

BETWEEN FAITH AND LEGALITY: A STUDY ON THE REGULARIZATION OF PUBLIC LANDS OCCUPIED BY RELIGIOUS AND WELFARE ENTITIES IN THE FEDERAL DISTRICT



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Eulírio de Farias Dantas¹, Charles Sarmento Abreu², Clarimar Santos Motta Junior³,
Jamille Saraty Malveira Graim⁴ and Ésio Vieira de Araújo⁵

ABSTRACT

The article explores the relationship between Church and State in Brazilian Constitutions, focusing on secularism and the growing political power of evangelicals. The research investigates how this influence impacts the regularization of public land occupied by religious and social assistance entities, which are objects of study in the Third Sector. Using a methodology that combines legal-constitutional analysis and the complex approach of Edgar Morin, the study highlights the historical construction of religious influence in Brazil. In the Federal District, urban expansion and population pressure complicate land regularization. Between 1991 and 2008, many legislative efforts failed due to violations of the Constitution and the LODF. Complementary Law No. 806/2009 and Law No. 6,888/2021 are important to resolve these issues, proposing new parameters for collaboration between the State and non-profit entities. The article's hypothesis, confirmed by statistical data, suggests that the increase in the political power of evangelicals influences the regularization of public land in the Federal District, evidencing a correlation between the growth of the evangelical population and the formulation of specific legislation.

Keywords: Secularism, Religious influence, Land regularization, Legislative Chamber of the Federal District (CLDF), Evangelical churches.

¹Master of Laws from (UCB)
Doctorate student in Constitutional Law at I.D.P- DF
University Professor

²Master of Laws from (UCB)
Doctorate student in Constitutional Law at I.D.P- DF
Tax Auditor of the Federal District Revenue

³Master in Law from I.D.P-SP
Doctorate student in Constitutional Law at I.D.P- DF
Lawyer

⁴Master in Civil Law from the University of Coimbra
Doctorate student in Constitutional Law at I.D.P- DF
Lawyer

University professor
⁵Master of Laws from (UCB)
Doctorate student in Constitutional Law at I.D.P- DF
Tax Auditor of the Federal District Revenue

INTRODUCTION

The present study examines the intricate relationship between Church and State in Brazilian Constitutions, focusing on secularism and the growing political influence of evangelicals in recent decades. The research investigates how this influence impacts the regularization of public land occupied by religious and welfare entities in the Federal District, a central theme in the study of the Third Sector. The relevance of the research lies in the need to understand how power dynamics and religious influence are intertwined in the formulation of public policies, affecting the urban and social development of the region.

The investigation seeks to analyze the possible correlation between the increase in the evangelical population in the Federal District and the formulation of legislation that aims to regularize the occupation of public land by religious and welfare entities. The study questions how this growing evangelical political influence, aligned with the national trend, can shape the process of land regularization, impacting the management of urban space and the relations between different religious groups.

In this context, the research raises the hypothesis that the growth of the evangelical population in the Federal District influences the formulation of laws that seek to regularize land occupied, especially by religious and welfare entities. To test this hypothesis, the study proposes to: 1) General Objective: To analyze the influence of the growth of the evangelical population on the regularization of public land in the Federal District. 2) Specific Objectives: 2.1) To examine the historical evolution of the relationship between Church and State in Brazil, from the imperial period to the present day; 2.2) To identify and analyze the legislation regarding the regularization of land occupied by religious and welfare entities in the Federal District; 2.3) To evaluate the statistical correlation between the increase in the evangelical population and the formulation of specific laws for land regularization and 2.4) To investigate the impact of religious political influence, particularly of evangelicals, on public policies in the Federal District.

Based on a methodology that combines the legal-constitutional analysis and the complex approach of Edgar Morin, the study aims to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of power and religious influence in the public sphere, contributing to the debate on the secularity of the State and the relations between religion and politics in contemporary Brazil. It is expected that the results of the research will provide subsidies for the formulation of more effective and equitable public policies, considering the issue of

occupation of public land by religious and welfare entities in the Federal District, promoting a fairer and more sustainable urban and social development.

BETWEEN SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE: THE TRAJECTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN BRAZIL

The Constitution of 1891 reserved 14,400 km² in the Central Plateau for the future capital, establishing the secular character of the State. Although Brazil is secular, it is not atheist. The presence of the church has been a unifying factor in democracies. Here, "church" encompasses several Christian denominations, all within the scope of the Third Sector (Mendes, 2011, p. 113; Bulos, 2014, pp. 504-577-579).

There is a belief that the active participation of religious entities in public life contributes to social cohesion and to the promotion of ethical and moral values that underpin the Democratic Rule of Law, "promoting the existence of an active civil society, which is fundamental for the consolidation of democracy" (PAES, 2012, p. 62).

As will be analyzed below, over the centuries, churches have been responsible for a wide range of assistance, educational and citizenship promotion activities, acting as essential partners of the State in the provision of services to the most vulnerable population. Whether through social assistance, education, health or culture programs, traditional religious entities contribute significantly to improving the living conditions of the communities in which they are inserted (SILVA, 2006, pp. 326-351; NEVES, 2008, p. 366).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

John Gilissen (2003, p. 17) discusses the influence of the Catholic Church on universal law, noting that canon law, belonging to the community of believers, exerts considerable influence on secular law in Western Europe. He highlights this influence due to the Christian universalism prevalent in the Middle Ages, the exclusivity of canon law in writing in Western Europe between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, and the competence of ecclesiastical courts in matters such as marriage and divorce.

The influence of canon law declines from the sixteenth century onwards, as states become secularized, especially after the French Revolution, when religious influence on law decreases significantly, especially in France. However, canon law continues to be one of the historical foundations of Western law, despite the advances of rationalism and natural law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (KOSELLECK, 2016, pp. 270 and 280).

Subsequently, it is noted that secularism in Brazil is constitutionally established with the promulgation of the first republican Constitution of 1891.

In the contemporary context of Brazil, there is a complex intersection between religion and politics, revealing a flexible boundary between these social spheres. This relationship manifests itself in diverse interactions, shaped by historical, cultural, and political nuances. Religious leaders influence political institutions, religious discourses and values permeate debates and electoral campaigns, and religious manifestations often take on political connotations. However, this dynamic is heterogeneous and constantly changing, reflecting the diversities and contradictions of contemporary Brazilian society (ORO, 2005, p. 2).

In the current Brazilian political scenario, the marked influence of evangelical churches, particularly Pentecostals, in the political sphere stands out, evidenced by the formation of the so-called "evangelical benches" in different governmental instances, from the municipal levels to the National Congress, including the state and district Legislative Assemblies.

This presence generates a mimetic effect on other religious groups, such as Afro-Brazilians and Catholics, who show a growing interest in their political representation. This phenomenon is especially relevant in the context of the Catholic Church, which maintains a long-standing relationship with the Brazilian State, alternating between periods of proximity and distance throughout history. In addition, the rise of far-right groups within these religious segments is observed, pointing to a certain corrosion of the systems that underlie the Democratic Rule of Law, with potential implications for the country's political and social stability (FERREIRA, 2020, pp. 46-69).

A superficial analysis is carried out about the intrinsic relationship between the main religious expressions in Brazil, aiming to identify patterns, trends and transformations over time, with a view to a more comprehensive and grounded understanding of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

During Brazil's Colonial and Imperial periods, Catholicism was the official religion, with the state exercising control over the Church through the Portuguese Royal Padroado. Under this regime, the executive branch had a constitutional duty to protect and supervise the church, including the appointment of bishops. This relationship reflected a mentality of the Ancien Régime, valuing a liturgical view of the world as essential for the conservation of society (OLIVEIRA, pp. 76-96; NEVES, 2003, p. 27).

Esquivel (2003, p. 4) argues that the institute of the Padroado had a negative impact on Brazilian Catholicism, leading to a reduction in ecclesiastical influence due to submission to political power. This resulted in a conflicting relationship between the Church and the State during the Imperial period, marked by two major conflicts: the "Feijó Schism" (1827-1838) and the "Religious Question" (1872-1875). These events contributed to the gradual separation of church and state, culminating in the transition to republican rule.

According to Gabriel Oliveira (2017, p. 78), in the years that marked the process of Independence and the granting of the first Brazilian Constitution in 1824, disputes arose for the control of ecclesiastical competences among the political agents of the State, involving different sectors of the clergy. Themes related to the intersection of politics and religion dominated the debates, demonstrating the State's effort to centralize Church affairs, while liberal discourse incorporated religious elements into its rhetoric, reflecting an adaptation between the new constitutional prerogatives and the old religious beliefs.

After Brazil's Independence in 1822, the ruling elites were composed mainly of farmers and merchants, linked to the agrarian economy and interested in maintaining traditional structures, including the slave system and large property. Influenced by Enlightenment ideals, these elites consolidated a conservative and anti-democratic ideology, resisting industrial development and maintaining Catholicism as the official religion, although they tolerated other religions in private cults. They established a centralized political system, subordinating the Church to the State and implementing indirect elections based on qualified voting, excluding a large part of the population from the electoral process. Life tenure in the Senate and in the Council of State perpetuated the political elites, forming an oligarchy that monopolized power and titles of nobility (COSTA, 1999, pp. 10-11).

In Brazil of that period, liberalism was imported and did not emerge from a bourgeois struggle against aristocratic privileges. The lack of an active bourgeoisie limited support for liberalism, which came mainly from the rural strata. The landlord elites resisted the abolition of latifundia and slavery, restricting the reach of liberalism. The issue of slavery was central in all revolutionary movements, with a predominance of opposition to the emancipation of slaves due to the fear of revolts (LIMA JÚNIOR, 1968).

Elitist, racist and slave-owning behavior was common among revolutionaries, as observed in the Inconfidência Mineira and the Bahian Conjuration. Even with the participation of blacks and mulattoes, leaders such as Cipriano Barata expressed disdain

for them. This elitist mentality was also manifested in the revolutionary proclamations, which guaranteed the masters' right to property over slaves, evidencing the continuity of the interests of the elites during the liberal period (TAVARES, 1817; MOTA, 1972, p. 154).

A peculiarity of Brazilian liberalism was its conciliation with the Church and religion. The presence of priests in revolutionary movements, such as in the Revolution of 1817, led them to be accused of propagating ideas of Homeland and Freedom and collaborating with revolutionary groups. The Right of Patronage and the participation of sectors of the clergy in Freemasonry explain this adherence to revolutionary ideas, evidenced by the posters during the Revolution of 1817 exalting both the Homeland and the Holy Catholic Religion (COSTA, 1999, p. 31 *apud* GRAHAM, 1956, p. 121; ARMITAGE, 1943, p. 25).⁶

On May 3, 1823, members of the Brazilian Parliament gathered to participate in the first Constituent Assembly of Brazil. During a semester of intense work, the Assembly held 148 sessions and deliberated on 38 bills, 157 nominations and 237 opinions. It was not surprising to find several Catholic priests among the participants in the Constituent Assembly, given the historical influence of the Church in the country, where it had a cultural monopoly and played a significant role in the administration (COSTA, 1999, p. 132).

In addition, the Constitution of 1824, in its article 5, granted Catholicism the *status* of official religion of the State, prohibiting the public worship of other religions and attributing to the Catholic Church the control of civil records of birth, marriage and death, as well as the management of cemeteries (NOGUEIRA, 2012, p. 65). Item IV of article 92 also provided that: "*They are excluded from voting in the Parish Assemblies. IV. Religious, and any, who live in cloistered Community*".

At dusk on November 15, 1889, Ruy Barbosa sat in front of a ream of foolscap paper, pen in hand, recording the events of the morning. Thus, before the dust of Deodoro's cavalcade dissipated, he began to sign the Organic Decree that established the Provisional Government of the newly proclaimed Republic (BALEEIRO, 2012, p. 13).

According to José Afonso da Silva (2001, p. 254), the Provisional Government issued Decree 119-A, of January 7, 1889, drafted by Ruy Barbosa, establishing religious freedom with the separation of Church and State.

⁶ On the participation of priests in the Revolution of 1817, see Maria Graham, *Journal of a voyage to Brazil and residence there during the years 1821-1823*. London, 1924 (translation into Portuguese, São Paulo, 1956, p.121). John Armitage, *The History of Brazil*. London, 1836, 2v. (translation into Portuguese under the title *História do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, 1943, p.25).

In his analysis, Rodrigues (2013, p. 158) highlights two different approaches in relation to the regime of separation between State and religions. While Brazil adopts a flexible separation, recognizing the religious fact as part of the culture, France opts for a rigid separation, where the State seeks to abstract the religious differences of citizens in favor of an ideal of "universal citizen".

According to Neves (2014, pp. 120-121), the Church hierarchy was initially perplexed by the new situation. In March 1890, all the bishops issued a Pastoral Letter in defense of the union between Church and State, sending to the President of the Republic, Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca, a document entitled "Complaint", even though he declared himself a Catholic. On July 20 of that year, the Catholic Party was founded in Goiás, launching candidates for the September 15 elections. The defeat considered "shameful" was attributed to electoral fraud. It can be seen that "secularism as a socio-historical process in development" (VALENTE, 2018, p. 111) is increasingly associated with the liberalism that historically founded it.

It was only in 1910 that Rui Barbosa, who had already become disillusioned with a work he had co-authored years earlier, finally raised the banner of revisionism openly, albeit timidly. He exposed in the platform of the Civilist Campaign of 1910 some points that, in his view, needed amendments. Of the eleven points that he considered untouchable, the defense of religious freedom with the separation of Church and State stood out (BALEEIRO, 2012, p. 38). This understanding was echoed in the Constitution of 1891, precisely in article 72, paragraph 7, which provided for the following:

"Article 72. The Constitution guarantees to Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country the inviolability of the rights concerning liberty, individual security and property in the following terms:
Paragraph 7 - No cult or church shall enjoy official subsidy, nor shall it have relations of dependence, or alliance with the government of the Union, or that of the States."

Years later, with the reform of the Federal Constitution published in the Diário do Congresso Nacional on September 4, 1926, this article was as follows:

"Article 72 of the Constitution is replaced by the following:
Art. The Constitution guarantees to Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country the inviolability of the rights concerning liberty, individual security and property, in the following terms:
Paragraph 7 - No cult or church shall enjoy official subsidy, nor shall it have relations of dependence or alliance with the Government of the Union, or that of the States.
The diplomatic representation of Brazil to the Holy See does not imply a violation of this principle."

Once again, the religious expressed discontent with the loss of Brazil's status as the official religion of Catholicism and the cessation of public subsidies. The primate archbishop of Brazil, D. Antônio de Macedo Costa, expressed concern, warning that the total separation of church and state would disturb the national conscience and have disastrous effects in the civil and political sphere. Despite objections, the 1891 Constitution established not only the separation of Church and State, but also recognized only civil marriage, removing the public validity of religious marriage (WESTIN, 2021).

According to Esquivel (2003, p. 9), during the 1930s, under the government of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945), there was a phase of "reconciliation" between the Catholic Church and the State. This rapprochement was facilitated by the friendship between Getúlio Vargas and Dom Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra, who had been appointed coadjutor archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and the capital of the Republic on March 15, 1921 (IHGB, 2024).

The close relationship between these two important public figures solidified an alliance that brought the Church and the State closer again, albeit in a different way from the traumatic experience during the imperial period. In the same period, the Catholic Electoral League was also established, associated with Catholic Action, which, according to Gomez de Souza (2004, p. 84), "analyzed candidates for electoral offices, based on some principles or requirements that it considered indispensable for the interests of the Church (indissolubility of marriage, religious teaching in schools...) and recommended or vetoed these candidates."

In the Constitution of 1934 there is a strong clerical reaction against the secularism present in the Constitution of 1891, which resulted in the reintroduction of the reference to divinity in the preamble, which reads: "We, the representatives of the Brazilian people, putting our trust in God...". This divine invocation, as highlighted by Araújo Castro, was a response to the religious sentiments prevalent in Brazilian society at the time, meeting the expectations of the vast majority of the population (CASTRO, 1935, p. 56)

Briefly, the Constitution of 1934 established the separation between Church and State, prohibiting the intervention of the public power in religious affairs and guaranteeing religious freedom. Poletti (2012, pp. 34-35 and p. 84) highlights the main provisions regarding this relationship, including the prohibition of establishing, subsidizing or hindering the exercise of religious cults; the guarantee of the inviolability of freedom of conscience and belief; the maintenance of diplomatic representation to the Holy See; protection against

deprivation of rights on grounds of philosophical, political or religious belief; the guarantee of freedom of worship and acquisition of legal personality by religious associations; the secular character of cemeteries; the protection of the family by the State; and the regulation of civil marriage with legal effects also for the religious.

The spirit of secularism of the 1937 Constitution is evident from its preamble, which stands out for not mentioning the name of God, a common practice in the other Brazilian Constitutions, except those of 1891 and 1934. This Constitution reiterates the principle of separation between Church and State, by eliminating the clause present in the 1934 Constitution that allowed reciprocal collaboration between both (SCAMPINI, 1974, pp. 163-164)

As Mariano (2002, p. 142) points out, the 1946 Constitution reiterated the principles of separation between State and Church, as well as collaboration between both in the promotion of the common good. However, this did not imply equal treatment by the State in relation to the various religious groups during the Republican period.

On the contrary, despite the legal provisions, other religions, such as evangelical and especially mediumistic (Afro-Brazilian and Spiritist), faced difficulties in being socially recognized, being often accused of disturbing public order, practicing healers, and illegally practicing medicine (BALEEIRO and SOBRINHO, 2021).

Father José Scampini (1974, pp. 369-430) points out that the 1967 Constitution reiterated the principle of separation between Church and State, in accordance with the provisions established in the Constitutions of 1891, 1934, 1937 and 1946. This reiteration included the prohibition of establishing, subsidizing or interfering in religious cults, as well as maintaining any type of relationship of dependence or alliance with them. Notably, this Constitution introduced a restrictive clause on 'reciprocal collaboration', present in the Constitutions of 1934 and 1946. Finally, the 1988 Constitution maintained the provisions in force in the other constitutions in relation to the separation of Church and State.

The period from the 1960s to the 1980s was marked by significant political and cultural changes on a global scale, especially in Latin America. These transformations had a profound impact on the Catholic Church, leading to the emergence of movements such as Liberation Theology, which exerted a significant influence on Latin American Catholic clergy. Due to its continental social dimension, this movement became, in the view of many academics, one of the most progressive in the world (LIBÂNIO, 1987, pp. 260-278; GILL, 1994, pp. 403-425).

The truth is that the Catholic Church has consistently maintained its political protagonism in relation to other religious denominations. Lacerda (2017, p. 18) summarizes well what was the true political status of the Catholic Church in the first half of the twentieth century:

"It is necessary to recognize that, contrary to what a certain secularist militancy seems to believe, the presence of the Catholic Church in Brazilian politics has always been, since the proclamation of the Republic in 1889 until today, much more the rule than the exception. If, officially, the proclamation led to the separation of the Catholic Church and the State, a good part of the Brazilian political establishment accepted Catholicism as the *de facto* official religion during the first half of the twentieth century."

And the same author continues: "among those who opposed such a state of affairs were precisely the Protestants" (LACERDA *apud* DELLA CAVA, 1976).

However, in parallel with this dynamic, other religions, especially the evangelical, with its multiple denominations, gradually emerged, conquering a growing space in both the religious and political scenes. This advance of evangelical denominations was marked by the expansion of their representation in the spheres of power, such as the formation of "evangelical benches" in different political instances, from the City Councils to the National Congress. This phenomenon deserves a more in-depth analysis to understand its implications in the interactions between religion and politics in contemporary Brazil.

THE GROWTH OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Despite having participated in national public life since the nineteenth century, evangelicals, including immigration and mission Protestantism, and later Pentecostalism from the twentieth century onwards, only emerged as a political phenomenon during the New Republic. During the First Republic (1889-1930), its presence in national politics was practically non-existent. It was in the Vargas Era (1930-1945) that Brazilian evangelical leaders made their first and most significant political pronouncement in reaction to the strengthening of relations between the Vargas government and the Catholic Church. This pronouncement, known as the "Memorial", launched in May 1932, was led mainly by Presbyterian leaders and included demands typical of the secular tradition, liberalism and a social democracy of the time, such as secret ballot, quick and free popular justice, complete secularity of the State and official education, absolute freedom of expression, compulsory popular education and the promotion of pacifism (ORO, 2005, p. 7).

For didactic, historiographical and mnemonic purposes, the table below is presented in order to facilitate the understanding and analysis of the different categories of historical

Protestants and Pentecostals, contributing to a better understanding of the concept of "Protestant" and/or "evangelical".

Table 1

Historic Protestants	Pentecostal Protestants
Presbyterians	Assembly of God
Methodist	Christian Congregation of Brazil
Baptists	Foursquare Gospel
Lutherans	Brazil for Christ
Anglicans	God is Love
	New Life
	Universal of the Kingdom of God
	And many others

Source: Authors' Research.

The research reveals that both conservative sectors of the Catholic and Evangelical Churches participated in and strengthened the Brazilian Military Regime that lasted 21 years from 1964 to 1985 (TOLEDO, 1989). Analyzing the contributions of evangelicals over this period, the complexity of this group is perceived, which is not homogeneous as many imagine. Within the evangelical milieu, there is a diversity of thoughts and actions that is still present today (CNV, 2014).

The theological and pastoral scenarios of the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Churches during the 1950s and 1960s played relevant roles in the events related to the establishment and consolidation of the Military Regime in Brazil. While Catholicism witnessed the emergence of initiatives in favor of human rights, with the foundation of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), the expansion of social and educational programs, and the holding of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), evangelicals also took a leading role through both lay and clerical leaders and groups, working in both urban and rural areas. This engagement was in contrast to the conservative developmental model adopted by the State, which neglected public policies aimed at reducing socioeconomic and cultural disparities (PADILHA et al, 2022, pp. 18-19).

Roughly speaking, the leadership of the Presbyterians (including its offshoot, the Independent Presbyterian Church) and Baptists supported the military coup of 1964, with the exceptions of Methodists, Episcopalians, and Lutherans. "Opposition with resistance existed among Protestants, but not officially" (PADILHA et al, 2022, p. 38).

Regarding this support, Araújo (2010, p. 95) clarifies that "among the evangelical churches in Brazil, the Presbyterian Church was the most involved and the most committed

to the 1964 Revolution because of the links of this Church with the middle class and because of the political prestige it enjoyed in political and military circles".

The little resistance that came from this denomination was from Jaime Nelson Wright (1927-1999), the son of American pastors, who graduated in theology and did graduate work at Princeton University in 1950 (MEDICCI et al., 2017, p. 221). His trajectory was marked by deep political and social engagement, especially in the defense of human rights, driven by the disappearance of his brother Paulo Stuart Wright, a sociologist and politician impeached in 1973 during the Military Dictatorship (VILELA, 2016, pp. 179-194).

Jaime documented torture and murders practiced by the State, participated in events in memory of the victims of the dictatorship, such as the cult in honor of Wladimir Herzog in 1975, and, from 1979, collaborated with the Archdiocese of São Paulo in the project "Brazil: Never Again". He also participated in the I National Congress for Amnesty, and his legacy is celebrated annually by the 2 de Julho Foundation in the Jaime Wright Award for Promoters of Peace and Human Rights (PADILHA et al., 2022, pp. 19-20).

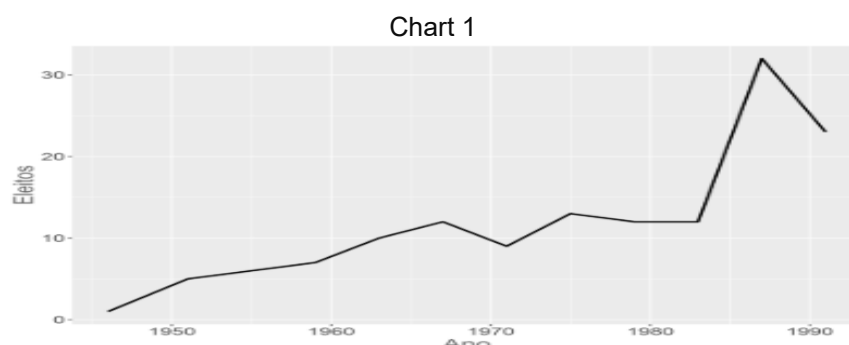
The influence of evangelical churches, especially Pentecostal ones, in Brazilian politics is a significant and growing phenomenon, manifesting itself in the "evangelical benches" composed of parliamentarians who represent their interests in various governmental spheres. The lists of parliamentarians, produced by DIAP, may contain errors and outdated information, as they use the criterion of evangelical faith, including members of historic and Pentecostal churches, and some not linked to any specific church (LACERDA, 2017, p. 63).

This influence manifests itself in a variety of ways. One of them is in the formulation and voting of bills that reflect the values and interests of evangelical churches, such as issues related to morality, family, education and health. In addition, evangelical churches have a considerable capacity to mobilize voters, which can be relevant in electoral periods (PIERUCCI, 1989, pp. 104-132).

This political extension of evangelical churches has generated debates and controversies, especially with regard to the secularity of the State and the guarantee of individual rights. Some critics argue that this influence may pose a threat to the separation of state and religion, while others argue that it is legitimate for religious groups to actively participate in the political process.

According to the data in Graph 1, regardless of opinions on the subject, it is undeniable that evangelical churches exert considerable influence in Brazilian politics and

continue to play a significant role in the country's political scenario, with an exponential growth perceived during the last decades, as Freston (1993, p. 167) points out, when referring to the number of Federal Deputies and Evangelical Senators elected between 1946 and 1991:



Source - Freston (1993: 167)

In current times, significant transformations in the religious panorama can be observed from the perspective of Robbins (2008, p. 127), who in the last three decades (...) "they appear to be a period of especially rapid growth in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Oceania; recent estimates suggest that Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity currently have about 523 million adherents, two-thirds of whom live outside the West, the place of origin of these religions."

In the same understanding, Ricardo Mariano (2008, pp. 68-95) states that Pentecostal churches register the highest rates of contemporary religious growth, attributed in part to the lack of support by traditional social institutions. Faced with limitations in addressing individual issues and in the provision of essential services such as health, education, employment and housing, which substantially affect the well-being of vast segments of society, additional alternatives are sought.

For this reason, "the participation of civil society is increasingly requested as an alternative, in the Third Sector as a whole, as a materialization of the social state and understanding of the Democratic State of Law enshrined in contemporary constitutionalism" (PAES and MAZZA, 2015, p. 10).

Over the centuries, the construction of a just and democratic nation has been driven by the active participation of various sectors of society. In the midst of this context, Brasília emerges as a symbol of hope for Brazilians, reflecting the aspiration for a more inclusive and egalitarian country. While local leaders sought the autonomy of the Federal District through their political representation and the installation of the Legislative Chamber, the

Catholic and Evangelical churches played an important role in promoting ethical and moral values that contributed to a more cohesive and participatory society.

POLITICAL AUTONOMY: THE FIRST CHALLENGES OF THE CLDF AS A LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Chronologically, on April 21, 1960, Brasília is inaugurated and, months later, on October 3, a significant part of the political history of the people of Brasilia begins, who vote for the first time for President of the Republic. According to the headline of the *Jornal de Brasília* (1986, p. 3), of the 23,618 registered voters, 21,842 go to the polls to vote only for President of the Republic.

It is important to remember that before its political autonomy, the legislative body of the Federal District was the Federal Senate. The truth is that the House of Laws of the Federal District was not implemented, although it was provided for by Federal Law No. 3,751, on April 13, 1960, which tried unsuccessfully to establish the administrative organization of the Federal District, even predicting that the elections would be for mayor (PEREIRA, 2014, p. 8) with the installation of a legislative chamber composed of councilors. None of the initiatives is implemented because there are no elections, and the gap in the legislative residue remains for the entire duration of the 1967 Constitution (BRASIL, 1960).

In 1982, Brazil was the scene of the country's redemocratization process (KINZO, 2021, pp. 3-10). Several rallies for the "Diretas Já" are organized throughout the Federal District. Brasília, initially conceived as a federal appendage (ABRÚCIO, 1998, p. 17) without economic or political autonomy, follows a model similar to that of neutral municipalities of the imperial period and the Federal District of Rio de Janeiro. Three decades pass before its citizens can exercise their right to choose their political representatives, with the end of the Military Regime and the approval of a constitutional amendment in 1985, which allows the election of congressmen (CLDF, 2024).

Full political autonomy is achieved with the election of the first congressmen, who strive to approve, as mentioned, an amendment guaranteeing the political autonomy of the Federal District. This victory culminated in the promulgation of the so-called Citizen Constitution, on October 5, 1988 (CHAIA & CHAIA, 2008, p. 176).

From then on, in 1990, the Federal District was able to elect its governor and the first 24 district deputies by direct vote. The installation of the Legislative Chamber on January 1, 1991 marks the beginning of a new era for Brasilia, ending decades of political and

economic discussions about the administration of the special district. This historic milestone coincides with the struggle for the return of direct elections for the presidency of the Republic.

After three decades of anticipation, the 24 district deputies, elected by popular vote for the first time, took office, marking the end of a period of tutelage over Brasília and its departure from Brazil's political history.

Therefore, the installation of the CLDF represents the fulfillment of a century-old aspiration, dating from the dream of building Brasília, provided for in the Federal Constitution of 1891, to today's contemporary challenges.

INITIAL CHALLENGES OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AFTER THE INAUGURATION OF THE CLDF

When he took office for the 1st legislature, the district deputy was already faced with a great challenge related to the irregular public land that had persisted for years and that proliferated rapidly throughout the territory of the Federal District. In this context, the occupation of public lands by religious and social assistance entities was included.

There was an important variable to be considered: the CLDF was not yet institutionalized or professionalized (MELLO, 2015, pp. 20-37; VOLPE, 2006, pp. 7-43). Before dedicating itself to issues such as the regularization of religious land in public areas, the CLDF needed to carry out internal structural tasks, such as the creation of the Organic Law of the Federal District (LODF) and its Internal Regulations (RICL). In addition, in the external sphere, the implementation of the Master Plan for Territorial Planning of the Federal District (PDOT) and the Territorial and Urban Planning System of the Federal District (Sisplan) was pending, which would only materialize a year later, with the enactment of Ordinary Law 353, of November 1992, replaced by Complementary Law No. 17 of January 28, 1997.

Without the consolidation of these fundamental legal instruments, the elected parliamentarian faced significant limitations in his ability to draft structuring legislation. The absence of the LODF and RICL, coupled with the lack of implementation of the PDOT, severely restricted the scope of action of the district parliament, making it difficult to achieve essential legislative initiatives to meet the demands of the population and address pressing issues such as land regularization.

Despite having qualified civil servants, the Legislative Chamber of the Federal District (CLDF) faced major structural challenges in the 1st legislature, such as lack of physical space and inadequate technological resources. These problems limited the ability to take advantage of the technical knowledge of the civil servants, justifying the delay in the discussion and approval of important legislation.

Still in the 1st Legislature, elected parliamentarians with religious agendas often adopted practices of the "old politics" in their parliamentary activities. Faced with the absence of legislation for fundamental issues, they resorted to improvised solutions, especially those deputies who were part of the support base of the governor of the CLDF. One of these practices was the appointment of their own regional administrators, who were given broad powers in a context of decentralized oversight of the GDF and centralized in the RAs.⁷

The regional administrators, appointed by parliamentary indication, granted precarious authorizations for the use of public properties, meeting the interests of the deputies who appointed them. Many religious leaders, some with limited legal knowledge, were induced to believe in the definitive resolution of the land issue. This misperception strengthened the relationship between parliamentarians and their electoral bases, consolidating support for future elections.

Throughout the various legislatures of the Legislative Chamber of the Federal District (CLDF), many deputies were elected with the support of their religious bases. Notably, parliamentarians associated with the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God received support almost exclusively from evangelical voters. Exceptions to this rule include Maurílio Silva and Rubens Brunelli, elected by the Casa da Blessing Church; Deputy Sandra Faraj, from the Christian Community Ministry of Faith; and Pastor Daniel de Castro of the Assembly of God of Taguatinga (ADET). On the Catholic side, Deputies Padre Jonas, Washington Mesquita, Cláudio Abrantes and Pedro Paulo de Oliveira (Pepa) stand out. It is important to mention that these last two acted as the Christ of the Way of the Cross and as Coordinator of the event at Morro da Capelinha, in the city of Planaltina, DF, respectively.

In any case, the elected parliamentarians reflected the diversity of Brasília's society, demonstrating its democratic and representative nature. However, the representation of specific interests of different social segments can interfere in political decisions, which are

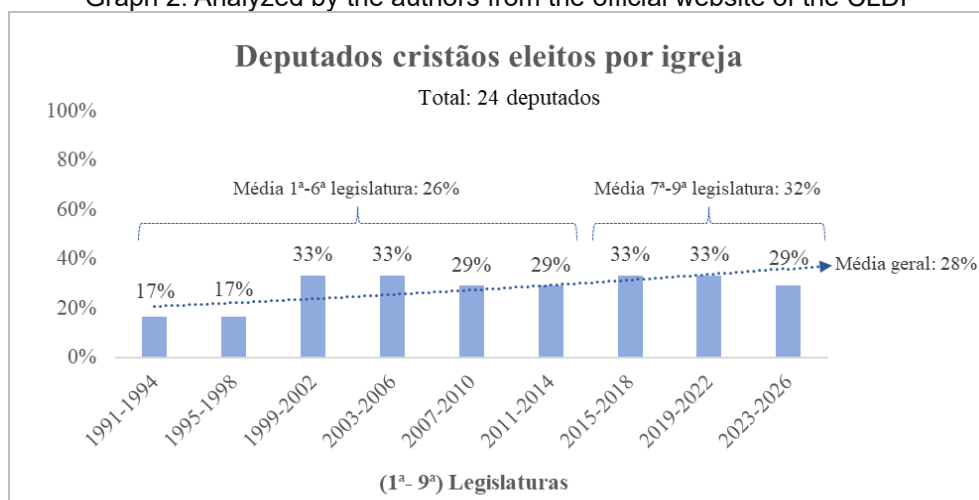
⁷ Since 1989, during Roriz's term as "bionic governor", the Federal District has expanded its administrative territory with the creation of 18 new Administrative Regions, reaching a total of 35 today.

not always aligned with the broader public interest and generally do not coincide with their electoral bases (VOLPE, 2006, p.166; SAMUELS, 1997; AMORIM NETO and SANTOS, 2003; AMES, 2001).

The graphs below present revealing information about the profile of the district deputies. It is noted that approximately 28% of the 24 parliamentarians throughout all legislatures obtained explicit support from evangelical churches or implicit support from the Catholic Church for their elections as district deputies. This is because evangelical churches often cast pastors as political candidates, while the Catholic Church implicitly supports candidates based on their work in religious-related activities.

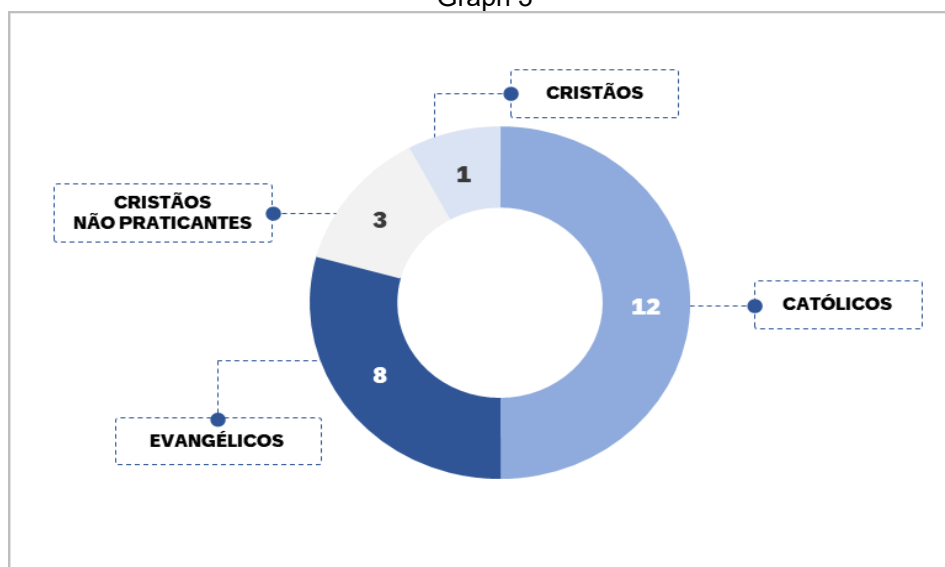
The data in **Graph 2** reveal a constant increase in the presence of the "Christian caucus", composed of evangelicals and Catholics, in the CLDF throughout the legislatures. For example, between the 1st and 6th legislatures, this representation averaged 26%, increasing to about 32% in subsequent legislatures.

Graph 2. Analyzed by the authors from the official website of the CLDF



For a better understanding of the objectives of this study, it is essential to clarify which of the candidates in the legislatures analyzed would not be elected without the political support of the Catholic and Evangelical churches. In this sense, it is not about the religion that the parliamentarian practices, but about the political commitment to his electoral base that elected him. The following graph shows the religion declared by the 24 deputies elected during the current legislature (2023-2026).

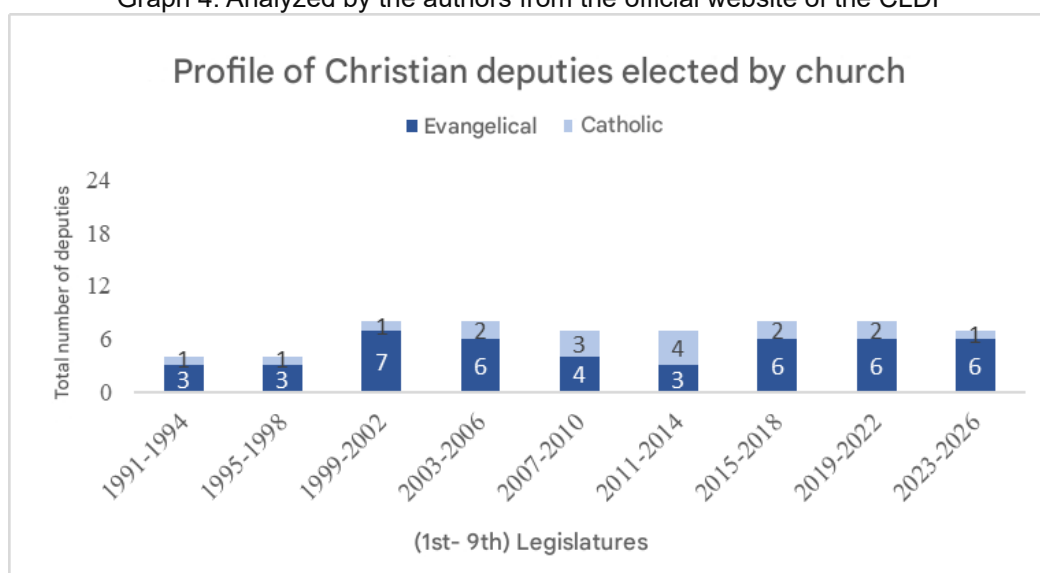
Graph 3



Source - Data extracted from Jornal Metrópole (16/10/2022)

The analysis of the data above reveals that half of the CLDF deputies declare themselves Catholic, but only one of them was elected with votes from this religion. This information is highlighted in **Graph 4**, which also reveals another relevant fact: of the 8 deputies who declare themselves evangelicals in the new legislature, 6 of them would not be elected without the votes coming from evangelicals.

Graph 4. Analyzed by the authors from the official website of the CLDF



With the exception of the 6th Legislature, it is notable that, in all legislatures, the evangelical presence has always surpassed that of Catholics. For example, in the 1st Legislature, evangelicals represented 12.5% (3 deputies: Maurílio Silva, Peniel Pacheco

and Wasny de Roure) of the total number of parliamentarians, while in the 9th Legislature, this evangelical profile represents 25% (6 deputies: Iolando, Pr. Daniel Castro, Eduardo Pedrosa, Paula Belmonte, Martins Machado and Thiago Manzoni), doubling the number of parliamentarians over more than three decades. The observed growth shows a national phenomenon that denotes the growing political influence of evangelicals in various instances of power, including the Federal District, confirming the hypothesis initially proposed.

The conclusion of the above data shows that the increase in the representativeness of the Christian caucus to about 33% between the 6th and 7th legislatures, equivalent to eight parliamentarians out of a total of 24, stands out as an expressive phenomenon over the last three decades, exerting a direct impact on the socioeconomic and political context of the Federal District. The presence of this contingent in a legislative body with 24 members gives them a quorum of "simple majority" in the district legislative process, providing substantial influence both in the votes in the CLDF Plenary and in the definition of the political agenda of the GDF.

This scenario points to a relevant influence of religious dynamics on local politics, evidencing the political and social weight of this group. In addition, the success on specific issues, such as the regularization of public land occupied by philanthropic entities, reflects a shared interest by all Christian denominations in the search for solutions that meet their needs, highlighting their importance in the formulation of policies in the Federal District.

During the period from 1991 to 2008, the lack of a specific public policy for urban and land regularization of occupied real estate units presented a complex and prolonged dilemma. The regularization of these lands faced constant legal obstacles, related both to compliance with constitutional principles and to the practical application of the proposed measures. The material and formal unconstitutionality of the initiatives presented represented a significant challenge, requiring careful analysis and adjustments in the legislative proposals to move towards an effective solution to the issue of land regularization of "church land" in the Federal District, which would only be achieved almost two decades later, as will be shown below.

LEGAL APPROACHES TO THE RESOLUTION OF LAND CONFLICTS

In the table below, some of these initiatives recorded by Orivaldo de Melo (2009) will be presented, in an exemplifying and summarized way:

Table 2

<p>Law No. 1,019, of 1996: Authorizes the donation of lots to religious temples, Masonic temples and philanthropic, non-profit entities, located in a special area in the manner specified and provides other provisions. (Author of the project: Deputy Carlos Xavier) Provisions questioned: Full text Action/Plaintiff: 2004 00 2 008420-0 ADI (PGJ) Nature of Decision: Final DJU Publication: 02.02.06 (File: 10.04.06)</p>
<p>Law No. 1,319, of 1996: Provides for the concession of use of public assets to entities mentioned. (Author of the bill: Deputies Luiz Estevão, Adão Xavier and Tadeu Filippelli) Provisions questioned: Full text Case/Plaintiff: 2008 00 2 016888-0 ADI (PGJ) Nature of Decision: Final DJU Publication: 10/19/09</p>
<p>Law No. 2,688, of 2001: Provides for public interest collaboration between the Federal District and the entities that it specifies through donation with charge of the areas occupied by it for teaching, social assistance and health activities. (Author of the bill: Executive Branch) Provisions questioned: Full text Action/Plaintiff: 2004 00 2 008193-1 ADI (PGJ) Nature of Decision: Final DJU Publication: 14.09.04 (File: 22.12.04)</p>
<p>Law No. 2,926, of 2002: Authorizes the donation, with charges, of the areas occupied by entities that it specifies. (Author of the bill: Executive Branch) Provisions questioned: Full text Case/Plaintiff: 2004 00 2 008193-1 ADI (PGJ) Nature of Decision: Final DJU Publication: 26.01.06.</p>
<p>Complementary Law No. 373, of 2001: Provides for the disallocation and allocation of an area for the implementation of a lot for a social assistance entity. (Author of the bill: Deputies Alírio Neto and Jorge Cauhy) Provisions questioned: Full text Case/Plaintiff: 2005 00 2 000397-5 ADI (PGJ) Nature of Decision: Final DJU Publication: 17.01.06</p>
<p>Complementary Law No. 534, of 2002: Assigns the areas it specifies to religious entities, through donation with charges. (Author of the bill: Deputies José Edmar and Nijed Zakour). Provisions questioned: Full text Case/Plaintiff: 2004 00 2 000165-5 ADI (GDF) Nature of Decision: Final DJU Publication: 13.11.06.</p>

Source - Melo (CLDF).

Despite the principle of secularism explicitly enshrined in the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil (CRFB), there is an occasional search for benefits by religious institutions with the State, evoking past privileges. Justice Marco Aurélio pointed out that the appropriate interpretation of this provision indicates the original constituent's option for state neutrality (ADPF 54, 2012, p. 2). The principle of secularism, reflected in the

Constitution, was also incorporated into the Organic Law of the Federal District (LODF), especially in items I to IV of article 18.

It is indisputable that the district deputies, without formalizing their intention, made efforts to reverse a jurisprudence that prohibited the donation of public land to philanthropic entities without financial compensation, both in the STF and in the TJDFT. This strategy involved the mass production of laws considered unconstitutional and illegal, overloading inspection bodies such as the Public Prosecutor's Office (MPDFT), the Court of Justice (TJDFT), the GDF Attorney's Office, the Federal District Court of Auditors, the Federal Supreme Court, the Federal District Inspection Agency (AGEFIS), and the Integrated Land Use Surveillance System (SIV-SOLO), among others.

Consequently, the increase in demand for technical work would require a sufficient number of public servants with the necessary qualifications to deal with the bureaucracy resulting from the irresponsibility and inefficiency of the legislative action of another Power. In the context of the Judicial System, there is a substantial increase in legal bureaucracy, negatively impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of these bodies, compromising their regular activities and affecting this system as a whole.

Many of these laws were judged years after they came into force, creating an expectation of legality in the legal environment during the period in which they are watched. According to the Court of Auditors of the Federal District, this scenario generated legal uncertainty for district public administrators, putting them at risk of practicing acts of management of the public good based on the hasty interpretation of district laws (TCDF, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2005).

The introduction of new legal figures by the CLDF to regulate public administrative relations, such as the donation of public real estate with charges, has generated significant challenges. Terracap, for example, faces a Herculean task, comparable to the myth of Sisyphus, as it deals with a mission that is impossible to fulfill due to the scrutinizing inspection imposed by the new CLDF legislation on its real estate stock. This situation may violate the LODF, specifically Article 71, § 1, IV, by unduly attributing responsibilities to another power, posing an additional legal challenge to the implementation of these laws.

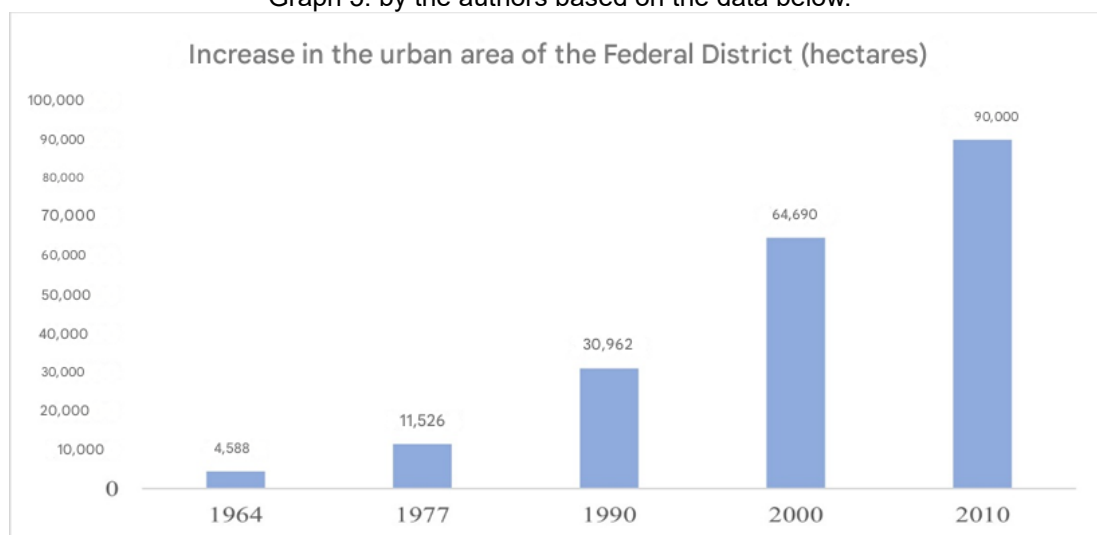
Regardless of the origin of the legislative proposals, whether from the local Executive or Legislative Branches, the crux of the matter is that religious and welfare entities do not have the necessary financial resources to acquire public land, especially in areas of high

real estate value, such as those in the listed area of Brasília, where the cost per square meter is one of the highest in Brazil (IPHAN, 2016, pp. 1-18).

In addition to the financial challenge, additional obstacles have emerged that are difficult to resolve, including the scarcity and increased demand for land for religious and social welfare institutions, amid the growth of the urban area in the Federal District, coupled with political issues.

Rafael dos Anjos (2012, p. 13), a researcher at UnB, revealed that, between 1990 and 2010, Brasília underwent intense urban and social transformation. In 1990, the saturation of the Pilot Plan and satellite cities led to housing invasions and state actions, creating settlements without solving the housing problem. With 30,962 hectares, Brasília was already a young metropolis. By 2010, the urban area had expanded to 90,000 hectares, reflecting rapid territorial transformation and growing environmental problems. This expansion has led to the transition from rural to urban areas, intensifying urban challenges. Brasília began to incorporate extremes and contradictions, with uncontrolled growth increasing poverty, environmental degradation and socio-spatial segregation.

Graph 5: by the authors based on the data below.



The numbers show that the urban territory of the Federal District grew approximately 190.33% between 1990 and 2010. In addition, the population of the Federal District increased from 1,601,094 inhabitants in 1991 to 3,789,728 inhabitants in 2024, representing a significant growth of 136.71%, according to IBG data (2024).

This accelerated and uncontrolled growth has resulted in an increase in poverty and socioeconomic inequality, especially in peripheral areas of the Federal District. This

situation refers to the famous question of Prof. Oscar Vilhena: "How does the deep and persistent socioeconomic inequality affect the integrity of the Rule of Law?" The answer suggests that the lack of minimum substantial guarantees provided for in the Constitution aggravates social inequalities, creating obstacles to the full exercise of rights and to the participation of society in collective life. Consequently, this erodes the foundations of democracy and the rule of law (VIEIRA, 2008, pp. 191s and 212s).

These complex phenomena are directly related to the issue of the unconstitutionality of district laws, since, statistically, during this period, there was a higher incidence of laws judged unconstitutional, whose object was the donation of public land from Terracap and GDF to philanthropic entities.

As a result, new cities were created as Administrative Regions (RAs) in the Federal District, expanding the political power of the head of the Executive and the parliamentarians from the base of the GDF. The rise of religious leaders to the positions of district deputies led to the appointment of regional administrators who favored their political godfathers. This allowed religious and social assistance entities to establish themselves precariously on public land in the "urban voids" of the RAs, where there was no defined legal destination.

This contemporary vision finds a parallel in D'Epinay's work where local evangelical leaders are equated with "colonels", controlling "electoral flocks" that follow their political orientations. These leaders offer electoral support to politicians in exchange for benefits for their churches. In addition, the pastors themselves run for legislative positions with the support of their congregations and, once elected, promote policies in favor of their churches, to the detriment of the public interest (LACERDA, 2017 *apud* D'EPINAY, 1970, p. 19)

This situation resulted in a pent-up demand, as the GDF was unable to effectively meet the growing need for public land for these philanthropic entities. This occurred because the creation of new Administrative Regions was more a political act of the governor than the realization of a prior urban-legal planning. Therefore, there was no planning or study that would allow the rapid availability of public land for this purpose.

The bureaucracy and slowness associated with the legalization of land subdivision in the Federal District are so evident that, in many cases, public authorities choose to postpone land regularization to a later phase. This political decision avoids the requirements of environmental licensing and the investments in infrastructure necessary for the prior approval of land subdivision, as established by legislation (MARTINS, 2021, p. 2).

A Special Commission led by then-Deputy Brunelli highlighted the scarcity of land for all religious denominations, leading many Protestant churches to settle in residential areas. This resulted in disturbance of peace and, in some cases, criminal consequences. Itinerant public hearings were held in various Administrative Regions, generating opposition from local communities, including evangelicals who lived in the vicinity of these "improvised churches" (CLDF, 2003 and 2004).

The concentration of traffic near places of worship generated congestion on residential roads, impacting the mobility of residents, especially in emergency situations. The absence of inspection, associated with political clientelism, stimulated the implementation of ineffective measures, aggravating urban problems. This dynamic, disseminated throughout the city, configured a systemic impact on the urban environment.

In 2009, Governor José Roberto Arruda, driven by previous proposals and the legislative agenda of evangelical deputies (ARAÚJO and SILVA, 2012), sent the Complementary Bill (PLC) 116/2009 to the CLDF. The PLC proposed the urban and land regularization of properties occupied by religious and social assistance entities, resulting in the enactment of Complementary Law No. 806/2009.

In the explanatory statement, the governor stressed that the initiative aimed to solve a chronic problem in the Federal District: the illegal occupation of public lands by entities, discussed for years in the Legislative Chamber of the Federal District. This situation, in part, was due to the high values of the properties, which made it difficult to acquire them by purchase or concession of real right of use, something essential for the Territorial Planning and Urban Development Policies of the Federal District (GDF, 2009).

The legislative process required the coordination of three fundamental "agenda holders" in this legislative context as rapporteurs, without whom the proposition would not have advanced. Evangelical Deputy Brunelli, who held the position of Vice-President of the Land Affairs Commission (CAF) and effective member of the Economy, Budget and Finance Commission (CEOF), and Catholic Deputy Rôney Nemer, in the Constitution and Justice Commission (CCJ), under the supervision of the Leader of the Arruda Government, Deputy Eurides Brito, were key elements in this process.

While Deputy Rôney Nemer took advantage of the centralized hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, Deputy Brunelli faced additional challenges in articulating amendments due to the decentralized nature of power in evangelical churches. Acting as rapporteur in two Thematic Commissions (CAS and CEOF), Brunelli gained political

prestige, especially among evangelicals, his most significant electoral base. During the period of amendments, Brunelli established strict requirements for pastors responsible for properties subject to regularization, in order to prevent possible fraud, given the urgency of the processing of PLC 116/2009, according to article 73 of the LODF.

The legislative process required legal skill to create a substitute for the original proposal, considering the different land particularities of each asset. 10 annexes were added to the proposition to reflect this diversity. After the sanction of LC No. 806/2009, the challenge of the scarcity of financial resources of the entities arose, essential for effective regularization. Subsequently, Laws 4,968/2012 and 6,248/2018 were enacted to solve these problems, but proved ineffective over time.

In 2020, the GDF proposed solutions for the occupation of lots in the DF by sports clubs through Message No. 453/2020-GAG, resulting in Law No. 6,888, of July 7, 2021. The objective was to regularize properties occupied by associations and non-profit entities, including sports clubs, whose concession periods have expired, establishing counterparts due to the public nature of these properties. In addition, a structured collaboration between these entities and the State in the provision of social services was proposed, through "remuneration in social currency". The draft also addressed the difficulties faced by associations and entities in the maintenance of properties acquired in Terracap's public bids, proposing solutions to ensure compliance with the monthly installments of the deed of purchase and sale with fiduciary alienation.

The draft bill also establishes objective criteria for remuneration in social currency and proposes campaigns to renegotiate old debts related to properties occupied by associations or non-profit entities, as well as religious or social assistance entities. In accordance with District Decree No. 39,680/2019, the approval of the project resulted, as already mentioned, in the repeal of District Laws No. 4,968/2012 and 6,248/2018, establishing new parameters for the policy of regularization of occupations of the associations and entities in question (GDF, 2020).

In this regard, it is imperative to recognize the risks that arise when certain religious institutions exert significant political influence, particularly in the case of the Catholic Church and Evangelical denominations. Such dynamics can potentially undermine the principle of the secularity of the State, opening space for a religious polarization in the political sphere. This close connection between some churches and political power can result in public policies that exclusively favor the interests of these institutions, to the detriment of religious

diversity and citizens' freedom of belief. On the other hand, religions of African origin continue to be marginalized by the State, evidencing the persistence of religious inequality.

Finally, while recognizing the positive role of churches in social cohesion and the promotion of ethical values, it is essential to ensure that the State maintains its religious neutrality to preserve democracy and the individual rights of citizens. Maintaining the religious neutrality of the State is essential to preserve democracy and the individual rights of citizens, in line with the best practices of state management in developed countries.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study analyzed the complex relationship between Church and State in Brazil, focusing on secularism and the growing political influence of evangelical churches in the regularization of public land occupied by religious and welfare entities in the Federal District. The research sought to understand how power dynamics and religious influence are intertwined in the formulation of public policies that impact land use and urban and social development in the region.

The study focused on the analysis of the correlation between the increase in the evangelical population and the legislative production aimed at the regularization of occupied lands, examining the hypothesis that the growth of this population directly impacts the formulation of laws that seek to regularize the land occupied by religious and welfare entities, especially in areas of high real estate value.

The investigation, using a methodology that combines legal-constitutional analysis and the complex approach of Edgar Morin, examined the historical trajectory of the relationship between Church and State in Brazil, from the imperial period to the present day, and the political influence of religions, especially evangelical, in the formulation of public policies in the Federal District. The research delved into the analysis of laws related to the regularization of land occupied by religious and welfare entities in the Federal District, identifying patterns, trends and transformations over time.

The main points addressed were: a) the research identified the existence of several laws that seek to regularize the donation of public land to religious and philanthropic institutions, despite questions about the constitutionality of these donations and their compatibility with the principle of secularity of the State. The large number of laws considered unconstitutional has overloaded the control bodies of the Federal District, generating legal uncertainty and compromising the efficient management of public assets;

b) The accelerated urban growth of the Federal District boosted the demand for public land, including by religious entities. However, the scarcity of financial resources of these entities makes it difficult to acquire and maintain land, impacting the effectiveness of land regularization laws. The political influence of deputies and religious leaders also affects the management of urban space and relations between different religious groups. In this context, the research highlights the need for clear, equitable and transparent public policies that consider the financial difficulties of entities and promote the fair allocation of public land; c) Legislation and attempts at solution - The analysis of Complementary Law No. 806/2009 and Law No. 6,888/2021 demonstrated advances in the search for a constitutional and legal balance for the regularization of public properties occupied by non-profit institutions. however, the effectiveness of these laws depends on factors such as the availability of resources, the effectiveness of enforcement, and political commitment to implementation; and d) *Relationship between churches and the state* - the study highlighted the complex relationship between churches and the Brazilian state, oscillating between cooperation and conflict throughout history. The research demonstrated the importance of guaranteeing the secularity of the state, respecting religious freedom and promoting equality between different religions.

This study sought to shed light on land policies in the Federal District, specifically in relation to the interaction between religious entities, political actors and the State. The research revealed the tension between the principle of the secularity of the State and the demands for public land by religious entities, evidencing the need for clearer and more equitable public policies in this area.

The analysis of laws and political practices demonstrated the influence of the "Christian caucus" in the formulation of public policies that primarily benefit the Catholic and Evangelical churches, neglecting the demands of other religious groups, such as religions of African origin. This inequality in the allocation of public resources and access to land reinforces the need for a broader debate on secularism and the guarantee of equal rights for all religions.

The difficulties encountered in the exercise of the investigation included obtaining precise data on the performance of the Christian caucus in the CLDF, the complexity of the legislation and the sensitivity of the issue. However, the results of the research contribute to the academic community by providing an in-depth analysis of the relationship between religion and politics in the context of land policies in the Federal District.

It is urgent that future research investigate the implications of Complementary Law No. 806/2009 and Law No. 6,888/2021, analyzing whether these legislations really promote equality and respect for religious diversity, considering, in particular, religions of African origin. The perpetuation of the exclusion of these religions from the process of formulation and implementation of public policies requires a critical and in-depth analysis, challenging future research to address how public policies and academic research itself can inadvertently contribute to the marginalization of specific religious groups, such as African-based religions. From this critical analysis, it is possible to identify mechanisms and practices that result in exclusion, seeking to overcome inequalities and promote social justice and the full exercise of religious freedom for all citizens.

The study reinforces the urgency of promoting public debate on the relationship between religion and politics in Brazil, with the aim of building a more just, egalitarian and democratic society. By understanding the dynamics of power and influence, it is possible to formulate public policies that meet the interests of all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs.

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