

The foundation of Belo Horizonte: order, progress and hygiene, but not for all

A fundação de Belo Horizonte: ordem, progresso e higiene, mas não para todos

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Abstract

The plan for Belo Horizonte, founded at the turn of the 19th century, was premised by order, progress and hygiene. The city has displayed, however, a peculiar pattern of social-spatial exclusion since its beginnings. This pattern has been traced back to the plan, as it foresaw the construction of an elitist urban area in replacement of the existing village, evicting former residents and poor newcomers and relegating them to the unorganized, unhygienic suburbs as well as to at-risk and environmentally fragile areas. This historiographic research reveals which mechanisms and practices led to such social-spatial segregation, working outside and as a result of its plan, while challenging simplistic “rich-center/poor-periphery” dichotomies that have dominated Belo Horizonte’s historiography, unveiling instead a much more complex reality.

Keywords: hygiene; planning; urban history; legislation.

Resumo

O plano de Belo Horizonte, capital inaugurada no fim do século XIX, teve ordem, progresso e higiene como premissas básicas. Todavia, a cidade apresenta, desde suas origens, um padrão peculiar de segregação socioespacial. Essa condição tem sido atribuída a seu plano, que previa a construção de uma zona urbana elitista, expulsando antigos moradores e imigrantes pobres para os subúrbios desorganizados e sem higiene, assim como áreas de risco e ambientalmente frágeis. Esta pesquisa histórica revela quais mecanismos e práticas resultaram em tal segregação socioespacial, agindo além do plano e em consequência dele, ao mesmo tempo que desafia dicotomias tais como centro rico/periferia pobre que têm dominado a historiografia sobre Belo Horizonte, revelando uma realidade muito mais complexa.

Palavras-chave: *higiene; planejamento; história urbana; legislação.*



Introduction

At the turn of the 19th century, order, progress and hygiene governed the foundation of Belo Horizonte as the new capital of Minas Gerais. While order and progress were the emblems of the recently inaugurated republic, hygiene was an obsession of the times, in the aftermath of the epidemics and pests in Europe and in reaction to the colonial urban model in place, as represented by the city of Ouro Preto.

Those premises led to a gridded urban plan, presupposing isometry and equality. However, as the plan was more than just the urban grid – urban, suburban and rural at once –, and as there were limited resources for the construction of the city, order, progress and hygiene were not available for everyone. Health, thus, was also not for all. The urban/suburban differentiation present in the 1895 Belo Horizonte plan was later enforced by an unequal implementation of basic infrastructure such as sewage and water supply. The following analysis will reveal, through historical research, which mechanisms and practices resulted in such social-spatial segregation, working outside and as a result of the plan, while challenging the simplistic “rich-centre/poor-periphery” dichotomies that have dominated Belo Horizonte’s historiography, unveiling instead a much more complex reality.

One of the many possible readings of the foundation of Belo Horizonte as the new capital of Minas Gerais in 1897 presents it as a reflection of important events happening in the second half of 19th century Brazil as well as globally. At the national level, it comes only a few years after the proclamation of the

Brazilian Republic in 1889 and the abolition of slavery in 1888. Directly or indirectly influencing the creation of the new city, those events are undoubtedly the pinnacles of a period of broad political, economic and social changes in Brazil. At the global level, Belo Horizonte emerged a few decades after the Haussmannian Paris renovations, which changed the course of urbanism forever.¹ Two other capitals, Washington D.C., inaugurated one century prior, and the Argentinian La Plata, preceding Belo Horizonte by only one decade, surely played a fundamental role in the history of Belo Horizonte.

Belo Horizonte’s urban endeavor has been framed as an important part of the Brazilian republican project. Not only for its project but also for its construction, the city has been seen as the material representation of State power, embedding, in one gesture, the republican ideals of order and progress (Le-Ven, 1977; Magalhães & Andrade, 1989; Paula & Monte-Mór, n.d.). Much effort has been dedicated to contextualizing Belo Horizonte’s foundation politically, while also associating its project with positivism and rationalism, and with Baroque urbanism (Aguilar, 2006; Faria, 1985; Gomes & Lima, 1999; Lemos, 1998; Magalhães & Andrade, 1989; Resende, 1974). Moreover, much academic energy has been directed toward reading the plan for Belo Horizonte as a transfer of models from Europe and North America, either for the positivist ideals embedded in its plan and construction, for its urban form, or even for its technical solutions (Salgueiro, 2001). Moving away from ideas of ‘inspiration’, ‘distorted copies’ or ‘transfer of models’, this article proposes a reading of Belo Horizonte’s foundation based on the three pillars that have sustained it from idealization

to materialization: the ideals of order, progress and hygiene. Order and progress, in positivist thought and the republican ideals, meant not only material orderliness and economic progress but, most of all, social order and social progress. In the urban environment, those could only be possible upon the guaranteed good health of its citizens, for which hygiene was a key element.

The experiences of industrialized European cities, the unbearable living conditions of workers, as exposed by Engels, and the many plagues and sanitary crises in London and Paris made hygiene a fundamental ingredient for cities (Choay, 2005). On the other hand, dominated by the idea of progress, industrialization also produced an optimistic view toward the future. In this line of thought, rationalism, science, and technique should amend problems in the human-environment relationship (ibid, p. 8). It would then follow that when the relation between humans and the city environment becomes troublesome, with the spread of diseases, science and technology should be able to bring it back to balance.

This is why hygiene, order, and progress were ubiquitous in the discourse of engineers, planners, politicians, and administrators involved in the planning and construction of Belo Horizonte, as well as of many other cities at the time. In this particular case, hygiene and order have led to the construction of a (partially) gridded city interrupted by amplified spaces, voids, and greens, a characteristic of what Choay (2005) calls the progressive model. However, in 1895, when Belo Horizonte was planned, industrialization was not yet a reality in Brazilian cities. The

key principles were therefore transposed from Europe and adapted to different local issues and motivations. In this framework, the refusal of the unplanned, organic colonial city (such as Ouro Preto, the previous capital of Minas Gerais) in the context of the recently inaugurated republic was key.

Another characteristic of positivism that was pointedly embraced by the author of Belo Horizonte's plan, Aarão Reis, was the concern with social and material progress. In the analysis of Salgueiro (1997), in what she calls an 'individual biography', the readings and writings of Reis clearly show his inclinations toward positivism and French thought and his interest in the causes of progress, love for humanity, and public well-being, consonant with the Illuminists he read (ibid, p.28). This is, of course, was not exclusive of Aarão Reis as a thinker, reflecting in fact the mentality of many engineers of his time. However, the positivist concern with the well-being of citizens does not go beyond political intentions and speech when it comes to the construction of the city, as we shall see further on.

The next sections will demonstrate how hygiene was an omnipresent idea in the foundation of Belo Horizonte, since the very first political ambitions of creating a new capital arose. It was not an exclusive idea of engineer and planner Aarão Reis, but part of general consensus – including politicians – on how to build ideal cities. Further on, the article will demonstrate, through an assemblage of actions, laws and events, that the desired tripod – order, progress, and hygiene – for the capital failed to be equally distributed across its territory and population. Gradually, what seemed like a geometric plan guided by

reason begins to gain new textures that will be perpetuated throughout Belo Horizonte's history, the most problematic aspect being social-spatial exclusion.

Antecedents: 'hygiene and order' as a motto for a new capital

A few days after the establishment of the Federative Republic of Brazil in 1889, Federal Decree n. 7 bestowed special competences upon State governors effective until the elaboration of the National Constitution, launched in 1891. One of those competences was to: "§1st Establish the civil, judicial and ecclesiastic division of the respective State and to order the transfer of the capital to a more convenient place"² (Brasil, 1889). This decree instigated fierce discussions in the *Assembleias Constituintes* (Constitution Committees) of the State of Minas Gerais between 1890 and 1891. The debates culminated in the elaboration of Article 117 of the Minas Gerais constitutional project, determining the transfer of the capital to a location yet to be chosen on the Rio das Velhas valley. As the historical account of Linhares (1905) has demonstrated, the project for a new capital of Minas Gerais was not a new one, having originated in the *Inconfidência Mineira* (an insurrectionist movement based on Minas Gerais, inspired in the American Revolutionary War) and reemerging often.

However, before the question became a topic for discussion at Congress, when the excitement about the transfer of the capital was reawakened, the Governor had already hired a commission to survey a number of sites

along the Rio das Velhas Valley: Lagoa Santa, Quinta do Sumidouro, Fazenda do Jaraguara, Barra do Jequitibá, Sete Lagoas, Fazenda do Campo Alegre, Matozinhos and Bello Horizonte³ (Linhares, 1905, p. 55). In October 1890, the report produced by this commission, signed by engineer Herculano Penna, pointed to the village of Bello Horizonte⁴ as a favorable location. This report circulated among congressmen and the newspapers, often mentioned in the debates held at the Constitution Committees (*O Jornal de Minas*, 1891). The rumor that this village was to be the location for the new capital spread rapidly after notes were published in Ouro Preto's local newspaper, *Jornal de Minas*. This paper was in circulation only between 1890 and 1891, publishing in an almost daily basis rather partial articles covering the topic of the new capital, as the editors did not hide their opposition to the project. Interestingly, their harsh criticism included a mocking attitude toward the village of Bello Horizonte and its residents, who were known for suffering from goiter, probably due to the lack of iodine. Their aim was to question the adequacy of the capital's location as it lacked one of the most valued assets at the time, hygiene.⁵

In fact, until mid-1891, the project for the capital's transfer had yet to be thoroughly discussed in Congress. The speculations on its future location were not, however, totally ungrounded. In March 1891, then President of the State Dr. Augusto de Lima drafted a decree transferring the capital to Bello Horizonte, which was never officially published. On April 7, he delivered a message to the *Congresso Constituinte*⁶ emphasizing the urgent need for changing the capital's location and appointing Bello Horizonte as the most suited place.

Article 117, determining the transfer of the capital to a location at the Rio das Velhas valley came from a project bill presented by congressman Dr. Augusto Clementino on March 24, 1891, which was nothing but an echo of a project proposed by Mr. Paraízo in 1867. The proposal stated:

The capital is transferred to a central point in the valley of Rio das Velhas, which is suitable for the edification of a great city with the indispensable conditions of hygiene.

§1st – This change will be achieved within four years, etc.⁷ (n.d. apud Linhares, 1905, p. 60)

Three critical features that the new capital city was expected to have can be gleaned from this proposition. Firstly, centrality was an important issue. Secondly, it was expected to become a great city. Thirdly, hygiene was a primordial question. Those aspects are the counter image of the features of Ouro Preto, as the latter was isolated, topographically constrained, and unhygienic, according to congressmen. It becomes obvious therefore that the prioritization of hygiene that is mostly attributed to the positivist mind of Belo Horizonte's planner, Aarão Reis, was in fact a general concern of the politicians of the time, years before Reis stepped into the picture.

The determination of the location of the new capital stirred much controversy at the Constitution Committees, which this article will not describe in detail. After lengthy discussions, the project for the new capital was finally approved, but reaching an agreement about its location in such a short time was an unmanageable task. The constitutional text, launched in June 1891, included Article 13 of the transitory dispositions – an almost identical

copy of Article 117 of the constitutional project – determining the capital's realization without designating a location. In October of the same year, the article became Act n. 1, Additional to the Constitution. In 1892, the new president of the State, Afonso Penna created a special commission to survey and finally choose a location, entitled *Comissão D'Estudos das Localidades Indicadas para a Nova Capital* (Survey Commission of the Localities Appointed for the New Capital – for brevity, it will be henceforth referred to as 'Survey Commission'). The five candidate locations agreed upon at the Congress were: Bello Horizonte, Várzea do Marçal, Barbacena, Juiz de Fora, and Paraúna.

The Survey Commission undertook a meticulous study of five candidate locations for the construction of the new capital, a task that was in fact more in the realm of statistical research than of engineering. In addition to the physical conditions surveyed in each location – topography, hydrography, access, roads – the final report presented several charts and data on population, temperature, rain, sanitation, medical reports, etc. (Capital, 1893). The five locations were compared according to specific parameters considered of major importance for the establishment of a new city for 200,000 inhabitants. The chapters of the report were divided according to the following parameters: I) Natural conditions of salubriousness; II) Water supply; III) Sewage; IV) Edification and construction; V) Living resources; VI) Public and private lighting; VII) Transportation; and VIII) General assessment (of minimal expenses). One can interpret that the ordering and length of chapters follow priority, which makes evident the importance ascribed to the health conditions of the future city and its inhabitants.

It is important to note that one of the members of this commission, among engineers, was a social hygienist medical doctor, Dr. José Ricardo Pires de Almeida. He signed one of the annexes of the final report where he analyses, for each location, the following aspects: the general assessment of each locality, under the Social Hygienist Movement point of view; physical-chemical and bacteriological analysis of waters, most current diseases, mortality statistics. At the end of his report, the social hygienist doctor compared and ranked the locations according to these parameters, in order to support the final decision.

Finally, with the Commission's report in hand, and after more heated discussions and several voting sessions, Belo Horizonte, at the Rio das Velhas valley, was the final choice for the location of the new Capital – but also the first one. On December 17, 1893, the first article of Act n. 3, Additional to the Constitution, designates Belo Horizonte as the location of the new capital. It also authorizes the government to order the organization of the plan under specific guidelines, out of which we can highlight the ones that led to the unequal distribution of people and resources: to divide the territory in plots for urban buildings or small farmsteads, determining the prices for each category according to the location, proximity to the city center or other conditions that might add value; to proceed with the expropriation of private areas within the perimeter established in the plan – and therefore the total extinction of the existing *Arraial de Bello Horizonte* with the eviction of its dwellers; to establish, through regulations, the plans as well as the sanitation and architecture guidelines for the buildings; to promote the construction of

houses in adequate sanitary conditions and with affordable rent for blue-collar workers; to grant plots of land to State servants who were required by law to reside in the Capital; to also grant plots also to Ouro Preto homeowners.

Thus, two years before the plan of Belo Horizonte was designed by Aarão Reis and the city's first plots distributed, Act n. 3 had already delineated two important tendencies for the capital. Firstly, hygiene and aesthetics were assets so indispensable for the new city and its edifications that they were to be regulated and therefore mandatory. Secondly, the government would reserve and distribute plots for a specific category of the population as well as determine prices for the other areas. Combined, these became the basic conditions that predetermined a special kind of socio-spatial segregation in Belo Horizonte, dictated by a certain quality control – on hygiene and architecture – and land prices. In time, the elaboration of the plan, the construction of the city and finally the occupation of the plan's perimeter and beyond contributed new layers and textures to the socio-spatial segregation that we see in Belo Horizonte to this day. The next section will detail this constellation of plans, laws, regulations, and events.

Planning isometry, building distinction

In May 1895, Aarão Reis, chief engineer of the CCNC – the commission of engineers formed to build the capital – launched the plan for the erstwhile Cidade de Minas, present Belo Horizonte. As an Escola Politécnica alum, his plan was laden with references to circulation,

fluidity, accessibility, speed, hygiene, and so on, presenting a superimposition of two orthogonal grids. Political economist James Scott, in *Seeing Like a State* (1998), listed a few important aspects in the use of geometric order for the planning of human settlements. He states that this order is most evident from above and from the outside – not at the street level – as these perspectives facilitate legibility for the outsider. As an entirely new city, it was important that Belo Horizonte would display such clarity, as the city was made for outsiders and not the previous Arraial residents. Geometry, homogeneity, and uniformity of land property were also convenient as a standardized commodity for the market.

However, while such order may prove useful for the authorities' ambitions over a newly constructed space, it may be less so for its inhabitants. In this respect, Scott states: "we must remain agnostic about the connection between formal spatial order and social experience" (ibid, p. 58). What Scott means is that having ordered streets does not necessarily mean a better social order, or anyhow, a better life for city inhabitants. The geometric ordering of Belo Horizonte's urban core, which we will present in more detail later, did not mean better living conditions for all. Nevertheless, this ordering was only intended for part of the city, perhaps in anticipation of the impossibility of the State's full involvement in the urban development of Belo Horizonte.

As mentioned before, the priority given to order, flow, and hygiene is usually attributed to a personal choice of the engineer Aarão Reis, given his technical training and positivist inclinations (Salgueiro, 2001). However, what the historiography of Belo

Horizonte usually overlooks is the Decree 803 of January 11, 1895. It was formulated four months before the publishing of Reis's plan, which set some ground for *Planta da Cidade de Minas* ("Blueprint for the City of Minas"). The decree was signed by the engineer Francisco Sá who directed the Agriculture Office at the time, namely the administrative unit directly involved in the city's construction. In its second article, the decree says: "Its area [the new capital] will be divided in sections, blocks, plots with necessary space, avenues and streets for the fast and easy communication of its inhabitants, good ventilation and hygiene"⁸ (*Minas Geraes. Orgão Oficial Dos Poderes Do Estado*, 1895a). The plan's rationality and the prioritization of air circulation, as well as people, were therefore already determined by this decree in the same way that hygiene was a condition present since the congressmen's discourses about transferring the administrative capital around 1890-1891, as seen above.

Building a city from scratch requires very basic urbanization works such as landfill and levelling, water supply and sewage. In theory, those are necessary all at once. In the context of limited resources, as in the case of Belo Horizonte, some of these had priority. There were, therefore, two simultaneous categories of infrastructure works: the ones requiring minimum investment for erecting a minimally functioning instant city that can begin receiving the new population; and the maximum long-term investments for that will incrementally build up the city's material legacy. Long-term infrastructural investments meant, for example, the installation of sewage, water and electricity networks while, for the short term, the expropriated *Arraial*

homes were made available for engineers and other professionals involved in the construction of the city.

The Decree 680 of 1894 that preceded the approval of Belo Horizonte's plan distinguished the overall project from its initial implementation in Article 3:

The general project for the new capital will be outlined for a population of 200,000 inhabitants, and the same estimated population will serve as basis for the division and marking of the plots; however, the works to be executed as of now will be designed for 30,000 inhabitants; forcing, nevertheless, the respective projects to be organized as to allow for the natural development of the work executed proportionally to population growth.⁹ (Minas Gerais, 1894)

Therefore, while the plan foresaw a total population of 200,000, with the simultaneous existence and growth of Urban, Suburban and Rural zones (see further), only part of the work was to be executed by the State in the first moment. The strip to be delivered by the CCNC (Comissão Construtora da Nova Capital) before the city's inauguration contained only the necessary elements for the functioning of a capital: the railway station, a few public buildings, a part of the grid containing plots and houses for the transferred civil servants. As the 1893 Act n.3, Additional to the Constitution, set the timeframe of four years for the capital's transfer, Belo Horizonte was founded as early as December 12, 1897. By this time, only a small part of the plan had been completed, and the city remained a construction site for many years (Barreto, 1996).

The installation of networked infrastructures such as railway, water, and sewage was not only crucial for urban

development and for the comfort of Belo Horizonte's future population, but were emblems of modernization and progress. In this sense, the construction of Belo Horizonte epitomized the formation of the modern metropolis, which, as other modern cities, "became a hotbed for innovation and a maelstrom of social, cultural and economic change as the new notions of speed, light, power and communications were constructed" (Graham and Marvin, 2001). It became, therefore, the ideal experimental ground for engineers to effect technological progress. It is meaningful, for instance, that public street lighting was delivered just a few days before the city inauguration, while water piping and sewage works were still incomplete (Singer, 1968). As visible infrastructure was prioritized, it was thus more important to look ready than to actually be ready.

Hence, investments were directed at those elements that were necessary for everyday functioning and for the symbolic image of the new city: railway, public buildings, and the urbanization of the first strip meant for 30,000 residents. In tandem, the State invested in the less visible and less permanent agricultural colonies – as they very soon became urbanized – that were nevertheless meaningful in the context of the suburban development of Belo Horizonte (more on this later). Looking at the occupation of Belo Horizonte in 1928-29, the consequences of these first investments are evident, as the logic of the constructed area is determined by two axes: the built strip in the Urban Zone, and another along the Arrudas valley, that is, along the railway. Initially implemented connecting Belo Horizonte to Sabará toward the East, in 1917 the railway

was expanded toward the West, as there were large swaths of population already living in those areas.

Thus, what seemed like an isotropic plan began to gain texture as visible and invisible infrastructure works – underground water networks and overground streets and electricity – were developed on several fronts. Through State power, the farming village is transformed into city, allowing for the gradual settlement of its immigrant population. Following the infrastructure, the city begins to develop first in its lower lands close to the railway station, which later became the city center. Slowly, the elites began to occupy the gentle slope ending at the Presidential Palace while the poorer population rapidly spread over the steep hills across the valley in the Suburban Zone, along the railway and the agricultural colonies (Guimarães, 1991; Barreto, 1996 [1936]). Thus, the distribution of plots and people and the building of infrastructure were decisive for the initial social-spatial segregation seen in Belo Horizonte.

Although Belo Horizonte was built as a new city purposefully conceived as the administrative center of the State of Minas Gerais, populated by State servants, it is interesting that the new town did not completely wipe out *Arraial* and its dwellers at once, as they also took part in the construction of the city, despite their unprivileged position. Important accounts of the co-living of villagers and builders were given by Padre Francisco Martins Dias (1897) and, after him, historian Abílio Barreto (1996 [1936]), both eye witnesses of the city's construction. Before the 'official inhabitants' arrived – the civil servants, officials, and politicians to whom

plots were later given and eclectic houses provided – the population of Belo Horizonte was incrementally built up by villagers, engineers, journalists, builders, salesmen, and even farmers who experienced together the everyday demolition and construction of the new town, while the site was still trapped in something between an *Arraial* and an administrative capital. It is important to consider, therefore, a co-existence of *Arraial* and City, of farmers and bureaucrats.

After the official plan was approved in April 1895, the CCNC started to distribute plots by public auction and through concessions, as promised by the State Constitution. On July 31, concessions were allocated through a lottery system, according to the requests made by the beneficiaries: 591 urban and 35 suburban plots (Minas Geraes. *Orgão Official Dos Poderes Do Estado*, 1895b). Some of the first suburban occupiers were members of the CCNC or well-established wealthy families, showing that the suburbs were also chosen by the wealthy. According to the list published in *Almanack da Cidade de Minas*, by Joaquim Lima in 1900, Adalberto Diaz Ferraz, the first Mayor of Belo Horizonte, lived at Rua do Chumbo in the suburbs of the capital, as did Francisco Bressane de Azevedo, the director of the Official Press. (Aguiar, 2006, p. 162).

On July 5 of the same year, the first public auction listed a number of plots for sale in the 1st and 2nd Sections, closer to the Central Station. Later, another auction launched on November 6 determined the minimum prices for each group of plots, in the Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9. Only one year later, in July 1896, suburban plots were put to auction, in Sections 1 and 6. Interestingly, two aspects of the proposals were considered by the

commission when choosing the winner: the price offered, and the estimated construction time. Therefore, the speed of construction promised by the buyer was a valued asset, as it was important that the city materialized rather fast.

However, according to the 1896 Commission's report, by August 10 of that year, only 135 plots were sold out of 2,518 available for sale (Le Ven, 1977, p. 34). Later that month, the government acknowledged that the system of public auction was not very efficient, delaying private constructions in the new capital.¹⁰ Decree 959, which came into force on August 20, 1896, authorized the CCNC chief, Aarão Reis, to make direct sales of any plot marked on the approved plan, either in the suburban or urban area. Proposals were to be sent to the CCNC, grounded on the prices set for similar plots on previous auctions. It is important to observe that although the entire perimeter of the plan was available for sale, only the first strip for 30,000 inhabitants was going to be built by the Construction Commission, while the rest – including the suburban area – was to be built later, as the city expanded. It was not clear, however, when this would happen. Therefore, it was possible that plots were sold without being properly marked on the site and without proper urbanization, reinforcing the differences between zones.

Although no zoning – besides very general categories of Urban, Suburban and Rural – was fixed, the area around the Central Station was destined to serve as a city center. On the public note announcing the first plot auction, on July 11, 1895, this area is marketed as:

some [plots] situated on the proximities of the Central [station], on the avenues which will connect it to the center of the future city and the proximities of the market, are in magnificent position for commerce, factories and big warehouses; others situated in the large avenue – Afonso Pena – or its proximities and the Parks, are destined for pleasant residences, with splendid views of the station, church, and other points.¹¹ (Leal, 1895)

The prices in this area were purposefully higher, since the infrastructural works had already been done, which included significant ground manipulations.

Most of historical research on Belo Horizonte focused on the planning and implementation of its central core, the urban zone, with its geometrical grid and its public buildings, while few studies have been dedicated to the rest of the Belo Horizonte territory. An important layer neglected by this historiography is the suburban developments (Aguar, 2006).

In the discussions around the original plan, the Suburban and Rural Zones are usually briefly mentioned as counterparts to the more important Urban Zone. When the analysis goes beyond planning toward describing and understanding the territorial development of Belo Horizonte after the city's inauguration, its suburbs are usually described as unplanned and unorganized, in contrast with the ordered urban core, which grew chaotically and spontaneously (Paula and Monte-Mór, no date), and became the recipient of the poorer population of Belo Horizonte and the evicted Arraial dwellers.

Entirely dedicated to the careful analysis of the planning and occupation of the suburbs of Belo Horizonte, the doctoral dissertation of Aguiar (2006) is an exception. His work represents an important step for deconstructing the consolidated representations of this city, particularly concerning the first decades of suburban occupation (until the 1940s). The first representation Aguiar deconstructs is that of an unplanned suburb in contrast to the geometrically organized center. The second one deals with the interpretation of Aarão Reis' plan as elitist and leading to severe socio-spatial segregation between a well-serviced urban core for the affluent and precarious suburbs for the poor. These discussions will be picked up in this analysis and developed further, in order to uncover many of the practices and instruments that made up Belo Horizonte's suburbs, and how they differed from the urban core. The discussion will demonstrate how the Urban/Suburban divide goes beyond urban form and center-periphery stereotypes, as not just physical separation on the map but also lived-in practical everyday allowances and aesthetic differentiation.

Urban-suburban distinctions

Aside from the evident morphological contrast, the most consistent differentiation between the Urban and the Suburban zones in the historiography of Belo Horizonte concerns class distribution. Some authors ascribe the origins of historical spatial segregation in Belo Horizonte to its original plan, which contrasted the planned, ordered, equipped and elitist urban zone to the unplanned, impoverished suburban (Gomes & Lima, 1999; Le-Ven, 1977; Magalhães & Andrade, 1989). After a thorough

analysis, one of Aguiar's partial conclusions notes that "the space management of the new city, over its first three decades, effectively established the social segregation, although this (...) was not predicted in the plan of CCNC"¹² (Aguiar, 2006, p. 207). As pointed out by Guimarães (1991), the plan's main concern was with accommodating the bureaucratic staff of the State apparatus and their servants. Reflecting the tendencies of that moment, the plan did not appoint a specific place for housing workers, which at the time was not a concern of the State. On the other hand, as a strategy to mitigate resistance from Ouro Preto bureaucrats, urban plots were given to transferred State civil servants as well as to former property-owners in Ouro Preto.

A quick comparison between the 1895 plan and the city's first cadastral map of 1928 leaves no doubts about the contrast and hierarchy between Urban and Suburban Zones, both in concept and after implementation. The Urban Zone contained the most important governmental buildings, parks and squares and was carefully detailed and built largely through public intervention. The Suburban Zone, conversely, is composed of juxtaposed patches, and its designated urban facilities were typically peripheral, such as a hippodrome, a slaughterhouse, cemetery, sewage treatment plants. Describing the suburbs of Belo Horizonte as unordered, unplanned or spontaneous, as the above-mentioned historiographers did, however, offers a too-limited view. It is necessary, therefore, to unwind this logic and understand the processes of occupation orchestrated by rationales other than planning, including social, economic and legislative layers.

In the attempt of organizing the occupation and construction of private buildings in the city, Belo Horizonte's early urban legislation acted mainly on two fronts. First, regulating the concession of plots for civil servants of the State and property owners from Ouro Preto, as promised on Act n. 3, in addition to the sale of plots. Secondly, the desire for materializing a state capital as quickly as possible required the establishment of some basic building regulations beyond the guidelines established by the plan.

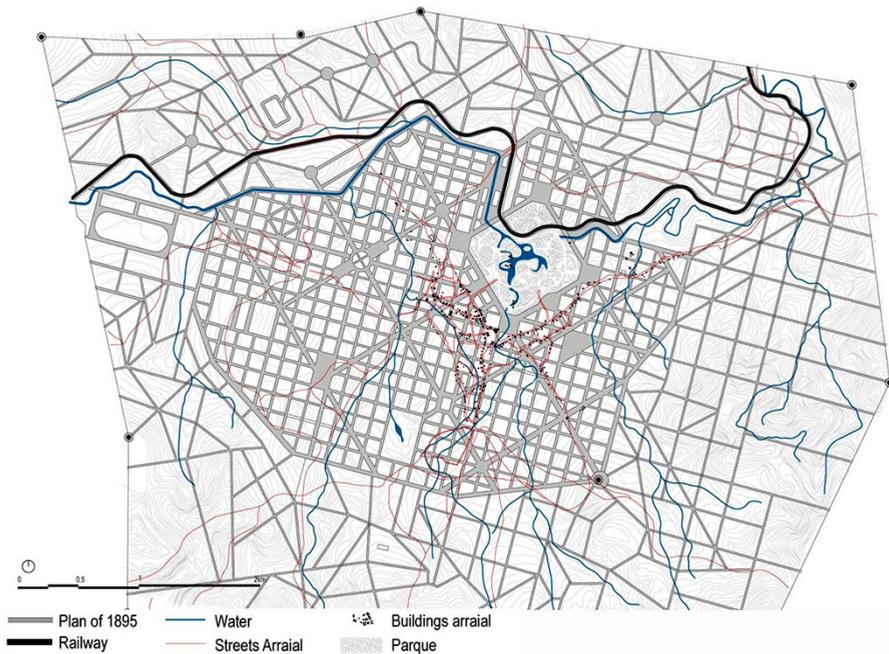
In these regulations, the first documented mention of the distinction between 'urban' and 'suburban' differentiates buildings rather than circumscribed zones. In the third part of Decree 803 (Minas Geraes, 1895a), which regulates the sale of plots, Article 8 states that: "The plots designated for urban and suburban edifications will be sold via public auction, (...) (Minas Geraes. *Orgão Oficial Dos Poderes Do Estado*, 1895a)".¹³ Further, in Article 15, the adjectives 'urban' and 'suburban' are used to characterize plots, determining that no one could purchase "more than twenty urban plots, ten suburban plots, or twenty between one and other specimen."¹⁴ (ibid). In Article 27 the distinctions between urban and suburban building regulations become more defined. According to these regulations, the buyer of urban plots was obliged to build within four years and to erect a fence or garden along the adjacent sidewalk within two years. For the suburban buildings, the same deadlines applied for building, but the fence or wall had to be put up within one year.

The plan of Aarão Reis was approved four months after this decree, presenting the concentric Urban, Suburban and Rural zones.

The order of facts suggests that Reis' zoning was, in fact, a direct reflection of Decree 803. In Guimarães' understanding, the conception of a suburban zone occupied by farmsteads and orchards was inspired by a suburban pattern already under development in Rio de Janeiro (1991). Thus, the unequal distribution of people and resources between those zones cannot be ascribed to the zoning alone. It is, instead, the consequence of a process by which segregation patterns had been part of a consolidated *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990) prior to Reis's involvement.

As briefly mentioned before, the CCNC started the expropriation of villagers' homes in *Arraial* in 1894, forcing their move to the northern margin of the Arrudas Valley, where there was no ongoing construction work. In Reis's plan, this first area to be constructed for the initial 30,000 inhabitants sat between two parallel avenues within the Urban Zone, with Avenida Afonso Pena at its center. As it is shown in Figure 1, this central area coincides with the pre-existing settlement, requiring its prompt demolition. Hence, one of the first consequences of the construction of the city was the immediate eviction of the local population from their homes, which were soon occupied by engineers as residences and offices, the former village was transformed into a construction site (Barreto, 1996 [1936]). The expelled population moved to a higher area on the other margin of the Arrudas River, occupying what would be the future Suburban Zone before it was even conceived by Aarão Reis and the CCNC (Dias, 1897). One of the forms of financial compensation for the villagers was the exchange of their expropriated property for an urban or suburban plot. It remains unclear how houses

Figure 1 – Redrawn map of the 1895 plan overlaid with the demolished village



Source: the author, 2019.

or plots were valued, but events show that plots in the Urban Zone had a higher price than the larger Suburban ones (see further). Moreover, the properties were exchanged for plots only, so a certain amount of capital was required in order to build a new house. According to Guimarães (1991), most owners opted for cash compensation instead of plots. It is also likely that many villagers occupied other areas outside the city, using the financial compensation to build new homes or to purchase suburban plots. Those were cheaper and larger, and more compatible with their previous village lifestyle, as larger plots and urban regulations allowed for growing crops and raising animals.

As argued by many authors (Le-Ven, 1977; Guimarães, 1991; Penna, 1997; Aguiar, 2006), one of the main factors that drove the exclusion of impoverished population from the Urban Zone was the elevated plot prices. This would have resulted from a 'free market' tendency to value plots by location and service provision. However, it is, first of all, the result of a State decision, as the State here acted directly on the market as buyer, regulator and seller. The decrees above had determined that the prices of the plots would be decided by the State, according to their location and the proximity of public equipment. The State was therefore predetermining, and perhaps intentionally boosting a market tendency.

Naturally, plots in the Urban Zone were more expensive, as the area received substantial efforts and investments, containing the plots reserved for public buildings, already under construction by this time. Moreover, in the first auctions to sell the plots, prices were suggested by potential buyers, in the form of bids. Thus, prices increased as interest raised.

Later, other urban regulations reinforced the distinctions between Urban and Suburban zones and buildings. The first *Código de Posturas*¹⁵ for the city, set in motion by Decree 1211 on October 31, 1898, revises and reaffirms some premises from previous legislation. According to Article 5, plot prices would no longer fluctuate according to location or to auction bids, but would be fixed at \$500,000 (five hundred thousand réis) for urban plots, all with approximately the same area, and \$30 (thirty réis) per square meter for the suburban plots, with different areas. An exception was made to levelled plots around the Central Station and the Praça da Estação (Station Square) where the necessary earthworks were complete, and where each square meter would cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000. Except for the triangular-shaped plots, located at the intersection of the diagonals, the standard urban plot size was 600 square meters, resulting in a price of \$833 (eighty-three réis) per square meter. This was less than half the price of the valued Central Station area, but almost thirty times the price of a suburban plot.¹⁶ The price difference between urban and suburban land was not only about location but a reflection of investments in earthworks, sewage, paving and tree planting. Since no investments focused on the suburbs at least for two decades, plots there were cheaper. By these new regulations,

the timeframe for building was compressed significantly: buyers had six months to start construction and twelve months to complete it, a timeframe extendable for no more than six months, at the mayor's discretion.

Other distinctions between the zones concerned uses and programs. Also according to Decree 1211 of 1898, sties and stables were forbidden in the urban and allowed in the suburban areas. In the former, only stables for horses with saddles or used for traction were allowed. Therefore, animals were tolerated in this area for the movement of people and things, but not as livestock.

A few welfare measures promised to give some assistance for the poorer, to help them fit into the new system. Former owners of *cafuas* (shacks) and labor workers were exempted from paying property registration taxes when buying new plots.¹⁷ In addition, suburban owners were exempted from some minimum standard building requirements when their financial situation did not allow for them, at the mayor's discretion. The suburban occupation, therefore, appeared more flexible, unlike the strictly regulated Urban Zone.

Between 1900 and 1902, nineteen governmental decrees regulated municipal services and established norms to guide uses and occupations in the city in the effort of shaping the everyday practices of Belo Horizonte's new inhabitants (Aguiar, 2006, p. 189). In 1901, a more comprehensive code of conduct was put in place, reinforcing previous laws and providing extensive details on conduct, uses, and building regulations, including details about procedures, technical solutions, and quality of materials. Article 23 reinforced what the previous regulations had left implicit: buildings would be classed as

urban and suburban. Indeed, Decree 1453 of 27 March 1901 established some meaningful differences between urban and suburban buildings, according to the Zone where they were to be built. I will highlight some of them, with particular attention to those that have, either intentionally or unintentionally, resulted in social-spatial segregation.

One of the most significant additions to the conduct norms was the prohibition, within the Urban Zone, of *cortiços*,¹⁸ inns, or any form of collective housing, except for hotels. This option was most of the time the only affordable alternative for the poor and for newcomers. Before the capital's inauguration, groups of small houses occupying the same plot and rented at low prices were already being built in the suburbs (Barreto, 1996 [1936], p. 638). This type of accommodation, cheap rental houses, was therefore relegated to the Suburban Zone.

In general, special attention was paid to building aesthetics, especially in the Urban Zone. In addition to contributing to the 'embellishment' of the city, the buildings needed to fill up the urban space harmoniously. For the Urban Zone, façades were required to be at least six meters high and seven meters long, occupying a minimum of 2/3 of the plot (Minas Gerais, 1901). Their front was to be gardened and enclosed with iron railing, while in the Suburban Zone they could even be fenced with hedges, wood or wire. Article 31 declares that the architectural style could not be dictated but, aiming for the embellishment of the city, it was subject to the analysis of the municipality. However, another article required roofs to be topped by a parapet¹⁹ or artistic pediment, indicating a strong inclination toward the Eclecticism.

This was a total rejection of the colonial style predominant in Ouro Preto and was largely adopted for civil servants' housing. Moreover, façades were supposed to have colors, and white walls were forbidden, which is also contrary to the aesthetic of Ouro Preto.

Other specific requirements for the Urban Zone regulated the quality of materials used in private construction to ensure the embellishment of the city core and 'proper' sanitation while avoiding its occupation by a poorer demographic. The use of precarious materials and modes of construction such as adobe and wood for walls, zinc and grass for roofs were allowed only in the Suburban Zone, but not in the Urban Zone. Article 74 sums up those intentions: "The use of bad quality materials is not allowed, especially in urban constructions." (Minas Gerais, 1901). If those were used, owners were subjected to the payment of a fine and, in extreme cases, demolition. Abandoned ruins were also subject to the same penalties. It is transparent therefore the importance given to the image of the city in formation in its very first years since the political project had promised the construction of an organized city, meant to be the symbol of the State's progress and civilization.

Article 72 of the same code provides an important reflection regarding the occupation of various regions in the city. According to the text, no building could be erected in a plot with recent earthworks, requiring at least five years of consolidation, except when the foundation sits on natural soil (Minas Gerais, 1901). Cuts and fills began around 1895 when the plan was approved and continued for many years in the areas around the Central Station (the South-West portion of the Urban

Zone was only urbanized in the late 1920s). This means that, for an extended period, a large area was unsuitable for construction, except when expensive foundation technology was used. Besides, no building was supposed to occupy the vicinity of a watercourse, keeping a distance of at least 70 meters, unless the margins were reinforced with stone retaining walls (ibid). This means that, if those conditions were met, the (official) occupation of large portions of the Urban and Suburban Zones would be postponed at least until the proper canalization of the rivers. It is well known, however, that many people were occupying the margins of creeks such as Córrego do Leitão since the beginning of the construction of the city (Guimarães, 1991, p. 70).

Exceptions

As we have seen, many building restrictions were set for the Urban Zone, which was expected to become a beautiful, ordered, and hygienic city, meeting the high expectations for an emerging state capital, not a temporary settlement. Although it was designed to be the state capital, Belo Horizonte was expected to be much more than just an administrative center. Replacing Ouro Preto meant fulfilling the roles the former had failed to play as state capital such as being the logistic and political center of the state, equipped with an industrial hub to boost economic development. This implies that its population would not be comprised of just top-tier officials, but also low-tier skilled workers, at first to build the city, and later to provide industrial and domestic services, work in commerce, etc. It is important to remember that Brazil had just abolished slavery two decades before, resulting in masses of poor, unemployed, or

precarious workers. An example of that is the fact that, in 1900, a large portion of commerce was driven by street vendors, as recorded in that year's city Almanack (Lima, 1900), who delivered meat, bread, vegetables, and groceries door-to-door.

This population was not completely ignored by the government or Reis' plan, however largely neglected. Article 6 of Act n. 3 of 1893 mentioned briefly that the State should "promote the construction of houses in sanitary conditions and at low rent prices for workers." (CCNC, 1895). However, much more care and resources were directed to higher rank civil servants to whom plots were donated and houses were built, to be paid for in monthly installments. In 1896, the CCNC built temporary wooden shacks to house around 200 people, not enough to host a large number of immigrants and workers with their families (Guimarães, 1991, p. 69). Between 1896 and 1897, 1,111 licenses were given for the construction of temporary shacks (ibid).

Actions concerning housing for the poor and the working class responded therefore to real-time circumstances rather than plan tenets. Aarão Reis' main concerns when designing the new city were street geometry, distribution of squares and buildings, the rational organization of plots; in sum, urban form. In his role as the engineer in charge of construction – however shortly – his main concern was to get the job done, and as fast as possible (Dias, 1897). Social class distribution was probably not one of his direct concerns, and neither was that expected from him as the engineer in charge. A testimony given by Padre Francisco Martins Dias, re-published in the most consulted historical book about Belo Horizonte, *Belo Horizonte: História*

Média, by Barreto (1996 [1936]), made Aarão Reis an unpopular figure, portraying him as a cold rationalist man. Martins had heard Reis saying that he no longer wanted to see *Arraial* residents in the areas that would become the Urban and Suburban Zones and they should start leaving (ibid, p. 71). In addition to being the designer of Belo Horizonte's plan and the engineer in charge of construction, he was also the one in charge of expropriations. This means that he became the personification of State action in Belo Horizonte and explains why so much of the accountability for this plan is directed at his person. He did, however, conceive the city with three simultaneous zones with three different characters and, although not publicly stated, able to house a broad range of different people according to the categories of urban, suburban and rural. Although a wealthier population might have desired to live in the suburbs, following a farm-based lifestyle on larger plots, the converse situation could not happen as the impoverished population could not afford the urban plots. The norms and prices established for the Urban Zone, by a succession of laws, decrees, auctions and later, through market action, became prohibitive for the impoverished population.

During the first construction years, improvised shacks or sheds were tolerated within the Urban and Suburban Zones (Guimarães, 1991). Despite the license system put in place, many other settlements spread informally. As earthworks advanced, these settlers were evicted and made camp somewhere else. During the first decades, there was a constant cycle of eviction and resettlement throughout the city. The first *favela*, *Alto da Estação*, was formed as early

as the first years of the capital, occupying a steep hillside right behind the central station. Since its urbanization was delayed, this small portion of land caught between the railway and Avenida do Contorno was the only part of the Urban Zone not built according to the plan.

As informal settlements spread, the municipality was forced to take action in order to house this population. The lower land prices and more flexible building parameters and demands set for the Suburban Zone were still unreachable for a large portion of the population (ibid). Those who could not afford these continued to occupy areas not yet urbanized such as the margins of creeks and steep hills – a pattern that persists to this day. Although the 1893 act had provided for the construction of houses for workers, no effective action was taken until 1902.

As early as 1902, suburban features had transformed part of the Urban Zone. Distinctions between the two areas, therefore, became harder to discern. Through Decree 1516, of that year, the government established special conditions for the concession of land for workers and industry. According to the Article 23 of the decree, a workers' zone was to be established in the 8th sector of the Urban Zone (the present Barro Preto neighborhood), just alongside the strip for 30,000 inhabitants to be delivered by the CCNC (Minas Gerais, 1902). Making this feasible meant allowing an exception to the rules – as reality interfered, reformulation was inescapable and this would neither be the first, nor the last exception. Sector 8 was therefore turned into Suburban Zone, which entailed a softening of norms concerning the concession of land, as well as of the parameters for its occupation. Later, in 1909, the state government created through

Decree 2846 a workers' zone also in the 8th Sector, which was to be strictly occupied by *operários* (industry workers). It modified the previous regulation by reducing the area to be divided in plots meant to be granted for free from 43 blocks to only 17. However, a certain degree of 'civility' was required since the right to acquire free land could only be granted to those who could prove: "a) to be low-tier skilled workers, that is, those who make a living from manual labor, (...); b) to have resided in the capital for, at least, two years prior to land grant application, having performed his craft or skilled labor for the duration of the period; c) to have good manners and be dedicated to work". The law adds the paragraph: "The conditions on items a and b will be proven by testimony from three respected people according to the mayor; on item c, by means of a certificate from the police authority" (Minas Gerais, 1909 apud Faria and Plambel, 1979, p. 66).

However, investments in infrastructure did not follow this plan, so water, sewage, and energy grids were not implemented in the first years. Very quickly, this neighborhood came to feature the worst sanitary conditions of the capital (Aguiar, 2006, p. 186).

In 1919, Act 178 allowed the municipality to establish *Vilas Operárias*, subdivisions that consisted of land divided into smaller and therefore cheaper plots meant for the working class. It is known from mayors' reports in the following years, however, that illegal plot subdivisions were taking place in the Suburban Zone, resulting in an urban pattern that diverged from the plan.

The first workers' suburban settlement to be approved and built by the government was Vila Concórdia in 1928. Despite efforts to

provide housing and allotments for all classes, the problem of land prices remained. In the State President's report of 1925, he declares that: "The action of the municipality (...) has been beneficial to the development of the city, facilitating the acquisition of plots for the construction of buildings for different social classes, especially labor workers and civil servants, consonant with special consideration for the creation of industries. Otherwise, the progress of the Capital would have been hindered for many years, because, with increasing prices of private property, their acquisition has been almost prohibitive, or the construction of buildings, especially residential ones for the less privileged classes".²⁰

Another element that played a fundamental role in the occupation of the suburbs and in the housing of the informal population was the establishment of agricultural colonies around the Suburban and Rural zones. Promoted by the State, these were not part of the 1895 plan by Aarão Reis but were implemented simultaneously to the construction of the city, adding a new layer to the concentric model envisioned by the planner. With their implementation, agricultural patches were superimposed to the grid designed by Aarão Reis, and a new land subdivision pattern was applied, and the rationale was to account for existing rural features, so that property lines were organized along watercourses, where the soil was more fertile, forming long strips perpendicular to each creek.

The colonies were: Carlos Prates, the largest to the West, Córrego da Mata (later renamed Américo Werneck) to the North, Bias Fortes, to the East, and Adalberto Ferraz, in the South. Their implementation (1898-1899), planned and undertaken by the State, goes in

the opposite direction of the plans made by Reis, who had designed this area as a Suburban Zone, separated from its surroundings by a Rural Zone. However, these colonies were implemented in former farming land expropriated by the State for the construction of the capital city. Their designation as agricultural land has, in fact, reinforced the area's previous character, before Aarão Reis had marked them as suburbs.

In 1912,²¹ the colonies, which had recently been emancipated by the State,²² were incorporated into the Suburban Zone, no longer belonging to the State's agricultural project but now beholden to Belo Horizonte's municipal urban regulations. The municipality would, from this point onward, be responsible for paving streets and implementing squares in these areas. Slowly, the large stretches of land were subdivided with the addition of the necessary streets and open spaces. As the large agricultural colonies occupied most of the Suburban Zone land, its resulting urban form is closer to the usual pattern of spontaneous suburbanization, namely that of homesteads. Officially belonging to the city did not, however, mean the implementation of urban infrastructure.

Influenced by the presence of Italian immigrants who were the first to form associations in the city, many workers' movements emerged in these areas claiming their rights to housing and better working and living conditions. In the analysis of Le-Ven (1977), the claims made by members of the formed workers' clubs and other associations drove a practice of demanding basic infrastructure in the precarious workers' areas from the municipality. In the years that followed, this practice became a common

procedure: suburban land was divided and sold by private owners, residents pressured the municipality through media or political influence and infrastructure was installed thereafter. Grouped in neighborhood associations, residents of Calafate ensured the implementation of the tramways in 1911 and the associations of Floresta and Lagoinha claimed for a more structured water supply in the same period.

Thus, in contrast with the urban zone, where basic infrastructure was installed and the promised sanitation and order was guaranteed, in the suburbs and urbanized rural areas those had to be conquered gradually by the residents by pressuring the authorities or doing the construction themselves. In the urban areas, as well as suburban, we have seen historical occupation along creeks and steep hills, where the construction of the capital took longer to advance. The unhygienic conditions of such settlements goes in the opposite direction of the capital's ambitions.

Conclusions

It is possible to understand that the 1895 Belo Horizonte plan had foreseen three distinct and physically separated urban environments by dividing the perimeter into urban, suburban, and rural zones. The first was meant for the administrative apparatus of the State of Minas Gerais and the residences of civil servants, carefully designed and built to be the best example of the capability of the State powers and engineering technology of the time, premised by order, progress, and hygiene. As no city is made of its

administrative body alone, a suburban zone was to accommodate other functions, uses, and peoples, 'not-so--urban' lifestyles, with a less strict spatial organization, larger plots, and orchards. Finally, a rural zone would serve as a breadbasket for the city, while also maintaining the character of the extinguished *Arraial de Bello Horizonte* represented by small scale family farming.

However, analysis has shown that, with time, an assemblage of plans, regulations and actions has rearranged the urban, suburban, and rural constellations in terms of space and of social relations. While the rural has subverted the suburban and vice-versa, with the implementation of the agricultural colonies and later their urbanization, the suburban also invaded the urban with the exceptions made for workers and the tolerance for informal settlements. Belo Horizonte's first space has materialized therefore as a constellation of different initiatives of building and urbanization despite the plan's definition of three zones. This was, on one hand, the result of constant shifts in managing, regulating, and programming this territory, and, on the other, of the logic of the market as well as the appropriation of empty land.

The analysis has also shown that the class divide in Belo Horizonte goes way beyond a center-periphery relationship, in which urban centers become inaccessible to the poor. It is clear that the suburbs received very different investments, especially regarding the absence of public spaces and

administrative buildings. It was, instead, the place for large or undesired programs such as the cemetery, slaughterhouse, and hippodrome. By restricting uses, conducts, typologies, the suburbs became also the place to host whatever was seen as unsuited for the 'official' city, which was meant to be represented by the image of the urban zone, with its public buildings and aligned houses. The suburbs were the place for cortiços, the collective workers' housing and the animals. Over time, the urban/suburban divide of Belo Horizonte is the result of multilayered distinctions put in place since its beginnings, leading to the severe social-spatial segregation we see until today.

Its present picture is then a result of the application, or lack thereof, of the grid, which imposes order, of selective investment in basic infrastructure such as sewage, water supply, and paving – directly influencing the health of its residents –, and the creation of a real estate market from scratch. It gains new texture with the accumulation of legislation and codes of conduct guiding the possibility of access and habitability here but not there, by making aesthetic and material demands as detailed as the design of the façades, the gardens, and the building materials. Restrictions of use, that is, reflecting on the daily practices of its residents have also included some and excluded others. Finally, a game of allowances, tolerances and prohibitions is played in order to provide better living conditions for some while worsening those of others.

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Notes

- (1) See Mumford, 1961; Rabinow, 1995.
- (2) Free translation by the author. In the original: *Estabelecer a divisão civil, judicial e eclesiástica do respectivo Estado e ordenar a mudança de sua capital para logar que mais convier* (sic). Text available at: <https://legis.senado.leg.br/norma/385366/publicacao/15820785>.
- (3) The spelling 'Bello Horisonte' refers to the old village that the new State capital replaced. The latter acquired the same name, although its spelling was changed to 'Belo Horizonte', its current version. In order to keep the distinction between the former village of Arraial de Bello Horisonte and new town, the difference of spelling will be maintained.
- (4) The report is mentioned by Mr. Manoel Eustachio in the session held on May 16th, 1891 (*Jornal de Minas*, n. 79, 1891).
- (5) See editions from November 1890 until May 1891, available at bn.gov.br.
- (6) The *Congresso Constituinte* was a temporary congress specially composed for the discussion and the voting of Minas Gerais' Constitution.
- (7) Free translation by the author. In the original: *Fica mudada a capital do Estado para um ponto central no vale do Rio das Velhas, que se preste à edificação de uma grande cidade com as indispensáveis condições higiênicas. §1º- Esta mudança se realizará no prazo máximo de quatro anos, etc.*
- (8) Translation by the author. In the original: "Art. 2º: A sua área será dividida em secções, quarteirões. E lotes, com espaços, avenidas e ruas necessárias para a rápida e fácil comunicação dos seus habitantes, boa ventilação e hygiene." (Minas Geraes, *Orgão Oficial dos Poderes do Estado*, n. 12, 1895a).
- (9) Free translation by the author. In the original: *O projeto geral da nova capital será delineado sobre a base de uma população de 200.000 habitantes, e sobre esta mesma base seria efetuada a divisão e demarcação dos lotes; as obras, porém, a executar desde já, serão projetadas e orçadas sobre a base de uma população de 30.000 habitantes, devendo, entretanto, os respectivos projetos sejam organizados de forma a permitirem o natural desenvolvimento das obras executadas à proporção que for aumentando a população.*
- (10) According to Singer, the sales of plots alone were not enough to finance the city's construction, not only due to the small number of plots sold until 1897 but also the low prices reached at the public tenders, forcing the State to take successive loans in 1895, 1896 and 1897, this time from the Bank of Paris and the Netherlands (1968, p. 220).

- (11) Free translation by the author. In the original: *alguns, situados nas proximidades da estação Central, nas ruas e avenidas que a ligarão com o centro da futura cidade e nas proximidades do Mercado, se acham em magnífica posição para comércio, fábricas e grandes depósitos; outros situados na grande avenida – Afonso Pena – ou em suas proximidades e na do Parque estão destinadas para aprasíveis residências, com esplêndida vista para a estação, igreja e outros pontos.* (sic)
- (12) The author refers to the plan of Aarão Reis, chief of this commission. Free translation by the author. In the original: *A gestão dos espaços da nova cidade, ao longo de suas três primeira décadas de vida, estabeleceu efetivamente a segregação social, ainda que esta (...) não estivesse prevista no plano da CCNC.*
- (13) Free translation by the author. In the original: *Os lotes destinados às edificações urbanas e suburbanas serão vendidos em hasta pública (...)*
- (14) Free translation by the author. In the original: *mais de vinte lotes urbanos, de dez suburbanos, ou de vinte entre os de uma e outra espécie.*
- (15) The closest translation would be a Code of Conduct, including building regulations, bureaucratic procedures and police matters.
- (16) The plots around this area had different sizes, between 450-525 m², so they would cost between \$900,000 and \$1,575,000.
- (17) The same exemption was offered however to property owners of Ouro Preto and transferred civil servants, who were granted plots.
- (18) *Cortiço* is a collective housing typology, in which small rooms are rented at small prices with the sharing of common areas such as bathrooms, kitchen and laundry. For more on *cortiços* see Bonduki, 2004.
- (19) *Platibanda* – a roof element in Brazilian architecture that is like a vertical extension of the frontal façade, making up a solid brick-and-mortar cresting.
- (20) *Message presented by Fernando de Mello Vianna, President of the State of Minas Gerais, 1926, pp. 373-37.*
- (21) Act 55 of 1912.
- (22) Until then, they were managed by the State. After emancipation, they became regulated by the municipality.

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