

*OVERVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY URBANIZATION IN  
BRAZIL*

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The urbanisation process observed in Brazil today comes from an attempt to change established by the 1988 Constitution, through a chapter dedicated to Urban Policy. Several attempts came to regulate this chapter, which only happened with the City Statute (Brazilian federal law), Law 10,257, of July 10, 2001.

In the context observed in the 1980s, the process of economic globalization intensifies, since the bipolarizing effect of the world is undone and neoliberal policies are established. One of its main characteristics is the global economy, which according to Castells (1999), was only possible due to the new infrastructure provided by information and communication technologies.

The territorial exclusion process established over the 1970s had serious results made explicit in the cities in the late 1990s. Maricato (2001) highlights two consequences of this process, one of which is what the author calls environmental predation, due to this dynamic of housing exclusion and spontaneous settlements, and the increase in urban violence, felt most intensely in areas marked by homogeneous poverty, in large cities.

The election of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) takes place amid the population's desire to maintain economic stability, achieved by the previous government, but also the need for urgent improvements in social policy.

In pursuit of urban policies initiated in 2001, with Law 10.257 (City Statute), Lula implements, in his government, the Ministry of Cities. According to the ministry's own website

([www.cidades.gov.br](http://www.cidades.gov.br)), its creation sought to be innovative in urban policies, integrating sectorial policies for housing, sanitation and urban mobility.

According to IBGE (2010), more than 84% of the Brazilian population lives in cities. In this way, the Ministry of Cities occupies a void observed in the Federal Government's urban policy. The role of the ministry is also to define a policy in line with the other structures of the Federation (municipalities and States) and with the other powers of the State (Legislative and Judiciary).

The Growth Acceleration Programme (PAC) was created in 2007, already in Lula's second term. Its objective was a set of measures programmed to accelerate economic growth through investment in infrastructure, basic sanitation, housing, transportation, energy, among others.

In the first year of the election of President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), PAC 2 was launched, which included the PMCMV (My house my life housing Programme). The first aimed to face the main challenges of large urban centers to improve people's quality of life and included Urban Mobility programmes for large cities and medium-sized cities.

The PMCMV fits in with the objective of reducing the housing deficit, boosting the civil construction sector, and generating work and income. The programme, according to Maricato (2011, p. 67), "*resumes housing policy with an interest only in the number of houses, and not in its fundamental urban condition*". According to the author, despite having boosted the civil construction sector, it contributed to the acceleration of the project of social segregation that occurred in Brazilian cities, mainly since real estate agents are defined without obeying public guidance.

Although social advances have occurred, the author says that cities have worsened. This is seen in the way the public policies of the last governments treat the city.

Despite the decrease in social differences, Brazilian cities are even more segregated, made worse, especially, by the implementation of the PMCMV, which imposed a form of segregation of space on the income classes served by the programme.

In the government of Michel Temer (2016-2018), we observed a drop in public investments related to the social and urban policies of the previous period. Despite the quantitative increase, mainly in investment in social housing for lower income classes, cities have become even more segregated and the implementation of these investments did not observe the urban concern that the City Statute would bring to national urban policy.

In 2018, President Jair Bolsonaro was elected. His government plan was consulted through the official website ([www.bolsonaro.com.br](http://www.bolsonaro.com.br)). Reading the government plan of the current president of the republic demonstrates the lack of interest in themes related to the New Urban Agenda. Issues such as housing, sustainability and urban management are not mentioned in

the plan. In this context, the Ministry of Cities, created in 2003, was extinguished. Already in the end of 2020, the year marked for the Corona virus spread, we saw de country enter in a profound economic crisis where millions are unemployed and none action about the urban agenda.

The PMCMV was configured, therefore, in the same way as the National Housing Bank (BNH) in previous periods, as a strategy for economic growth (STROHER, 2017). In this way, urban planning in the 1980s and 1990s passed to local governments and established, in this sense, the interests mainly of landowners of local elites.

The power of local and regional elites, also dominating local politics, starts to establish the real estate guidelines of cities, through what Stroher (2017) calls the protagonism of the local scale.

What we see in this context was a reproduction of mistakes made in previous periods that, despite the increase in the share of resources destined to the spatial issues of the city for the lower income classes, contributed to the increase in the socio-spatial segregation of Brazilian cities and the fragmentation of the territory. This was permitted, as we shall see later, by a profound association between the local political powers and the real estate market, or the financial agents involved in this process.

Stroher's research (2017) for the metropolitan region of Curitiba, Paraná state capital, notes that the lower income class population looks for housing options where the real estate market has less interest. In this sense, there is an intense process of irregular occupations in uninteresting spatial structures for the real estate market. On the other hand, the uneven distribution of public and private investments in the metropolis of Paraná, generates an unequal appreciation and the so-called spatial differentiation in the establishment of social classes in the territory.

The case of Curitiba may be one of the exclusive patterns of Brazilian metropolises, according to Stroher (2017), observing a disparity in the distribution of social classes in the territory, in the permanence of the housing deficit for the lower income classes and in the continuity of informal urban occupation processes, where the success of housing policy is linked to the need for continuous real estate valuation.

According to Inostroza (2017), informality is a structural feature of urban development production in Latin America, difficult to resolve through the paths of urban legality.

Carlos (2009), through his studies in the metropolis of São Paulo, launches the hypothesis that the reproduction of the urban space signals that financial capital is produced through a "real estate product", establishing a transition from industrial capital to the preponderance of financial capital that it produces space as a commodity, that is, a real estate product.

In this context, it is observed that in the metropolis of São Paulo, as well as in other national

urban structures, the passage of money from the industrial productive sector to the real estate sector. This process of integration with the logic integrated to globalized capitalism generates, on the other hand, an area outside the logic of the immediate reproduction of financial capital, which the author calls “disintegrated” in relation to the reproduction of capital, creating a deepening of inequality, strengthening the informal sectors, disintegrated from the globalized logic of capital.

Although the author calls these informal areas as not integrated into the globalized sector of the economy, forming a complex, non-traditional periphery, since today the periphery also encompasses different income classes and industries, and is part of the reproduction of the real estate space.

For Baltrusis (2010), this type of housing (informal, self-built and precarious) was fundamental for the economic development of the countries of peripheral capitalism. From the 1980s onwards, from the change in Fordist logic that had been going on until then, there was a dispute over a privileged location in the hierarchy of urban space, changing the logic of the territorial distribution of cities.

According to the author, the new forms of contemporary living of the high income classes in Brazilian cities, established by closed, fortified enclaves, in order to avoid the other, was responsible for the process of fragmentation of the urban fabric that, together with condominiums of luxury and slums, accentuate the processes of socio-spatial segregation of Brazilian cities.

For Angotti (2013) the clients of these fortified or closed enclaves are the high-income extracts that bring with them ideologies and practices of separation and superiority that flow from Eurocentric cultures, with trends in copies of external models and urban design. These spaces arise through a philosophy of exclusion and neoliberal policies to reduce public spending and privatize spaces.

What we have noticed is a continuation, since decades ago, of an urbanization process in which it does not consider the location of the poorest in the territory. We see a continuity of processes of social segregation that has been aggravated by the economic and political crises of the last few years and a lack of interest on the part of our leaders in leading urban issues and collective interests.