




## BETWEEN NORM AND PRACTICE: THE (IN)EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CAMPINA GRANDE MASTER PLAN IN PROMOTING DECENT HOUSING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### ENTRE A NORMA E A PRÁTICA: A (IN)EFICÁCIA DO PLANO DIRETOR DE CAMPINA GRANDE NA PROMOÇÃO DA MORADIA DIGNA E JUSTIÇA SOCIAL

### ENTRE LA NORMA Y LA PRÁCTICA: LA (IN)EFICACIA DEL PLAN DIRECTOR DE CAMPINA GRANDE EN LA PROMOCIÓN DE LA VIVIENDA DIGNA Y LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL

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#### ABSTRACT

The Master Plan (PD) is a fundamental instrument for urban planning and guiding land use and occupation policies. In Campina Grande (PB), the long interval without normative revision motivated an analysis of its effects on territorial organization and access to housing. The objective of this study was to examine to what extent the 1996, 2006, and 2025 versions incorporate guidelines related to decent housing and socio-spatial justice. The research was justified by the need to evaluate, from a scientific perspective, the relationship between legal formulation, urban dynamics, and the distribution of territorial vulnerabilities. Methodologically, a theoretical review, documentary analysis of the three versions of the Master Plan, and consultation of socio-spatial indicators were adopted. The results pointed to the presence of instruments such as Special Zones of Social Interest and the social function of property, as well as the persistence of patterns of inequality in the territory. It was observed that the 2025 Master Plan introduced normative updates whose scope will depend on the implementation and monitoring processes foreseen in the legislation.

**Keywords:** Master Plan. Decent Housing. Socio-spatial Justice. Urban Inequality. Campina Grande (PB).

#### RESUMO

O Plano Diretor (PD) constitui instrumento fundamental de ordenamento urbano e de orientação das políticas de uso e ocupação do solo. Em Campina Grande (PB), o longo intervalo sem revisão normativa motivou a análise de seus efeitos sobre a organização territorial e o acesso à moradia. O objetivo do estudo foi examinar em que medida as versões de 1996, 2006 e 2025 incorporam diretrizes relacionadas à moradia digna e à justiça socioespacial. A pesquisa se justificou pela necessidade de avaliar, em perspectiva científica, a relação entre formulação legal, dinâmica urbana e distribuição de vulnerabilidades territoriais. Metodologicamente, adotou-se revisão teórica, análise documental das três versões do Plano Diretor e consulta a indicadores socioespaciais. Os resultados apontaram

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a presença de instrumentos como as Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social e a função social da propriedade, bem como a permanência de padrões de desigualdade no território. Observou-se que o Plano Diretor de 2025 introduziu atualizações normativas cujo alcance dependerá dos processos de implementação e monitoramento previstos na legislação.

**Palavras-chave:** Plano Diretor. Moradia Digna. Justiça Socioespacial. Desigualdade Urbana. Campina Grande (PB).

## **RESUMEN**

El Plan Director (PD) es un instrumento fundamental para la planificación urbana y la orientación de las políticas de uso y ocupación del suelo. En Campina Grande (PB), el largo periodo sin revisión normativa motivó el análisis de sus efectos en la organización territorial y el acceso a la vivienda. El objetivo de este estudio fue examinar en qué medida las versiones de 1996, 2006 y 2025 incorporan directrices relacionadas con la vivienda digna y la justicia socioespacial. La investigación se justificó por la necesidad de evaluar, desde una perspectiva científica, la relación entre la formulación legal, la dinámica urbana y la distribución de las vulnerabilidades territoriales. Metodológicamente, se adoptó una revisión teórica, un análisis documental de las tres versiones del PD y la consulta de indicadores socioespaciales. Los resultados apuntaron la presencia de instrumentos como las Zonas Especiales de Interés Social y la función social de la propiedad, así como la persistencia de patrones de desigualdad en el territorio. Se observó que el PD 2025 introdujo actualizaciones normativas cuyo alcance dependerá de los procesos de implementación y seguimiento previstos en la legislación.

**Palabras clave:** Plan Director. Vivienda Digna. Justicia Socioespacial. Desigualdad Urbana. Campina Grande (PB).

## 1 INTRODUCTION

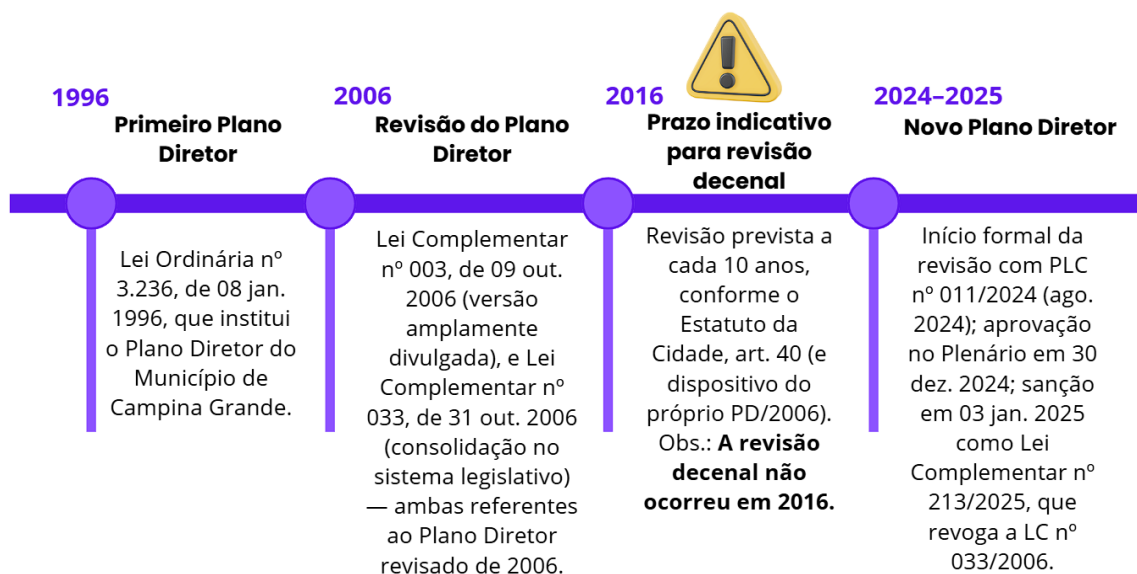
The right to decent housing, enshrined in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and reinforced by the City Statute (Federal Law No. 10,257/2001), is one of the pillars for the construction of a just and egalitarian society. However, the realization of this right faces significant challenges, especially in municipalities that fail to regularly update their urban planning instruments. Campina Grande, an important city in the agreste region of Paraíba, exemplifies this problem: its original Master Plan, from 1996, was revised in 2006 and remained in force for almost two decades, until the sanction of a new Master Plan in 2025.

This prolonged hiatus (Figure 01) – well beyond the ten-year period determined by the City Statute in its article 40 – raised questions about the capacity of an outdated plan to respond to the socioeconomic dynamics and housing demands of a city in transformation.

**Figure 1**

*Timeline of the Master Plan of Campina Grande (1996–2025)*

### LINHA DO TEMPO: PLANO DIRETOR DE CAMPINA GRANDE - PB



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025), based on LO 3.236/1996; LC 003/2006; LC 033/2006; PLC 011/2024; LC 213/2025; Law 10.257/2001, art. 40.

In this context, the general objective of this article was to analyze to what extent the Master Plan of Campina Grande acted as an effective tool for the realization of the right to decent housing and socio-spatial justice. To this end, the right to housing was initially contextualized in the legal and theoretical framework, articulating the constitutional foundations and principles such as the social function of property.

Then, the successive versions of the municipal Master Plan (1996, 2006 and 2025) were examined, comparing its provisions aimed at social housing and urban equity with the socio-spatial reality of the city. Finally, the (in)effectiveness of these norms was discussed and proposals for the improvement of urban and housing policies were presented, pointing out in the conclusion the importance of making the planned instruments effective and strengthening participatory management, without anticipating the specific results of the analysis at this point.

Methodologically, the study was characterized as a documental and qualitative analysis. Local urban planning legislation – Master Plan laws of 1996, 2006 and 2025, as well as complementary norms such as the 2009 Law of Special Zones of Social Interest – and secondary sources (Census data, technical reports and academic literature) were examined. Indicators such as the Social and Infrastructural Vulnerability Index (IVSI) were also considered to map the distribution of urban vulnerability in Campina Grande.

The approach made it possible to compare normative progress with practical effectiveness, evidencing gaps between the "letter of the law" and the materialization of social rights. The relevance of the theme lay in the need to understand how urban planning can promote decent housing and inclusion, offering subsidies for more effective public policies.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT**

From the introductory framework outlined, this section developed the analysis in four articulated axes, combining theoretical foundation, normative examination and empirical reading of the urban reality of Campina Grande. Initially, the right to decent housing was discussed in dialogue with the concepts of equity and social justice, placing it in the scope of fundamental rights and the social function of property (2.1). In continuity, the trajectory of the municipal Master Plan between 1996 and 2025 was analyzed, highlighting its main devices aimed at housing and socio-spatial inclusion (2.2). Next, socio-spatial inequality and vulnerability patterns identified in the city were examined, based on indicators such as the IVSI and the territorial distribution of vulnerable neighborhoods and Special Zones of Social Interest (2.3). Finally, a critical assessment of the effectiveness of the Master Plan was carried out and proposals for the improvement of urban and housing policies were presented, with a focus on the promotion of equity and urban citizenship (2.4).



## 2.1 RIGHT TO DECENT HOUSING, EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The right to adequate housing is closely linked to the dignity of the human person and the idea of social justice. It is a fundamental right of a social nature that integrates the existential minimum for a dignified life. In Brazil, housing was elevated to a social right expressed in article 6 of the Federal Constitution, reaffirming that its enjoyment cannot be subject only to market forces or to property seen as a mere commodity.

On the contrary, the guarantee of housing acts as a structuring vector of constitutional principles, such as human dignity, the social function of property, a balanced environment and the reduction of territorial inequalities. In the urban context, the social function requires that the use of land meet the guidelines of the Master Plan, so that private property, although protected, is only legitimate when it fulfills this function (FC, articles 5, XXIII, and 182, §2).

In the case of unbuilt, underutilized or unused urban land, non-compliance may lead to successive measures — compulsory subdivision or construction, progressive property tax over time and, in the last case, expropriation — by means of a specific law for the area included in the Master Plan (CF, art. 182, §4), according to arts. 5 to 8 of the City Statute (Law No. 10,257/2001).

The realization of social rights, such as the right to housing, requires a delicate balance between robust legal norms and concrete state action. In the words of Ronald Dworkin<sup>3</sup>, fundamental rights should be treated as "trump cards" that prevail over utilitarian calculations or administrative conveniences. In other words, it is not enough to recognize the right in law — it is necessary to take it seriously, ensuring mechanisms for its compliance.

In the Brazilian context, Norberto Bobbio<sup>4</sup> has already warned that the formal proclamation of universal rights means little if there are no real conditions for its exercise. Fábio Konder Comparato<sup>5</sup>, in turn, emphasized the transformative role of economic and social rights, arguing that rights such as housing are irreversible historical achievements and premises for material equality.

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<sup>3</sup> DWORKIN, Ronald. Taking rights seriously. Trans. Nelson Boeira. 2. ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2002, p. 334-337. — It argues that fundamental rights operate as "trump cards" against utilitarian reasons, and cannot be sacrificed for administrative convenience.

<sup>4</sup> BOBBIO, Norberto. The era of rights. Translated by Carlos Nelson Coutinho. 11. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1992. 217 p.

<sup>5</sup> COMPARATO, Fábio Konder. The historical affirmation of human rights. 6. ed. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2017, p. 221-229. "It sustains the centrality of social rights, such as housing, as an irreversible achievement and a condition of material equality."



Luís Roberto Barroso<sup>6</sup> also contributed to this discussion by proposing criteria for the judicial realization of social rights, combining the guarantee of a basic core (existential minimum) with respect for the separation of powers and institutional dialogue.

In summary, it can be stated that national and foreign scholars converge on the idea that the effectiveness of social rights requires not only legal provision, but diligent public policies and responsible justice.

At the international and legal level, important milestones have reinforced the right to housing. The UN Conference in Istanbul (Habitat II, 1996), for example, recognized adequate housing as a fundamental human right, and Brazil incorporated these guidelines into its legal system.

Along these lines, federal laws such as No. 11,977/2009 — which instituted the Minha Casa, Minha Vida (MCMV) Program — introduced land regularization instruments (urban demarcation, legitimization of possession, etc.) aimed at precarious settlements, expanding the state's capacity to promote social housing. Such initiatives demonstrated institutional commitment to reducing the housing deficit, but their results depended on the articulation with local policies.

The Brazilian urban reality, however, shows the existence of relevant challenges in the transition from standardization to the realization of the right to housing, especially in contexts marked by socio-spatial inequalities and different capacities to implement public policies.

In light of this scenario, the dimension of the housing situation is illustrated by IBGE data<sup>7</sup>: in the 2022 Demographic Census, 16,390,790 people were identified living in Favelas and Urban Communities, distributed in 12,348 territorial areas of this nature, present in 656 municipalities. This is a statistical category specific to the 2022 Census, comparable — with methodological reservations — to what the IBGE previously disclosed as "subnormal agglomerations", and any changes in classification and identification procedures should be considered in the longitudinal reading of the data.

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<sup>6</sup> BARROSO, Luís Roberto. Course on contemporary constitutional law. 3. ed. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2018, p. 367-370. "It proposes guidelines for judicial action in social rights, combining the idea of an existential minimum with respect to the separation of powers and institutional dialogue."

<sup>7</sup> BRAZILIAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS (IBGE). Official portal. Available at: <https://www.ibge.gov.br/>. Accessed on: 17 Apr. 2025.

Researchers such as Raquel Rolnik<sup>8</sup>, Edésio Fernandes and Betânia Alfonsin<sup>9</sup> observed that informality is not the exception, but the rule in the occupation of Brazilian urban land, regardless of the size of the cities.

This reality stemmed from the historical heritage of an "absolutism of property"<sup>10</sup> in legislation and an urbanism that traditionally served only the formal city, relegating the poor to illegality. The result was an urban dualism: part of the population integrated into the legalized areas and endowed with infrastructure, while another part – pushed to the peripheries and informal settlements – lived in a condition of sub-citizenship.

The struggle for urban reform in Brazil sought to reverse this situation. The National Movement for Urban Reform (MNRU)<sup>11</sup> played a founding role in the 1988 Constituent Assembly, when it managed to insert a specific chapter on urban policy in the Constitution. This achievement represented the recognition that decent housing, urban inclusion and full citizenship are inseparable. Even so, tensions persisted between the "should-be" of the law and the "being" of social reality.

As Ermínia Maricato points out<sup>12</sup>, the distance between an advanced legal framework and the real city is evident: innovative instruments, such as the Statute of the City, coexisted with practices that maintained the "exile in the periphery" of low-income populations, isolated in distant areas and lacking services. This contrast revealed that socio-spatial justice is not achieved only with good laws, but requires political will, resources and democratic management.

In view of this, it was necessary to critically analyze how the Master Plan – the main municipal planning tool – was used (or not) to enforce the right to decent housing and promote equity. After all, only by bridging the distance between the norm and reality – that is, between what was foreseen on paper and the concrete conditions experienced by citizens – would the

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<sup>8</sup> ROLNIK, Raquel. (org), CYMBALISTA, Renato (org). Urban Instruments against Social Exclusion. São Paulo, Pólis, 1997. 112 p.

<sup>9</sup> FERNANDES, Edésio; ALFONSIN, Betânia. Right to adequate housing and Security of Tenure in the City Statute: Guidelines, Instruments and Management Processes. Belo Horizonte: Forum, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> A concept that dates back to the liberal tradition of civil law, according to which the right to property was exercised in a full, unlimited way and unrelated to its social function. This view was gradually overcome by the recognition of the socio-environmental function of property.

<sup>11</sup> A political-social articulation that gained strength in the late 1970s and early 1980s, composed of urban planners, jurists and popular movements, and which was decisive for the inclusion of urban policy in the Federal Constitution of 1988.

<sup>12</sup> MARICATO, Ermínia. Cities in Brazil: neodevelopmentalism or predatory peripheral growth? Social Policy and Development, Campinas, n. 1, nov. 2013. Available at: <<https://fpabramo.org.br/2013/07/12/cidades-no-brasil-neodesenvolvimentismo-ou-crescimento-periferico-predatorio/>>. Accessed on: 16 jul. 2025.

right to housing cease to be an unfinished constitutional promise to become a full experience of citizenship.

## 2.2 CAMPINA GRANDE'S MASTER PLAN: BETWEEN NORM AND REALITY

The Master Plan, defined by the Federal Constitution (art. 182, §1) and by the City Statute as a basic instrument of urban policy, must guide the development of cities by ensuring the social function of the city and property and equitable access to urban land, housing, sanitation and infrastructure – components of the so-called "right to the city". In Campina Grande, the trajectory of the 1996, 2006 and 2025 Master Plans reflected significant normative advances, but accompanied by gaps in practical implementation.

The first post-Constitution Master Plan, instituted by Municipal Law No. 3,236/1996, represented an initial milestone by introducing concepts aimed at socio-spatial inclusion. This pioneering plan incorporated innovative instruments for the time, such as the delimitation of Special Zones of Social Interest for slum areas, irregular allotments, "urban voids" and tenements, with the express objective of reserving portions of the territory for popular housing programs.

In addition, the 1996 law outlined guidelines for the urbanization of precarious settlements, prioritizing the implementation of basic infrastructure (water supply, energy, sewage, paving, drainage) and community equipment in these areas. Such provisions demonstrated the awareness of the municipal legislator regarding the need to integrate informal nuclei into the formal urban fabric, raising the standard of habitability and realizing the right to adequate housing.

A significant part of these advances, however, had a gradual and, in certain aspects, limited materialization, due to administrative and institutional obstacles that delayed their full implementation. The 1996 Master Plan, although it introduced three categories of Special Zones of Social Interest (slums, voids and tenements) and represented a milestone in the incorporation of the urban reform agenda in the municipality, had a low level of operability: it did not immediately define the corresponding perimeters or establish sufficiently clear procedures for their application, which ended up restricting, in that context, the practical scope of its potential to induce urban policies<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> OBSERVATORY OF THE METROPOLIS; UFPB. Final Report – Campina Grande (PB). 2021. Available at: [https://www.observatoriodasmetrolopes.net.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Relatorio-Final\\_Campina-Grande\\_UFPB.pdf](https://www.observatoriodasmetrolopes.net.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Relatorio-Final_Campina-Grande_UFPB.pdf). Accessed on: 03 mar. 2025.



The trajectory of the Special Zones of Social Interest has illustratively highlighted this distance between normative provision and progressive implementation. Although provided for since 1996, its demarcation and regulation were only consolidated later, when the Municipality issued Complementary Law No. 4,806/2009, which specified and delimited several zones; This thirteen-year interval contributed to the fact that large informal settlements remained, for a certain period, without fully defined legal recognition, which made it difficult to structure continued actions of land regularization and urbanization in these areas.

In fact, at the end of the 1990s, Campina Grande did not have a structured municipal housing policy: public initiatives were limited to specific projects and an insufficient number of affordable housing in the face of the existing deficit. Estimates from the 2010 Municipal Plan for Social Interest Housing<sup>14</sup> indicated a housing deficit of about 16,593 homes in the municipality at that time, the result of decades of accelerated urban growth and migration without a correlated supply of affordable formal housing.

Furthermore, the revision of the Master Plan of Campina Grande in 2006, formalized in Complementary Law No. 003, of October 9, 2006 (sometimes referred to, in later acts, as LC No. 033/2006), linked the municipal urban policy to the guidelines of the City Statute (Law 10.257/2001).

The text enshrines foundations such as participatory democracy and social justice, and reaffirms principles such as the social function of the city, the social function of property, sustainability and democratic management. In macrozoning, the Urban Recovery Zone (ZRU) is established, highlighted in Subsection III, with parameters aimed at urbanization and land regularization of residential areas marked by lack of infrastructure, irregular allotments and low-income housing centers.

According to article 19 of this plan, the Urban Recovery Zone had as its priority objectives to urbanize and regularize precarious housing centers, in addition to encouraging the construction of new social housing in these areas.

In addition, the 2006 Plan also refined, in its article 36, the concept of Special Zones of Social Interest: it defined them as areas intended to ensure the social function of the urban territory, primarily aimed at land regularization, urbanization and production of social interest

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<sup>14</sup> MORAES, Demosthenes; MIRANDA, Livia; CARVALHO, Myrian; ALMEIDA, Ana; LACERDA, Josete. Right to the city and housing: institutional and normative constraints for the implementation of slum urbanization policies – evaluation of the recent cycle: Campina Grande/PB. Final report. Campina Grande, sea. 2021. Available at: [https://www.observatoriodasmetrolopes.net.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Relatorio-Final\\_Campina-Grande\\_UFPB.pdf](https://www.observatoriodasmetrolopes.net.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Relatorio-Final_Campina-Grande_UFPB.pdf). Accessed on: 8 out. 2025.

housing. This definition connected the municipal plan to the instruments of urban reform at the federal level, seeking to reverse the logic of socio-spatial exclusion by inserting spaces reserved for popular housing in local zoning.

Another important measure planned in 2006 was the elaboration of a Municipal Housing Policy. Article 97 of the Master Plan established the objective of universalizing access to adequate housing in the municipality, prioritizing vulnerable social groups and using legal, urban and financial instruments for this purpose.

This command led, a few years later, to the establishment of the Municipal Housing Council and the Municipal Social Interest Housing Fund (by Law No. 4,787/2009), as well as to the formulation of the 2010 Municipal Social Interest Housing Plan, structuring housing provision programs – both for new units and for urbanization and regularization of existing settlements.

Thus, at the normative level, the 2006 revision represented a substantial advance: it incorporated the instruments of the City Statute, created specific zones and guidelines to address housing precariousness, and linked the Master Plan to public housing policies.

Despite this more robust legal framework, the concrete effectiveness of the 2006 measures also faced challenges. The execution of favela urbanization projects advanced slowly: over the following decade few comprehensive interventions were carried out, many through federal programs (such as the Growth Acceleration Program – Housing, which financed improvements in some settlements, such as the occupations of the railway line in the Araxá neighborhood and areas of Bodocongó).

On the other hand, there was a significant increase in the stock of affordable housing through the Minha Casa, Minha Vida program<sup>15</sup>: between 2009 and 2020, about 13,222 social housing units were built in Campina Grande.

An emblematic case was the Aluizio Campos Housing Complex<sup>16</sup>, inaugurated in 2019 with about 4 thousand units, announced as the largest in the country under the Minha Casa, Minha Vida program. These initiatives contributed to reducing the quantitative housing deficit, but did not eliminate structural housing problems.

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<sup>15</sup> BRASIL DE FATO. The Minha Casa Minha Vida program in Campina Grande "zeroed" the deficit, but did not solve the housing problem. Column "Observatory of the Metropolis in the Elections of Paraíba", 2 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/colunista/observatorio-das-metropoles-nas-eleicoes-da-paraiba/2024/05/02/o-programa-minha-casa-minha-vida-em-campina-grande-zeroou-o-deficit-mas-nao-resolveu-o-problema-habitacional/>. Accessed on: 10 Feb. 2025.

<sup>16</sup> MOTA, L. A.; CAVALCANTI, A. R. Macroeconomics, Housing and Regional Development: the Aluizio Campos Multimodal Complex in Campina Grande-PB. *Qualitas*, v. 21, n. 2, May/Aug 2020.

**Figure 2**

*Aluizio Campos Housing Complex*



Source: Campina Grande City Hall (PMCG), 2017, apud Mota and Cavalcanti (2020, p. 64).

Most of the projects were located in peripheral areas, maintaining a pattern of urbanization that segregated the beneficiaries and imposed challenges of urban integration. Thus, although the 2006 Master Plan improved the norm and the federal program increased the supply of housing, the reality of Campina Grande continued to be marked by spatial inequalities, requiring a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of these policies.

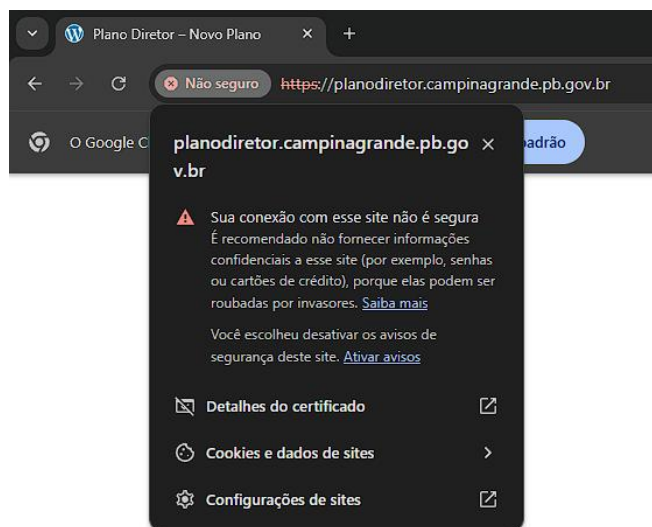
Between 2006 and 2024, there were no new revisions of the Master Plan, consolidating an interval of 18 years and evidencing the non-observance of the ten-year cycle provided for by law. Only in 2024 was the update process resumed, culminating in Complementary Law No. 213/2025, sanctioned in January 2025, which instituted the new Master Plan.

Throughout 2024, 55 community meetings and public hearings were held; even so, in this work, participation is qualified as relative, because the dissemination of the drafts and the contribution channels were concentrated on the Master Plan portal and, during the document collection carried out on November 19, 2024, practical access barriers were found — such as browser instabilities and warnings (e.g., "unsecure" connection alert and "503 Service Unavailable" error), as observed in Figures 03 and 04.

Such barriers reduced the effective accessibility to information and compromised the duty of publicity and access to the documents of the process (City Statute, art. 40, §4, II and III), in addition to the requirement of disclosure in an easily accessible place (Law 12.527/2011, art. 8), in connection with the constitutional right of access to information (FC, art. 5, XXXIII, and art. 37, §3, II).

**Figure 3**

*"Not Secure" Connection Warning in the planodiretor.campinagrande.pb.gov.br Domain*

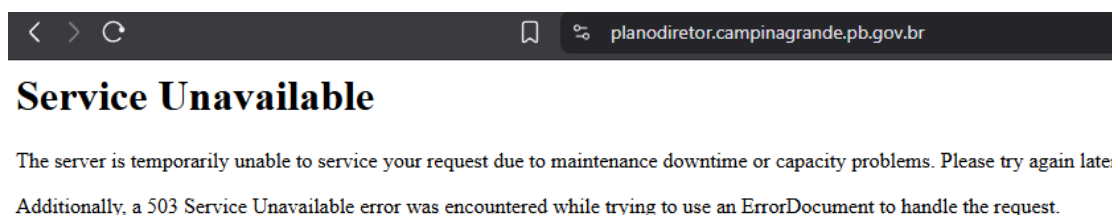


Source: Screenshot taken by one of the authors. URL: <https://planodiretor.campinagrande.pb.gov.br>. Accessed on: 13 nov. 2024.

In a later update, carried out on 16 Oct. 2025, it was found that the Master Plan portal was still unavailable, with a return error "503 Service Unavailable", indicating persistence of instabilities in access to the [planodiretor.campinagrande.pb.gov.br](https://planodiretor.campinagrande.pb.gov.br) domain, as illustrated in Figure 04.

**Figure 4**

*"503 Service Unavailable" Error in Domain planodiretor.campinagrande.pb.gov.br*



Source: Screenshot taken by one of the authors. URL: <https://planodiretor.campinagrande.pb.gov.br>. Accessed on: 16 out. 2025.

Despite these limitations, the public debate has had repercussions in the incorporation of proposals aimed at a more inclusive city, especially in the housing axis: the expansion of the ZEIS in an appropriate location, the provision of social interest settlements on underused land (including by special urban adverse possession and expropriations for the purposes of urban reform) and the encouragement of social housing close to employment and service areas, mitigating the peripheralization of poverty.

Together, these guidelines signal the search for integration between housing policy and territorial planning, guiding urban growth to the public interest and the promotion of socio-spatial justice.

Normatively, the 2025 Master Plan brought important news. He divided the municipality into Urban Macrozone and Rural Macrozone, and defined subcategories such as the Transitional Rural Macrozone, adapting the zoning to the different realities of the territory. He reaffirmed principles such as the social function of the city and property, equity in access to the benefits of urbanization and democratic management<sup>17</sup>.

Among the instruments provided, it consolidated and expanded the Special Zones of Social Interest: article 51 of the new law defined these zones as portions of the territory intended primarily for the land regularization of precarious settlements and the production of social housing.

Two types of Special Zones of Social Interest were established – type 1, corresponding to areas already occupied by low-income population (favelas, invasions, consolidated irregular allotments), and type 2, referring to unbuilt or underused land considered strategic for popular housing programs.

It is important to highlight that the plan explicitly created new Special Zones of Social Interest type 1: in all, 23 areas were delimited as Special Zones of Social Interest type 1 in the Annex to the law, including historically vulnerable communities (such as those of Jeremias, Pedregal, José Pinheiro, Vila Cabral, Malvinas, among others) and consolidated occupations that now have legal recognition.

These instituted Special Zones of Social Interest type 1 were added to the zones already defined in 2009, composing the set of priority areas for regularization and urbanization actions in the municipality. In addition, the plan provided that new zones could be created by specific laws (art. 53, § 1), after technical studies, which gave flexibility to expand the policy as needed.

Another innovation of the 2025 Master Plan was to stipulate deadlines for the regulation of instruments – for example, the law determined the updating of the Construction Code, the Land Use Law and the regulation of the progressive Urban Property and Land Tax within 12 months, aiming to make the mechanisms provided for effective. Also included in the

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<sup>17</sup> CITY COUNCIL OF CAMPINA GRANDE. With 38 amendments, the Campina City Council approves the new Master Plan of the Municipality. Campina Grande, [n.d.]. Available at: <https://www.camaracg.pb.gov.br/com-38-emendas-camara-de-campina-aprova-novo-plano-diretor-do-municipio/>. Accessed on: 6 jul. 2025.



text were the institution of the Municipal Social Interest Housing Fund and other housing financing tools<sup>18</sup>.

In short, the Master Plan of Campina Grande followed a path between norm and reality: the 1996 and 2006 plans undeniably innovated in a positive way, but faced limited execution, while the new 2025 plan sought to learn from these lessons, reinforcing devices and deadlines to make the right to decent housing effective. It remains, however, to be seen to what extent this new legal framework will be able to change the existing panorama of urban inequality – an issue discussed in the next section.

### 2.3 SOCIO-SPATIAL INEQUALITY AND VULNERABILITY IN CAMPINA GRANDE

The socio-spatial structure of Campina Grande evidences a historical pattern of center-periphery segregation, in which urban infrastructure and access to services tend to be more consistently concentrated in central areas, while the edges of the city accumulate shortages and greater exposures to social risks. It is, therefore, a territorial dynamic that is not only descriptive, but indicative of inequalities in urban integration between more consolidated sectors and peripheral sectors.

In this sense, the distribution of the Social and Infrastructural Vulnerability Index (IVSI) in the urban census tracts confirmed this exclusionary dynamic: Figure 05 illustrates that the tracts located in the periphery exhibited vulnerability indices much higher than average, while the central core of the city had low vulnerability. In other words, the central areas — corresponding to the most consolidated neighborhoods and provided with infrastructure — formed a kind of "archipelago of well-being", while the urban edges concentrated pockets of deprivation and social risk.

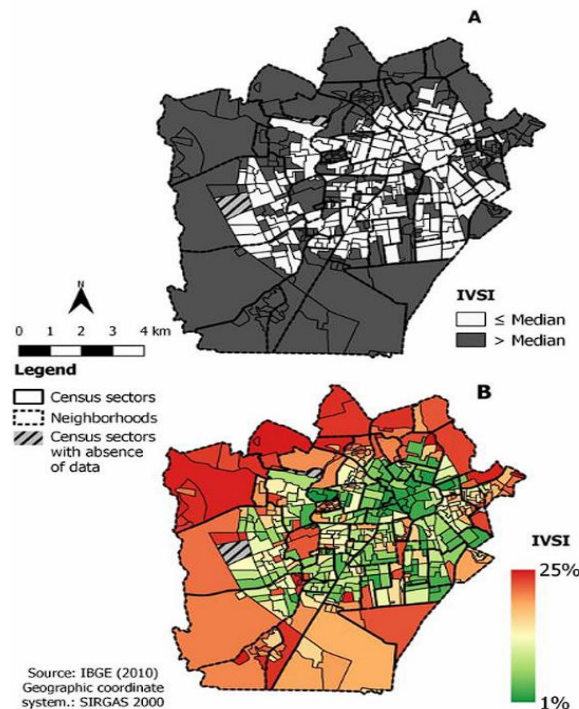
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<sup>18</sup> DÉRCIO. Mayor of Campina Grande sanctions new Master Plan: check out the main points. [S.l.]: Dércio, [s.d.]. Available at: <https://dercio.com.br/prefeito-de-campina-grande-sanciona-novo-plano-diretor-confirma-os-principais-pontos/>. Accessed on: 25 mar. 2025.



**Figure 5**

*Spatial distribution of the Social and Infrastructural Vulnerability Index (IVSI) in the urban census tracts of Campina Grande. The concentration of vulnerable sectors (in red, indicating values above the median of the IVSI) is observed along the edges of the urban perimeter, while the central nucleus exhibits low vulnerability (in green).*



Source: SILVA, R. N. et al. Revista Geociências do Nordeste (Caicó), v. 6, n. 2, jul./dez. 2020, p. 54-64, p. 60<sup>19</sup>.

On the IVSI map, practically all peripheral sectors appeared above the municipal median (indicating high vulnerability), while most central sectors were below the median (low vulnerability). This disparity revealed the strong association between poverty, informality and urban periphery in Campina Grande. It should be noted that there were some sectors without data (due to the absence of significant population or sampling issues), but the general trend corroborated the link between peripheral location and social exclusion.

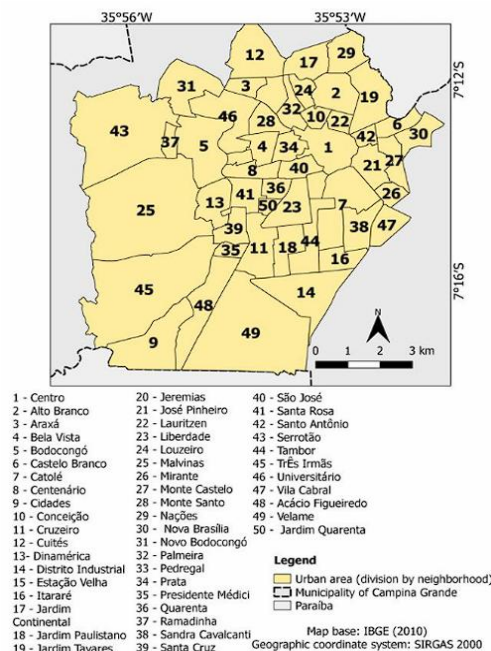
Figure 06 presents a map of the neighborhoods of Campina Grande, functioning as a spatial reference for the identification of the areas of greatest vulnerability and the Special Zones of Social Interest mentioned throughout the work. The reading of the territorial cut allows us to perceive that several popular neighborhoods are located in portions further away from the central area — such as Serrotão, Cidades, Nova Bodocongó, Cuités, among others

<sup>19</sup> SILVA, R. N. da; et al. Social and infrastructural vulnerability in the urban area of Campina Grande, Paraíba, Brazil. Journal of Geosciences of the Northeast, v. 6, n. 2, p. 54–64, 2020. DOI: 10.21680/2447-3359.2020v6n2ID18400.

—, composing a pattern of peripheralization associated with housing precariousness. In this context, the IBGE records, in the 2010 Census (LIT – Subnormal Agglomerations), the existence of 41 census sectors classified as subnormal agglomerations in the municipality, covering approximately 29 thousand residents, which corresponds to about 7% of the municipal population at the time<sup>20</sup>.

## Figure 6

*Reference map of the neighborhoods that make up the urban area of Campina Grande (PB), numbered according to official administrative division (IBGE, 2010). This map serves to locate the territories mentioned in the diagnosis*



Source: SILVA, R. N. et al. Revista Geociências do Nordeste (Caicó), v. 6, n. 2, jul./dez. 2020, p. 54-64, p. 61.

These informal settlements were spread across various interstices of the urban fabric, often on environmentally fragile terrain or of little interest to the real estate market: margins of old deactivated dumps, strips along railroad lines, slopes subject to landslides, valley bottoms subject to flooding, and other risk areas. This pattern reflected the historical process of exclusionary urbanization – driven both by demographic factors (rural exodus, rapid

<sup>20</sup> BRAZILIAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS (IBGE). 2010 Demographic Census: subnormal agglomerations – territorial information. Table 1 – Some characteristics of the census tracts of subnormal agglomerations, according to Major Regions, Federation Units and municipalities – 2010. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2010. Available at: [https://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Censos/Censo\\_Demografico\\_2010/Aglomerados\\_subnormais/Aglomerados\\_subnormais\\_informacoes\\_territoriais/tabelas\\_pdf/tab01.pdf](https://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Censos/Censo_Demografico_2010/Aglomerados_subnormais/Aglomerados_subnormais_informacoes_territoriais/tabelas_pdf/tab01.pdf). Accessed on: 14 set. 2025.

population growth) and by the lack of access of the low-income population to formal urban land.

Local studies<sup>21</sup> indicate that, by the end of the 1970s, Campina Grande had only three favelas and that, a few years later, this number had already reached 17, evidencing the rapid intensification of precarious occupation in the period. This expansion is related, in the literature, to socioeconomic pressures aggravated by droughts in the Northeast and to the internal migration of impoverished families, with a strong predominance of migrant population in the settlements. In the following decades, the trend of peripheralization and slumization continued: faced with the scarcity of affordable housing alternatives in well-located areas, significant portions of the population began to erect shacks or self-build in areas without infrastructure and without formal land ownership<sup>22</sup>.

As Maia (2010) pointed out, the neighborhoods that concentrated subnormal settlements were, for the most part, far from the center, showing that the low-income population, unable to afford the costs of well-situated regular housing, was compelled to occupy the fringes of the city in informal conditions. This residential segregation produced a vicious circle of vulnerability: families in peripheral areas suffered from the scarcity of public services (transport, sanitation, health, education), high travel costs and less access to jobs, which deepened inequalities.

It should be noted that there were urban intervention efforts aimed at mitigating these contrasts. Favela urbanization programs, although punctual, brought improvements to some communities in the 2000s – for example, in the occupations of the Araxá neighborhood and in the areas of Bodocongó, as highlighted earlier, which received infrastructure through projects of the Growth Acceleration Program. In addition, the massive production of housing by the MCMV program partially modified the map of vulnerability<sup>23</sup>.

Between 2010 and 2020, more than 13 thousand housing units were built in Campina Grande, many in large subdivisions on the northern and southern outskirts of the city. The Aluizio Campos Complex, located in a peri-urban area in the south/southeast sector of

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<sup>21</sup> RAMALHO, Deolinda de Sousa. Drought, migration and housing: where is the woman? Invisible? Roots: Journal of Social and Economic Sciences, Campina Grande, n. 13, p. 31-51, 1996, p. 40. DOI: 10.37370/raizes.1996.v.497. Available at: <https://raizes.revistas.ufcg.edu.br/index.php/raizes/article/download/497/474/928>. Accessed on: 14 set. 2025.

<sup>22</sup> MAIA, Doralice Sátyro. The periphery and fragmentation of the city: closed allotments, popular housing complexes and irregular allotments in the city of Campina Grande-PB, Brazil. Scripta Nova: Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, v. 14, 2010. Available at: <https://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-331/sn-331-80.htm>. Accessed on: 02 out. 2025.

<sup>23</sup> BRASIL DE FATO – Paraíba. The Minha Casa Minha Vida program in Campina Grande zeroed the deficit, but did not solve the housing problem. 2 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/colunista/observatorio-das-metropoles-nas-eleicoes-da-paraiba/2024/05/02/o-programa-minha-casa-minha-vida-em-campina-grande-zeroou-o-deficit-mas-nao-resolveu-o-problema-habitacional/>. Accessed on: June 14, 2025.

Campina Grande (associated with the Leve neighborhood), has been consolidated as a large planned housing project, with the forecast/implementation of basic equipment and services. However, because it is located in a peripheral strip of the urban fabric, its territorial insertion tends to reproduce the center-periphery logic: although it contributes to reducing the quantitative housing deficit, it can maintain physical and functional distances in relation to the centralities and opportunities concentrated in them (employment, specialized services and urban networks).

Indeed, critical studies have questioned whether simply building mass housing would amount to solving the housing problem. Lima and Miranda (2024)<sup>24</sup> pointed out that, in Campina Grande, the Minha Casa, Minha Vida program zeroed the deficit, but did not fully resolve the issue, as qualitative deficits and urban integration challenges persisted. There was evidence of default, abandoned or underutilized units, and difficulties in accessing commerce and jobs in the new complexes, indicating that providing houses was necessary, but not sufficient to guarantee decent housing. Adequate housing also involved security of tenure, infrastructure, accessibility and insertion in the city.

In Campina Grande, studies indicate that socio-infrastructural vulnerability tends to be concentrated at the edges of the urban perimeter, in contrast to relatively lower levels in central areas. In the 2025 Master Plan, part of these territories is incorporated into the instrument of Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS), with the delimitation of ZEIS 1 in settlements and specific areas — such as Vila dos Teimosos, Vila Cabral, Rosa Mística, Pedregal, Três Sisters, Mutirão (Serrotão), Novo Bodocongó, Jardim Continental and Castelo Branco — and the creation of ZEIS 2 for Luiz Gomes (art. 54), guiding the prioritization of urbanization, regularization and housing provision.

The overlap between vulnerable neighborhoods and neighborhoods legally defined for housing policy was positive in the sense that it directed efforts where it was most needed. However, it also revealed that the city has maintained, over time, pockets of poverty that are almost watertight. The creation of Special Zones of Social Interest, by itself, did not automatically change this reality – it was necessary for the legal declarations to be converted into urbanization plans, land regularization and service provision.

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<sup>24</sup> LIMA, Jobson Brunno da Silva; MIRANDA, Livia. The Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program in Campina Grande: zeroed the deficit, but did not solve the housing problem? Brasil de Fato – column "Observatory of the Metropolis in the Elections of Paraíba", 2 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/colunista/observatorio-das-metropoles-nas-eleicoes-da-paraiba/2024/05/02/o-programa-minha-casa-minha-vida-em-campina-grande-zeroou-o-deficit-mas-nao-resolveu-o-problema-habitacional/>. Accessed on: 26 Aug. 2025.

In this vein, the socio-spatial inequality of Campina Grande manifested itself geographically: a well-infrastructured center endowed with investments versus peripheries marked by precariousness. This center-periphery pattern of local urban development was perpetuated by the absence, for many years, of effective redistributive urban policies.

The recognition of the problem – through diagnosis of the Social and Infrastructural Vulnerability Index, delimitation of Special Zones of Social Interest, etc. – was an important step. However, the persistence of this inequality indicated that the previous Master Plan instruments have not been able, so far, to significantly reverse the situation of urban segregation. It remained to critically evaluate whether the new guidelines of the 2025 Master Plan, combined with vigorous public policies, could promote a more equitable and integrated city.

## 2.4 MASTER PLAN, EQUITY AND URBAN CITIZENSHIP: CRITICAL BALANCE AND PROPOSALS

The historical analysis of the Master Plan of Campina Grande showed a mismatch between the normative forecast and the socio-spatial dynamics effectively produced, a picture that dialogues with a pattern observed in several Brazilian cities. On the legal level, especially after the Statute of the City (2001), the master plans began to incorporate guidelines and instruments aimed at the social function of property, the containment of territorial exclusion and the strengthening of the right to housing.

In terms of implementation, however, the translation of these commands into concrete results was conditioned by structural factors: the technical and procedural complexity of the review and execution of the plan (diagnoses, cartographic bases, normative compatibilizations, and participatory steps), the need for continuous institutional capacity, in addition to conjunctural constraints, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected administrative routines and participatory processes in multiple contexts. Therefore, a critical assessment of the normative effectiveness, the obstacles verified and the formulation of ways to improve the local urban and housing policy was imposed.

From the point of view of normative effectiveness, it can be stated that the Master Plans of 1996 and 2006 had limited scope in promoting urban equity. Both introduced relevant innovations – such as the definition of Special Zones of Social Interest, the creation of special zones such as the Urban Recovery Zone and the provision of sectoral housing plans – but came up against obstacles such as the lack of timely regulation (as in the case of the Special



Zones of Social Interest, regulated only in 2009), administrative discontinuity and insufficient resources to make the planned actions viable.

The gap between the normative provision and the operationalization of urban guidelines contributed to the improvements materializing gradually: although municipal planning already pointed to the need to address housing and territorial precariousness, the consolidation of instruments and operational cuts occurred progressively — for example, with ZEIS being delimited and regulated only in 2009.

As for the 2025 Master Plan, it is still too early to assess empirical results, but the text already explains a broader institutional and instrumental design and a structured review process with social participation in stages, including territorial reading and public hearings. The plan incorporates and organizes classic instruments of urban policy — such as compulsory subdivision/building/use, progressive property tax over time, and consortium urban operations — and delimits ZEIS (ZEIS 1 and ZEIS 2), which shifts the focus to implementation challenges: regulation by specific rules and administrative routines, conversion of ZEIS into effective urbanization/regularization programs and housing provision, financial support (including through existing mechanisms such as the Municipal Social Interest Housing Fund) and, finally, administrative continuity with systematic monitoring of instruments, programs and projects within the scope of the Municipal System of Democratic Planning and Management.

A central finding of this study is that the effectiveness of the Master Plan depends less on the sophistication of the text and more on stable execution routines, with participation, financing and administrative continuity. In Campina Grande, the existence of instruments such as ZEIS and fiscal mechanisms only produces effects when there is regulation, territorial prioritization and monitoring, converting guidelines into verifiable actions.

- Governance and social control: ensure the regular functioning of the councils and publish, annually, a simple execution report (goals, actions and pending issues), with periodic hearings in ZEIS.
- Sectoral integration by territory: for each ZEIS and large complexes, adopt an integrated plan (housing + infrastructure + equipment + transport), treating them as "complete neighborhoods".
- Land/tax instruments: structure an objective flow to trigger progressive PEUC/IPTU and related measures in well-located idle properties, with a cadastre and land bank focused on HIS.



- Financing (FMHIS): strengthen the operationalization of the Fund with collegiate governance, public criteria and diversified sources (budget + urban instruments + intergovernmental cooperation).
- Indicators and review: define a lean set of indicators (Reurb, sanitation, urbanization, HIS production, etc.) with annual disclosure and direct use in the management and periodic review of the plan.

Ultimately, the right to decent housing and to the city must be evaluated not only by the number of houses delivered, but by the quality of the urban insertion of these houses. As the present study emphasizes, it is necessary to ensure that the new dwellings are connected to the formal city, with security in possession and access to services, under penalty of perpetuating segregation. Campina Grande now has a more complete normative framework to attack its urban problems; the proposals above aim to assist in the transition from the letter of the law to the concreteness of urban justice, putting into effect what the 1988 Constitution and the 2025 Master Plan recommend.

### **3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The trajectory of the Master Plan of Campina Grande has evidenced (and evidences), in an emblematic way, the difficulty of converting legal guidelines into concrete transformations. In almost three decades, there have been relevant normative advances – incorporation of principles of urban reform, creation of instruments for decent housing, identification of vulnerable areas – but also a significant distance between norm and practice, reflected in the persistence of center-periphery segregation, the proliferation of informal settlements and the territorial concentration of poverty. Only with the 2025 revision did the Municipality comprehensively update its Master Plan, opening a new window of opportunity to face these problems.

The results of the research showed that urban planning, in isolation, does not produce changes: laws and plans only gain effectiveness when accompanied by qualified management, social participation and stable financing. In Campina Grande, the past (in)effectiveness of the Master Plan was due to institutional weaknesses and economic constraints, which the new plan sought to mitigate by setting goals and integrating policies, conditioning its success to the continued commitment of the government and society.

Finally, it is reaffirmed that the right to decent housing is not limited to the reduction of the numerical deficit, but involves urban quality, integration into the city and security of tenure. The experience of Campinas indicated that equity, citizenship and social justice are gradual constructions, which depend on master plans effectively implemented and translated into concrete improvement of living conditions, so that decent housing becomes, in fact, a right accessible to all.

The study indicated that the Master Plan of Campina Grande proved to be partially effective in promoting decent housing and social justice. Although challenges and implementation gaps persist, normative advances and relevant concrete results have been identified, especially in the expansion of instruments and in recent housing production. Overall, the final diagnosis revealed a better and more consistent performance than the researchers assumed before starting the investigation.

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