



The challenge of implementing social land regularization - REURB-S: the case of the vulnerable territory of Vila Feliz – Londrina/Paraná

Thaís Aparecida de Souza

Mestre, UEL, Brasil
thaisjcsouza@gmail.com
orcid.org/0009-0008-0793-6027

Sandra Maria de Almeida Cordeiro

Professora Doutora, UEL, Brasil
sandrakordeiro@uel.br
orcid.org/0000-0003-2064-4068

Ideni Terezinha Antonello

Professora Doutora, UEL, Brasil
antonello@uel.br
Pesquisadora CNPq - PQ 2
orcid.org/0000-0002-6147-4731

Léia Aparecida Veiga

Professora Doutora, IFPR, Brasil
leia.veiga@if.edu.br
orcid.org/0000-0002-7870-293X

Alan Alves Alievi

Professor Doutor, SEED/PR, Brasil
akalan@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-1168-9398

Submissão / Submission: 30/11/2025

Aceite / Acceptance: 01/03/2026

SOUZA, Thaís Aparecida de; CORDEIRO, Sandra Maria Almeida; ANTONELLO, Ideni Terezinha; VEIGA, Léia Aparecida; ALIEVI, Alan Alves. O desafio da implementação da regularização fundiária de interesse social - REURB-S: O caso do território vulnerável Vila feliz – Londrina/Paraná. **Periódico Eletrônico Fórum Ambiental da Alta Paulista**, [S. l.], v. 22, n. 1, p. e2530, 2026. DOI: [10.17271/1980082722120265930](https://doi.org/10.17271/1980082722120265930). Disponível

em: https://publicacoes.amigosdanatureza.org.br/index.php/forum_ambiental/article/view/5930.

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O desafio da implementação da regularização fundiária de interesse social - REURB-S: o caso do território vulnerável Vila feliz – Londrina/Paraná

RESUMO

Objetivo - Analisar as condições socioeconômicas e ambientais do território vulnerável Vila Feliz, em Londrina (PR), destacando os desafios da implantação da regularização fundiária de interesse social nesse espaço.

Metodologia - A pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa e caráter exploratório, buscou apreender, de forma inicial e sistemática, as múltiplas dimensões do uso do território por famílias de baixa renda e das ações de diferentes agentes produtores do espaço urbano. Foram utilizados dados de fontes secundárias (bibliográficas e documentais) e de fontes primárias, obtidos por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas, em agosto de 2024, com 38 responsáveis por domicílios do território Vila Feliz, em Londrina (PR).

Originalidade/relevância - O estudo é relevante porque revela o descompasso entre o amplo marco jurídico que garante o direito à moradia e à cidade e a realidade de segregação, informalidade e vulnerabilidade vivida por populações de baixa renda em territórios como a Vila Feliz, em Londrina. Ao analisar esse território e discutir a implementação da REURB-S como instrumento de enfrentamento da injustiça socioambiental, o trabalho busca contribuir com subsídios teóricos e práticos para o planejamento urbano integrado, a gestão municipal e a atuação dos movimentos sociais na defesa do direito à cidade e da moradia digna.

Resultados - Os principais resultados indicam que a Lei nº 13.465, ao introduzir a legitimação fundiária, oferece um instrumento jurídico consistente para assegurar o direito real de propriedade e valorizar os imóveis em territórios informais, articulado às medidas urbanísticas, ambientais e sociais da REURB-S. Contudo, evidenciou-se que sua efetivação é limitada por disputas de poder locais, pela ausência de ação mais incisiva da gestão pública e pelo desconhecimento da população sobre o processo de regularização, o que reforça a centralidade da vontade política e da mobilização social para que a função social da propriedade se concretize no cotidiano das famílias.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas - Ao tomar o território vulnerável Vila Feliz, em Londrina (PR), como campo empírico de análise e problematização, este estudo busca contribuir para o debate sobre o direito à cidade e a justiça socioambiental.

Contribuições sociais e ambientais - A articulação entre o diagnóstico das condições socioeconômicas e ambientais vivenciadas pelas famílias com a discussão crítica sobre a aplicabilidade da REURB-S e do arcabouço legal urbano vigente, evidenciou-se os limites e as potencialidades da regularização fundiária de interesse social como instrumento de enfrentamento da informalidade urbana. Assim, o trabalho oferece subsídios teórico-analíticos e propositivos tanto para o planejamento urbano quanto para a formulação e revisão de políticas públicas de habitação de interesse social, reforçando a centralidade dos territórios populares na construção de cidades mais justas, democráticas e socialmente inclusivas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Direito à Cidade. Insegurança Jurídica. REURB-S. Favelas. Londrina.

The challenge of implementing social land regularization - REURB-S: the case of the vulnerable territory of Vila Feliz – Londrina/Paraná

ABSTRACT

Objective – To analyze the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of the vulnerable territory of Vila Feliz, in Londrina (PR), highlighting the challenges of implementing land regularization in the public interest in this area.

Methodology – The qualitative and exploratory research sought to initially and systematically understand the multiple dimensions of land use by low-income families and the actions of different agents producing the urban space. Data from secondary sources (bibliographic and documentary) and primary sources were used, obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted in August 2024 with 38 heads of households in the Vila Feliz territory in Londrina (PR).

Originality/Relevance – The study is relevant because it reveals the mismatch between the broad legal framework that guarantees the right to housing and the city and the reality of segregation, informality, and vulnerability experienced by low-income populations in territories such as Vila Feliz, in Londrina. By analyzing this territory and discussing the implementation of REURB-S as an instrument to combat socio-environmental injustice, the study seeks to contribute theoretical and practical insights for integrated urban planning, municipal management, and the actions of social movements in defense of the right to the city and decent housing.

Results – The main results indicate that Law No. 13,465, by introducing land legitimization, offers a consistent legal instrument to ensure real property rights and increase the value of properties in informal territories, in conjunction with the urban, environmental, and social measures of REURB-S. However, it was evident that its implementation is limited by local power struggles, the absence of more incisive action by public management, and the population's

lack of knowledge about the regularization process, which reinforces the centrality of political will and social mobilization for the social function of property to be realized in the daily lives of families.

Theoretical/Methodological Contributions – By taking the vulnerable territory of Vila Feliz, in Londrina (PR), as an empirical field of analysis and problematization, this study seeks to contribute to the debate on the right to the city and socio-environmental justice.

Social and Environmental Contributions – The articulation between the diagnosis of the socioeconomic and environmental conditions experienced by families and the critical discussion on the applicability of REURB-S and the current urban legal framework highlighted the limits and potential of land regularization of social interest as an instrument for tackling urban informality. Thus, the work offers theoretical-analytical and propositional subsidies for both urban planning and the formulation and revision of public policies for social housing, reinforcing the centrality of popular territories in the construction of more just, democratic, and socially inclusive cities.

KEYWORDS: Right to the City. Legal Insecurity. REURB-S. Favelas. Londrina.

El reto de la implementación de la regularización de la propiedad de interés social (REURB-S): el caso del territorio vulnerable de Vila Feliz, en Londrina (Paraná)

RESUMEN

Objetivo – Analizar las condiciones socioeconómicas y ambientales del territorio vulnerable de Vila Feliz, en Londrina (Paraná), destacando los retos que plantea la implementación de la regularización fundiaria de interés social en este espacio.

Metodología – la investigación, de enfoque cualitativo y carácter exploratorio, buscó comprender, de forma inicial y sistemática, las múltiples dimensiones del uso del territorio por parte de familias de bajos ingresos y las acciones de diferentes agentes productores del espacio urbano. Se utilizaron datos de fuentes secundarias (bibliográficas y documentales) y de fuentes primarias, obtenidos mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas realizadas en agosto de 2024 a 38 responsables de hogares del territorio de Vila Feliz, en Londrina (PR).

Originalidad/Relevancia – el estudio es relevante porque revela el desajuste entre el amplio marco jurídico que garantiza el derecho a la vivienda y a la ciudad y la realidad de segregación, informalidad y vulnerabilidad que viven las poblaciones de bajos ingresos en territorios como Vila Feliz, en Londrina. Al analizar este territorio y discutir la implementación de la REURB-S como instrumento para combatir la injusticia socioambiental, el trabajo busca contribuir con subsidios teóricos y prácticos para la planificación urbana integrada, la gestión municipal y la actuación de los movimientos sociales en la defensa del derecho a la ciudad y a una vivienda digna.

Resultados – los principales resultados indican que la Ley n.º 13.465, al introducir la legitimación fundiaria, ofrece un instrumento jurídico coherente para garantizar el derecho real de propiedad y valorizar los inmuebles en territorios informales, articulado con las medidas urbanísticas, ambientales y sociales de la REURB-S. Sin embargo, se ha puesto de manifiesto que su aplicación se ve limitada por disputas de poder locales, por la falta de una acción más incisiva de la gestión pública y por el desconocimiento de la población sobre el proceso de regularización, lo que refuerza la importancia de la voluntad política y la movilización social para que la función social de la propiedad se materialice en la vida cotidiana de las familias.

Contribuciones teóricas/metodológicas: al tomar el territorio vulnerable de Vila Feliz, en Londrina (PR), como campo empírico de análisis y problematización, este estudio busca contribuir al debate sobre el derecho a la ciudad y la justicia socioambiental.

Contribuciones sociales y ambientales: la articulación entre el diagnóstico de las condiciones socioeconómicas y ambientales que viven las familias y la discusión crítica sobre la aplicabilidad de la REURB-S y el marco legal urbano vigente puso de manifiesto los límites y las potencialidades de la regularización fundiaria de interés social como instrumento para hacer frente a la informalidad urbana. Así, el trabajo ofrece subsidios teórico-analíticos y propositivos tanto para la planificación urbana como para la formulación y revisión de políticas públicas de vivienda de interés social, reforzando la centralidad de los territorios populares en la construcción de ciudades más justas, democráticas y socialmente inclusivas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Derecho a la ciudad. Inseguridad jurídica. REURB-S. Favelas. Londrina.

1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the social production of Brazilian urban space reveals socio-territorial contradictions, particularly when attention is directed toward the vulnerable portion of the population that, in everyday life, experiences exclusion from the right to the city. This exclusion crystallizes in favelas, an expression of the denial of the fundamental right to dignified housing, which, in turn, compromises access to other rights (health, education, work, environment, culture, and economic conditions) that, although provided for by law (BRASIL, 1988), are not effectively guaranteed.

This urbanization process is marked by socio-spatial segregation, which leads this population - especially low-income groups - to seek survival in favelas, historically excluded from access to housing both through the market and through public policies. According to Maricato (2003, p. 161), "[...] Brazilian society long postponed measures to confront urban problems, among which the land/real estate issue mentioned here is central, though not the only one." Over the decades, the result was the illegal appropriation of certain spaces in the city for housing provision, an expression of the "logic of necessity," as Abramo (2009) points out. These are territories marked by socio-spatial inequality and by the reproduction of conditions of deprivation and social vulnerability among the families living in these informal urban settlements or favelas, which, in this study, are referred to as vulnerable territories, understood, as Antonello (2022, p. 278) argues, as areas characterized by "[...] the lack of technical infrastructure (basic sanitation, electricity, waste collection, etc.) and social infrastructure (health, education), in addition to the precariousness of housing, generally located in unsuitable areas (urban riverbanks, former dumps, areas with steep slopes)."

From these territories emerges the struggle for the right to the city through the force of resistance, as Antonello (2023, p. 30) points out when arguing that the conflicts and contradictions of the social production of urban space "[...] generate, at the same time, the suffering of the oppressive domination of abstract space (capital logic) and the appropriation of the perceived space, lived in the favela (territory of resistance)."

The logic of capital prevails in the production of urban space, fostering and aggravating socio-territorial segregation insofar as it commands the urban land structure and holds hostage public policy on social-interest housing, subordinated to the interests of the "financial-real estate complex," as Shimbo (2019) argues. Thus, PMCMV (Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program) moved away from a strictly social focus as it became linked to a broader federal government project to address the international financial crisis that began in 2008, associating itself with the "complex financial-real estate model" in order to stimulate private companies connected to the construction and real estate sectors. In this way, the program distanced itself from the real objectives and needs of the most vulnerable populations, leaving them only with the precarious appropriation of territories situated on the margins of the formal city.

This shift in the focus of public policy can be observed in the 2022 Census data produced by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which reported 16 million Brazilians living in favelas or urban communities. According to the technical note, these areas may be classified by their "[...] incompleteness - at the limit, precariousness - of governmental

policies and private investments in urban infrastructure provision, [...] reproducing conditions of vulnerability [...] that also compromise the guarantee of the right to housing and legal protection against forced evictions and removals" (IBGE, 2023, n.p.).

Therefore, it is essential to insist that public policy on social-interest housing genuinely address this reality, as Antonello (2023, p. 35) states, "[...] in order to review the condition of 'vulnerability' of families, which is experienced in their living space, in their daily lives, due to housing precariousness, which subjects this population to greater risks, such as disease, violence, and environmental disasters, since they are mostly located in areas of environmental fragility; this process of vulnerability is related to social, economic, historical, and natural factors."

In this sense, the importance of examining the applicability of Federal Law 13.465/2017, which deals with Land Regularization of Social Interest (REURB-S), stands out, since it is an instrument of urban policy for confronting real estate and land informality and illegality in Brazilian cities. It must be implemented in an integrated manner with urban planning, since the principle governing intervention in territory demands an objective aimed at a future situational change; thus, planning is not only about decisions concerning the future, but mainly questions what the future of decisions is (Matus, 2006). At this point, the scope of urban planning is at stake: what direction and what decision should be conceived in order to transform the situation of social injustice present in Brazilian cities, precisely with a view to unified action, considering that: "We know that urban policies can affect the air we breathe, the quality of the spaces in which we live, work and play, the water we drink, the way we move about, as well as our access to healthy, nutritious foods and to health care services" (ONU-HABITAT/World Health Organization, 2020, p. 12).

It is considered that urban planning, when integrated with other sectoral policies, can act effectively to alter the socio-environmental injustice that afflicts Brazilian cities, particularly given that there is a robust legal framework for this, such as the City Statute (Law No. 10,257, of July 10, 2001) and REURB (Federal Law 13.465/2017), one of whose principles is to achieve the social function of the city and of property, aiming to ensure public action in favor of citizens' needs. Thus, by striving to attain this premise, it becomes possible to challenge market logic, which would reverberate as a change in the urban segregation process, considering that "In view of this dynamic imposed by market logic, segregation is understood as the materialization in urban space of the economic, political, social and cultural exclusion of the low-income population, in the sense that it is present in the daily lives of people living in the city" (Marques; Antonello, 2021, p. 4).

In this context, this article aims to analyze the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of the vulnerable territory Vila Feliz, in Londrina (PR), highlighting the challenges of implementing land regularization of social interest in this space. It is based on the understanding that land regularization, by its nature, assumes the meaning of a concession that is not restricted to the right to housing, but seeks to ensure access to the benefits, services, and resources that the city offers, which ultimately means guaranteeing the right to the city.

To achieve this purpose, the article is structured around two central axes: a) presentation and analysis of the formation of the territory and the conditions experienced by

the families living there; and b) discussion of important aspects presented by the new regulatory framework and municipal laws regarding land regularization policy as a means of promoting several rights beyond housing, along with a propositional analysis for its application in Vila Feliz.

1.1 Methodology

This research is characterized by a qualitative approach, in the terms discussed by Minayo (2010), since it focuses on the process rather than only on the results, allowing the analysis of human groups in their context while simultaneously considering individual and collective aspects, as well as the interpersonal and institutional relationships that traverse them.

It is also exploratory research, since it sought to approach the object of study and initially and systematically grasp the multiple dimensions involved in the use of territory by low-income families and in the actions of different agents who produce urban space. For this purpose, information was gathered from secondary sources - bibliographic and documentary - and from primary sources through visits to the territory with photographic records in September 2023, as well as the conduct of semi-structured interviews (Gil, 2008) and the application of questionnaires with residents of Vila Feliz, in Londrina (PR), in 2024.

The questionnaires were designed with open and closed questions and applied to 38 heads of household on a Saturday afternoon in August 2024, when most families were at home. The procedure for analyzing the interviews and questionnaires was qualitative-quantitative, since it identifies, through objective and subjective data, the reality experienced by the families in the territory that is the focus of the research. In the case of the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires, the study drew on quantitative research of a more objective nature, but it is understood that quantitative data reveal qualitative elements. The semi-structured interviews, in turn, provided a qualitative analysis, because the information obtained is linked to a subjective perspective that sought to understand the phenomena according to the singularities and meanings attributed to them, making it possible to bring subject and object closer together by understanding the meanings embedded in structures and relationships.

The importance of this qualitative-quantitative methodology for the present research lies in presenting, through quantitative data (mathematical language), the magnitude of the housing problem and, through the qualitative method, demonstrating not only human action but also the reaction to this reality as lived in the territory. This procedure made it possible to articulate the theoretical framework with the concrete experiences of the subjects, favoring an understanding of the perceptions, motivations, and challenges associated with the use of territory and with struggles for the right to the city.

2 RESULTS

2.1 Genesis of the vulnerable territory Vila Feliz in the voice of its residents

To reconstruct the history of Vila Feliz territory, two in-person semi-structured interviews were conducted. The criteria for selecting interviewees were based on the intentional

identification of participants/residents who had lived in the territory for a longer period or who had knowledge of its occupation processes. The role of public authorities regarding the right to housing and housing policies, based on their action in this territory, was also addressed.

This research technique adopted as a guideline the "difference in communication and simplicity of communication" defended by Fals Borda (1981), with the purpose of establishing dialogue between technical and popular knowledge in order to foster community engagement in learning about its territory and to encourage active and autonomous participation regarding conditions and proposals related to the land regularization process. As the author argues, by entering the territory through participatory research it is possible to perceive that "[...] every advance made in improving local conditions and stimulating people's power and dignity, as well as the self-confidence of grassroots people, always resulted in a marvel, in an experience that filled us with satisfaction [...]" (Fals Borda, 1999, p. 81).

Based on the categories and themes that stood out in the participants' statements, an effort was made to establish a correspondence with some of the theoretical references addressed in this research, which made it possible to build understandings, reflections, propositions, and conclusions in light of the objectives of this study through the voice of the territory's residents. This is anchored in the perspective defended by Cunha and Antonello (2025, p. 3), according to which "It is based on the premise that popular knowledge can establish mechanisms of resistance and struggle against hegemony in the face of science's dominant paradigm - modern science, appropriated by the interests of the dominant elite."

Following this theoretical-methodological path, the interviews were conducted. The interviewee referred to as João (a fictitious name) reported that when he arrived in Vila Feliz in 2000 there were six (6) families living there. In 2025, approximately fifty-six (56) families living in the territory were recorded (COHAPAR, 2023), a significant increase in this process. The other interviewee, designated Paulo (a fictitious name), contributed to the search for knowledge about the territory due to his willingness to recount the history of this Informal Urban Settlement (NUI) and the relationship between his personal history and the territory; other information found was sought in newspapers and official documents.

The Vila Feliz territory is considered an already consolidated settlement. According to the regulatory framework of land regularization, Article 11, item III, a consolidated informal urban nucleus is one that is difficult to reverse, considering the length of occupation, the nature of the buildings, the location of circulation routes, and the presence of public facilities, among other circumstances to be assessed by the municipality (Brasil, 2017).

Since, according to COHAPAR data (Housing Company of Paraná, 2023), Vila Feliz has existed for eighteen (18) years, João - the interviewee who had lived in the territory the longest - stated that he had been there for more than twenty-five (25) years. Regarding the period of existence of this vulnerable territory, in addition to the resident's account, information was obtained from a news report (one of the oldest found) published by BONDE-LD (Moradores [...], 2010), a news and media website belonging to the Folha de Londrina group, which mentioned an event related to Vila Feliz in 2010. Even without absolute precision about the period of formation of this territory, it can be inferred that this informal urban nucleus has existed for more than a decade. Given the finding that this NUI (informal urban nucleus) is private property, we asked both

resident participants in the interview whether there had ever been any request for the families to leave the area. Resident João answered:

No, no one - not even the heirs - ever showed up again. Right at the beginning the heirs came, just when we were clearing the land, then they called the neighbors, the police, the police came too... they said like this: you all can stay here; as long as it doesn't go to court you can stay as long as you want, so we've been here until today [sic] (Field research, 2024).

Interviewee Paulo answered that there had never been any demand in that sense. In the statements of the interview participants, it was evident that the situation of the land (private) is not unknown, as was also observed among other residents. This statement is based on the information obtained during the survey carried out in this investigation, when it was possible to hear other residents talking about who in fact would be the owner of the land.

With respect to the habitability of the buildings and the residents' living conditions, it was observed that some houses had received structural and aesthetic improvements and/or had been expanded, which indicates a more adequate housing standard for the families. This current reality of houses with a better structural level, built in masonry and with other elements that depart from the traditional characterization of precarious dwellings built in favelas, could also be heard in the interviewees' accounts. They narrated that this was not the case with the first dwellings built in the territory. The houses were literally shacks, essentially made of wood, much more prone to fire risk, situations that in fact occurred in the territory more than once, as reported in the interview by one of the participants. Regarding housing conditions at the beginning of the settlement, the interviewees reported: a) "Up there, the little shack near [...], it was a little shack, then it was falling down, we moved to the other side because it fell with a heavy rain [...] To another shack in Vila Feliz that fell because of the rain, about 6 or 7 years ago, it fell with the rain, then I went to live with my mother and stayed as a favor in another little shack here in the invasion of Vila Feliz itself, and from there ... building here, now we're here" [sic] (Field research, 2024).

It is worth emphasizing that, when one speaks of irregular settlements occupied by low-income families, the persistent image is one of a highly precarious housing pattern, characterized not only by the architecture of the dwellings but also by the materials used in the very production process. Gonçalves (2021) draws special attention to the typology of materials used by families in the construction of dwellings in settlement areas or favelas. In his studies, the author presents the evolution of the types of materials reported in census editions. The descriptions presented by the IBGE throughout its surveys included tin sheets, zinc-coated tarpaulins, metal sheets, unfinished wood, and used packaging material.

However, in the most recent censuses it was possible to observe that houses built with masonry materials in settlements and favelas predominated, understood as materials of higher cost and requiring more specialized use for this purpose. The presence of this type of construction in informal areas occupied by popular classes may have numerous explanations. In the case of Vila Feliz, one possible source reported by resident Paulo was the existence of a donation bank on site, which forwards leftover construction materials to the community. The turnover of families in the territory was another aspect reported in the interviews by João and

Paulo and through the questionnaires, a phenomenon typical of informal urban nuclei (NUIs). In the specific case of Vila Feliz, a percentage of the interviewed families reported having lived in the settlement for more than 10 years, while others had remained there for only 1 to 3 years. This condition may be related to the socioeconomic condition of the population itself, which is always seeking better places, possibilities for social and economic advancement, and security in housing tenure.

Regarding the presence of COHAB (Londrina Housing Company) in the territory, land regularization is not a widely disseminated topic. Among the final questions in the interview script, we asked the interviewees what they understood about land regularization, and the residents gave the following testimony:

Interviewer: Resident João, do you understand what land regularization is? Ah, I'm afraid of leaving here. I: Do you think it is something bad? I don't know, I don't think so, they said this place will never be regularized, but it's good because of everything, right [sic]. Resident Paulo. Interviewer: What benefit do you understand Land Regularization will bring? For me to have what's mine. To have proof of what's mine, to prove what's mine. Because whether you like it or not, people are right to say this isn't mine. [sic] (Fieldwork, 2024).

The residents' statements show that the land regularization process, as an instrument intended to change the condition of land and urban irregularity, is poorly understood and also reflects that illegality can often benefit certain groups or individuals. Indeed, fieldwork revealed the presence of an informal real estate market within Vila Feliz, a topic that surfaced at various moments in our research, in individual interviews, in the data collected through the census survey, and in conversations with residents.

It can be seen that one dynamic present in the informal urban nucleus (NUI) is the illegal commercialization of dwellings in the territory (sales and rentals), which reveals how increasingly complex the problem can become, both for the State and for the population. To understand this reality, it is worth recalling that territory, according to Santos (2005), carries the meaning of power. By pointing out that horizontalities defined by local space, lived space, are a form of response to the verticalities imposed on the used territory, characterized by a hegemonic vision including the *modus operandi* of the global scale, with its economic, cultural, and social determinations, the author argues that used territory is indeed a form of power. It is in this place that the possibility of doing things differently exists, especially in the search for a fairer society. If, according to Santos (2005), territory is power and there is in it the possibility of using it as a form of resistance to the evils of the system, for some it also continues to be power for reproducing the harmful means of the system that acts upon it. In Antonello's words (2023, p. 40), "the vulnerability experienced and suffered in everyday life, these territories become territories of resistance, from which emanates the struggle to overcome time and space as a commodity."

The illegal commercialization of real estate in favelas reflects, according to Coelho (2017, p. 11), "[...] the stories of how these people came to the favela are always linked to a relative or friend already established in the community who offered or informed them about a property being sold." The existence of a pattern of illegal real estate commercialization within

NIUs is undeniable and, according to Coelho (2017), results from the lack of interest of the formal market in producing housing for low-income families. According to the same author, two points should be observed regarding this "new and established" pattern. The informal market for the production and commercialization of housing does not operate for capitalist accumulation, but for the production of values without the extraction of surplus value; nevertheless, these commercial relations can yield greater profits due to the advantages of property location within the favela itself.

Abramo's study (2009) demonstrates that the definition of this type of market is linked to economic practices established outside the institutional regulatory framework of the rule of law and its systems of control; practices, resources, and punishment can, in a first approximation, be defined as informal economic practices. When these relations are recurrent and secured by some form of institutional regulation parallel to rights, they may give rise to a market - that is, a regular encounter of buyers and sellers of goods and services whose commercial transactions are reproduced through a certain freedom of action and decision on the part of participants.

The illegal trade in property and land in the territory is used to reproduce the same exploitation to which residents are subjected, especially when directed toward families living under economic insufficiency and seeking subsistence. The problem becomes even greater when these supposed "real estate actors" assume a quasi-legal posture in the territory, imposing rules and embodying, in the territorialization of power relations, agents such as drug traffickers, militias, or figures who have had some involvement with crime and now use their life history to obtain advantages in the territory.

Thus, Vila Feliz is a vulnerable territory that expresses itself as a "territory of inequality" (Abramo, 2009) within the city of Londrina, and has been the focus of public authorities, represented municipally by COHAB, through visits carried out in the territory, housing proposals presented over the years, and socioeconomic surveys conducted on site. Nevertheless, the problem persists. In this direction, it is necessary not only to rethink the lack of institutional capacity for action, but also to ask what strategies, actions, or governmental articulations have been adopted or developed by COHAB to change the reality of these families. In addition, when speaking of land regularization, it is necessary to understand what could in fact make the right to housing effective, or what might present itself as an obstacle in a territory with such concrete and distinctive conditions in relation to what the law defines as a consolidated urban nucleus, with an existence of approximately two decades, occupied predominantly by low-income families and without any judicial challenge from any claimant. In this sense, there is no shortage of questions to be explored in view of public inaction in relation to Vila Feliz.

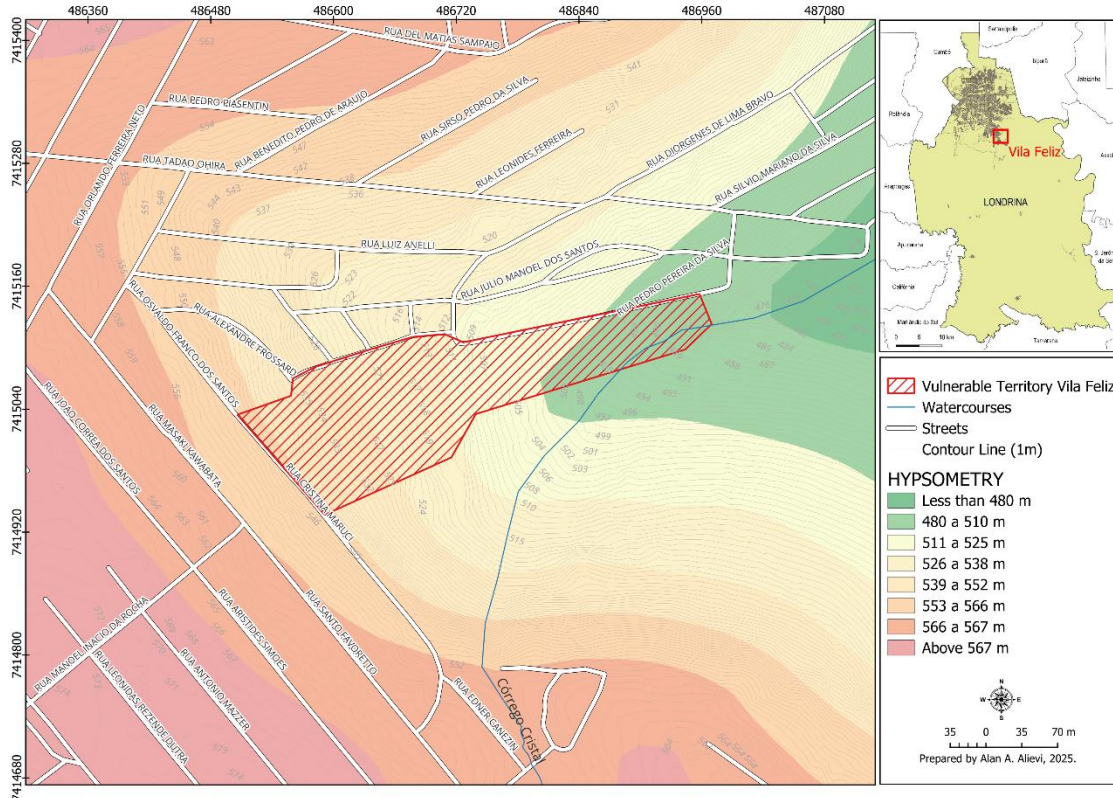
It is worth emphasizing that the central feature of the current situation is the absence of the State, due to the lack of political and urban planning in the preventive sense, for the provision of housing to an economically vulnerable population. It is fundamentally important to understand that the lack of this prevention is burdensome both to public coffers and to the families subjected to such conditions. According to Fernandes (2023), State prevention through social-interest housing proposals costs far less than the high sums allocated to land regularization of irregular areas. The next section is devoted to the socioeconomic

characterization of the Vila Feliz population in order to demonstrate that this territory presents the necessary conditions for the implementation of land regularization of social interest.

2.2 Delineating the socioeconomic dimension of the families in Vila Feliz

The socioeconomic dimension of the residents of this territory was developed based on the data obtained, as described in the research methodology, with the concern of carrying out an analysis aimed at characterizing this community and presenting its classification within one of the REURB typologies. Until 2025, Vila Feliz was located on privately owned urban land in the southern portion of Londrina (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Location of the vulnerable territory Vila Feliz - Londrina, PR, highlighting land slope



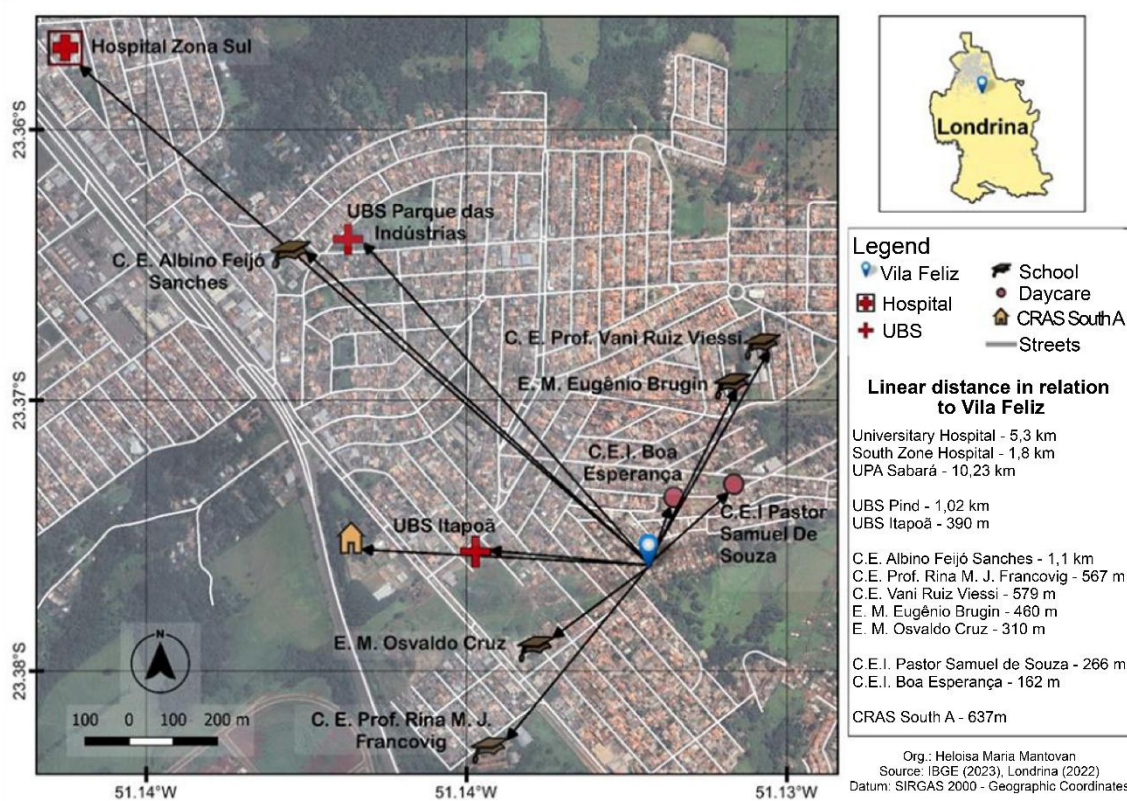
Source: SIGLON - Londrina, 2025. Prepared by Alan Alves Alievi, 2025.

Until December 2025, the houses were distributed along a sloping portion ranging from 552 m to 480 m, creating greater mobility difficulties for the families living in the lower part, since when going to work or seeking public services they must travel an uphill distance.

Among the 56 families living in Vila Feliz (COHAPAR, 2023), 38 residents were interviewed in the survey conducted for this research, corresponding to 67.8% of the households in the territory. At the time, residents of some homes were not at home.

The surveys carried out with residents during fieldwork showed that the population of the territory uses the urban social facilities installed in the surrounding area (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Linear distance traveled by residents of Vila Feliz to the main public health, education, and social assistance services in 2024



Source: Souza, 2024.

According to Figure 2, residents' demands for health care, education, and social assistance have been met by public services located in neighboring districts. The greatest distance traveled by residents (in a straight line) is approximately 10.23 km to access health services at the Sabará Emergency Care Unit (UPA). The shortest distance traveled (in a straight line) is approximately 162 m to reach the Boa Esperança Early Childhood Education Center (CEI).

Based on the characterization of the Vila Feliz favela, it can be observed that the absence of regular urban services such as electricity, water, and sanitary sewage led residents to resort to informal solutions, such as clandestine water and power connections, in addition to sewage channeling carried out by the population itself into the Sanepar's network. Although garbage collection takes place regularly, it does not enter the territory, which requires each family to take its waste to the collection point.

In the age profile of the interviewees, adults of economically active age predominate, especially between 18 and 50 years old, which indicates a population potentially capable of insertion into the labor market. However, employability reveals weak formal attachment, with emphasis on unspecified occupations possibly associated with seasonal and informal activities, in addition to domestic work, construction, industry, commerce, and, to a lesser extent, public service.

From a legal, urbanistic, environmental, and social point of view, the territory shows major deficits in relation to legal standards and to the sustainability expected of a planned and

regularized urban space. Because it is an occupation on privately owned land, residents do not possess documentation ensuring the right to housing. In response to the absence of public authorities, the population itself promoted improvements to make the area more habitable, albeit through informal means such as clandestine water and electricity connections.

This informality in access to services also raises environmental concerns, especially regarding the indiscriminate use of resources such as water, whose management should be under the control of regulatory agencies. In this sense, the City Statute (2001), in advocating the construction of sustainable cities, points to the responsibility of public authorities and civil society in overcoming these conditions. Nevertheless, State absence appears as a central element in maintaining illegality and urban precariousness.

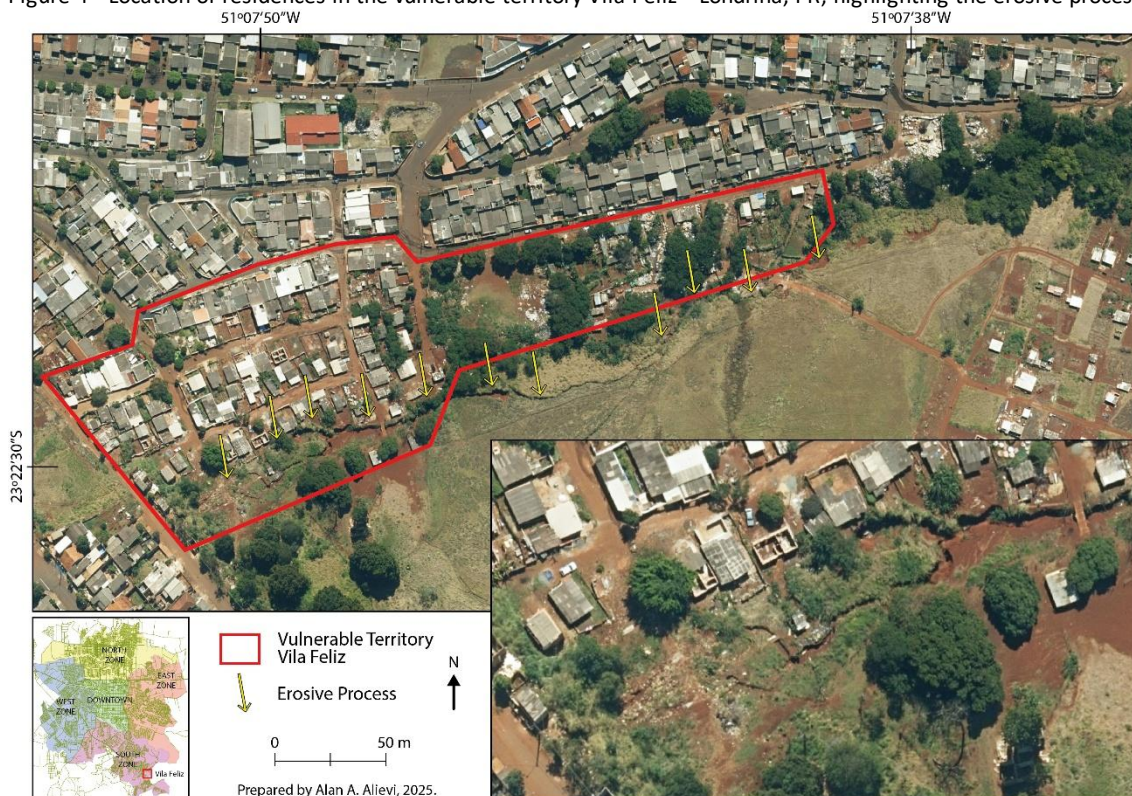
Finally, there is a clear lack of investment in infrastructure in Vila Feliz, expressed in the absence of sidewalks and in uneven, unpaved streets, which compromises accessibility, especially for the elderly and people with disabilities. Added to this is environmental insecurity caused by an erosive process at the gully stage, resulting from the lack of maintenance of stormwater drainage pipes, further aggravating the everyday vulnerability of resident families.

Figure 3 - Partial view of the streets and dwellings in the vulnerable territory Vila Feliz - Londrina, PR, in 2023



Source: Field surveys, 2023; Photos: Léia Aparecida Veiga, 2023. Prepared by Alan Alves Alievi, 2025.

Figure 4 - Location of residences in the vulnerable territory Vila Feliz - Londrina, PR, highlighting the erosive process



Source: SIGLON - Londrina, 2021; Field surveys, 2023. Prepared by Alan Alves Alievi, 2025.

The width of the gully required residents to build a crossing, which does not offer safety to those who use it (Figure 5), since it was constructed with scraps of wood and without the necessary support. In the deep gully channel (Figure 5), there is a large amount of urban solid waste, such as plastic packaging, damaged furniture, clothes, among others. The photographs in Figure 5 show that in some parts of the erosion there is water accumulation which, together with solid waste that also stores rainwater, may contribute to the proliferation of dengue mosquitoes. There is also imminent danger for some residents, because the erosive process is already very close to their houses. In this context, the study by Godoy, Benni, and Silva (2025, p. 4) on the "climate crisis" emphasizes that: "Housing precariousness, occupation of environmentally fragile areas, insufficient drainage and sanitation systems, and limited State action configure a scenario in which extreme climate events cease to be exceptions and become part of the everyday life of these populations."

What is known so far is that there are only risks of accidents to the families living in that area, with damage to the environment and to the health of that population considering the amount of garbage daily discarded there. This fact is consistent with the "environmental racism and necropolitics" reported in the study carried out by Silva et al. (2025) when discussing the precariousness of basic sanitation in favelas, which involves four axes (sanitary sewage, water supply, urban solid waste cleaning and collection, and urban drainage), and they warn that "[...] favela residents are more fragile and susceptible to exposure, because the environmental

quality and quality of life to which they are entitled are not provided. These places and their organizations are constantly neglected and ignored" (Silva et al., 2025, p. 323).

Figure 5 - Partial view of different observation points of the erosion in the vulnerable territory Vila Feliz - Londrina, PR, in 2023



Source: Field surveys, 2023; Photos: Léia Aparecida Veiga, 2023. Prepared by Alan Alves Alievi, 2025.

Throughout the characterization of this informal urban nucleus, it was noted that the population living in Vila Feliz is served in its surroundings by several community public facilities (Basic Health Unit, municipal and state schools, Social Assistance Reference Center, among others), which facilitates access to health care, school, and social assistance. On the other hand, it still lives with the problem of informality and irregularity characterized by the various factors presented above, and this informal urban nucleus (NUI) remains detached from or unintegrated into the legal city.

Bringing together the information that characterizes the study area, Vila Feliz presents a contrast of socio-spatial inequality in relation to other regular areas of the city. The results show that these families demand the right to housing and to dignified housing, with infrastructure and quality of life - rights not yet made effective. Even in the absence of legal recognition of housing tenure, some residents have invested time, money, effort, and hope in

improving the territory of which they are part, making that space a little more like what they truly expect it to be, an expression of a "territory of resistance." As Lefebvre (2001, p. 56) puts it, the city is "the projection of society onto a place"; each brick laid, each stone thrown to cover the mud, each potted plant added to the environment reflects what this population expects or aspires to in the territory. The geography of the place is altered by what is hoped for and by what is lived in everyday life.

These informal spaces of the city, when occupied by popular classes, directly involve the socioeconomic issue of these families. From the interviews, it was possible to verify that the Vila Feliz population is characterized predominantly by low-income families, with income below three (3) minimum wages, along with a higher percentage of women in the territory. The interviewed families show a relatively high level of dependence on income-transfer programs.

In view of the above, and based on the data obtained through the in loco interviews conducted with the population living in Vila Feliz, it is possible to infer that these families present a profile that falls within Land Regularization of Social Interest (REURB-S). This results in exemptions from notarial and registry costs and from document-related expenses in general for families included in the process. Another important point is that responsibility for drafting the land regularization project and implementing the necessary essential infrastructure lies with public authorities. The next section presents an analysis of the laws supporting the application of REURB-S and the challenge of making it effective in the territory.

2.3 The challenge of implementing land regularization of social interest - REURB-S: proposing its application in Vila Feliz

Land regularization is an instrument of urban policy provided for in the City Statute approved by Federal Law No. 10,257/2001, which brought into urban policy the orientation of land regularization and urbanization of areas occupied by low-income families, treating these areas in a special way regarding norms and buildings given the urbanistic, environmental, and social complexity presented by such irregular spaces, as is the case of the geographical cutout examined in this investigation, Vila Feliz.

However, in order to incorporate informal urban nuclei into the legal context of the city, it would only be technically and legally possible with legislation that contemplated the complexities present in such nuclei. Thus, the actual possibility of addressing informal areas in Brazil occurred only with the creation of Federal Law No. 11,977/2009. In this document, the first regulatory framework for land regularization in Brazil emerged. In addition to covering other typologies of land irregularities present in the national territory, including areas previously not contemplated by Law 6,766, it also added areas to be regularized that did not fall within the income range of up to 5 minimum wages, making it possible for the Law to address both areas of social interest, aimed at low-income families, and areas of specific interest, for families not classified as low-income.

Law 11,977 remained in force until 2017, when the new Law 13,465 of 2017, the so-called REURB, was approved. The two modalities covered by the previous law remain in the new framework, but the nomenclature changes: regularization of social interest becomes REURB-S,

and regularization of specific interest becomes REURB-E. Thus, REURB aims at a set of intervention measures for adapting or regularizing irregular and informal areas. According to Article 9 of Law 13,465, REURB has two main purposes: "the incorporation of informal urban nuclei into the urban territorial order and the titling of their occupants" (Brasil, 2017).

Law 13,465 of 2017 safeguarded important guidelines by expressing its objectives regarding the improvement of habitability conditions and environmental preservation through urbanistic and environmental mitigation measures, the valorization of human rights, social promotion, among others, considering an administration responsible for social, environmental, and economic sustainability, as set forth in Articles 10 and 11.

For this to happen, the implementation of essential infrastructure works in irregular settlements, together with social facilities (UBS, CRAS, schools, CMEI, among others) and improvements and maintenance in the structure of the residences themselves, is indispensable for the quality of life of the low-income families living in these spaces. Environmental measures aimed at eliminating or correcting possible risks to low-income families in irregular settlements are also extremely relevant, as in valley bottoms or river slopes, places commonly chosen by families excluded from access to formal housing.

It is worth mentioning that Municipal Law 13,515 of 2021, which establishes standards for the regulation of REURB-S, as well as Municipal Law 13,716 of 2023, expressed some guidelines concerning housing and environmental improvements. The incorporation of these aspects into municipal laws is extremely important to reinforce that the land regularization model that meets the proposal of sustainable cities is comprehensive land regularization. Moreover, it seeks to inhibit the construction of a "crippled" land regularization policy that acts only on part of the problem, a very common view in public action when social issues are treated in a fragmented manner. Based on the autonomy of municipalities enshrined in the Federal Constitution (1988), the municipality of Londrina was able to establish a differentiated consideration of family income to classify families as low-income, namely, a family income from 0 to 3 minimum wages, excluding welfare benefits.

The purpose of this classification, also presented in the municipal laws and in the recent decree, is to identify household heads and their ability to bear the costs of the land regularization process, with a view to guaranteeing gratuity for those who truly need it. Considering families living in irregular settlements classified as REURB-S (land regularization of social interest), Law 13,465/17 sets out its prerogatives regarding exemptions and responsibilities in the land regularization process.

It can be observed that urban land regularization (REURB) is part of the urban policy provided for in Articles 182 and 183 of the Federal Constitution (1988) and is regulated by the City Statute (2001), which clearly establishes the principle of sustainability in the general guidelines of urban policy. However, one of the issues raised by Sotto (2021) and by other scholars and practitioners of the Law lies in the difficult reconciliation between residents' permanence in the settlement and the preservation of those spaces with adequate parameters for receiving infrastructure and road systems that constitute a right to the city.

The author's recommendation is to provide differentiated treatment for the REURB modalities. According to Law 13,465, Article 36, the urbanistic land regularization project must

contain at least the essential infrastructure, namely four components: potable water supply and sanitary sewage (collective or individual), household electricity, and drainage solutions, leaving optional, according to item V, "other equipment to be defined by Municipalities according to local needs and regional characteristics" (Brasil, 2017). It is in this field that the author considers this differentiation should be explored according to the specificities of the territories covered by the law.

It should be recalled that the issue of land regularization on which this study focuses is loaded with principles that point toward a policy capable of addressing the various dimensions of the problem present in informal urban nuclei. In addition to the registry and legal security that REURB can provide, it must also ensure improvements and corrections, when necessary, in both urbanistic and environmental terms. Sustainable regularization encompasses legalization, urbanization, and socioeconomic programs consistent with rights-based perspectives (human rights, housing rights, and the right to the city).

In this context, considering the enactment of Law 13,465 of 2017 in relation to privately owned informal urban settlement areas, as is the case of Vila Feliz, the determinants listed below support the argument that REURB-S has the potential to guarantee housing tenure rights to Vila Feliz families, namely:

- a. verification of a consolidated informal urban nucleus (Article 11): a consolidated informal human settlement is considered so because of its irreversibility. The recognition of a consolidated human settlement, as is the case with Vila Feliz, opens the possibility of initiating a REURB process, since the purpose of the law is to integrate consolidated informal urban nuclei into the fabric of the formal city;
- b. admission of REURB on privately owned properties: for the possibility of REURB on private land, in addition to the Law referring to this territorial condition, as stated in Article 11, item VII - "occupant: one who maintains de facto power over a lot or ideal fraction of public or private lands in informal urban nuclei" - it also brings instruments applicable to this type of property;
- c. existence of instruments available in the Law that ensure the application of REURB in privately owned territories, such as land legitimation, among others (Brasil, 2017).

Therefore, Law 13,465 introduced land legitimation as a new land regularization instrument, innovating by proposing the real right of ownership itself, that is, transferring property rights to occupants. From the possible application of this or another instrument capable of addressing the actual situation of the nucleus, the legal issue is dealt with and, as a main effect, the property is valued as a credit asset in the real estate market. Nevertheless, this does not exempt the other REURB measures from being implemented.

Urbanistic, environmental, and social measures, in turn, are guaranteed within the regularization project that accompanies the Certificate of Land Regularization (CRF), the document issued by the Municipality and composed of the approved land regularization project.

It is understood that the legal bases for this process to be carried out are in place. However, the challenge materializes in its application amid forces contrary to its realization, both internal and external. The internal ones observed in the territory are expressed in the power relations of agents who benefit from the illegality of the territory; the external ones are tied to the absence of direct action to confront the situation on the part of local management represented by COHAB-LD.

3 CONCLUSION

As provided for in the Constitution, fulfillment of the social function of property represents the possibility of change for these families through the application of instruments appropriate to that reality. But this needs to begin not only with the instruments described in the City Statute that act for the collective good, but with political intention. Obstacles to the effectiveness of rights for that population may initially be highlighted by the little or no intention, or by the population's lack of knowledge about these legal devices and about the land regularization process itself. According to the interviewees, it was possible to perceive that for some there is no clarity about the process and for others there is a divergence of interests. The lack of clarity regarding the implications of land regularization is evident, but in this process of approaching the territory another obstacle was perceived: at the time, we were informed that there were people who opposed the implementation of land regularization because it ran counter to their own interests. Once informed of this objection, the next actions, aimed at working on community organization and awareness regarding the REURB process, were impaired, because we were asked not to resume this proposal.

Based on the analysis of Law 13,465/2017, the informal urban nucleus (NUI) occupied for housing purposes, predominantly by a low-income population and formally classified as REURB-S, is recognized as being exempt from registry costs and fees and guaranteed public responsibility for drafting and financing the land regularization project and for implementing essential infrastructure when necessary. Therefore, based on REURB, we consider that there is potential for the implementation of a land regularization process in the Vila Feliz favela. At this moment, it is hoped that obstacles related to political will, social organization, and others can be overcome so that the right to housing and the right to the city may be accessed by this "invisibilized" population.

The research revealed that the territory can be characterized as vulnerable both because of the economic condition of the population and because of its distance from the model of the legal city and the absence of a guarantor of rights.

Therefore, with regard to the parameters established by legislation for the application of land regularization, Vila Feliz meets the required criteria: the social function it fulfills, the predominantly low-income population, and the fact that it constitutes a consolidated informal urban nucleus, that is, a territory consistent with irreversibility. Even so, the implementation of a land regularization process does not advance.

Considering the magnitude of the existing legislative framework - which should be a source of pride if many of these norms were not restricted merely to paper - and considering the legal requirements already met, this study sought to understand why this population remains subjected to its current condition. When we analyze the population present in this territory, most of it shares the same objective: the legal acquisition of housing, which may simultaneously mean shelter, right, stability, comfort, and security. Nevertheless, the passivity identified among residents seems to reflect a limited understanding of the benefits of land

regularization, associated with the expectation that public authorities (that is, COHAB-LD) will promote the REURB process.

Based on the interviewees' reports, the objective of claiming land tenure is legitimate and shared, and land regularization, even if timidly, seems to be viewed positively. At the same time, COHAB's knowledge that several families live in this territory - corroborated by the Company's attempts to offer other housing proposals, as João reported in the interview - may bring a certain sense of security regarding the advancement of a REURB process in the territory. Therefore, it is not clear to this population what REURB can promote, nor by what path this could happen. On the other hand, a tiny portion of residents in this context, benefiting from the inaction of public authorities and of the population itself, does not desire the process. And the public authorities? Armed with knowledge of the local reality and of the existence of legal instruments that in theory have the potential to promote social justice or at least correct urban injustices over time, they remain inert.

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STATEMENTS

CONTRIBUTION OF EACH AUTHOR

When describing each author's participation in the manuscript, use the following criteria:

- **Conception and Design of the Study:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro.
 - **Data Curation:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro; Thais Aparecida de Souza; Léia Aparecida Veiga.
 - **Formal Analysis:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro; Thais Aparecida de Souza; Ideni Terezinha Antonello, Léia Aparecida Veiga, Alan Alves Alievi.
 - **Acquisition of Financing:** There was no financing.
 - **Research:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro; Thais Aparecida de Souza; Ideni Terezinha Antonello, Léia Aparecida Veiga, Alan Alves Alievi.
 - **Methodology:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro; Thais Aparecida de Souza; Léia Aparecida Veiga.
 - **Writing - Initial Draft:** Thais Aparecida de Souza
 - **Writing - Critical Review:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro; Thais Aparecida de Souza; Léia Aparecida Veiga, Ideni Terezinha Antonello and Alan Alves Alievi.
 - **Revision and Final Editing:** Léia Aparecida Veiga, Ideni Terezinha Antonello and Alan Alves Alievi.
 - **Supervision:** Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro and Ideni Terezinha Antonello.
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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We, Thais Aparecida de Souza, Sandra Maria Almeida Cordeiro, Ideni Terezinha Antonello, Léia Aparecida Veiga, Alan Alves Alievi, declare that the manuscript entitled "The challenge of implementing land regularization of social interest - REURB-S: the case of the vulnerable territory Vila feliz – Londrina":

1. **Financial Ties:** Has no financial ties that could influence the results or interpretation of the work.
 2. **Professional Relationships:** Has no professional relationships that may impact the analysis, interpretation or presentation of the results.
 3. **Personal Conflicts:** Has no personal conflicts of interest related to the content of the manuscript.
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