p. 21) who attend and/or inhabit there. The press of the 1950s fulfills its role in representing these places, subjects and states as a focus of proliferation of "strays". This bum, who can be both the poor man, without fixed housing and work, as well as the prostituted woman, both who pass through the streets of Porto Alegre. We cannot disregard the ethnic-racial aspects of these subjects, although the press of this period was not explicit in relation to color, it highlighted foreign nationalities. The predominant discourse at the time, according to Antônio Guimarães (2008), is that "color is just an accident". They would all be Brazilians and by accident we have different colors, which later would be recognized as the "myth of racial democracy".

Racial discourse, as historian Hebe Mattos (1998) stated, is always a discourse of classification permeated by ambiguities, especially in the Republic, when the discourse of the mixed-race nation is formulated in such a way as to positivize the black presence in society, previously seen as deforming and unfeasible social relations, without, however, eliminating, in practice, neither the hierarchies of color based on the concept of race, nor the desire to build a white, modern and Europeanized nation.

³ According to Cláudio Pereira Elmir (2004, p. 15), on December 11, 1956, a letter from residents and merchants of the Azenha Neighborhood was sent to the Municipality of Porto Alegre, signed by 31 people claiming to change the name of Rua Cabo Rocha to Professor Freitas and Castro. The justification of this request was the supposed association of the street's first name with prostitution and crime recently banned from that region (Document recorded in the Archives of the Municipality of Porto Alegre). Councilman Célio Marques Fernandes registers two days later a bill with that legislative house incorporating this demand for himself and becoming a spokesman for the will of the population of those surroundings (Bill No. 93 of 1956, legislative; process n. 1363).

For Maria Aparecida Sanches (2010), the construction of the modern Brazilian nation could not be carried out without the inclusion of the black-mixed-race population, while establishing an efficient control of urban space and popular layers was placed as for this was the very measure of its inclusion. Therefore, we did not rule out that these subjects classified as "strays" were also "non-white" Brazilians.

The historian Charles Monteiro, in analyzing the chronicles of Nilo Ruschel, referring to the capital of the "golden years", reaffirms the Region of Cabo Rocha as a place of memory, marked by "police occurrences and the dramas of everyday life". Nilo Ruschel recalled "the Cabaret of the Rooster as a space of freedom and musical creation for the musicians of the Bohemian Porto Alegre" (Martin 2004, p. 492), among them the black musician and composer Lupicínio Rodrigues.

Sendo assim, a mudança do nome da Rua Cabo Rocha parece cumprir uma "função simbólica", que tem por intuito apagar todo e qualquer vestígio do passado desregrado. Cláudio Elmir salienta que essa alteração daria o sentido de "cortar o último vínculo daquela via pública com os elementos da ameaça social, agora não mais presentes. É como se fosse um "novo começo", numa outra rua, com diferentes atores" (2004, p. 15). Todavia, esse "novo começo" é alargado até a área central de Porto Alegre, na região da Rua Voluntários da Pátria.

"Cleaning the city of strays and fallen"

The notion of social imaginary, as understood by Dominique Kalifa, describes "the way societies see their components, hierarchize their divisions, elaborate their future". This notion, according to Kalifa, is a way not only to reflect, but also to produce the social as an "interactive set of correlated representations, organized in latent fictions" (2017, p. 21). In this way, it is necessary to narrate, create stories, anecdotes, "incidents", rumors that stage and create lives – in the case of *bas-fonds* a "miserable life". One way to access the imaginary of Porto Alegre *bas-fonds* is through the local press, in the case of this article, the newspaper Diário de Notícias ⁴ and also criminal proceedings.

The Newspaper Diário de Notícias, between 1954 and 1960, period contemplated by the reports analyzed in this text, belonged to them to the group "Diaries and Associated Broadcasters", of the businessman Assis Chateaubriand. Until the 1950s, the DN shared the

⁴ The Diário de Notícias de Porto Alegre was consulted in the online format, available at the digital library found on the National Library website.

leadership of journalism south-rio-grandense with the newspaper *Correio do Povo* (Caldas Júnior group). However, the episode of August 24, 1954 – the suicide of the President of the Republic Getúlio Vargas – is the Beginning of the end of the journal. In the journalist's memoirs Celito of Grandi the episode is called as: "Getulio commits suicide. And the fire of intolerance destroys the Diary" (DE GRANDI, 2005, p. 90). According to Francisco Rüdiger (1998), part of the population of Porto Alegre the Vargas' death with the opposition that the Group of Associated Diaries preached in all its media. The DN building was located in "Largo dos Medeiros", next to The Customs Square in Rua da Praia, central area of the city. In addition to this place the protesters also "smashed" other buildings of the group commanded by Chateaubriand, as the da Radio Farroupilha. The DN would not be up and running again in March 1955.

To understand the object analyzed here, it is important to understand that in the 1950s the Brazilian press was going through a modernization process, along the lines of American journalism. Ana Paula Goulart Ribeiro (2003) comments that business journalism, in this period, slowly replaces the political-partisan model, a line followed from the second half of the 19th century to the mid-twentieth century. Business journalism aims to privilege information, that is, "to break the news" by depriving itself of personal comments with opinionated airs. It is at that moment, also, that the press is professionalized, as well as advertising. In the case of newspapers, they follow a "unity of style", the idea of the "front page" highlighting the reports that most transmitted a "mirror of reality".

In the case of the DN, we noticed that the organization of the news related to crimes is concentrated on a single page (usually on page 05 or 07), with two police columns entitled: "In the 4 corners of the city" and "Rose of the bad winds". In the first column were gathered notes of crimes on thefts, robberies, public disorders, whether fights or "drinking". In the "Rose of the bad winds", it brought the episodes of greatest repercussion, with some image and title highlighted, especially of cases solved by the police, or that she was involved. According to Camila Alves Pereira, a historian who analyzes the *Diário de Notícias* between 1954 and 1955, emphasizing the notion of crime in this journal, this newspaper "ends up making a positive 'propaganda' of the role played by the police, who in both cases was present performing their function, through the maintenance of order and security of society" (PEREIRA, 2018, p. 35). This is the case of the report published on June 29, 1954, which deals with the intense and severe exercise of police surveillance on the transit of through the central streets of the city.

The Customs Department is exercising severe surveillance on the transit of through the city's central streets. Several complaints have come to the knowledge of the bachelor Fernando Azambuja, holder of that Specialized. This authority appointed Inspector Alírio Selistre to lead a class of inspectors he is detaining and collecting from chess the mundanes they are encountering on the streets.

The areas hardest hit by the "footing" of falls are the avenue Senador Salgado Filho, the street 7 September and the Voluntários da Pátria.

The inspectors of the Customs Station also inspect the lupanars and dubious pensions, in order to collect the beautiful good guys, who have no profession and live at the expense of the.

The falls and their "cute" are being detained and⁵prosecuted for loitering.

In a report ten days before the one reproduced above, the DN had issued a lower note in its column "Rose of the bad winds", under the title "Cleaning the city of strays". In the report of the 19th, the DN informs that the Customs Station, under the command of Fernando Azambuja, had started a campaign against loitering and pimping.⁶ The day before the report, some inspectors from the Customs Department performed several "raids on the *bas-fonds* of The Volunteers". DN reporters and police forces regard *bas-fonds* as something directly related to "suspicious pensions", understood as "disguised brothels" (RAGO, 1990). On that occasion, 25 people were arrested for investigations, including some foreigners. The DN closes the note extolling the police action that is working "to rid the city of pernicious elements".

The police campaign against "loitering" That Wins to the Pages of the DN, is based on the Criminal Misdemeanor Law, established in 1941⁷. This law chapter VII "Of the misdemeanors relating to the police of costumes", Article 59 on the Loitering. The law considered by loitering "to surrender someone habitually to idleness, being valid for work, without having income that guarantees him enough means of subsistence, or to provide for his own subsistence through illicit occupation". The penalty provided for against the person classified as a "slut", could be the simple prison of fifteen (15) days up to three (3) months. Também, New Year were foreseen Article 60 - begging; the article 61 – act offensive to modesty;

⁵ DAILY NEWS, 29/06/1954, p. 7. http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/2310 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

⁶ DAILY NEWS, 19/06/1954. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/2164 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

⁷ Decree-Law No. 3,688/41.

Article 62 - drunken ness. Criminal law did not criminalize prostitution itself, as Next of crime referred to Article 229 of the 1940 Penal Code, which Was criminal practice of the Pimping. In other words, it was characterized as a crime to maintain "prostitution house" or place destined for meetings for the purpose libidinous, on its own or third party's account, or not intending to profit from, or be a direct mediator of the owner or of the Manager. The expected penalty was two (2) to five (5) years in prison, and was subject to fine.

On March 13, 1955⁸, in the Column "Depeceans Rumors" under the pseudonym "Dr. Cas. K Vell", who called himself a "rumor collector" coming from behind the scenes of the Civil Police Department. One of these "say-what-says-ques" is linked to those recent actions taken by the Customs Police, or rather, the closure of the "tolerance houses" of the neighborhood Azenha (Cabo Rocha), already mentioned above. According to the rumor collector, there is a contradiction in this process of closing these sites. For, as these were extinct, "new houses" appeared, especially on Rua Voluntários da Pátria. Dr. Cas. K Vell" suggests that one of these "new homes" would be owned by the sister of a police inspector. The alcoholic casts doubt: "does the police man have a part in this, too?". Those little murmurs from Dr. Cas. K Vell" have gained new reports, as we will see later.

The mistrust that falls on the police institution is permanent since at least the decades of its "formation". According to sociologist Luís Antônio Francisco de Souza, who studies the police of São Paulo during the First Republic, there is an "oscillation between disciplinary norms and illegalism" (2009, p. 225). This movement finds a correspondence in what the French philosopher Michel Foucault studies in his famous work "Watch and Punish" (2014[1975]), and understands that the organization of an isolated illegality and closed in delinquency would not have been possible without the development of police controls. Prison and police form a twinned device; alone they carry out differentiation, isolation and the use of delinquency throughout the field of illegalities. The articulations between police-arrest-delinquency end up leaning on each other and form a circuit that is never interrupted. This identifies the obstacles of understanding the police institution, which goes beyond the ins and outs of an abusive, repressive and corrupt apparatus.

Chilean political scientist Marcelo Fabián Sain, in his work on epistemological difficulties in the study on the police institution in the field of will problematize about a

⁸ NEWS JOURNAL, p. 5. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/3230 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

naturalization made in the analyses of police institutions. According to Marcelo Sain, the Police is a complex social institution:

[...] for torturing and protecting; arrest and care; abuse and help; corrupt and deter corrupt; to promote crime and fight against crime; criminal activities and disjoining them; bribe offenders and incarcerate them; destabilize and stabilize; take lives and save; (SAIN, 2010, p. 33).⁹

From the different perceptions raised about the police, we present interesting cases about these subjects that also constitute the scenario of Porto Alegre *bas-fonds*. The first reported case is that of the "Night Guard 'pervert' exploited two minors"¹⁰. The article signed by Homero Maya D'Ávila, reported that during an inspection in the region of Rua Voluntários da Pátria, the police found two girls, minors, in front of the "Tropical Cabaret". They were accompanied by a night watchman. One of the girls, 16 years old, said, when taken to juvenile court, "that lived" with him. The Night Guard, in his statement, reported "this issue of minor was not with me, because when I walk with a woman I do not want to know if it is bigger or smaller". After hearing, the girls were referred to the Women's Shelter. According to the DN, the Night Guard was collected "to chess", where he would respond to the process.

Another case is dated in 1958, the matter receives the title¹¹ of "Three inspectors of bad customs", which describes:

Three inspectors of the Customs Station committed a series of arbitrariness, even assaulting a colleague, as well as missing with respect to a duty inspector at the 3rd Police Station. [...] They made several arrests on the street Voluntários da Pátria assaulting passers-by to dagger blows.

The trio of inspectors, still, broke a residence located in Voluntários da Pátria, in "Corticeira Gaúcha", at dawn and beat the resident "savagely". According to the report the three inspectors were "highly intoxicated" when they arrived at the Police Station, it was not reported if they had any punishment from their superiors.

⁹ Translation by the author.

¹⁰ NEWS DIARY, 06/07/1955, p. 5. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/4840 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

¹¹ NEWS JOURNAL, 23/05/1958, p. 5. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/22068 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

"Civil guard accused of exorbitating his duties", so the DN reported on April¹², 1959, on its page 5. The civil guard was accused by "two bohemians" who filed a complaint on the D.P.C. Duty The plaintiffs were that night at the "*Boite Cometa*", located on Rua Voluntários da Pátria, and claimed to have consumed only two beers. However, they received an account with a value far above what they believed duty. When complaining to the manager of the establishment, "the 'lion of the farm' came into play." According to the bohemians, this was a Civil Guard and had been hired "by the owner of the dump" with the aim of providing the security services and, in a way, "maintaining order" and "inhibiting agitators". The two were locked in a liquor pantry by the "farm lion", and only left when dawn came, reporting straight to the police station in order to file the complaint.

These are some cases brought to the local press about the police officers involved in different "types of incidents classified as disorder, misdemeanors or crimes", which according to historian Claudia Mauch, presents "that endorsement of certain values associated with order and morality were not always reflected in civilized and tempered behaviors" (MAUCH, 2017, p. 251). Argentine historian Lila Caimari (2012), too, will point out that the corruption of some police officers is present at different levels. The use of the car by the police institution – the "patrol car" – will generate "new temptations" characteristics of the deviation of discipline and morals. In addition, it is at this time, too, that the central streets of Porto Alegre are enlarged, generating a new urban dynamic. This is reflected in Caimari's idea (2010), when he identified that the uses of new technologies, such as the automobile, do not prevent the police from remaining slow in a fast city. In other words, delinquency gains agility with the use of motor vehicles, and police violence begins to function better as a "threat than as a practice".

During the month April 1955, the DN brings three new reports, two of which are published on the day April 1st¹³. The first, placed in a high box, says: "Asks Association Commercial Providences to the Chief of Police", with the caption: "Motives – attacks on morals and property". The text will highlight the existence of two problems that need urgent and efficient measures. The First is the "daily assaults", the second refers to prostitution in the central streets of the city, reaching to occupy the vicinity of the Public Market and the shelters of 15 de Novembro Square and Parobé. The article highlights that both problems are

¹² NEWS DIARY, 04/09/1959, p.5. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/29821 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

¹³ NEWS DIARY, 01/04/1955, p. 5. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/3566 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

the fruit of the environment of immorality that the Centre is taken, "where unfortunate slumps and degenerate individuals seek to attract attention of unscrupulous men." With this, the President of the Commercial Association of Porto Alegre takes the lead in these problems, sending a letter to the Chief of State Police, reporting all their indignation. It will be emphasized in the letter the "spread of the areas of merit in the most varied parts of the city, putting at stake not only the stability of commercial and industrial establishments near these points clandestine, as is the case with Voluntários da Pátria", places that infringe the "rigid principles that inspire the Brazilian family". The letter concludes by calling for "vigorous police action to suppress this violent wave of attacks on property and morale."

The second article, located on the same page, has the title "What will the Customs Station be in?", signed by João S. Kern. It will be reported the existence of a Police Inspector known for his arbitrariness, usually committed against harlots. This Inspector ends up being removed from his duties, but the subject of matter is focused on his return to activities in a kind of "unbreakable pedestal". His return meant the return of abuses, violence and arbitrariness in the *bas-fonds* by Porto Alegre. Segundo the reporter John S. Kern, at that moment he gained a new problem, because "were grouped almost in the heart of the city." Kern speak about the existence of a "Order" of the Customs Station, prohibiting the movement of women registered and known R.C.P., as harlots in the central region before midnight. From that hour on point, the lull through these streets contrasts with the explosion of "harlots, suckers, punkers, lancers, storytellers, drunks, corner heartthrobs and farm lions", finally "all the fauna of the *bas-fonds*". In this same report, it will be called to attention of the existence of a "house with immunity", located in Street Voluntários da Pátria, never closed by the police. This house would be owned by a 'sister of the 'sanitizer of the *bas-fond*!'. The indication that a Police Inspector would be directly connected a "house of tolerance" already appeared in the "murmurs" of "Dr. Cas. K Vell."

On April 13, 1955, the DN will disclose that "the tolerance houses of the city center", entitled¹⁴ as a "sanitizing measure of the Chief of Police" will be closed. It is stressed that the owners of these "houses" located in the Central Zone, will have the deadline until May 1 to "lock the doors". The Civil Police Deputy warns in the matter that has received complaints from ladies who intend to reach the D.P.C. and find themselves confused with who infest the adjacent streets of that department. This measure targets only "tolerance houses", not

¹⁴ NEWS JOURNAL, 13/04/1955. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/3766 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

including rooms and hotels recognized "as a permanent point of harlots". According to the DN, the social problem is partly solved, since it is "eliminated the evil, and the streets that have become 'taboo' for families at night will be clean" for anyone, especially passers-by ladies without going through "vexations". On Sunday, May 1, 1955,¹⁵the DN announces that "severe supervision will ensure the measure", ending once and for all the "*trottoir*" in the Center and praising the police for the "correct measure".

Margareth Rago's "The Pleasures of the Night" (1990) is an analysis of the world of prostitution in the city of São Paulo, between the years 1890 and 1930. The historian will refer to a conception of "ghost of prostitution", when they propose to face the representations and mythologies that constitute the imaginary of the "underworld". Margaret Rago states that prostitution is an essentially urban phenomenon, inscribed in a specific economy of desire, characteristic of a society in which relationships are mediated by exchange and in which a whole system of moral codifications, which "values monogamous sexual union, the nuclear family, virginity, female fidelity." But at the same time, it allocates a "specific place for what it considers as insubmissive" (1990, p. 23). This insubmission is the place that is placed in the figure of the prostitute.

The social imaginary, the prostitute is all that is reprehensible on a woman, because it is seen as A "nomad, 'public woman', nocturnal, artificial, full of vices" (RAGO, 1990, p. 28-29). However, the prostitute carried the stigma of being "free, uncontrolled and irrational" (Rago 1990, p. 53), and contributed to the "powerful imaginary threat" from the urban environment.

The discussion about prostitution was a frequent matter among jurists and physicians in the first half of the 20th century (ENGEL, 2004). Considered as a social threat, which presented a particularity that made it more difficult to be fought. The Doctor of Law Thaís Dumêt Faria, states that "at the same time that there was a revulsion towards prostitutes, there was also awareness of the need for prostitution to maintain the social order" (FARIA, 2013, p. 58). As Margaret Rago has already stated, there was no interest of men, especially those with political influence and power, in totally eliminating the "Harlots Zones", they "considered them vital to themselves and their children, at least for a period of his life" (RAGO, 1990, p. 191).

¹⁵ NEWS JOURNAL, 01/05/1955. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/3992 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

With this, we understand that the "Cleaning Campaign" and closing of the "Houses of Tolerance" of the Center of Porto Alegre, promoted by the press and police chiefs in the 1950s, fell on the establishments considered "low level". In the first decades of the 20th century, cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo underwent a process of intense hygiene and moral sanitation. Porto Alegre also has its poorest areas, which are inhabited and frequented by heterogeneous individuals, where workers mingled with criminals and prostitutes, the main targets of "cleansing" measures. Cláudia Mauch states "that where there was diversity and a different way of life from that of the elites, newspapers see the space of the dangerous classes" (2004, p. 109). The poor came to be regarded as dangerous.

It is understood that the threat came from the poorest layers, subjects who had precarious housing, poor healthy lifestyles, and still seen as propagators of diseases and resistant to the social control policies of cities. Sidney Chalhoub points out that the concept of "dangerous class", in its French origin, that presented by Mary Carpenter, includes subjects who had already passed through prisons, or those who sought their livelihood through thefts and not work (CHALHOUB, 1996, p. 20). However, Dominique Kalifa will attribute the birth of the category of "dangerous class" to the early fourteenth century, a period in which "poverty loses its positive value to become the product of degradation" (2017, p. 70). It is in this context that poverty becomes a bad one, connected with immorality, with the crime itself – the idea of the "bad poor", the one not deserving of assistance and charity, and constitutes "one of the main lines of force that structure the representations of *bas-fonds*" (KALIFA, 2017, p. 68).

Through the newspapers analyzed, we also see that the region of Rua Voluntários da Pátria, between 1954 and 1960, was an area constantly portrayed as the "social derision" of Porto Alegre. This area was regarded as dangerous, not only because it is described by the disorder of its nightlife. The DN brought some notes, throughout this decade, in its police columns, warning about the imminent danger to passers-by, who were subject to all "bad luck" to be approached by "thieves, punkers, harlots", suffering physical aggressions and dislocations, have their belongings stolen or even, "fall into the tale of Gilda". These elements permeate a social imaginary composed of "debauchery, degradation, criminality and sexuality" of all moral plagues and social organizations condemned by the "citizen of good". These characteristics will be seen, even if represented in an imaginary in the processes of sexual crimes.

Judging the social image of the "Voluntários da Pátria"

The cases of sexual crimes that have reached the Police and justice can contribute to the analysis proposed in this article. These legal achievements were set against the backdrop of hotels, guesthouses and comfortable houses in the "Voluntários da Pátria" region. The intention is not to analyze the nature of these crimes themselves, in this case seduction and rape, but to understand the weight given in decisions, especially of judges, because these sexual and criminal practices occurred in a known "prostitution zone" of the city. The fact that an offended woman was taken by force or not, that she stayed for as long as she was, until she was devirginized by her boyfriend, fiancé or stranger in one of these environments, associated her as a free woman of easy life or friend of a?

As well as Dominique Kalifa, historian Sandra Jatahy Pesavento identifies the imaginary as part of a field of representation and, as an expression of thought, which is manifested by images and discourses that intend to institute a meaning of reality. Sandra Pesavento corroborates that "[...] the representation of the real, the imaginary is always reference to an "other" absent. The imaginary enunciates, reports and evokes something not explicit and not present" (PESAVENTO, 1999, p. 242). This notion can be used in order to understand the legal discourses presented in criminal proceedings. In the historian's reading, reality is seen not only by the act "happened", but also by that "thought" or even "the desired".

This article the analysis is focused on eleven (11) cases that occurred in hotels, guesthouses and comfortable houses, located in the Rua Voluntários da Pátria or its surroundings. This sampling of processes covers the period of the 1950s, and is covered both by police investigations, as well as criminal prosecutions. However, only three (3) cases will be described qualitatively, as they present elements that permeate all the analysis performed Previously.

Thus, it is important to highlight the legislation of Porto Alegre of the period, which provided, in its "Code of Municipal Postures", in section IV called "Hotels, Pensions and Comfortable Houses" the rules of these classes of establishments. The art. 102 states that these sites "in addition to other prescriptions derived from federal, state or municipal laws or regulations, are required to maintain: a) strict morality and hygiene on the part of both employees and guests; § 1 - Guests or employees, whose immorality, indecency, or inconvenient habits, are manifest, may not be admitted or remain in these establishments." The art. 106 reported that, in the event that these offences are committed, they "will be

punished with a fine of Cr\$ 100.00 to Cr\$ 500.00, in addition to others that fit"¹⁶. This code portrays a manifestation of municipal power in sanitizing the city of Porto Alegre, in the model of the campaigns performed by the police and by a social and economic elite.

The first case of sexual crime occurs the afternoon of 1 January 1954¹⁷, in a room of the Restaurant "Pipi", located on Rua Voluntários da Pátria, Proximo to the Viação Station Railway. Marina was devirginized by her boyfriend Samuel. The young woman was 16 years old, worked as a Domestic in a third-party home, primary instruction and black color, as described in the statements of the Police. The criminal complaint was made by Marina's mother who discovered the fact so, three months later, resorting to authorities immediately. Samuel was the accused, which she was 22 years old, white, working, literate and dating the offended since November 1953. The involvement of Marina's mother in the case is significant, as the offended changes her testimony in court claiming to have been devirginized as a child by a classmate who does not remember the name. This information is denied by the mother by Marina, that confirms being threatened with death by Samuel who would have said that "it didn't matter to kill one or the other and go to the rehab." The story also featured the statements of two witnesses in court, two men neighboring the offended and her mother who claimed that the minor was known in Vila São Gabriel (South Zone of Porto Alegre) as "flirt", in addition to working in Centro of the city and arrive late at night in the house that lives with the mother. The judge delivered the conclusion of the case, on August 18, 1955, as unfounded highlighting some points: the fact that of the alleged crime have occurred in a pension room in the central area; the statements of Marina; and by Samuel deny to be the author of devirginization and as also had good criminal records, that is, it was his first stint with the police and the young man proved to be a "hardworking boy".

We can understand in the story of Marina and Samuel, that the representative of the Judiciary had an image of the reality of "little room in the Center". The "infamous Voluntários da Pátria" also weighed in the testimonies of the witnesses presented by the accused, which indicated that Marina besides being "flirt", was still a habitual passerby of that region of the Center. The offended, too, proved to be a worker. However, this condition was seen as "a kind of transgression", which disobeyed the normalizing intention of the local elites. The fact of being an interracial couple may also have contributed to the unfavorable sentence to

¹⁶ LAW No. 383, MARCH 3, 1950. Available at <https://leismunicipais.com.br/at/rs/p/porto-alegre/lei-ordinaria/1950/38/383/lei-ordinaria-n-383-1950-codigo-de-posturas-municipais> Accessed on 20 Sep. 2019.

¹⁷ Criminal proceedings no. 1990, nature Seduction, year 1954. Collection of the Public Archive of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (APERS), subfund 2nd Criminal Court, box no. 004-4306.

Marina, even if at the "literally" the attribute "color" did not exist as a criterion of defense, so little of accusation. The jurist in the case makes no reference to Marina's color, although it focuses on her moral and sexual conduct.

Another case of sexual crime comes from a police investigation, which occurred in Porto Alegre. The seduction of the minor Silvana, 16 years old, white and primary¹⁸ education. A domestic worker, Silvana came from Caçapava do Sul, an interior city in Rio Grande do Sul. She was represented by her mistress, Mrs. Eva Dorneles, with whom she also resided. On the day she went to the police station to report her seducer, Silvana was seven (7) months pregnant. According to the offended, the person responsible for his condition was Ramon, 27 years old, municipal employee, white and with secondary education. Before the episode of seduction, Silvana resided for a time with two cousins who, as declared in the police, "was the victim of mistreatment" and was handed over to the Juvenile Court, until she was hired by Mrs. Eva Dorneles. During this period, Silvana and Ramon began a relationship, and after a few attacks from the boy the young woman agreed to have sex with him, on the promise of marriage.

The scenario of the first sexual intercourse of the couple of boyfriends was the "Primavera Inn", Rua Garibaldi, in the evening. After this first time, the offended and the accused, had other meetings, some of them at the "Hotel Brasil", Rua Voluntários da Pátria. Silvana stated in her statement that Ramon, upon learning of the pregnancy in that time of five (5) months, "recommended that he take "Tatuzinho" the order to kill the child with this good remedy for these cases". Another solution pointed out by the accused was to "take Silvana in a midwife to take the child" and, after that was no longer found by his then-girlfriend.

Ramon's version, of course, differs from the one narrated by Silvana. He claims to have met the offended in a pension that resided, and that the young woman came to work for four (4) days in that place. He also comments that other employees of the pension referred to Silvana as "a regular in suspicious areas of the capital". Denying that she had maintained a loving relationship with Silvana, but confirming that she maintained carnal relations on the day she met her, having noticed at that time that she was "a free woman, because some of her acquaintances women had been at the pension, in a lecture with the offended, and the accused knew such women as regulars of the meretricious area of Rua Voluntários da Pátria".

¹⁸ Police Inquiry No. 154, Nature Seduction, year 1956. Collection of the Public Archive of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (APERS), subfund 2nd Criminal Court, box no. 004-4351.

Ramon points out that Silvana was "a woman used to have sex with men." Regarding Silvana's pregnancy, she says she was aware of the fact, "but she did not feel the slightest obligation to give money or any other support to the offended."

The judge of the action did not recognize that there was any evidence that indicated Ramon as the cause of the devirginization of the offended, and stated that before she had sex with Ramon was no longer a virgin and already led an irregular life. Thus, "there is no crime of seduction and even corruption of minors in the face of the irregular behavior of the offended before the relations with the accused". It makes no reference to Silvana's pregnancy.

This case, by Silvana and Ramon, presents some nuances similar to the previous case. However, we have a use, on the part of Ramon and his witnesses, who is not embarrassed to assume to know "some of the women in the area of merit of the Voluntários da Pátria" who even held conversations with Silvana. Although the offended worked as a maid and had a recognized place of residence, the couple would have met while Silvana worked in the boarding house that Ramon lived in. The fact that she attended the place and the region of the street Voluntários da Pátria, as well as knowing some influenced the decision of the operator of the law. This had the understanding that Silvana, just by attending this place, made her an "equal" of the women who exhibited themselves as merchandise on the night of the city. Failing to consider that Ramon knew these "easy-to-live" women.

The last case, brought here, is what happened in the year 1950¹⁹. Ivoni, a 16-year-old white, primary and domestic education officer, denounced, through the representation of his mother, Benício, 19 years old, military, white and primary education. The story of Ivoni and Benício is narrated from the sexual encounter, which the two had on June 12 of that year. The stage of this plot was, again, "a building of Rua Voluntários da Pátria", which served as a shelter for one night. The day before the meeting, Ivoni said that Benício got him a job at the home of a family on Ernesto Alves Street, which was near his residence. The two were "flirting", since when the offended worked in one of the stands of the "Festa do Divino" (occurred in Rua Oswaldo Aranha), at Benício's insistence she abandoned this job and accepted the "new job" Indicated by the accused. He narrates that the episode of the overnight, only occurred because it was "locked outside" the house of the "new missus." And because it's late at night, and your missus doesn't Appear, Benicio "said he would take her to

¹⁹ Criminal proceedings No. 4277/329, Nature Seduction, year 1950. Collection of the Public Archive of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (APERS), subfund 2nd Criminal Court, box no. 004-4328.

an acquaintance's house, where the offended could overnight, having offended her if it was a family home, to which the accused confirmed". In Benício's testimony, he will not deny having had sex on the day indicated by Ivoni but denies that she was a virgin at that time. The accused alluded to the ease of having persuaded her to move and overnight in that Enclosure. This offended and aggressor case contracted marriages in the same year of the alleged seduction.

What can be inferred from the case is that, although there is no extensive detail of the region of Rua Voluntários da Pátria, Benício found there a place that offered "shelter" to his intentions, be they only "overnight" in the enclosure, or to maintain relations sexual relationships with the young woman. We then have a region that did not pre-judge boyfriend couples such as Ivoni and Benicio, but also did not care that a 16-year-old girl was alone with a man in a hotel room.

Final considerations

The aim of this article was to analyze the present social imaginary of the "Rua Voluntários da Pátria" and the areas of merit of the city of Porto Alegre, which constitute the *bas-fonds*. We saw how the narratives present in the chronicles and periodicals built the imaginary of the underworld of the "zones". These environments located in the Center of a metropolis under construction, where aspects of modernity contrasted between darkness and rutilant.

A social and economic elite used the pages of the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* to complain about the increasingly constant, close and scrued conviviality with the different inhabitants of the *bas-fonds*. But, the DN in addition to "breaking the news", also gave opinions of measures to be taken, mainly by the police. When the police actions met the expectations of the DN editor, its officers, especially the Chief of Police, received "torn praise". It was a moralistic and conservative opinion of good manners and, as mentioned above, prostitution was not a crime, which possibly caused the attention of the "good citizens" to have focused on the houses of prostitution. The aspect of addiction, although not contemplated with greater emphasis in this essay, is present both in the press and in some processes. Being in the 1950s, that Porto Alegre acquires a character of metropolis and needs

to deal with consumption and the sale of the "cursed herb"²⁰. The DN of 1955 brings several news that it was in the *bas-fonds* Centre where this practice would be promoted.

Regarding legal achievements, we can identify that this social imaginary ended up being an aggravating factor contrary to the offended, and in some cases favorable to the accused. Thus, it is clear that these series of reports that are constructed by the press, but which are also in the daily life of the subjects of the city, aim to qualify and disqualify, to say the intolerable and tolerable. Finally, it is recommended that more studies be carried out that contemplate the 1950s, after all in this period the crime begins to "organize". Therefore, the importance of resorting, for example, to literature, journals, and other sources from the Judiciary.

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²⁰ NEWS JOURNAL, 1955. Available at http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/093726_03/4758 Accessed on 17 Sep. 2019.

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