



The urban policy of the Federal District: a historiographical review of the relationship between land occupation and socio-spatial inequalities

***A política urbana do Distrito Federal: um resgate historiográfico da
relação entre ocupação territorial e desigualdades socioespaciais***

***La política urbana del Distrito Federal: una revisión historiográfica
de la relación entre la ocupación territorial y las desigualdades
socioespaciales***

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Received at 19/03/2022 Accepted at 22/09/2022



Abstract

The present article focuses on the history of urban expansion in the Brazilian Federal District, since 1960, in which there is a prominent situation of landholding irregularity, dating back to the first years of the new capital (Brasília) and intertwined with the very history of the city. To this end, the background to the construction of Brasília is presented, together with successive plans of land use. Thus, it is demonstrated how the growth of the real city has interfered in the formal planning, thereby revealing tensions and territorial disputes. The role of the public authorities is discussed with regard to the distribution of urbanizable land, to dealing with urban irregularities and how its actions have been based on a project of social stratification. Aspects are exposed of the housing policy practiced in the Federal District, which for many years was characterized by the eviction of "invasions", in order to arrive at the current guideline for landholding regularization. It may be observed that particularities of the policies and programs of city management have brought repercussions to the relations of integration or exclusion among different social classes and have resulted in different spatializations of inequalities. The investigation is guided by a historical approach, presupposing the study of political, social, economic and cultural interfaces, adopting a literature and documentary review in order to provide support for the reflections.

Key-Words: *Brasília, landholding regularization, real estate speculation.*

Resumo

O presente artigo focaliza o histórico de expansão urbana do Distrito Federal, desde 1960, na qual se destaca o quadro de ampla irregularidade fundiária habitacional, que remonta aos primeiros anos da nova capital e se confunde com a própria história da cidade. Para isso, são apresentados antecedentes da construção de Brasília, bem como sucessivos planos de uso do solo. Demonstra-se como o crescimento da cidade real interferiu no planejamento formal, evidenciando tensões e disputas territoriais. Discute-se a atuação do poder público na distribuição de terras urbanizáveis, no enfrentamento das irregularidades urbanas e como a sua atuação se baseou em um projeto de estratificação social. Expõem-se aspectos da política habitacional praticada no DF, caracterizada, por muitos anos, pela remoção de "invasões", para se chegar à atual diretriz de regularização fundiária. Observa-se que particularidades das políticas e programas de gestão da cidade têm rebatimentos nas relações de integração ou exclusão entre diferentes classes sociais e resultam em distintas espacializações de desigualdades. A investigação se orienta por uma abordagem histórica, pressupondo o estudo das interfaces políticas, sociais, econômicas e culturais, adotando-se a pesquisa bibliográfica e documental como subsídio às reflexões.

Palavras-Chave: Brasília, irregularidade fundiária, especulação imobiliária.

Resumen

El presente artículo se centra en la historia de la expansión urbana del Distrito Federal, desde 1960, en la que destaca el cuadro de amplia irregularidad habitacional, que se remonta a los primeros años de la nueva capital y que se entrelaza con la historia de la propia ciudad. Para ello, se presentan los antecedentes de la construcción de Brasília, así como los sucesivos planes de ordenación del territorio. Se muestra cómo el crecimiento de la ciudad real interfirió en la planificación formal, mostrando tensiones y disputas territoriales. Se discute el papel del poder público en la distribución del suelo urbanizable, en el enfrentamiento de las irregularidades urbanas y cómo su acción se basó en un proyecto de estratificación social. Se exponen aspectos de la política habitacional practicada en el Distrito Federal, caracterizada, durante muchos años, por la eliminación de las "invasiones", para llegar a la actual pauta de regularización de terrenos. Se observa que las particularidades de las políticas y programas de gestión de la ciudad repercuten en las relaciones de integración o exclusión entre las diferentes clases sociales y dan lugar a diferentes espacializaciones de las desigualdades. La investigación se orienta por un enfoque histórico, asumiendo el estudio de las interfaces políticas, sociales, económicas y culturales, adoptando la investigación bibliográfica y documental como subsidio a las reflexiones.

Palabras clave: *Brasília, regularización de la propiedad, especulación inmobiliaria.*



1. Introduction

In 1960, the inauguration of the new Brazilian capital was the materialization of an old project to move the national political power into the interior. According to Tavares (2014), Lucio Costa's Pilot Plan [*Plano Piloto*] materialized the precepts of modernist rationality and promoted expectations of a utopian ideal. However, its implementation revealed an inability to face the social demands and implied an early urban dispersion, marked by socio-spatial segregation.

Historical approaches have revealed a process of socio-spatial exclusion linked to the housing problem ever since the colonization period and the exploitation of the Brazilian territory (BONDUKI, 1998; SEVCENKO, 1998). The situation became aggravated as Brazilian urbanization took place, particularly with the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy, in which cities assumed a relevant and primordial role. This situation of socio-spatial injustice has also become characteristic of the Federal District, with the observed particularities of the planning and consolidation processes of the territory (PAVIANI, 2010).

In the Brasilia experiment, it was hoped to circumvent the ills of the undesigned city. However, the origins of urban irregularity go back to the period of its construction. At the same time, land valorization and speculative processes began even before the capital was moved. It may be observed that the housing problem has always been linked to irregular land use, insofar as the lack of housing imposes urgency, and therefore demands immediate actions, even if promoted on the margins of formality.

The rural lands that were to make up the Federal District underwent an intense process of expropriation, which also aimed to control the growth of the city. According to Jatobá (2016), the Federal District Government, until 1992, exercised the exclusive right to the subdivision of land. However, the monopoly of the activity proved incapable of containing informal occupation.

Colela (1991) analyzed the housing issue in Brasília and considered it essential to discuss the state ownership of land, considering that its retention did not confirm the expectation that this would result in a more equitable distribution of urbanizable areas. She indicated that, in other cities, private property is cited as an obstacle to implementing popular housing programs, so that the state ownership of land would be a basic condition for promoting social justice. According to Colela, the government acted in a similar manner toward the private sector and used its exclusive prerogative over the subdivision of land as an instrument of speculation, which demonstrated that it is not private property that provides real estate income, but the dominant economic system, which acts to regulate the price of this commodity.

The construction of the Pilot Plan should have broken with the prevailing social order and mark a new era of development. According to Holston (1993), the urban conception rejected the reality of Brazilian cities, marked by chaotic growth, favelas and subversive political organization, in order to propose the utopian inexistence of social strata. The city contemplated the entire population, which would coexist in superblocks and buildings with diversified market values.

Holston identified a paradox in the process of urban consolidation in Brasilia when he stated that government actions after the inauguration made use of mechanisms of stratification and social control, which the original project intended to negate "By denying residential rights to the construction workers, it intended to keep the Brazil they represented from taking root in the inaugural city"¹ (1993, p. 200). It denounced the government's role in promoting inequalities, associated the Pilot Plan's quality of life with maintaining privileges and criticized the preservationist legislation, imposed since 1960, for reinforcing such privileges and denying the right to the city to subsequent generations.

Certain guidelines for occupation have become fundamental in the Federal District, such as the recommendation of not occupying the Paranoá River basin due to environmental and health reasons.

¹ For direct citations, the English version used was Holston, J. *The Modernist City - An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*. Chicago, The University of Chicago. (1989, p.200).



However, it appears that planning has sometimes distanced itself from the spontaneous formation of the city, so that unofficial growth vectors have reshaped the plans drawn up as a reflection of territorial disputes and housing shortages. With regard to dispersed growth, Derntl (2020a) has argued that, although satellite cities² are traditionally associated with what is “unplanned”, they are an intrinsic part of the initial formulations of the territory and represent how ideas and instruments of urban planning have been shaped into the context of the capital.

Within this perspective, this article studies the urban consolidation of the Federal District, focusing on the irregularity of housing land and the urban policies that have been implemented since 1960. It starts from a scenario in which, in the search for housing, the informal city swiftly became consolidated. A brief history of the main district plans for land use is presented, in order to investigate the extent to which these instruments anticipated the occupations or proposed measures to combat the informal use of urban land. The role of the public authorities is also discussed, since they held a large part of the urbanizable land and induced urban dispersion and aggravated social disparities.

In the context of the interface between history, urban planning and social practices, the reflections are part of the debate on spatial injustice, a theme observed along the historical path of the formation of the city territories and that has been taken up again in contemporary times. It is intended to indicate that territorial management policies have had repercussions in the relationships of integration or exclusion between different social classes and, depending on the decisions and programmatic specificities, are decisive in aggravating tensions and inequalities.

The methodological procedures are guided by a historical approach, with a realization that understanding the reality presupposes the study of political, social, economic and cultural relations and connections (GIL, 2008). Thus, there is a return to previous periods and transformations in the process of occupation and expansion of the Federal District's territory, revealing interfaces between history, urban planning and social practices. The investigation has involved a literature and documentary review in order to access historical data and reflections consolidated in the literature, so as to provide support for the conclusions reached.

Primary sources of this study, the land use plans, have been consulted to demonstrate the government guidelines for territorial management and its contrast with the growth of the real city. With regard to the type of contribution, it is intended to broaden the available knowledge, such as the discussion on the public domain of urbanizable land and its distribution by the State, and to stimulate the academic debate with possible new research questions. The article develops into three main topics. The first reviews some of the antecedents of the move of the country's capital; the second addresses the main plans for land use since 1960; and the third discusses the influences of territorial disputes over housing and landholding policy and the consequent impact on the consolidation of the territory.

It may be observed that the landholding problem is intertwined with the history of the city and that government plans and actions have contributed to the expansion of informal occupations, and which have not been limited to specific social groups. The connections between irregular land use, the housing demand, socio-spatial segregation and real estate speculation are evident, factors that feed back into a vicious circle.

2. Antecedents of moving the capital and the valorization of land

The idea of moving the capital from Rio de Janeiro to the interior of the country dates back to events that took place long before the government of President Juscelino Kubitschek, having been formalized in the Federal Constitution of 1891, from when studies and expeditions began so as to enable the interiorization of the nation's political power.

Surveys on the occupation and characteristics of rural properties were the object of analysis and a

² The term “satellite city” is used informally. The Federal District is organized into Administrative Regions, since it is indivisible into municipalities.



determining factor in choosing the ideal site for the construction of Brasília. The final report by Donald J. Belcher and Associates, in 1954, concern was afforded to provide the Brazilian government with “incontestable proof of the extent of the land, of its use at the time and, most importantly, of its potential use in an agricultural development program” (BELCHER et al, 1956, p. 77).

The recommendation for the site known as *Sítio Castanho* took into consideration the cost that would have to be disbursed for the expropriations. Concerns over the use of the land did not only project an imminent situation but stemmed from previous initiatives of subdivision and commercialization of lands that had gained strength since the demarcation of the area known as the Cruls Quadrilateral³. According to Tavares (2014, p. 104-105), the laying of the foundation stone, in 1922, marked the beginning of speculative processes that were not only restricted to the demarcated area, but exerted an influence over the real estate market in nearby cities, as in Goiania.

In 1955, in order to initiate the expropriations, the government of the state of Goiás instituted the Comissão de Cooperação [Cooperation Commission], which was responsible for surveying the existing farms in the demarcated area. Carvalho (1996) associated the decision to expropriate the areas of the entire Federal District, and not only those that were necessary for the construction of the urban area, with the aim of discouraging the purchase of rural properties with a view to their valorization and renegotiation.

Despite the efforts made to ensure complete expropriation, the objective was only partially achieved. According to Carvalho (1996), the precariousness of the property titles, added to the required urgency, compromised the success of the expropriations. Vieira Junior (2012), discussed the difficulties of measuring the property chain and informed that, at the time, the limits of the properties were commonly formalized in parish registers, through an oral declaration, as required by the Land Law of 1850.

Fortes et al (2007) presented data from the Companhia Imobiliária de Brasília [Real Estate Company of Brasília] (Terracap)⁴, from 1996, which identified, at the time, around 51.4% of the lands in the Federal District as being fully expropriated, 33.3% as private, 8.5% as partially expropriated, with no precise definition of which plots were public or private, and 6.8% as still being in a legal expropriation process. Despite the incompleteness, the expropriations enabled the formation of a land bank, administered and distributed by the Companhia Urbanizadora da Nova Capital do Brasil [Urbanization Company of the New Capital of Brazil] (Novacap), until it transferred over to Terracap, in 1972.

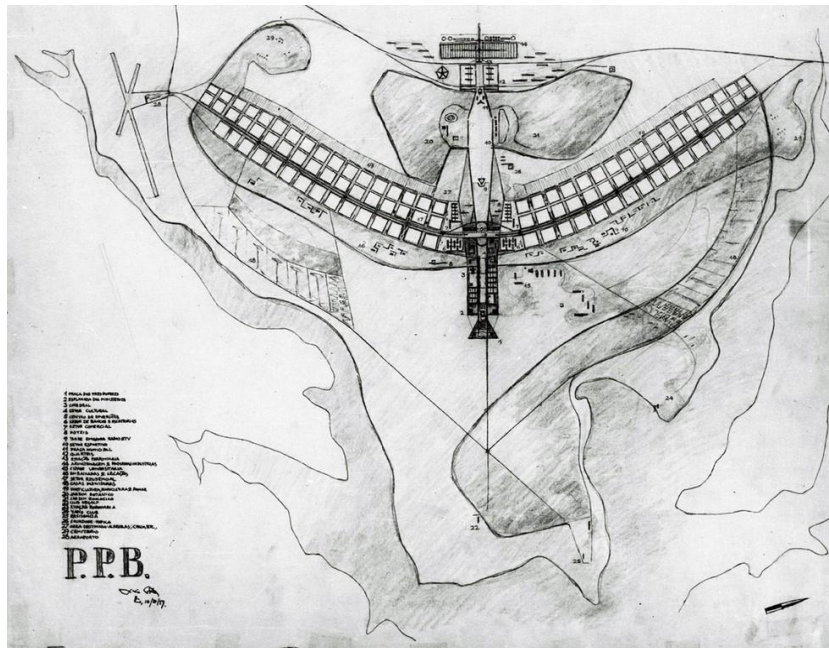
In 1956, the public notice for the National Competition for the Pilot Plan of the New Capital of Brazil was launched. In addition to the winning proposal, among the 26 projects presented, there was wide adherence to the precepts of modernist urbanism expressed in the Charter of Athens, written by Le Corbusier in 1941, in which recommendations for urbanism are launched in order to solve the problems of the industrial city.

The comments made by the jury regarding Lucio Costa's proposal already indicated satellite cities as a possible solution for expansion. Among the advantages, it is noted that “the size of the city is limited: its growth after 20 years will take place (a) through the peninsulas and (b) through satellite cities” (IPHAN, 2018, p.46). The perception of limitation suggests a concern with preserving the original details. In other words, the project would not accept expansion through densification or the creation of areas adjacent to its original limits.

³ The demarcation of the quadrilateral resulted from the enterprise led by Luiz Cruls, who, between 1892 and 1894, commanded the Exploratory Commission of the Central Plateau in order to choose the site of Brazil's new capital.

⁴ Throughout the article the acronyms for all departments and institutions have been included in the original Brazilian Portuguese form.

Figure 1: Lucio Costa's Pilot Plan.



Source: Federal District Public Archives.

Lucio Costa indicated no development solutions on a regional level. According to the Pilot Plan Report, the project should take in the entire population, welcoming different social groups through the allocation of different price ranges for certain blocks. However, as soon as construction began, the reservation of land for public servants who would occupy the administrative city demonstrated that the “total population” did not include the contingent of migrant workers.

Although Brasília's urban experience has become symbolic, the lack of a solid regional development plan and the city's rarefied structure associated with the preservationist discourse and the non-compliance with housing demands formed a framework conducive to informal land occupation. However, it is necessary to assess the role of the public authorities in promoting urbanization. For this, we have reviewed the policies on land use and occupation that have been implemented since 1960.

3. Territorial expansion and the plans for land use and occupation

According to the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage – IPHAN (2016, p. 17), the working population went from around 500 workers in 1956 to 13 thousand in 1957, 64 thousand in 1959, and 127 thousand in 1960. It was left to the construction companies to set up temporary camps in order to house their workers. In addition to the encampments, the families started to settle in Cidade Livre, the current Núcleo Bandeirante, where the plots of land were assigned through a lending system, with the condition that they would later return to Novacap (RODRIGUES, 2019).



Figure 2: Cidade Livre, the current Núcleo Bandeirante.



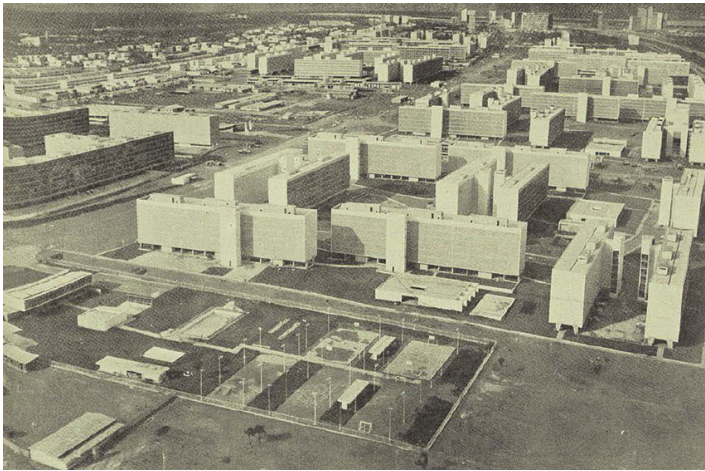
Source: Federal District Public Archives.

There were two main organizations responsible for recruiting the population for Brasília. The Brasília Work Group (GTB) was responsible for transferring public servants, while it was down to Novacap to recruit the workforce for the construction of the capital. Residence rights and access to housing in the Pilot Plan differentiated the groups recruited. Holston (1993) attributed to this differentiated recruitment the essence of the government's plan to occupy and organize the new capital, already stratified even before its inauguration.

Both groups – bureaucratic and construction – covered a range of social classes. For example, Novacap recruited not only workers, but also engineers, architects and merchants, while the GTB recruited ministers of state through to drivers and porters. In the bureaucratic group, some of the social principles from the Pilot Plan were included in the initial actions of the GTB, which sought to level out any differences in *status* by distributing housing, in the same building or superblock, to different classes of public servants. Holston assessed that this mixture proved to be “explosive” (1993, p. 206) and led to the voluntary abandonment of the collective housing structure by those who had a guaranteed right of residence⁵.

⁵ Holston also attributed the evasion of the Pilot Plan to architectural homogeneity and a low variety of residential typologies.

Figure 3: Section from the *Revista Brasília* with an aerial view of the Pilot Plan and a text explaining about the residential blocks.



MORADIA

Os blocos de apartamentos de uma superquadra são todos iguais: mesma fachada, mesma altura, as mesmas facilidades, todos construídos sôbre pilotis, todos dotados de garage e construídos com o mesmo material, o que evita a odiosa diferenciação de classes sociais, isto é, tôdas as famílias vivem em comum, o alto funcionário público, o médio e o pequeno.

Source: Adapted from Novacap, 1963.⁶

The initial social homogeneity was denied. In the construction of social strata, in addition to the discrimination suffered by the majority of those recruited by Novacap, the lowest class of public service began to be marginalized. For this group, housing began to be built in satellite cities and those who already lived in the Pilot Plan were gradually “expelled”, mainly from 1965 onwards, when the government sold a large part of its housing units, and the private market took over the commercialization of housing.

Motivated by having their rights denied, organizations representing workers emerged and resistance movements from the encampments and occupations also began to break out, with some of them demonstrating an element of success⁷. The illegal periphery was consolidated as a result of disputes that defended the permanence of informal urban centers and the legalization of the possession of occupied lands. In response, the government began to implement subdivision plans designed to receive families who had been evicted from the invasions. Taguatinga, in 1958, was the first satellite city, followed by others, such as Gama, Núcleo Bandeirante, Sobradinho and Paranoá.

Figure 4: Taguatinga in 1965.



Source: Federal District Public Archives.

Figure 5: Removal of an invasion.



Source: Federal District Public Archives.

⁶ “The apartment buildings of the superblocks are all the same: same façade, same height, same facilities, all of them constructed on pilotis, all with garages and constructed with the same material, which avoids the odious differentiation of social classes. In other words, all families living together, the high-serving public servant alongside the medium and the lower.”

⁷ Reference may be made to the permanence of Vila Planalto, Vila Telebrasilíia and Cidade Livre.

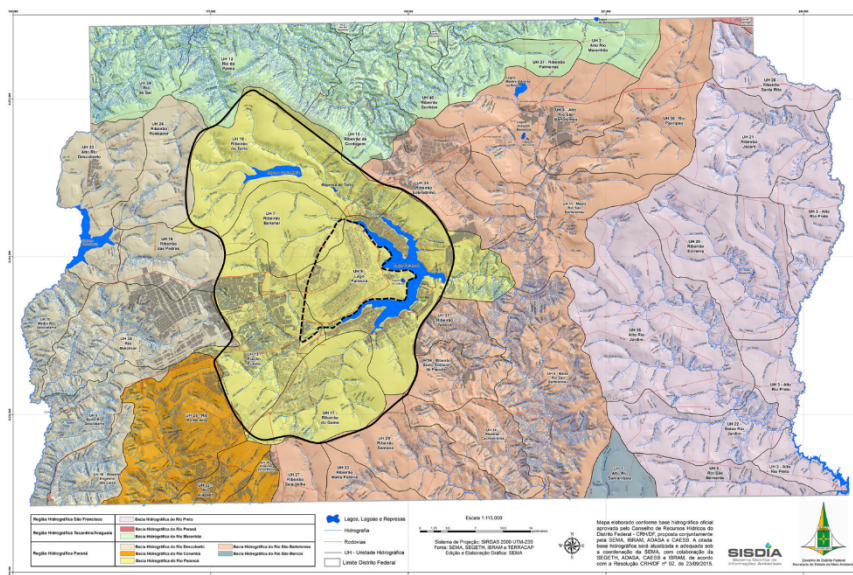


Territorial expansion continued “in full swing”. Even so, Brasília's first years form a period characterized by the inexistence of urban plans that envisaged the Federal District in its entirety, leaving the Pilot Plan Report, from 1957, to guide urban management during the 1960s. Therefore, other instruments launched the first guidelines for occupation in the Federal District on a regional level, such as the *Plano de Abastecimento* [Supply Plan], of 1957, aimed at the production of horticultural crops and small holdings. The plan mentioned a containment area called the “slope protection strip”, in this case, the slopes of the Paranoá River Watershed. Subsequently, Decree No. 163/1962 named the protection zone as the “protective sanitation strip” and divided the Federal District into three large areas: the metropolitan area (circumscribed by the protective strip), the satellite cities area, and the rural area.

The Park Ring Road (EPCT) demarcates this strip and, even today, is a relevant territorial landmark, used to delimit the surroundings of the Urbanistic Complex of Brasília (CUB). Therefore, the EPCT was chosen as a preservation polygon, which implied prioritizing areas outside its perimeter in order to implement satellite cities.

In 1970, the Federal District Water, Sewage and Pollution Control Master Plan (PLANIDRO) was drawn up, establishing the hydrographic basin as a planning unit and ratifying the non-occupancy of the Paranoá Basin, with the respective imposition of a population limit.

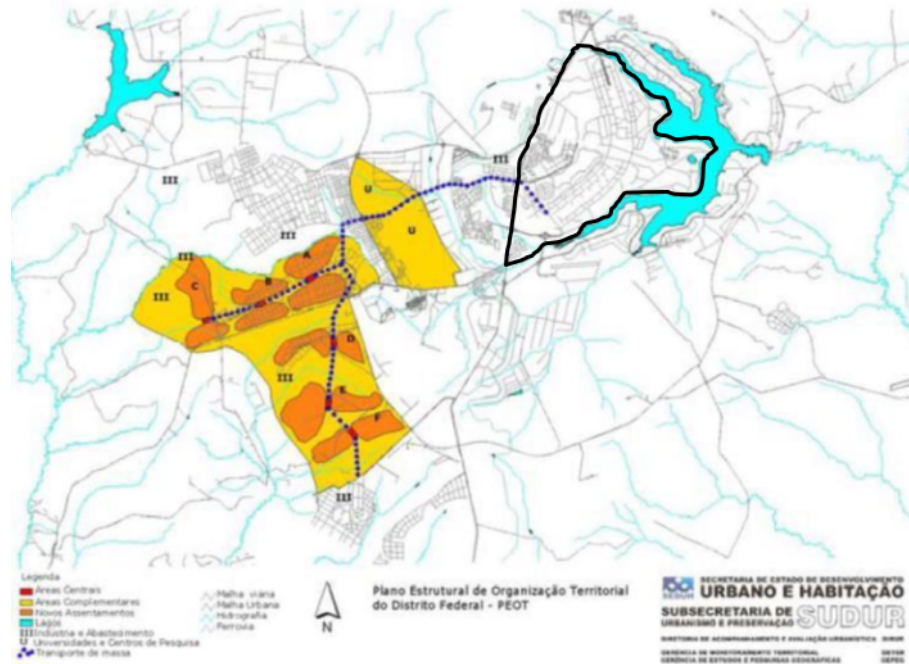
Figure 6: Hydrographic map of the DF, highlighting the Paranoá Basin (yellow), EPCT (solid black line) and CUB (dotted black line).



Source: Adapted from Adasa, 2016, based on Iphan Ordinance No. 68/2012.

In 1978, the first urban plan for the Federal District, the Structural Plan for Territorial Planning (PEOT), was approved. Between Taguatinga and Gama, six new settlement areas were proposed (see Figure 7, from “A” to “F”), designed to also house groups of low-income public servants (HOLSTON, 1993, p. 292). The definition of the southwest vector of growth and the preservation of the sanitation strip were fundamental points and, although the Pilot Plan was still relatively unoccupied, the PEOT confirmed the decision to proceed with the expansion of the periphery before the occupation of the center took place.

Figure 7: Settlement areas (in orange) of the PEOT. The CUB is highlighted in black.



Source: Adapted from the PEOT, 1978.

Later plans lent themselves to detailing the principles of the PEOT, such as the Territorial Occupation Plan (POT), in 1985, and the Land Occupation and Use Plan (POUSO), in 1986⁸. More significant changes in the guidelines were only observed when Lucio Costa visited Brasília in 1985, which resulted in the document *Brasília Revisitada* [Brasília Revisited]. Here, Costa gave advice regarding the occupation of areas close to the Pilot Plan. The recommendation is highlighted regarding the area between Lake Paranoá and the São Bartolomeu Basin (in the Asa Nova Sul region), which, although abandoned by territorial plans, foresaw a new urban occupation that would consolidate in the current Administrative Region of the Botanical Garden.

⁸ The POT was a technical document that did not become a decree or law. POUSO was approved by means of a resolution in 1986, and was later converted into Decree No. 12,898/1990.

Figure 8: New residential areas proposed by *Brasília Revisitada* in yellow. The CUB is highlighted with the dotted line.

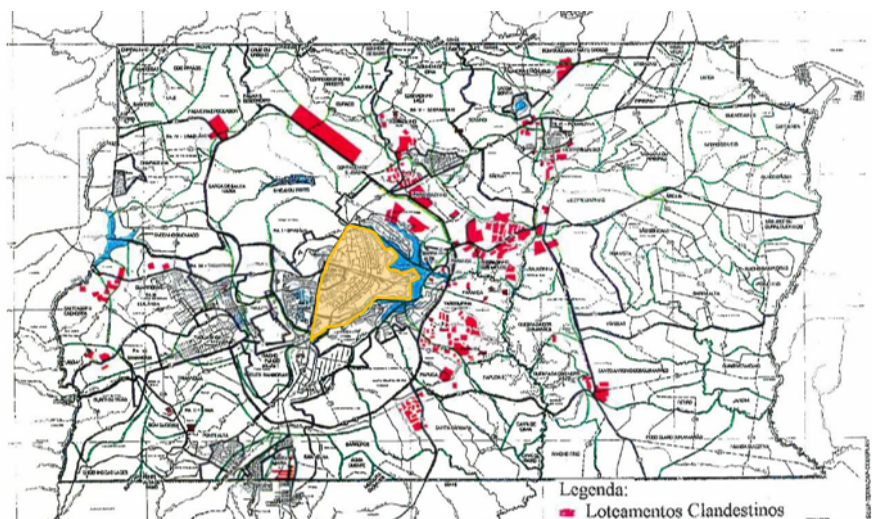


Source: Adapted from GDF, 1987.

By limiting the city's growth into a single direction, highly selected areas of the territory opposite the priority vector were left out of the planning and, therefore, were more susceptible to irregular occupation. Thus, from the 1970s onwards, clandestine closed middle-income subdivisions, popularly known as “horizontal condominiums”, proliferated in the São Bartolomeu Basin.

Malagutti (1996) reported that the first “condominium” registered in the Federal District was Quintas da Alvorada, created in 1975. From then on, the formation of a semi-radial ring east of the Pilot Plan began, in the São Bartolomeu Environmental Protection Area. New regions also began to stand out due to the closed subdivisions. The type of occupation is significant along the BR 020 highway, towards Sobradinho and Planaltina, and around the Brasília National Park, along the EPCT highway.

Figure 9: Illegal subdivisions, in red, in 1992. The CUB is highlighted in orange.



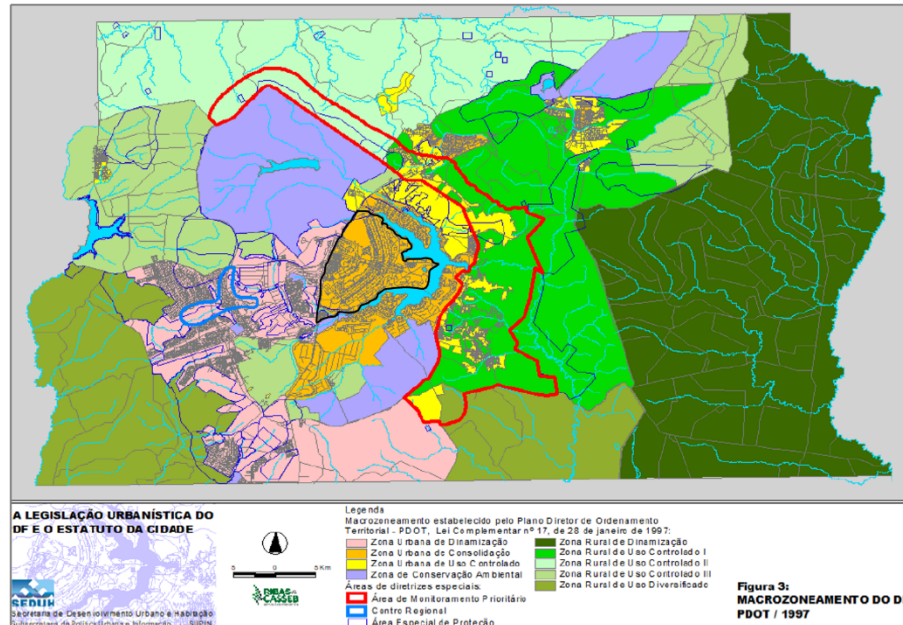
Source: Adapted from Malagutti, 1996, p. 28.

In 1992, Law No. 353 instituted the first Master Plan for Territorial Planning (PDOT). The PDOT/92 became the basic instrument of the urban development policy for the Federal District and embodied the land occupation plans approved until then. The instrument recognized the irreversibility of the framework referring to informal urban occupation and indicated the need for studies in order to guide

actions that would either regularize or dismantle clandestine subdivisions.

Five years later, Complementary Law No. 17/1997 revised the previous plan and approved a new PDOT with the premise of prioritizing the densification of consolidated areas instead of creating new areas. The southwest vector was reaffirmed, but the vectors towards Sobradinho and Planaltina were also recognized, a region classified as a "Priority Monitoring Area", with the delimitation of its polygonal in the zoning map, but still with few innovations and without implementing any more effective actions.

Figure 10: Macro-zoning of the PDOT/1997. Polygonal of the Priority Monitoring Area, in red, and the CUB, in black.

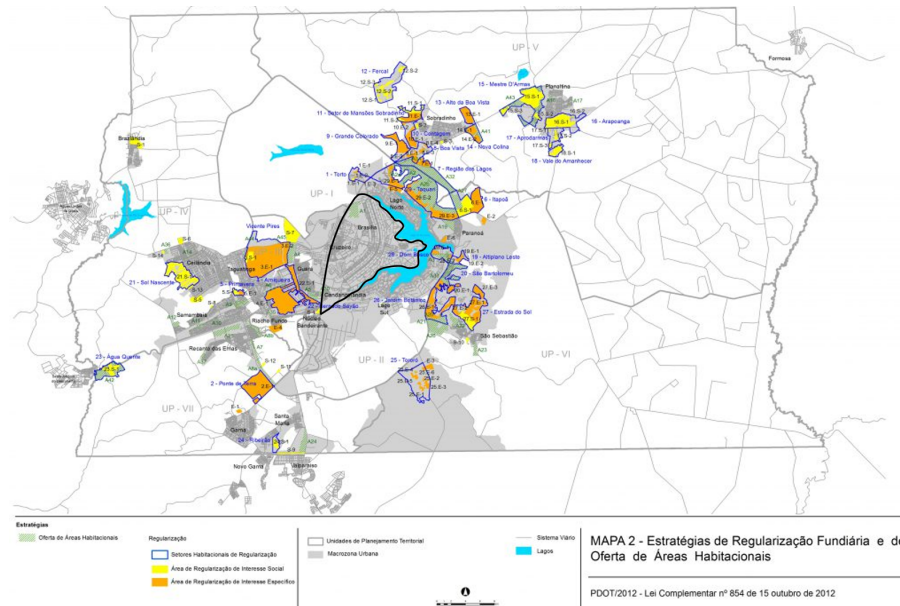


Source: Adapted from Kronenberger and Holanda, 2019.

In 2009, Complementary Law nº 803 approved the revision of the PDOT. The new instrument, still in force, placed the landholding regularization of urban and rural, public and private lands as one of its objectives. As part of the Landholding Regularization Strategy, Regularization Areas of Social Interest (ARIS) and Regularization Areas of Specific Interest (ARINE) were created. For the first time, the Master Plan incorporated a list of places subject to regularization, with a determination for established low-income settlements to become a priority.



Figure 11: Landholding Regularization Strategy of the PDOT, with ARIS indicated in yellow and ARINEs in orange



Source: Adapted from GDF, 2012.

The territorial plans presented herein demonstrate how the main expansion guidelines remained unchanged for decades, strengthening the Pilot Plan-Taguatinga binomial, although the occupation of areas to the northeast of the center began before 1960. The urban sprawl expanded beyond the zones formally destined for densification and the satellite towns were prematurely established to receive the contingent of workers. The representation of official planning demonstrates its intention to preserve and maintain the administrative center unchanged, a kind of “island” where the social problems of large Brazilian cities should not become manifested.

4. The housing and landholding issues in the midst of territorial disputes

When reflecting on contemporary cities, Secchi (2015) stated that, due to the particularities of political traditions, cities have different social topographies of inequalities. The characteristics and forms of occupation of the territory are records of the actions of subjects and conflicts in society and have generated policies that promote increasing disruption and individualization. Although he recognized that in Western cultures, cities have been considered opportunities for social and cultural integration, promoting contact between the differences, the exchange of knowledge and producing new identities, in a contradictory manner, has established itself as a stage for differentiation. Secchi also confirmed that public policies, including urban policy, could have effectively fought these imbalances, through the action of actors in society with the ability to determine the conformation of the territory.

The origin of conflicts and disputes over land predates the inauguration of Brasília and, as a backdrop, there was real estate speculation. However, the case of Brasília differs from other Brazilian cities mainly due to the intense participation of the State in organizing the territory, holding the domain of a large part of the lands and a monopoly over the activity of land subdivision until the approval of the PDOT in 1992, which extended this prerogative to private individuals. According to Veloso Filho (1986), the bureaucratic management of space replaced the actions of the private real estate market by promoting, in a very accentuated manner, a process of spatial selectivity characteristic of undesigned cities, which he considered paradoxical. This confirms Colela's position (1991), when she states that the public domain of land did not lead to an equitable and socially fair distribution.

The occupation of the capital left no doubt as to its purpose and gave privilege to one single function: administrative. This argument supported the exclusive inclusion of public servants for housing in the Pilot Plan, planned for a population of around 500 thousand inhabitants. It should be noted that the

current population of the Pilot Plan has not even reached half that number⁹, while in 1960 the population of workers allocated to the periphery already exceeded 100,000 inhabitants. However, the selection criteria for access to housing in the center quickly began to privilege income and social position, instead of the type of bond with the administration.

On the periphery, government subdivisions were conceived with predefined recipients. As an example, Holston (1993, p. 300) cited the case of Ceilândia, which only received families evicted from the favelas around Núcleo Bandeirante, and Sobradinho, whose affordable houses were reserved for low-level employees from various departments. This thus points to the state regulation of the real estate market and its implications for creating social strata throughout the Federal District.

The urban development of the Federal District was, to a large extent, characterized by the formation cycle of the legal periphery as a response to the illegal periphery, which was sought to be eliminated. As an example, there was the creation of the Comissão Permanente de Controle de Remoção de Invasões [Permanent Commission for Controlling the Removal of Invasions], in 1965, and, in 1969, the Campanha de Erradicação de Invasões [Invasion Eradication Campaign] (CEI) was instituted. Between 1971 and 1972, the occupants were registered and relocated to Ceilândia, named after the campaign's acronym and, currently, the most populous administrative region in the Federal District, with 352,758 inhabitants.

Figure 12: Ceilândia in the 1970s.



Source: Federal District Public Archives.

⁹ Projections by the Federal District Planning Company estimated a population of 233,236 for the Pilot Plan in 2020 and, of 250,356 in 2030 (GDF, 2022, p. 21).

Figure 13: Aerial view of Ceilândia in 1973.



Source: Federal District Public Archives.

The institutional arrangements aimed at social housing go back to the creation of the Sociedade de Habitações Econômicas de Brasília [Affordable Housing Society in Brasília] (SHEB), in 1962, with inexpressive actions due to the works stoppages that occurred during the governments of Jânio Quadros and João Goulart. Subsequently, the Social Housing Society (SHIS) was created in 1964, the Federal District Housing Development Institute (IDHAB), in 1994, and the current Housing Development Company (Co-dhab), in 2007.

It is essential to highlight the close relationship between SHIS and the National Housing Bank (BNH¹⁰), which operated for more than twenty years and was responsible for raising funds from the Housing Financial System (SFH). The National Housing Bank provided financial support both for constructions in the Pilot Plan, intended for public servants, and for affordable housing projects, although housing production differed greatly in terms of the quality of residences, depending on the target public.

According to Colela (1991), until 1979, the production of affordable housing maintained some regularity, although below the demand. Between 1979 and 1982, the government suspended the construction of housing based on an understanding that the housing supply would be responsible for increasing the migratory flow towards the capital. As a result, this aggravated the situation of irregular occupation, the growth of cities in Goiás around the Federal District and an increase in the sale and rental prices of properties.

Oliveira (2008) indicated another period, between 1985 and 1988, when the housing policy was weakened, at least within the limits of the Federal District. Based on an ideology of social separation, the “Return with Dignity” program was established, which aimed to send migrants back to their cities of origin, together with the “Surroundings with Dignity” program, which encouraged the construction of housing in the surrounding municipalities in order to receive the surplus population.

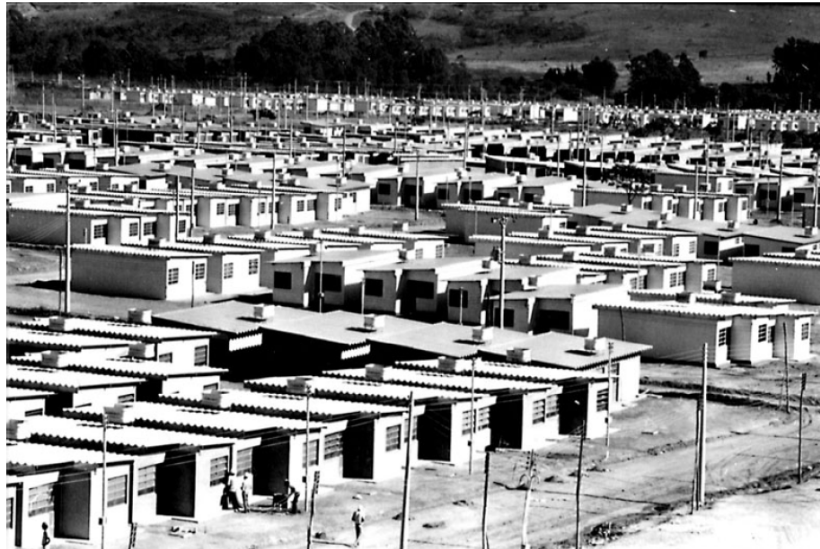
In 1989, Decree No. 11,476 formalized changes in the government's action, with no resources from BNH, made extinct in 1986, in terms of meeting the housing demand. The norm established that “people residing in invaded areas of the Federal District may be transferred to semi-urbanized subdivisions” (art. 1). Thus, the phase of constructing housing units ended in order to officially inaugurate the phase with a vast distribution of lots, which characterized the governments of

¹⁰ According to Oliveira (2008), between 1966 and 1991, SHIS produced 56,719 housing units with BNH resources, out of a total of 76,453.

Joaquim Roriz¹¹.

The policy for distributing housing and plots of land transformed the territory and gave rise to new administrative regions, such as Samambaia, the implementation of which began in 1985. In addition, the measure constituted an important tool for controlling social conflicts and was the object of campaigns of a populist nature, although it helped to aggravate socio-spatial segregation.

Figure 14: Affordable housing in Samambaia.



Source: Federal District Public Archives.

Subsequent assessments by the Federal District Government (GDF) itself identified inconsistencies in the provision of housing, such as the fact that the program was promoted by agencies linked to social services, without the participation of agencies dealing with housing or urban planning. In this regard:

“If, on the one hand, the abundant distribution of land compromised the urban development of the Federal District, on the other, it is easy to see that it was not enough to reduce the deficit, which may be simply verified by official data that indicates the Federal District as being the Federative Unit where the largest number of people, in percentage terms, do not own the place where they live.” (GDF, 2012, pg. 40).

In relation to ownership, it became common practice to grant leave to reside, but not domain, leaving the beneficiaries to wait years in order to receive the deeds. Added to the inertia of the public authorities is the condition of "permanence time", which, although justified as a form of protection for the beneficiary, links a certain population to a territorial portion, without considering possible social, cultural or economic transformations that may give rise to the desire to move homes.

Thus, in addition to the formal-spatial rigidity that characterized the urban policy and the formal offer of residential areas on the periphery of the Federal District, there was also a legal-procedural rigidity, with the imposition of requirements restricted to the low-income population.

On the other hand, in the Pilot Plan, the distribution of land by Novacap was mainly undertaken for public bodies and usually through donation. Among the beneficiaries were the district and federal governments, IAPs (Retirement Institutes), FCP (Affordable Housing Foundation), Military Ministries, House of Representatives, Federal Senate, among others. However, as the real estate business conducted by Novacap intensified, the government “began to command the bidding process,

¹¹ Joaquim Roriz was in charge of the executive district between 1988 and 1990, as appointed governor, and from 1991 to 1994 and from 1999 to 2006, as governor elect.

arbitrating prices and selecting buyers, through delivering areas that were incrementally being designed and urbanized” (MALAGUTTI, 1996, p. 70).

Along the same lines, Vesentini (1986, p. 114) also denounced inequalities in the process of pricing and in the distribution of lots and apartments in the new capital. Testimonials report the sale of lots at derisory prices close to the lake, reserved for “mansions”, as an exchange of favors and to select buyers, since the neighborhood would be for the elites, from whom political support was sought. Therefore, the Public Authority holds the urban space as a bargaining chip, to the detriment of its socially fair distribution.

At this point, it should be noted that the appropriation of public areas in the Federal District is also manifested in high-income upscale neighborhoods. A study carried out by Oliveira (2015, p. 21) demonstrated, only in the administrative regions of Lago Sul and Lago Norte, the illegal occupation of 1,574 hectares in the form of an extension of the perimeter of the registered lots. The area is greater than the total occupied by low-income communities in Pôr do Sol and Sol Nascente¹² and has led to a high valorization of the adjacent properties without there being any counterpart for the government and the community.

Figure 15: Example of an occupation in public areas in the region of Lago Sul.



Source: Oliveira, 2015.

According to Freitas (2013, p. 20), landholding conflicts and deliberate omissions have characterized the relationship between housing policy and the middle class of the Federal District, a segment generally not catered for in housing programs. For Malagutti (1996, p. 91), the scarcity of available urban land for different income categories, especially the middle income, the limitations in real estate financing and the low production of real estate are elements that foster a highly speculative real estate market.

This market is characterized by an inelastic supply and the fixed number of land conflicts with growing social demand, which constantly causes prices to rise. Competition for location helps to explain how the commercialization of affordable housing is able to contribute to the segregation of the most vulnerable population.

As an example, a case study developed by Colela (1991) in 1988, assessed four settlements (three

¹² The study estimated that, at the time, both regions occupied 1,500 hectares. Originally belonging to the Administrative Region of Ceilândia – IX, since 2019, Pôr do Sol and Sol Nascente make up the Administrative Region XXXII.



formal – Candangolândia, QE-38 do Guar´a and Setor M Norte de Taguatinga – and one informal – “Invasão” do CEUB, in the Pilot Plan) and concluded that the commercialization of housing occurs regardless of the legal situation of the property (ownership, concession of use or irregular use). At the time, the formal subdivisions had been implemented for around three years, and the informal, ten years. During this period, 20% of the properties in Candangolândia were sold; 7% in the M North Sector; 70% in Guar´a and 60% in the “Invasion” of CEUB. It may be observed that the highest numbers refer to the best locations, even in the case of the occupation of the CEUB which, although composed of shacks, also generated real estate income through sale or rent.

Colela concluded that “the house, which should have a use value, began to have an exchange value” (1991, p. 12) when referring to the pressure suffered by beneficiaries with affordable properties from higher-income social segments¹³, after urban improvements in areas originally lacking in infrastructure. Thus, she stated that the programs ultimately serve the market, since the families left the properties and moved to even more distant places.

As previously mentioned, the territorial sprawl of the middle class, from the 1970s onwards, commonly occurred in the form of clandestine subdivisions, whose multiplication was characterized either by the omission and consent of the public authorities, or by its limitation of action in the face of speed, legal barriers and the volume of occupations that were fixed each year. This group began to settle in cheaper, more distant places, although still with good accessibility. In addition to the housing value, the search for different residential typologies and benefits of the rural area, such as contact with nature, ample space and security, are factors that began to stimulate a kind of voluntary segregation.

Land grabbing in the Federal District was the subject of a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI), created in 1995 by the Legislative Chamber of the Federal District (CLDF). The commission found that around 650 “condominiums” had been constituted between 1987 and 1994 and its final report explained the involvement of an extensive network of public and private agents, with the participation of authorities from the three branches and top public servants the Federal District administration, all of whom had benefited economically from the illegal land market.

Later, when the district legislation began to offer the means for landholding regularization of the subdivisions, the CPI found, on the one hand, a great lack of interest and neglect of subdivisions in seeking the regularization of their “undertakings” and, on the other, the creation of a “veritable industry for commercializing process protocols” (p. 17). Added to this is the late recognition of “stillbirth” processes, with incompetent documentation, which were processed in administrative instances for years.

After more than 25 years of the CPI, the territorial reality demonstrates that the efforts brought to bear for the investigation and accountability of those involved have not been sufficient to contain the emergence of new occupations or to reverse part of the damage caused to the public coffers, the environment, the urban ordering or even to third parties in good faith.

Considering the near irreversibility of the framework of irregularity and the search for the effective right to housing, landholding regularization became a guideline in the federal and district urban planning legal system. Currently, the legalization of informal urban centers is made possible by the Regularização Fundiária Urbana [Urban Landholding Regularization] (Reurb), object of Federal Law No. 13.465/2017, which has simplified procedures for carrying out the titling of occupants, as with granting permission for the direct sale of lots in the specific interest regularizations.

Jatobá (2016) warned of the risk of distorting regularization programs and their becoming incorporated

¹³ “Higher-income social segments” refers to any group with an income higher than the beneficiary, and not necessarily the middle class, whose income would make it impossible to participate in housing programs. For example, it was found that 28% of buyers sold their homes, mostly financed by SHIS, to buy a new, better located home, which demonstrated the inadequacy of the programs for producing homes without appropriately targeting the borrowers’ income (COLELA, 1991).

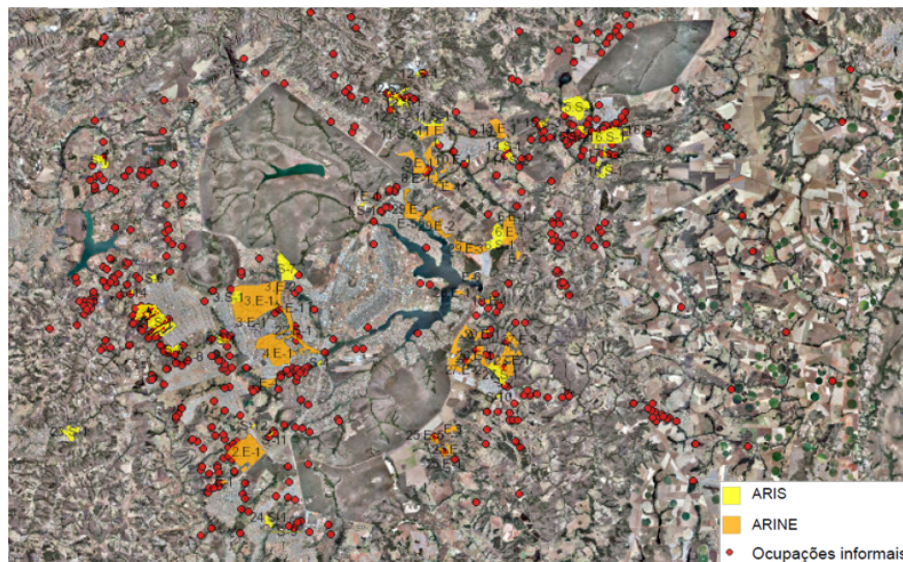
into the reproduction structure of informality. This tends to occur to the extent that the mere expectation of regularization stimulates an increase in the supply of informal urban land and a reduction in the formal supply. With the certainty of undertaking future urban improvements, at the expense of the government or the residents themselves, land grabbers add their future valorization to the price of illegal lots, a kind of premium that makes the informal market highly profitable and inaccessible to those most in need, who are already excluded from the formal market. Also noteworthy is the effect of the overvalorization of clandestine subdivisions on properties in central and legalized areas, for which their values are inflated in a cascade effect. Thus, he concludes:

The more you regularize, so the more areas to be regularized will appear. Regularization has proven to be a contradiction in urban planning. Instead of concentrating their efforts on providing new areas to meet the housing demand of different income groups, governments ultimately dedicate too much time and resources to regularizing previously consolidated situations, with costs much higher than implementing formal areas. (JATOBÁ, 2016, p. 14).

On the other hand, there is the political cost of not promoting regularization, a decision that implies the responsibility of the State for its inertia and omission in the face of urban and environmental damage caused by implanting previously consolidated urban centers. Thus, it is down to public managers to promote regularization and break the vicious circle of informality.

In the Federal District, this challenge is added to the vast amount of informal occupations, both included and not included in the Landholding Regularization Strategy of the PDOT. In 2017, the Federal District Government mapped out these occupations using the notary condition as a criterion. The results indicated that 34.42% of the lots in the Federal District were not registered, a total of 194,453. Of these, 81.51% were in regularization areas and 18.49% were not included in the strategy. Figure 16 presents the territorial distribution of informal occupations.

Figure 16: PDOT Regularization Areas and informal occupations.



Source: Geoportal, 2022.

5. Final considerations

Moving Brazil's capital to the center of the country fulfilled the objective of occupying the Central Plateau and reconfigured the Brazilian demographic distribution. Brasília fostered a significant migratory flow and represented an opportunity for thousands of workers summoned by the government during the capital's construction. However, the first land use guidelines already demonstrated that the working population would not be received and led to the early creation of satellite cities, thereby consolidating the polynuclear structure of the territory.



Concern over the occupation of the Federal District's land was present in studies long before the construction, as observed in the Belcher Report. Real estate speculation was foreseen, but not avoided, so that the landholding problem has become confused with the very history of the city. Strategies to circumvent the pattern of reproduction in Brazilian cities, such as the formation of a bank of public lands and the monopoly of land subdivision by the State, became instruments of social stratification, through the planned fragmentation of the territory and the removal of low-income populations in order to keep the Pilot Plan reserved for pre-established segments.

Appropriations of space tend to reflect the unmet needs. The scarce housing supply and the overvalorization of the Pilot Plan and the formal real estate market have propelled the emergence of informal occupations by low- and middle-income populations, as well as the significant illegal privatization of public areas in high-income neighborhoods. However, historically, the response provided by the government has reflected a clear difference in treatment depending on the type of irregularity faced.

The legal periphery, implanted on the outer perimeter of the containment zone, succeeded the illegal periphery in response to the movements of fixation, giving rise to removals that, for years, characterized the housing policy of the Federal District. When analyzing the transfer of low-income populations on a national level, Maricato (2014) indicated that there is a persistent tendency for public authorities to face the problem only in unforeseen occurrences, such as floods and landslides. In comparison with the Federal District, it may be observed that evictions and the fight against informality have aimed, ultimately, at preserving the central areas.

Social disputes have become apparent in the territory in different ways, either through irregular occupation, or through the consent of the public authorities with irregularities, guided by different criteria and interests or through reserving distant areas for popular housing. The formation of the Federal District reflects a framework of spatial injustice that consolidates particularities resulting from government policies established along the historical path.

It may be observed how market forces have influenced housing programs. In the Federal District, the commercialization of affordable housing contributed to a process of excluding the impoverished strata, so that, as soon as the lots were created, they went onto the market and became valorized, even before they actually received any basic infrastructure. Similarly, landholding regularization, if unaccompanied by parallel actions of housing supply, inspection and land control, may ultimately foster more informality.

The contemporary debate has focused on the way in which landholding regularization instruments are applied and their links with the housing problem, in an attempt to equalize socio-spatial disparities and guarantee fundamental rights to housing and a healthy environment, observing the social function of the city and the principles of urban policy. At an opportune moment for reflections on the future, in which discussions are taking place to undertake a revision of the PDOT, this article has not intended to exhaust the theme but rather to establish a basis for fresh investigations into the perspectives of the landholding issue, so inseparable from housing. Despite the importance of Reurb, it is questionable whether its conduct may favor less vulnerable groups or, even, perpetuate the “invasion-regularization” cycle.

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Como citar: LANCELLOTTI, A.C.O., GUINANCIO, C. The urban policy of the Federal District: a historiographical review of the relationship between land occupation and socio-spatial inequalities. *Paranoá*, (33), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.18830/issn.1679-0944.n33.2022.19>

Editors: Viviane Ceballos, Regina Oliveira e Maria Fernanda Derntl.