
Suburban districts of a Brazilian city: agents and forms at the intra-urban segregation and integration of João Pessoa-PB

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Abstract

Building houses and intervening in the urban space are activities that, over time, have acquired strength both in the use of space and in the process of accumulation of capital, so that to produce the "urban" has become more and more an intrinsic process of such accumulation (HARVEY, 2011). From the late restructuring of the capitalist system emerged a new period of housing production in Brazil, as well as in other emergent Latin America's economies, which neoliberal politics abdicated to the fordist production of equipments and collective means of consumption and housing by the privatization of public services and the provision of the means of workforce reproduction and the growing interest on the appreciation of financial and real estate capital (PEREIRA, 2011). The object of this research is the city of João Pessoa, capital of Paraíba State, located in the Brazilian northeast and classified by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) as an urban center with regional influence with less management capacity than a metropolis. Founded in the 16th century, it has nearly 720.000 inhabitants (IBGE, 2010) and occupies about 211Km². Its urban structure results from an accelerated expansion process related to the national politic of social housing that started at the mid of 20th century, which created and consolidated tendencies of growth and caused the increase of social distances in the intra-urban space and the phenomenon of residential segregation (VILLAÇA, 1998; CORREA, 2005). The late transitions on the production of the Brazilian urban spaces can be identified in João Pessoa through the intensification of the real estate production since 2005, which can be verified by the increasing of the number of acting companies – between 2005 and 2015 there was an increase of 53% in the construction sector and of 63% in the real estate sector -, as well as on the occupation of suburban areas – which at 2012 were not even classified by the basic instrument that defines the city's development policy. Moreover, from *in loco* observations, it was found that the city still has empty spaces in consolidated and infrastructured areas, showing a speculative strategy, which occupies the peripheral area because of the low value of available land. However, some questions about this subject still need to be investigated: How are the products offered by real estate developers in such locations characterized? What is the role of the State in this process? Is it possible to identify processes of integration of peripheral areas with the consolidated urban structure? To answer these questions, this research aims to analyze the performance of the real estate developers and the State in suburban districts of João Pessoa during the period of Brazilian real estate boom (from 2005 to 2015) and identify the repercussion in the urban structure. Two districts were selected, considering how intense and diverse real estate production was during the mentioned years, which were Altiplano

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Cabo Branco – inhabited mostly by medium and high income classes, presented an increase of 0,26% of its residents between 2000 and 2010 (IBGE) and a medium increase in 6 times of the number of realty acquired among 2005 and 2015 – and Gramame – inhabited mainly by low income class, had an increase of 3,94% of its residents between 2000 and 2010 (IBGE) and a medium increase in 29 times of the number of realty acquired among 2005 and 2015. The analysis of the actions of the real estate developers in the studied districts was based on the survey of the main typologies constructed in the time window of the research, which were identified through satellite imagery of Google Earth and photographic survey *in loco*. Furthermore, the data from Real Estate Transmission Taxes for the first three months of 2005, 2010 and 2015 was collected at the City hall to enable the analysis of the movements of the land value in those areas. The investigation of public's power influence were based on the identification of the Major public works undertaken and the changes in the current urban legislation regarding the districts studied and their neighborhoods. It was concluded that the occupation of the peripheral areas of João Pessoa between 2005 and 2015 presented a clear heterogeneity, marked by the offerings of new real estate products aimed at the middle and upper income classes, as well as traditional products aimed at the lower classes income, resulting in a conflicting process, where urban integration is inherent in a real estate promotion of increasingly valued products that exalt and intensify spatial segregation based on its materiality.

Keywords: Suburban district, Real estate production, Spatial segregation, Brazilian city