

Autoconstruction as a Housing Tactic in the Contemporary City

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Abstract

Based on the recognition of the difficulty of access to urban housing by the lower classes as one of the greatest political and socioeconomic challenges faced by Brazilian cities in the contemporary world, this article seeks to elucidate how this issue has been operated over the years and what are the consequences of such actions for Brazilian cities. At first, we identified the agents responsible for the construction of low-cost housing, analysing the history of their actions. From this, we observed that autoconstruction (construction of housing by self-work, in both consolidated areas and informal settlements) and the production of social housing projects promoted through public-private partnerships (State and civil construction companies) constitute the two main means of access to cheap housing by the poorest parts of society. We conducted two case studies, each evaluating the quality of the neighborhoods produced through such practices in Brasilia, the federal capital of Brazil. In these studies, we analyzed the history of the occupations as well as the formal and functional aspects of these places. We observed that, in the Brazilian case, both the self-construction and the private-public partnerships consist in practices of city production consolidated several decades ago. We concluded that, although autoconstruction is the practice that has a negative connotation in the collective imaginary, the neighborhoods resulting from both practices have similar deficiencies, resulting in inefficient cities.

Keywords: autoconstruction, social housing, strategies x tactics

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1. Introduction

The urban issue and the need for urban development planning has been the focus of several debates and research in Brazil since the 1960s, given the intense process of industrialization and, consequently, urbanization that was taking place in the country (MONTE-MÓR, 1981). This process led to an accelerated growth of urban centers, as well as the overwhelming increase in the demand for housing, especially by the popular classes, who migrated towards cities in search of better living conditions.

Since then, many governmental initiatives have been responding to this demand, from the creation of the Retirement and Pension Institutes (IAP) in the 1930s to the present day with federal programs, such as the My House, My Life Program (PMCMV) launched in 2009 and still in force.

These initiatives have in common the fact that they operate according to a market logic, in which the urbanized land layout and the production of built spaces work through a linear process, the management of which is the responsibility of government agents and construction entrepreneurs. This way, the urbanized land is understood as a commodity and ends up out of reach of a large part of the population, which cannot fit into the financing mechanisms for acquiring / renting houses.

In this context, the mechanism of autoconstruction appears as a unique possibility of housing and permanence in the cities for part of the population. The term refers to the production of spaces, especially for housing, by the poor, through their own labor force, apart from the formal construction market and often without being part of the linear purchasing process and sale of urbanized land.¹

The modality of self-construction is applied to several spaces that shelter the daily activities of the most deprived portions of the population, in legalized and individual-owned areas or in informal settlements. As a means of producing constructed spaces that do not belong to the regular construction process of spaces in cities, it is understood that self-construction functions as a tactic.

The concept of tactics x strategy (DE CERTEAU, 1994) suggests that there is a difference between the way groups holding the power and those that do not have it function. De Certeau considers that strategy is linked to those who hold power and control of space, while the tactic is used by the "weak," those who must move in the space that does not belong to them. In this sense, we understand that the production of housing through autoconstruction functions as a tactic of the popular strata for economic reproduction and its fixation in the urban context, understood here as a field (BORDIEU, 1994) and dominated by those who hold power - *a priori*, government entities, civil construction investors, financing institutions.

This paper focuses on the city of Brasília, based on a comparison between two case studies. The first, at Vila Estrutural, seeks to understand the urban spaces formed through autoconstruction. The second one focuses on Riacho Fundo II, a district that has been the target of the implementation of a large number of housing complexes produced through partnerships between PMCMV and construction companies.

¹ References about the concept of autoconstruction are discussed in the item 3 of this paper.

2. Overview of Government Actions on Popular Housing

Understanding the existence of autoconstruction as an alternative to meet the demand for housing demands a lookback on how Brazilian housing policies have been working overtime. In a synthetic analysis, we started with the first initiatives of the IAPs, then went through the National Housing Bank (BNH) financing program and finally came to the PMCMV, which is still going on, observing that the low-income population has never really been successfully contemplated by housing policies.

The performance of the Brazilian government in the field of popular housing has been perceived since the 1930's, with the creation of IAP ². With the authorization of the federal government, the IAP began to allocate part of their funds to the construction of popular houses. The IAP, however, developed an incomplete social policy, since access to housing was restricted to salaried workers in each professional category. Therefore rural, informal urban workers and the population without formal employment was not contemplated by this system (ALMEIDA, 2009), which ended its activities in 1966.

It is important to mention that in the 1930's Brazil was still essentially rural ³. From the 1940's onwards, a large increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around 7% per year was observed. This fact is responsible for the increase of migratory movements of the poor population towards more industrialized regions and Brasília, which was inaugurated in 1960. As a consequence, numerous informal popular settlements started to appear around major city centers, which triggered various urban problems (RUFINO, 2016). So popular housing as a socioeconomic issue started to appear then, consequently needing more attention from governmental entities.

The BNH was created in this context, inaugurating the first attempt of a housing policy to operate at a national level, in opposition to the palliative and punctual treatment that the issue had been having until then. A national policy of housing and territorial planning was formulated, with the intention of promoting social housing or financing to the low-income population, being based on the application of resources from the Fund of Guarantee by Time of Service (FGTS).

It is important to mention that BNH investments were guided only by economic profitability criteria, without following any type of macro-policy. As a result, there was an overvaluation of land and real estate speculation, which did not solve the problem of social housing (MONTE MÓR, 1981). An example of the ineffectiveness of BNH's performance is the fact that only 18% of the funds were invested in households earning less than five minimum wages. This way, after the massive construction of 4 million housing units, the middle class and the contractors were the real beneficiaries. Most of the workers, who represented three quarters of the

2 Autarchies centralized by the federal government, created in 1933 to replace Retirement and Pension Funds. Membership was linked to professional categories, such as merchants, bankers or industrialists. The Institutes had as main objective to organize the social security sector, but were also important in the design of housing in Brazil, representing the direct production and the beginning of the large-scale financing of popular houses.

3 For the first time, in the 1960's, urban population outgrew rural in Brazil (CENSO/IBGE, 1970 apud RUFINO, 2016). In 1973, the first metropolitan regions were institutionalized, concentrating more than half of the entire Brazilian population.

Brazilian population, continued to irregularly provide their own housing (ARANTES, 2011).

The measures created by the federal government were directed to solve a "false fundamental problem", to which were applied "false solutions" that were nothing but devices to face an economic crisis caused by more than one factor (BOLAFFI, 1979). Such solutions did not represent the institutionalization of urban planning from a perspective of a complete approach (MONTE-MOR, 1981), but rather a focus on housing only as private property, not considering the planning of public spaces and aspects related to urban infrastructure.

With the stagnation of economy and consequent monetary inflation, which occurred since the 1980's, metropolitan hubs started to grow at higher rates. Population growth generated an intensive process of urbanization, especially at outskirts of big cities, increasing the character of the metropolis of the peripheries (RUFINO, 2016). Monte-Mór (1981) also argues that government investments in social policies have contributed to the accelerated marginal urban growth of large Brazilian cities, as well as the imbalance between Brazilian regions due to the different distribution ratios of BNH applications. Finally, in the early 1980's the BNH crisis depleted the public alternatives for producing social housing (ARANTES, 2011).

Between 1991 and 2000, the number of favelas in Brazil grew by 22.5% (RUFINO, 2016). As the hope that would counter the neglect of the country's low-income population, President Lula's election in 2002 came with promises that would lead to major policy reforms. As a first attempt, the Ministry of Cities was created with the objective of implementing public policies that the Labor Party (PT) had been seeking for years. The goal was to unify measures related to urban development and rely on popular participation (ARANTES, 2011). From 2003, greater governmental efforts began to take place in the upbringing of a housing policy, through a reformulation in the composition and the form of action of the FGTS curatorial council.

In this context, and with the global crisis of 2008, civil construction in Brazil relied on new public funds as an attempt to overcome the so-called subprime crisis that affected the world economy (AMORE, 2015). This triggered the privatization of housing policies, aiming to get the real estate sector out of the financial crisis (ARANTES, 2011). This is how PMCMV emerged in 2009, in the agenda of both the Civil House and Ministry of Finance (Table 01). The housing complexes built through the program are public-private partnerships between the federal government and construction companies, initially divided into three categories, each directed at a population income bracket⁴.

⁴ In 2017, the PMCMV went through some changes, counting with a new bracket of income after that. The table above shows the income brackets as they were after the reformulation.

**TABLE 01 – Income brackets for the PMCMV
(CAIXA ECONÔMICA FEDERAL, 2018).**

INCOME BRACKET	HOUSEHOLD EARNINGS	EQUIVALENT IN MINIMUM WAGES*	PARAMETERS
1	Up to R\$ 1.800,00	1,88	Extended deadlines and instalments from R\$ 80 to 270. Almost integral subsidy
1,5	Up to 2.600,00	2,72	Low interest rates. Subsidies up to R\$ 47.500,00
2	Up to R\$ 4.000,00	4,19	Subsidies up to R\$ 29.000,00
3	Up to R\$ 7.000,00	7,33	Differentiated interest rates

*As in 2018.

We should notice that, when the program was first launched, official data indicated that 90% of the housing deficit was concentrated in families with incomes up to three minimum wages (bracket 1). Still, at that time only 40% of investments were directed to this income bracket (AMORE, 2015). The remaining 60% were directed to families with incomes of up to 8 minimum wages, which indicate the prevalence of interests of real estate sectors and civil construction in the formulation process of the Program. So we can say that PMCMV works mainly as an economic and, not necessarily, a housing strategy, which leaves part of the population unassisted by the Program⁵.

Therefore, we can see that government's initiatives on popular housing had economic development as a historical purpose, aiming to bypass crises through investments in civil construction. We also concluded that public policies do not reach the entire population that depends on them to legally stay the city. Consequently, there is a part of the population that is forced to build, in a clandestine way, their dwellings in the cities, without considering legal parameters, with autoconstruction as the ultimate resilience resource.

3. Autoconstruction: What Are We Talking About?

After understanding how the government has managed the production of popular housing over the years, it is important to understand how the population put aside by this system meets the need for housing. As shown in the previous section, traditional access to the real estate market does not serve a large portion of the population (Figure 01). Therefore, the federal government has been encouraging housing programs, so the poorest sections of the population can have access to housing.

⁵ This can be proven by the definition of the brackets of income. The inconsistency of this division gets very clear when we look at the average monthly income per household. For example, of R\$ 1.723,00 in São Paulo to R\$ 575,00 in Maranhão (IBGE, 2016). Even though they have very different incomes, the Program puts these two families in the same bracket, what makes it even more difficult for the families in need to access the housing program.

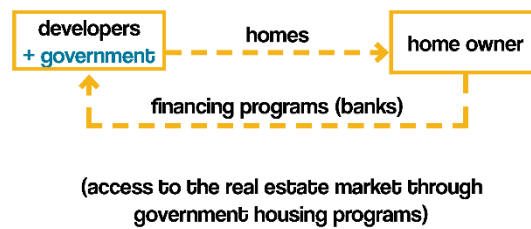
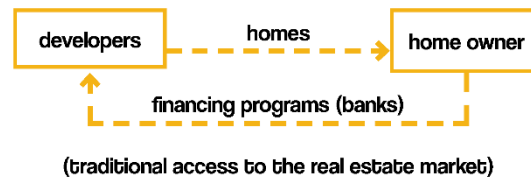


FIGURE 01 – Traditional access to the real estate market (1) and access to the real estate market through housing programs (2) (Image by the authors).

As we have seen, despite the incentives for the production of social housing, the poorer sections of the population are not served by these initiatives. Among the alternatives, autoconstruction is the most comprehensive and the one that most has consequences to Brazilian cities (Figure 02). A simple definition of the term is "a housing construction system for the low-income population, where the future owner builds the dwelling with his own work" (DICIONÁRIO ONLINE MICHAELIS, 2017). Another definition adds to this concept the formal or informal obtaining of an urban lot, where the family builds the house itself using its own resources and the help of family, friends or payed labor (PRAXIS, 2016). Autoconstruction can be also defined by synonyms such as community task force, self-help and mutual help (MARICATO, 1978). The author defines the term as a process based on cooperation between people, in an exchange of favors and family commitments that are distinct from the capitalist relations of buying and selling workforce.

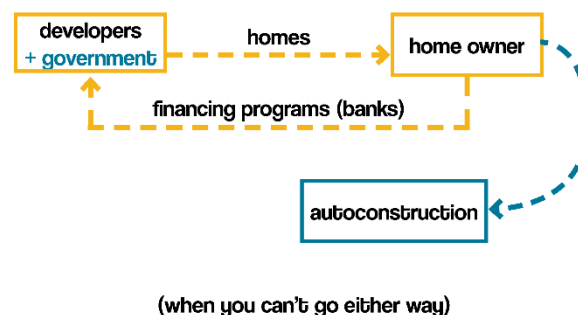


FIGURE 02 – Poor population, which does not have access either to the traditional real estate market or housing programs, autoconstruct their own houses (Image by the authors).

Another issue about autoconstruction is the fact that it is an activity that takes a lot of time to be completed, being a time-consuming process, since it occurs from the use of free time in the family: weekends and vacation periods (GOMES, BARBOSA DA

SILVA & SILVA, 2003). Thus, the pace of autoconstruction follows the rhythm of the worker's free time, as well as the availability of money from family members. We can infer from this that the activity of autoconstruction happens from the application of time that would otherwise be directed to paid activities or leisure. The authors also mention the total cost of the project, stating that just as the time spent with the activity is being withdrawn from the rest and leisure time of the worker, the money invested comes from reserves or benefits beyond the basic salary. We can conclude then that overwork is an element of great significance in the process of autoconstruction, contributing to the fact that housing is not part of the wage bill. What makes it feasible is precisely the cutting of costs related to labor.

It is important to emphasize the provisional nature often attributed to self-construction. Jacques (2007) analyzes the shelters of slums under the concept of Fragments. The meaning of "shelter" is explained by the author in analogy to the act of "cover", being a way to protect, cover, hide. When deprived of the formal possibility of being sheltered, the individual seeks various materials that can perform the function of dwelling. Thus, these fragments are used and replaced as new materials are acquired, or when inclement weather damages the shelter. The self-built house remains in the process of evolution even when it receives solid walls of masonry, because improvements and extensions always appear with no deadline to finish. The author also explains that the logic of autoconstructing a shelter produces a temporary element, manufactured as a patchwork of quilts sewn together and can become an actual house. That is, to change its ephemeral temporality to a durable and permanent good that will be inhabited.

As a result, autoconstruction is understood in the present research as the only possible alternative for the production of the housing of a significant portion of the Brazilian population, given the insufficient coverage provided by public policies managed by the government. The use of this maneuver should be approached as the way to generate a family shelter with the primary intention of protection and permanence in the urban environment.

4. Case Studies and Results

4.1 Overview of Brasília's construction and history

Brasília is an important urban planning reference of the 1950's and 1960's, designed from the precepts of modern architecture⁶. The underdevelopment of the country, however, leaves marks on the production of the new capital and raises, mainly, the reality of social exclusion (SOBREIRA, 2013), as we can observe in Figure 03.

⁶ The city was built as designed by Lucio Costa, winner of the *National contest for the pilot plan of the new capital of Brazil*, which occurred in 1956. Recognized as world heritage by the UNESCO in 1987, Brasília also is home to several buildings designed by world-renowned architect Oscar Niemeyer.



FIGURE 03 – At the top, the Vila Estrutural; at the bottom left, Riacho Fundo II. The original core of the city (Plano Piloto) is marked in yellow (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors).

Before the inauguration and consolidation of the core designed by Lucio Costa, the Federal District already had nine satellite cities, urban parcels with no political autonomy and dependent on a center (Brasília). Although the city's original plan had foreseen their existence, the expectation was that the satellite cities were not to exist before the consolidation of the *Plano Piloto*. Its early occurrence is due to the incentives of migration to the new capital during construction, with promises of housing and benefits for life improvement (Figure 04). A consequence of the lack of perception of what was going on in the country was the early peripheralization of Brasília, resulting in the inversion of the logic of creation of satellite cities (PAVIANI, 1994). The environment, which should have been equally and orderly planned when the capital reached its limit, formed in a disorderly fashion, like any metropolitan region that developed without proper planning.



FIGURE 04 – “Brasília: the new capital of Brazil. Some against, lots in favor. All benefited!” (Federal District Public Archive - ArPDF).

Several maneuvers tried to dismantle the informal settlements, as was the case of Vila Estrutural. It first appeared in the 60's, with the presence of garbage collectors who settled around the open dump that was formed there from the rubble deposit of the construction of the capital (ALVES et al., 2002). There were several attempts to remove the shacks, without success (Image 05). The Estrutural was legalized in 2004 as part of the 25th Administrative Region. Even so, 13.33% of the residents of Estrutural still live in improvised shacks (CODEPLAN, 2014), and are also surrounded by other irregular occupations such as the Santa Luzia settlement. In addition to sheltering residents in extreme social vulnerability, the region lacks urban infrastructure and Public Equipments (EPC)⁷.

⁷ Lots or public spaces meant for institutional or community activities (schools, hospitals and health centers, public safety, sports courts, public squares, playgrounds, etc.).



**FIGURE 05 – Removal of shacks at Estrutural in May 1995
(Federal District Public Archive - ArPDF).**

At the same time there were attempts to eradicate the informal settlements, there were housing policies based on the mere distribution of public land to the poor, mainly during governor Joaquim Roriz's terms (PAVIANI, 1994). Riacho Fundo was part of this context, being consolidated by means of donation of lots in 1993 along with the localities of São Sebastião, Santa Maria and Recanto das Emas. Riacho Fundo II, as the 21st Administrative Region of the Federal District, was laid out of a governmental attempt to eradicate informal settlements, which resulted in an exponential urban expansion that attracted migratory currents from neighboring states to receive lots.

4.2 Vila Estrutural vs. Riacho Fundo II: a brief analysis

Vila Estrutural is approximately 15km from the Plano Piloto. The access to the district happens only through the DF-095 highway, which connects it to the rest of the Federal District. The oldest part of the district grew around the dumping site which, during the period of regularization of the city, was moved northwest, freeing the area to receive some EPC. New residents continued to build shacks on the outskirts, again pushing the city's expansion toward the dumping site (Figures 06 and 07).

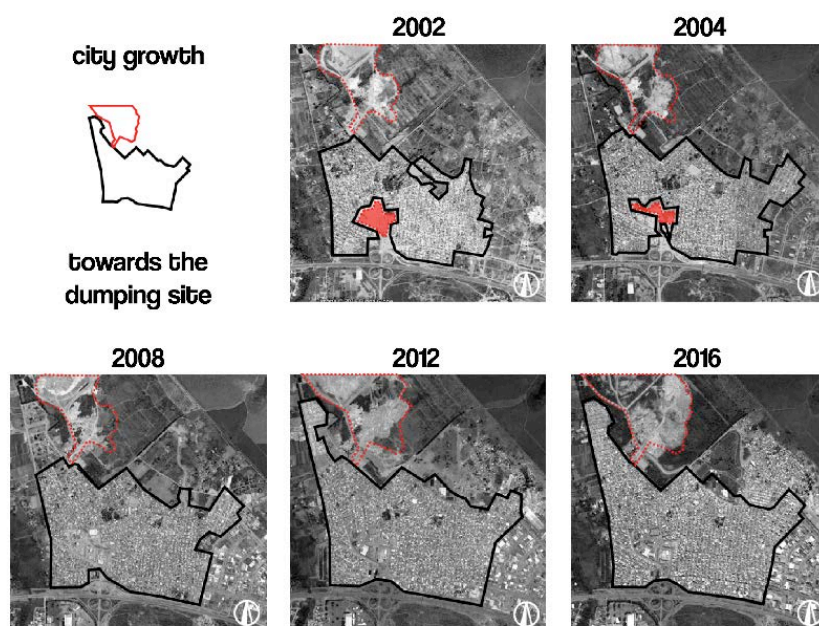


FIGURE 06 – Evolution of the occupation at Vila Estrutural between 2002 and 2016 (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors).

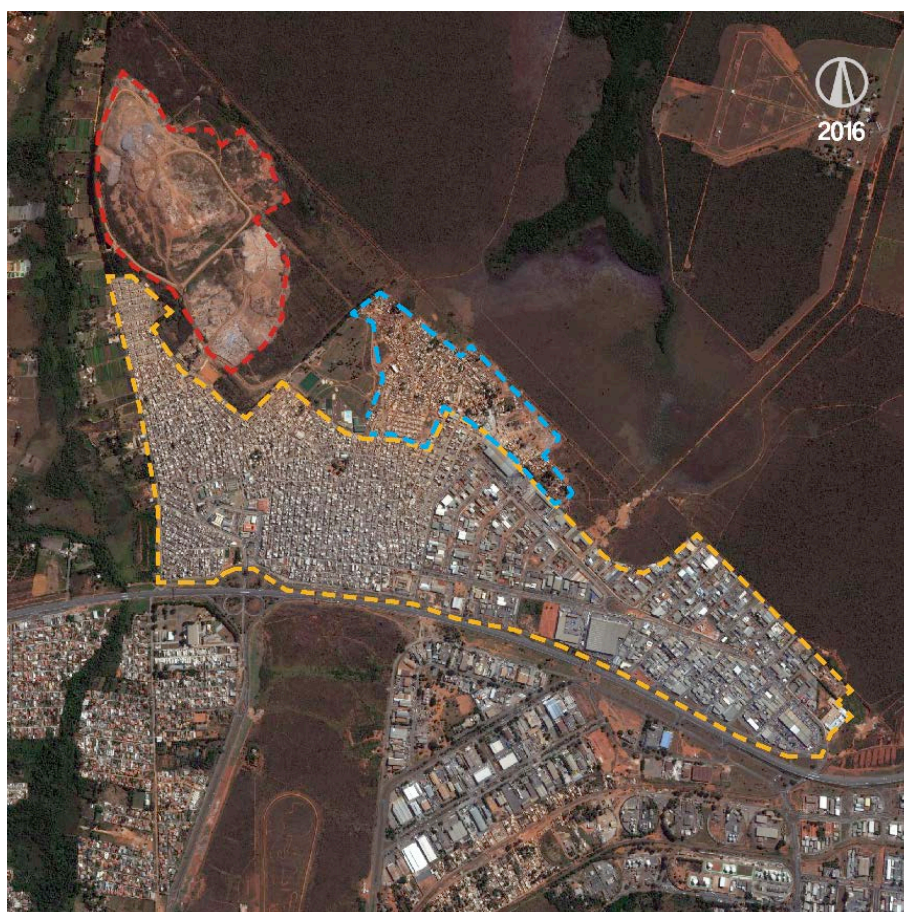


FIGURE 07 – Estrutural circa 2016: in yellow, the densified urban area; in red, the new location of the dumping site; in blue, a new informal settlement, Santa Luzia (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors).

Despite its legalization, the absence of public services in the district is remarkable. There is an agglomeration of EPC such as schools, community center, public square and institutions in general in the area where the dumping site once was, which hinders the population's access to essential services. In addition to the poor distribution of these services, several of the EPC lots are now occupied with irregular residences, not corresponding to the regularization plan approved for the place (Figure 08).

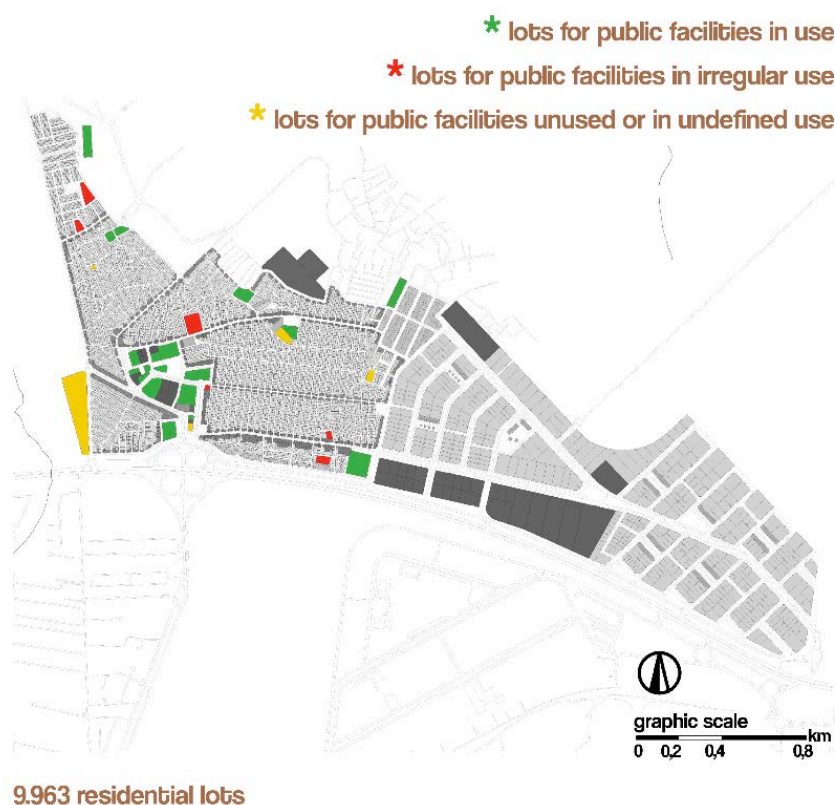


FIGURE 08 – EPC lots in the Estrutural district. (Secretary of State for territory management and housing - SEGETH, modified by the authors).

It is important to mention that 80.89% of the residents mention that there are no tree-lined streets in the vicinity and 91.33% say there were no parks/gardens nearby (Figure 09). Regarding cultural aspects, 99.77% of the residents do not attend museums, 88.41% do not attend cinemas, 99.37% do not attend theaters and 97.30% do not attend libraries (CODEPLAN, 2016). The data reveal that, in addition to the lack of public spaces, the community does not have easy access to cultural facilities, or that the places destined to these activities are not attractive to the majority of the population. As an example, the Cultural Center of Estrutural, inaugurated in 2015, was already in a poor state of conservation the following year and lost its potential of use for leisure when the building turned into the Center of Specialized Reference in Social Assistance (CREAS) (Figure 10).



FIGURE 09 – Some views of the district’s streets, showing the poor quality of public spaces (Image by the authors).



FIGURE 10 – Auditorium of the Cultural Center of Estrutural (current CREAS) in a poor state of conservation (Image by the authors).

Despite the urban problems cited, the demand for housing in the district is still big. But the urban network indicates the lack of planning for this growth. The regularized area refers to the traditional logic of parceling, with blocks in an orthogonal layout, while the district expands informally in an organic mesh (Figure 11). The newer side of the Estrutural is improvised by the locals themselves, who settled there and built their own homes and new streets. The shacks are precarious and it is common to see building materials in front of the houses, waiting until the resident can carry out a

renovation (Figure 12). It is important to mention that 13.77% of the city's households are still improvised shacks or houses under construction (CODEPLAN, 2016).



FIGURE 11 – Above the dashed line, the organic settlement of Santa Luzia. Bellow the same line, the orthogonal layout of the legalized Estrutural (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors).



FIGURE 12 – Autoconstructed house. It is possible to see a pile of accumulated material for a renovation on the right (Image by the authors).

Riacho Fundo II is located near the DF-001 highway, which is its only way of access (Figure 13). The district develops in a linear fashion, connecting itself to the highway by perpendicular streets that separate the denser parts of the administrative region (Figure 14). Nowadays, with the district getting denser, linearity becomes more

evident (Figure 15). Its expansion, unlike what has been happening at Estrutural, is based in a development plan, which forecasts lots destined to EPC.



FIGURE 13 – In white, the DF-001 highway, in red Riacho Fundo II and in yellow the Plano Piloto. (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors).



FIGURE 14 - Riacho Fundo II circa 2012: in yellow, the densified urban area. (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors)



**FIGURE 15 - Riacho Fundo II circa 2017: in yellow, the densified urban area.
(Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors)**

Our study is focused on two parts of the district, created from government programs focused on social housing. The first area is the Residencial Parque do Riacho, which was built along the DF-001 highway, in order to eliminate the void that was left when plans of expansion of the metro system changed, leaving behind a huge space subject to invasions. According to the project description (DISTRITO FEDERAL, 2013), the area was already depleted of its native vegetation cover, being completely decharacterized.

The project is part of both, the PMCMV and the Morar Bem program (local government), having cost almost half a billion reais. The condominiums were designed to house 5,904 families, who could acquire an apartment if they were registered in Bracket 2 of the housing programs. During a visit to the Riacho Fundo II Regional Administration, information was obtained on the planning and execution of the Residencial Parque do Riacho. Forty-two condominiums were built, each with nine four-story buildings. After the completion of the residential complexes, the population of Riacho Fundo II increased from 45,000 to 100,000 inhabitants.

The apartments have two or three bedrooms, with respectively 50m² and 60.25m². There is also a parking space for each unit. It is important to note that the condominiums were built after the consolidation of the single-family houses of Riacho Fundo II, the first one being delivered in the first half of 2014 and the last one in the first half of 2016. It was possible to observe during the visit the absence of a relationship between the urban network and the condominiums built afterwards. The new buildings are surrounded by exclusive parking lots, which in turn are also gridded with electric fences with only visual permeability. There is no integration between the housing complexes and the exterior, generating physical barriers that cause various problems for the district (Figure 16).



FIGURE 16 – Residencial Parque do Riacho (Image by the authors).

It is possible to notice the presence of some empty lots between the residential complexes (Figure 17). According to the Regional Administration of Riacho Fundo II, the construction company responsible for the development designed the condominiums and also public squares among them that were to be built by Novacap⁸. However, no square was built, resulting in large urban gaps between the condominiums and a large shortage of quality public spaces for the residents (Figure 18).

⁸ Public corporation created in 1956 by then President of the Republic Juscelino Kubitschek, with the objective of building the new federal capital, Brasília. It has as shareholders the Federal District and the Federal Union.



FIGURE 17 – Residencial Parque do Riacho along the DF-001 highway, evidencing the empty spaces among the condominiums, which are marked in yellow (Google Earth Pro, modified by the authors).



FIGURE 18 – One of the empty spaces in the area, where there was supposed to be a square (Image by the authors).

Still according to the Regional Administration, there are no commercial areas in Riacho Fundo II. Therefore, there is a lack of this activity in the district, as well as structure for other services, such as schools and hospitals. This, plus the fact that

Riacho Fundo II is one of the many dormitory towns⁹ in the Federal District, is responsible for a large amount of daily commuting movements of the resident population¹⁰.

The images of Residencial Parque do Riacho publicized by the construction company before the construction of the complexes (Figures 19 and 20) highlight the design of the leisure areas, suggesting to the future owners a great quality of life in the place. This shows that the sale of the condominiums was based on the importance of quality public spaces in a community. The images also show a decontextualized design, where the condominiums would be inserted in a free and wooded area. However, the reality of the Residential Park do Riacho happens in the margins of a highway, with an urban context already consolidated previously by single-family houses, which resulted in large grid areas without continuity and integration to the existing morphology (Figure 21).



FIGURE 19 – Image from the website of the construction company responsible for the design of Residencial Parque do Riacho, Retrieved from: <<https://www.facebook.com/parquedoriacho/photos/a.1437811966452153.1073741828.1437810529785630/1441080666125283/?type=3&theater>>. Accessed: 30 July, 2018.

⁹ The term indicates urban parcels that are not self-sufficient, from which the population makes daily commutes to work.

¹⁰ Although 100% of the district's households are permanent, which would indicate a well-functioning and consolidated place, only 20.33% of the population works there (CODEPLAN, 2015).



FIGURE 20 – Image from the website of the construction company responsible for the design of Residencial Parque do Riacho. Retrieved from: <<http://forum.skyscraperpage.com/showthread.php?t=206206>>. Accessed: 30 july, 2018.



FIGURE 21 – Street that separates the early residences from the Residencial Parque do Riacho (Image by the authors).

The second area we are dealing with is a housing sector that is still under construction. According to the official description of the project (DISTRITO FEDERAL, 2007), it includes residential (both single-family and collective) and institutional lots, as well as mixed use, commercial and community use (Figures 22 and 23). The project proposal describes the public spaces with emphatic discourse. The single-family houses are planned in an urban articulation around small squares meant for socialization, a solution also adopted to create pleasant microclimates. The collective dwellings are foreseen in a maximum of four floors, with half the first floor on *pilotis*¹¹.

¹¹ Set of pillars that support the building liberating the ground floor, of public use, destined for free passage of pedestrians.



FIGURE 22 – Single-family house under construction (Image by the authors).



FIGURE 23 – Residential building under construction (Image by the authors).

According to the project description (DISTRITO FEDERAL, 2007), its "mixed-use lots are confronted with large green areas that define squares between them and the highways." On the collective or institutional lots it says, "The demands raised by both the original population as well as the newcomers were observed." We can infer from this that there is a vague discourse about community proposals, when no uses or demands actually reflect the needs of the residents.

As the Residencial Parque do Riacho, the execution of this urban expansion of Riacho Fundo II prioritizes only the delivery of the residences. Although the project was approved years before the actual construction of the sector, in 2016, it was still under construction and there was no work in the lots destined to public use. Therefore, we can say that the production of these places does not consider the development of the district as a whole.

5. Conclusions

We can verify, based on the analysis of Estrutural and Riacho Fundo II, that the focus in the development of these cities is the provision of housing, either by means of autoconstruction, or the construction of housing complexes based in partnerships between the government and construction companies. In both cases the lack of areas for trade, health, education and collective uses in general is clear. In addition, it was possible to perceive that the creation of these new urbanized spaces does not take into account the relation between them and the already consolidated urban fabric, or the importance of public spaces for the urban environment as a whole.

This issue is linked to the very way in which social housing is treated in Brazil. We have seen that, over time, government initiatives to deal with the housing deficit have always been linked to a market logic, where profit is a goal as (or more) important as the solution of the housing problem itself. As an alternative, autoconstruction is historically consolidated as a means of producing living spaces. It is observed that both scenarios lack urban and social planning, which compromises quality of life for those who live in these places. This proves that planning and execution by formal means does not always result in a quality urban space.

Both alternatives of access to housing of social interest, formal and informal, do not solve the problem of the city. The spaces resulting from autoconstruction continue to appear without connection to the formal city as the urban population grows. No matter how informal the creating of spaces that are not pre-conceived in the urban network is, the housing complexes end up being configured in the same way, also producing cities without good conditions to live in.

The common element between the two cases analyzed is the very creation of an urban space that primarily seeks the shelter of poor people. As a possible alternative to this problem that creates spaces of heterotropy (FOUCAULT, 1984), the use of abandoned areas in large centers fits this purpose. In this way, the uninhabited urban spaces, physically consolidated in the formal city, could accommodate the needy population under favorable social conditions. Alternatively, housing mechanisms such as social leasing could still be explored. Examples like these don't have many occurrences in Brazil, so these are methods yet to be explored. It is appropriate for future research, therefore, to investigate other inclusive ways of producing cities that promote good results for all who inhabit it.

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