

Brasilia and the utopia of an egalitarian city: hidden shades of gender-oriented segregation.

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Introduction

Brasilia is commonly described as a utopian project that aimed to create an egalitarian society through urban planning. As an egalitarian city, it was understood that its urbanism should offer to all its inhabitants, without social distinctions, equal opportunities and the urban qualities necessary for a full human development. Its urban plan and architecture, based on the Modern Movement premises, should be an inductor of social change, as the solution for traditional Brazilian socio-economic segregation. In the words Richard Williams "*A city for a free men with access to the best living conditions regardless of racial or social origins*" (2009, 30). However, while the social segregation was recognized as a problem to be remedied, other forms of exclusion were naturalized. Many scholars have dedicated attention to Brasilia and its utopia, exploring the social aspects of its plan and reality (Epstein 1973; Gosling 1979; Paviani 1985; Holston 1989; Scott 1998), however, issues of gender segregation are still an underestimated topic. Recently, a survey conducted in Brasilia aimed to identify "*What makes women change paths when walking on foot.*" (Souza, Bittencourt, and Taco 2018) The findings revealed that 54,51% of the interviewed women felt insecure walking in places with the presence of unknown men. Other answers relate the fear to the urban environment, like dark streets or sidewalks 36,91%, and empty streets or sidewalks 39,06%. The research showed that women's biggest fear of walking through public spaces is physical or sexual violence by men. Although attributes of public space represent the second and third positions in the query, the psychological impact on threat represented by strange men is still the main reason for women avoiding public space.

Another research conducted in Brasilia by the architect and police officer Flávio Ferraz, mapped the main criminal occurrences in the metropolitan area of Brasilia. The research aimed to relate the rate of crimes with physical aspects of the urban environment, as well as feeling of insecurity. For this, the author considers that safety is related to crime occurrences in a specific place, while the feeling of insecurity is related to personal and subjective issues. The findings revealed that people feel safer in their neighborhoods than in other neighborhoods due to the presence of unknown people. As well as the feeling of insecurity is lower in-home (alone or with family) than in public spaces for the same reasons. However, one important aspect of this research is the non-inclusion of sex crimes because most of them take place at the victim's home. (Ferraz 2017)

In November 2019, the Brasilia's Department of Public Safety released data on 524 occurrences of sexual crimes in Brasilia from January to October of this current year. The records showed that 59% of the rapes were committed against children (0 to 14 years old), of which 76.2% of them are female, while among young and adult victims (14 over) 90.5% were women. Even though women feel more unsafe in public space, the data revealed that 49% of the rapes happen inside the domestic environment, and only 22% in public areas. (Secretaria de Segurança Pública 2019)

As a result of the high rate of sex crimes against women, since 2011, a protest called Slutwalk¹ has been organized in the central areas of Brasilia. The protest fight against gender-based violence, but for the right to dress and reclaim the right of walking and acting freely in public spaces without being harassed or offended. In this same region, artistic groups and cultural producers headed by women have organized a series of activities that seek to provide further visibility to the issue of women and public space. The facts described, together with the

¹ Slutwalk protest is an international movement started in Toronto (Canada) in 2011, that calls for the end of rape culture. See in <https://marchadasvadiasdf.wordpress.com>

statistics presented, suggest that, although gender segregation is intrinsically associated with social and psychological issues, the physical space also plays an important role by inducing or inhibiting activities. While public space does not pose a real threat, the imagery of a place hostile to women drives them away from these spaces, creating more insecurity.

Despite its original egalitarian intentions, as a city that should provide equal access to all its inhabitants, Brasilia has been experienced in different ways by men and women. This fact may indicate that the public and the private space are perceived in different ways by both. Contemporary criticism suggests that space is never neutral, but discursively constructed, ideologically biased, and shaped according to dominant power structures and forms of knowledge. (Greed 1994; Agrest, Conway, and Weisman 1996; Rendell, Penner, and Borden 2000; Wrede 2015) In gender studies, many authors consider that there is a direct link between gender and space, in which women are more associated with the private/domestic environment and men with the public one. (Heynen 2016) The public-private binary suggests that the organization and shape of space can become a form of control, limiting women's experience. If space is considered a social construction produced by its users, from a gender perspective, the urban environment could be seen as the embodiment of social and cultural values, which include gender roles. (Spain 2014)

In the case of Brasilia, although the city was designed and built in a specific temporal context, where gender issues were not as prominent subject as it is today, gender segregation becomes more evident currently, assuming a practical dimension that manifests in the way men and women perceive and experience the city. This paper assumes that the gender segregation in Brasilia can be seen not only as a materialization of a social structure but also as a result of spatial configurations. By combining the discursive analysis of the founding text of Brasilia, historical facts, demographical data analysis, and social appropriations as evidence of gender-

oriented segregation, this paper proposes a discussion about gender theories and the utopia of an egalitarian city.

The modernist egalitarian city from the feminist perspective

For modernist architects in the first half of the twentieth-century, the ideal city should be a symbol of its time, expressing the power, rationality and beauty of the machine age, as well as the most enlightened ideas of social justice.(Fishman 1982) The ideal city should proportionate the urban qualities and fulfill the minimum needs for a full social and spiritual development for all of its inhabitants. These needs, in turn, were elaborated from the idea of a universal man, which, would present the same demands independent of geographical, climatic, and cultural conditions – such as dwelling, work, leisure, and transportation. Despite its good intentions, several criticisms were addressed to the Modern Movement was heavily criticized for its universalist aspirations. One of the critical exponents was the journalist and urban activist Jane Jacobs in her seminal *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). Jacobs denounced modernist interventions in New York City as responsible for killing urban diversity and creating an empty and lifeless environment. She considers the modernist urbanism, based on the idea of progress, order, and control as a simplistic model that limits diversity and natural complexity of urban life. The ideal urban planning should promote multiple uses, thereby stimulating greater vitality, and social and economic diversity.

In the following years, complexity and diversity became fundamental concepts in urban studies, which started exploring the city in its physical and social dimensions. According to Henri Lefebvre (1974), space is socially produced by those who use it in everyday life. In this sense, as a social construction it also can be seen as reproduction of social structure, embodying norms, values, and gender relations. (Spain 2014) Following this logic, feminist critics related the desire for order and control of the modern movement with reproduction of

patriarchy. Not only because most of the modernist urban plans were designed by white middle-aged men, but also the zoning, played an important role on gender segregation.

In *Masculine Cities and Feminine Suburbs: Polarized Ideas, Contradictory Realities* (Saegert 1980) and *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Hayden 1983) the categories "cities" and "suburbs," are considered as opposites, reproducing a social structure that define specific parts of the city for men and women. A similar remark can be seen in the work of Hannah Arendt (1959) and Jürgen Habermas (1989), and their notion of public and private spheres. Both authors use the term public realm and public sphere as the domain of public life, as an opposition of private sphere, centered in the home. Following this logic, another example can be found in the book *The Country and the City* (1985), where Raymond Williams analyzes how these two images "country" and "city" are represented in English literature. The countryside is described as a rural, romantic, natural, and inviolate environment; whereas the city is defined as a symbol of modernity, progress, capitalist production, and orderly and rational labor.

"In the discourse that associates the condition of modernity with the condition of homelessness, the idea of being progressive, modern or adventurous, is associated with the public realm, it concerns a masculine drive of progress and heroism. Home, on the other hand, is associated with tradition, and with private space, the place of feminine care and love. Hence the tension between modernity and home relies upon a gendered opposition between masculinity and femininity" (Heynen 2016, 79)

According to Heynen, in modernist architecture, the rational and the natural are explicitly opposed; orthogonality is placed as rational and masculine, unlike the curve that is free, natural, and wild, for example, in the texts and designs of Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer. (Feuerstein, Krenn, and Wikidal 1997)

"Man walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he is going; he has made up his mind to reach some particular place, and he goes straight to it" (Corbusier and Etchells 1929)

"It is not the right angle that attracts me, nor the straight line, hard and inflexible, created by man. What attracts me is the free and sensual curve – the curve that I find in the mountains of my country, in the sinuous course of its rivers, in the clouds in the sky, in the body of the beloved woman" (*Niemeyer 1998*)

In Le Corbusier's urban plans, the city center is represented by the verticality of the skyscrapers, which emerge imposing over the landscape, as if violating it - either in a natural landscape (Radiant City) or in ancient Paris (Voisin Plan). In Oscar Niemeyer's drawings of buildings, the male-female duality is clear, his compositional scheme uses the glazed tower as the functional and rational building, and the curved forms are used in secondary functions - for example, the Congress building and the Electoral Court in Brasilia, and the Communist Party Headquarter in Paris. Although its architecture shows the dichotomy between feminine and masculine, it can also be perceived in urban projects, as in the case of Brasilia.

Brasilia and its project of modernity

The construction of Brasilia represented a unique moment in the history of Brazil, not just for the great feat of building a city in record time, but also for the possibility of inventing a new reality. According to former Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek, Brasilia should be a new civilization landmark that leads to occupation and development of the interior of the country. More than a symbol of its time, the new capital must be an opposition to the Brazilian colonial past, as well as to its present marked by social inequalities and underdevelopment. *"Brasilia should be, by force, a metropolis with different characteristics, ignoring its contemporary reality, turning, with all its constitutive elements, to the future"*(Kubitschek 1975, 72) In this sense, the one thousand kilometers that separate the old and new capital should represent not only a physical distance but also a symbolic one, as a denial of the colonial occupation of the coast. More than three hundred years under Portuguese rule, followed by an

oligarchic republic and a populist dictatorship that ended in 1945, Brazil was going through an optimistic period with a newly established democracy. The image of an agro-commodity exporting country, a symbol of colonial backwardness, should give way to a modern, industrialized Brazil. Brasilia, as the meta-synthesis of JK's government, should reflect the aspirations of modernity and modernization, and its architecture should materialize that will.

Since 1936, modernist architecture has been used as an instrument of political propaganda in Brazil. The recognition of the exceptionality of modern Brazilian architecture by critics led names such as Oscar Niemeyer, Lucio Costa, and Affonso Eduardo Reidy to the hall of fame.² When the competition of ideas for the new capital was organized, modernist architecture and functionalist urbanism were already widespread in Brazil by those already mentioned architects among others. In fact, so much so that all twenty-six projects that participated in the contest presented the principles defined in the Athens Charter – such as technological solutions, railways, rational organization of the urban fabric, zoning, modernist architecture, and broad green areas.

In Kubitschek self-biography, “*Por que construí Brasília*” (Why I built Brasília) (1975), the words development and progress are used expressing a desire for modernity induced by material and technological development. He considered the new capital the main goal of his government project, as an instrument of change. For this Brasília should be deliberately an antithesis, and the solution to historical problems such as social inequality, which “*should be extinguished through the uniform spread of progress.*” Kubitschek believed that the idea of uniformly widespread progress would enable all to develop in their full capacities, reducing inequalities. While there was a recognition of the need to equate “social gaps” as inevitable,

² In 1943 the MoMA - Museum of Modern Art in New York organized an exhibit on architecture produced in Brazil - Brazil builds: architecture new and old, 1652-1942. (Goodwin and Smith 1943)

his understanding of inequality was based solely on socioeconomic aspects, disregarding other issues, such as gender equity, as one of the factors that generate inequality.

During the JK years (1956-1961), although women had won the voting rights and the guaranteed right to work in 1932, they still depended on the consent of their husbands or fathers, considered relatively incapable, and thus had limited autonomy. Men were the heads of marital society, having full control over earnings, wife, and children. They also had the right to settle and locate the family, and the woman must follow her husband. The woman was conditioned to the domestic environment, unlike the man who had his public life enshrined by law. Although these definitions had been laid down in the 1916 Civil Code, since the 1930s, feminist movements have fought for their change. From 1952, the political pressure for feminine emancipation became more latent, extending over the JK years. However, it only materialized in 1962, due to the conservatism on the part of politicians and endorsed by the support of the church in defense of the maintenance of the family structure. The right to divorce and the complete dissolution of marriage was assured in 1977, and only in the 1988 Constitution was absolute equality between men and women ensured. (Marques and Melo 2008) Before the approval of the Married Women Statute for families with a male-focused source of income, and women with unpaid domestic work, the chances of prosperity in these families were reduced. Consequently, the possibility of reducing social inequality was limited without the emancipation of women.

While the project of modernity proposed a break with the past in terms of social and economic development, conservatism in customs dominated the discourse during the construction of Brasilia, especially with regard to the role of men and women. Although these issues seem to be merely theoretical, they have had a significant impact on social organization and consequently, on city architecture, as can be seen below.

The plan of Brasilia

In Brasilia's foundational text, the *Relatório do Plano Piloto* (Pilot Plan Report) – RRP (1956), the city is described as a city planned for orderly and efficient work, but also as a living and pleasant city. More than merely a capital with its symbolic and administrative functions, it was also conceived as a cultural and sensitive city. The rational, orderly, and efficient are placed in the discourse of Brasilia as an antinomy to sensitive, enjoyable, and pleasant. This dichotomy can be seen as an evidence two realms, that are at the same time, complementary and opposite - one centered in work and the public life, and another one in home and the private life. This division in two distinct realms assumes a material feature when the city is analyzed.

The shape of the city is explained as "*the primary gesture of those who mark or take possession of a place: two axes intersecting at right angles, that is, the very sign of the cross.*" The occupation of a wild territory at the Brazilian central plateau suggests a new civilizational landmark, which given by the predominance of scientific, rational, geometrically precise thinking, as an opposition to the irrational (or disorderly) colonial urbanization. The urban form was defined from the crossing of two orthogonal axes intersecting in right angles, one of which remains orthogonal while the other bends to fit the topography.

The relationship between the axes and the two realms becomes more evident when analyzed with the city's functional organization. The rectilinear axis (Monumental Axis) defines the work area, the administrative and symbolic center of the capital. Alongside the arched axis (Eixo Residential), were arranged the housing sectors and its complementary uses. Unlike the residential axis that bends to fit the topography, the monumental axis imposes itself on the natural landscape, making use of successive artificial embankments. Which were used as an

aesthetic purpose to "*confer the desirable monumentality of a capital*", but can also be seen as man's domination over the natural landscape. If along the monumental axis can be perceived as the predominance of right angles and manipulation of the landscape, in the residential area, the preservation of the original topography and the preponderance of green areas give a certain naturalness to the composition.

Another crucial aspect to understand the city is the concept of urban scales, developed in 1987, for the Brasilia's candidacy as a world heritage site. (Costa 1995) In the document entitled *Brasilia Revisitada*, Costa defined "*the interaction between four urban scales: monumental, gregarious, residential and bucolic*" as the essential feature of his plan that should be preserved. These scales, unlike modernist zoning, defined not only the predominant uses of the different zones, but also proper relations between predominant and complementary uses, built and open areas, typologies, urban morphology, principles of circulation, and the landscape. They can be understood from the two spheres already mentioned, where the monumental and gregarious scales are part of the public realms, the residential as part of the private sphere, being the bucolic one as an articulating element of the landscape — comprising the free, paved or green areas, which give a unity to each of the other scales in their variations, as well as the parks, the artificial lake and leisure facilities along the artificial lake.

The monumental and gregarious scale together play the role of the civic center as a place for work, public administration, and monuments. It comprises the monumental axis, two avenues in the opposite direction, with six lanes each, separated by a vast unbuilt green esplanade, connecting the Three Powers Square and the railway station from one end to the other. The two avenues begin at Three Powers Square, a triangular square that connects the Federal Court, the Presidential Palace, and at its verge, the Congress building — the tallest building of the city.

Alongside the two avenues were arranged in an orderly sequence and equally spaced the ministries, cathedral, cultural sector, central bus station, the town square, the military sector, ending at the railway station.

The huge unbuilt esplanade, the spacing between the buildings, and the eccentric geometry of Niemeyer's architecture resulted in an overly monumental, rational and artificial urban scale.

The gregarious scale is defined from the intersection of the two axes, with the central bus station platform as its main space. This mass infrastructure is the crucial element for the articulation of the road system in three levels, and on the top, a non-buildable square that connects the monumental and gregarious scale. In the corner of this crossing were placed the Sector of Recreation, which is shaped like a traditional block with six-floors high, where entertainment activities are concentrated inland – like cafés, restaurants, cinemas, concert halls, and theaters, are connected by commercial galleries, terraces, and alleys. The hotel, bank, commerce, autarchy, and hospital sectors were placed near to this sector. The densification and verticalization of this scale easily allow its identification as the central business district of the city, both by the shape of the building and the concentration of commercial and bureaucratic activities. Although there is a great diversity of uses, some of them have been foreseen for other specific areas of the city - such as housing, schools, kindergartens, institutions, and churches.

The block is the basic unit of the residential area, with dimensions of approximately 300x300m, surrounded by a densely wooded strip that would confer protection by preserving intimacy. Within the court, six-floors collective housing buildings were arranged freely on pilotis. These laminar buildings feature two main facades, one facing the common area and the apartment rooms, and the other intended for circulation and service areas. (Leitão 2009) Already in the first buildings built, designed by Oscar Niemeyer, the main façade

received a skin of glass, and the service façade wall like hollow brick, giving greater privacy to domestic areas. Access by car on the block is via a single entrance and travels along winding roads with the intent of slowing down, giving more safety for pedestrians. At the encounter of two blocks, a small local commerce was located, arranged linearly along one side of the blocks, perpendicular to the residential axis. The facade of the commerce faced the wooden strip, not by the street, being accessed by pedestrians from inside the block. The church and the school were located at the end of the commercial street, and the kindergarten and health post inside the blocks. The set of four blocks conforms the superquadras (superblock), which would be equivalent to the size and density of a neighborhood. A sports club and a cinema were provided in each superquadras, enabling the daily living of residents, without the need to use a car, or to walk long distances. According to Costa, the six-store apartments allow mothers to observe children from the window, while they play in public areas. This affirmation not only defines the location of women and children in the city but also makes explicit the role of women as mothers and housewives. (Costa 1995)

Both the description, the design, and the organization of the city make clear the existence of two realms. From feminist theories, the city can be perceived in two distinct spheres: one is the masculine, rational, geared towards ornate and efficient work, the other is the female environment, domestic, natural and sensitive. Another analysis can be made from the organization of the city through concentric circles, having at its center the administrative-political function, followed by the commercial and bureaucratic, the domestic, and finally the wild nature, or bucolic scale. Within this logic, the sequence of scales suggests, on the one hand, at the center, the political power protected by the predominantly masculine economic (productive) power, and on the other hand, the domestic space that lies between wild nature and the rationality of the masculine center. That is, the residential scale can be understood as

a threshold space between the rational and the irrational, as a space that needs to be mediated, controlled, and protected.

Not only symbolically, but physically, the monumental scale was positioned far from the residential scale and separated by the gregarious scale. While on the one hand, the gregarious scale can be seen as a shared space between the monumental and the residential; on the other hand, it can also be seen as a barrier that separates the public from the private sphere. Although these questions sound too theoretical and abstract, they manifest themselves both in the materiality of the city and in the way, it is perceived and experienced by men and women.

Brasilia through the years

Since its construction, Brasilia has attracted a massive migration flow, initially by male workers, followed by their families and public servants after its inauguration. The construction of the capital mobilized a large migratory flow of people in search of job opportunities. In 1957, Brasilia already had a population of 12700 people, temporarily housed in camps and slums near the construction site.(Paviani 2010) Through six decades, spatial, social, and economic changes influenced the occupation of the territory and the behavior of its inhabitants. Changes in family profiles over time highlight other social arrangements, driving significant shifts on the role men and women play and the way they occupy the city. The following demographic data, organized by decade, shows populational changes and their impact on the behavior and occupation of the city by both men and women.

In 1960, the city was partially inaugurated, with 140164 inhabitants, being 62,2% men and 37,8% women - 48% living in the planned city, and 52% in informal settlements. Among the female population, 52% were of adult or fertile age (15 to 49 years), 41,4% of children (0 to

14 years), and 6,6% over 60 years. The percentage of women economically active was 13,4%, with men solely responsible for domestic provisions. This data can be related to several facts, among them: the concentration of construction jobs (male-dominated), the high fertility rate (six children per woman) imposing on them the responsibility of taking care of the house and family, and the restrictions imposed on female work by law. (Codeplan 2013) Because of this, in its first beginnings, women were restricted to the domestic environment, most of them living in settlements, distant from the city.

Through the 1960s, the city was still under construction, which started to change at the beginning of the next decade. In 1970, Brasilia's population achieved 537.492, being composed of 50.3% men, and 49.7% woman. By comparison, although the percentage of the male and female population was more balanced, the number of economically active men was 131.005 and only 47.286 women. In middle-class families, it was common to have maids who took care of household chores as well as caring for children, many of them living at work, in smaller rooms, connected to the service areas, in the back of the house or apartment. Thus, a large part of the labor supply for women was concentrated in domestic work.

In the center of the city, where the office towers, administrative buildings, and others under construction are concentrated, it formed a mostly masculine space. In the early 1970s, embassies moved from the old capital Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia, occupying offices in the Sector of Recreation. To cater to the diplomatic corps, sophisticated retail was established in the sector, as well as cinemas and theaters. However, at the end of the workday, other activities began in the early evening. Due to the concentration of men in the central area, several brothels, massage parlors, night clubs were established around. As a result, the center was shunned by women who might be mistaken for prostitutes. Towards the end of the decade, embassies began to move to their permanent headquarters, resulting in the area being emptied.

Most movie theaters have ceased their activities; others have started showing pornographic films and later live sex shows. Prostitutes lured customers in front of the theaters, who started these activities during the day. For middle-class women, or even for the most conservative, the central area was seen as a marginal place to be avoided. (Nunes 2009) (Rezende 2014)

In 1991, Brasilia reached a population of 1.601.094, being 48% men and 52% women. The growth of the metropolitan region made it possible to expand the labor market through the consolidation of satellite cities; however, the most significant salaries continued to be paid by the public sector, concentrated in Brasilia. Although the inclusion of more women in the labor market helped to increase family income, inequality between the center and the periphery still remained. In 2000, Brasilia reached a population of 2.051.146, and in 2010 2.570.160. A survey from 2011 revealed that 47.22% of the labor supply in the Federal District was concentrated in the Plano Piloto, where 93.6% of its inhabitants live and work, unlike other regions that maintained a rate of less than 50%. The city center concentrates the offer of jobs on service, commerce, and public administration sectors, attracting 666.5 thousand workers daily. Another critical finding reveals that 58.7% of households in the Pilot Plan use domestic services, unlike the more distant regions where this rate is 1.5%. (Miragaya 2013) Most of these domestic services are performed by women who live in outlying areas, who commute daily to Brasilia. In 2017, 32,4% of families had a female single-parent structure, and 20% of these families were in the most peripheral areas. This therefore required women after the work shift to go home, where they perform a second unpaid work shift, either for the care of their children or the household chores. In Brazil, women spend 6 hours weekly more on housework and caring than men. Adding the hours dedicated to housework to the hours worked, women work an average of 3 hours more per week. (Codeplan 2019)

In 2018, while the working-age population of women (1.364.000) was larger than that of men (1.152.000), the number of working women was lower than of men, respectively 811 and 842. By sector, among economically active women, 34% of them were absorbed by the public sector, education, health, and social care, 15% of them in food, lodging, and other arts and recreation activities, and 12,3% domestic services. Women's double work shift at home and their occupation in sectors such as education, health, and domestic services, added to the zoning, which concentrates these activities in the residential areas, suggests that women spend less time in the central areas than at home. This in turn results in a lack of women in public space, reinforcing gender-based segregation.

Conclusion

Although Brasilia's project of modernity sought to build a more egalitarian society, which was a break with social and economic backwardness, towards an emancipating future, from the perspective of gender studies, it has been quite conservative. Even though Brasilia is a city of its time, and the most significant advances in equity policies have taken place since its inauguration, as a political and urban project, it has nevertheless disregarded the importance of gender issues. While universalist ideas appear to be egalitarian on the one hand, but on the other hand ignore the specificities of men and women in access to the city, resulting in asymmetries, limiting opportunities and choice.

The urban zoning that should at first provide greater comfort and safety to its users has resulted in not only functional and social segregation but also gender-oriented segregation. The definition of work and housing areas is a reflection of social organization, defining the role of each person in society, resulting in physical and subjective barriers that limit access and equal opportunities in the city. Although the city has a modern aesthetic, it is a strong conservatism

that materializes in the built space and can be perceived through the analysis of demographic data and social appropriations over the years.

Gender segregation has deep roots in Brazilian society, but it also has a spatial dimension that cannot be denied. The fear of women in public spaces, especially in central areas of Brasilia, is a reflection not only of the city's spatial organization but also of a social structure that segregates and oppresses them. Although the city was designed in a specific context, the problems resulting from restrictive zoning are still perceived. In recent years, the struggle for equity has enabled greater feminine emancipation, but there is still much to change. Although architecture alone is not a determinant of human behavior, this study has shown that there is no denying its influence. While protests and occupying movements focus on cultural and behavioral changes, they also indirectly call for a spatial issue. However, without developing public equity policies that offer fair treatment and equal opportunity to all, not only according to gender but also sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, social class, aging, among others, according to their respective needs, the ideal of an egalitarian city is unlikely to be achieved.

The analysis presented suggests that a solution for gender segregation is much more complex and involves social changes that could not be achieved only by spatial changes. However, a possible solution to decrease the barriers that exclude women in certain parts of Brasilia would be the densification and the increase of labor supply in the residential areas, as well as the mixed-use at the city center incorporating housing supply. However, when introducing residential areas in the center, some facilities would be needed – such as schools, kindergartens, squares, and leisure equipment, which in turn would bring greater social and economic diversity, and urban vitality.

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