

Formalize without integrating? Land Regularization, Citizenship and Social Appropriation in the Mismatch between the Informal City and the Formal City

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Formalizar Sem Integrar? Regularização Fundiária, Cidadania e Apropriação Social no Descompasso entre a Cidade Informal e a Cidade Formal

RESUMO

Objetivo - analisar os limites da política de regularização fundiária no Brasil como mecanismo de integração urbana, propondo a categoria analítica de formalização incompleta.

Metodologia - adota-se abordagem mista de caráter crítico-documental, articulando revisão bibliográfica, exame normativo e análise descritiva de dados secundários de repositórios oficiais, especialmente IBGE, Fundação João Pinheiro e IPEA.

Originalidade/relevância - o estudo enfrenta a lacuna teórica relativa às situações pós-formais em que o território é juridicamente reconhecido, mas permanece materialmente segregado e institucionalmente integrado de maneira parcial.

Resultados - os resultados indicam que a centralidade conferida à titulação individual, quando desvinculada de infraestrutura, serviços urbanos e participação social, tende a produzir integração seletiva e cidadania territorial de baixa intensidade.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas - delimita-se operacionalmente a formalização incompleta em relação a categorias vizinhas, tais como tolerância precária, integração precária, cidadania insurgente e informalidade como modo de regulação estatal.

Contribuições sociais e ambientais - evidencia-se a necessidade de associar segurança da posse, urbanização, saneamento, mobilidade, permanência dos moradores e justiça socioespacial nas políticas de regularização fundiária.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Informalidade urbana; Regularização fundiária; Formalização incompleta; Cidadania territorial; Direito à cidade.

Formalize Without Integrating? Land Regularization, Citizenship and Social Appropriation in the Mismatch between the Informal City and the Formal City

ABSTRACT

Objective - to analyze the limits of land regularization policy in Brazil as a mechanism of urban integration, proposing the analytical category of incomplete formalization.

Methodology - the article adopts a mixed critical-documentary approach, combining literature review, regulatory analysis and descriptive analysis of secondary data from official repositories, especially IBGE, Fundação João Pinheiro and IPEA.

Originality/Relevance - the study addresses the theoretical gap related to post-formal situations in which territory is legally recognized but remains materially segregated and institutionally integrated only partially.

Results - the findings indicate that the emphasis on individual titling, when detached from infrastructure, urban services and social participation, tends to produce selective integration and low-intensity territorial citizenship.

Theoretical/Methodological Contributions - the article operationally distinguishes incomplete formalization from neighboring concepts such as precarious tolerance, precarious integration, insurgent citizenship and informality as a mode of state regulation.

Social and Environmental Contributions - the study highlights the need to associate tenure security, urbanization, sanitation, mobility, residents permanence and sociospatial justice in land regularization policies.

KEYWORDS: Urban informality; Land regularization; Incomplete formalization; Territorial citizenship; Right to the city.

¿Formalizar Sin Integrar? Regularización fundiaria, ciudadanía y apropiación social en el desajuste entre la ciudad informal y la ciudad formal

RESUMEN

Objetivo - analizar los límites de la política de regularización fundiaria en Brasil como mecanismo de integración urbana, proponiendo la categoría analítica de formalización incompleta.

Metodología - se adopta un enfoque mixto de carácter crítico-documental, articulando revisión bibliográfica, examen normativo y análisis descriptivo de datos secundarios de repositorios oficiales, especialmente IBGE, Fundação João Pinheiro e IPEA.

Originalidad/Relevancia - el estudio aborda la brecha teórica relativa a situaciones posformales en las que el territorio es jurídicamente reconocido, pero permanece materialmente segregado e institucionalmente integrado de forma parcial.

Resultados - los resultados indican que la centralidad conferida a la titulación individual, cuando se desvincula de infraestructura, servicios urbanos y participación social, tiende a producir integración selectiva y ciudadanía territorial de baja intensidad.

Contribuciones Teóricas/Metodológicas - se diferencia operacionalmente la formalización incompleta de conceptos próximos, como tolerancia precaria, integración precaria, ciudadanía insurgente e informalidad como modo de regulación estatal.

Contribuciones Sociales y Ambientales - se evidencia la necesidad de asociar seguridad de la tenencia, urbanización, saneamiento, movilidad, permanencia de los residentes y justicia socioespacial en las políticas de regularización fundiaria.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Informalidad urbana; Regularización fundiaria; Formalización incompleta; Ciudadanía territorial; Derecho a la ciudad.

1 INTRODUCTION

Urban informality does not constitute a fortuitous deviation or a residual phenomenon in the Brazilian urbanization process; It is a structural feature of the production of space in the country's cities. Throughout history, the rapid growth of urban centers, in conjunction with the insufficiency of housing and land policies, consolidated a pattern of access to land marked by exclusion. The 2022 Population Census corroborates the magnitude of this situation by identifying 12,348 Favelas and Urban Communities, where 16.4 million people live — equivalent to 8.1% of the total population (IBGE, 2024). This contingent, higher than that of several European countries, shows that informality is the rule of habitat production for the popular classes in Brazil. Estimates from 2014 by the Ministry of Cities also pointed out that irregular urban housing units — including clandestine allotments and subdivisions without titles — could reach the order of 18 million units, although this estimate lacks a standardized methodology and systematic updating.¹

The recognition of this reality boosted the construction of a normative framework aimed at land regularization. From the Federal Constitution of 1988 to the Statute of the City (Law No. 10,257/2001), the country institutionalized instruments that aimed to guarantee the social function of property and the right to housing. However, the enactment of Law No. 13,465/2017 operated a far-reaching paradigm shift. Under the pretext of debureaucratization, the new legal framework shifted the axis of the policy — from the focus on socio-spatial integration and the right to the city to a logic of massive titling and insertion of assets in the land market (Alfonsin, 2019; Rolnik, 2015). This inflection raises the central problem of this investigation: the risk that regularization will be reduced to an administrative-cadastral act, producing what is here called incomplete formalization.

International and Latin American critical literature offers keys to reading this mismatch. The understanding of informality as a mode of state regulation — and not as the absence of the State (Roy, 2005) — allows us to identify how the public power selectively administers legality. At the regional level, Abramo's (2003) analyses of the informal land market and Nunez's (2022) analysis of precarious integration in peripheral settlements reinforce that property title, by itself, does not dissolve the barriers of segregation. It is necessary, however, to differentiate the category proposed here from these previous concepts: while precarious tolerance (Gonçalves; Santos, 2021) describes the permanence of the territory under legal instability without regularization, incomplete formalization describes situations in which regularization has already occurred, but has produced only partial urban integration. The contribution of this article resides, therefore, in the displacement of the debate from a pre-formal condition to an insufficient post-formal condition.

The question that guides this work is: to what extent does the land regularization policy in Brazil, under the aegis of the current legal framework, produce forms of selective integration that formalize the title without integrating the territory? The central hypothesis maintains that

¹ The estimate of 18 million irregular households was widely cited in documents from the Ministry of Cities during the cycle of debates on the Land Regularization Framework. It is recognized that this is an estimate based on a non-standardized methodology and from a period prior to the 2022 Census. Its use in this article is contextual.

the emphasis on individual titling, unaccompanied by investments in infrastructure and services, consolidates a low-intensity territorial citizenship. Data from IPEA reveal that, between 2019 and April 2022, 84.7% of the titles issued in settlements were provisional (CCU – Contrato de Concessão de Uso), evidencing the fragility of legal recognition (Gómez; Vieira Filho, 2023). At the same time, the 2022 Census points out that, although the water network reaches 86.4% of households in favelas, adequate sanitary sewage is still a lack for significant portions of the population, with severe regional disparities in states such as Amapá (IBGE, 2024).

In addition to this introduction, the text is organized into sections dedicated to the objectives, the methodology, the conceptual delimitation of incomplete formalization, the socio-spatial trajectory of informal urban centers, the empirical panorama of informality and land regularization, the limits of legal formalization, territorial citizenship and conclusion.

2 OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this article is to analyze to what extent the land regularization policy in Brazil, under the aegis of the current legal framework, produces forms of selective integration that formalize the title without fully integrating the territory.

As specific objectives, it is sought to: (i) conceptually delimit the incomplete formalization category; (ii) differentiate this category from close notions present in the urban critical literature; (iii) examine national indicators on informality, housing deficit, titling and infrastructure; and (iv) to discuss the legal-territorial implications of land regularization for urban citizenship.

3 METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, the article adopts a mixed critical-documentary approach, which combines bibliographic review with descriptive analysis of secondary data from official repositories.² The research articulates: (i) bibliographic review of national and international production on informality and the right to the city; (ii) descriptive analysis of indicators from the 2022 Population Census (IBGE), the João Pinheiro Foundation (FJP) and IPEA; and (iii) examination of the regulatory framework for land regularization post-2017. It is recognized that the data on a national scale provide descriptive empirical support to the thesis of incomplete formalization, but that full causal proof would require longitudinal research of territorial trajectories in the post-regularization period — a gap identified and pointed out as a future research agenda.

4 FROM URBAN INFORMALITY TO INCOMPLETE FORMALIZATION: CONCEPTUAL

² The mixed approach adopted in this article combines qualitative desk analysis with the descriptive use of secondary quantitative data from official repositories. This combination does not imply the use of inferential statistical techniques, but is limited to the analysis of aggregate indicators already systematized by the sources cited.

DELIMITATION

The exegesis of contemporary land regularization processes imposes the overcoming of the conventional hermeneutics that interprets urban informality as a mere absence of law, a lack of planning or an episodic deviation from the formal order of the city. Such an approach reduces popular settlements to spaces of need, transferring to residents the responsibility for a condition that results, to a large extent, from the selective structure of production of urban space.

In peripheral urban formations, informality does not constitute exteriority in relation to the urban, but one of its constitutive forms. The expansion of Brazilian cities occurred inseparably from land concentration, unequal land valuation, insufficient housing policies, and the selective distribution of infrastructure. Favelas, irregular allotments, popular occupations and self-built peripheries did not emerge as exceptions to the dominant urban model; were an organic part of its realization (Maricato, 2003; Grostein, 2001; Santos, 1993).

The critique of the formal/informal dualism becomes central. By treating the formal city and the informal city as separate spheres, there is a risk of obscuring the relations of interdependence between them. Formality and informality are expressions of the same unequal urban rationality (Roy, 2005; Gonçalves; Bautès; Maneiro, 2018; Balbim; Santiago; Polli, 2025). Roy (2005) makes a decisive contribution by understanding informality as a mode of urbanization produced by the State itself:

Informality is not the object of state regulation but rather is produced by the state itself. The state has the power to determine what is informal and what is not, and to determine which forms of informality will thrive and which will disappear. State power is reproduced through the capacity to construct and reconstruct categories of legitimacy and illegitimacy, legality and illegality, order and disorder in the urban realm (ROY, 2005, p. 149, tradução nossa).

This perspective shows that urban informality is not located outside the State, but within the ways in which the public power classifies, administers and hierarchizes the territories.³ As Santos (2020) observes, Brazilian urban policy has advanced in normative terms, but has continued to face difficulties in regulating peripheral urbanization sustained by the exclusionary valuation of land.

4.1 Incomplete formalization: differentiation in relation to neighboring concepts

Land regularization emerges as an ambivalent instrument: on the one hand, it represents an achievement in the recognition of the right to housing and security of tenure; on the other hand, it can be limited to the legal-administrative incorporation of the territories without changing the material conditions that sustain their subordinate insertion in the city (Fernandes, 2011; Alfonsin et al., 2002). It is from this ambivalence that the category of

³ "Informality is not the object of state regulation, but is produced by the state itself. The state has the power to determine what is informal and what is not, and to determine which forms of informality will thrive and which will disappear. The power of the State is reproduced by the ability to construct and reconstruct categories of legitimacy and illegitimacy, legality and illegality, order and disorder in the urban sphere" (Roy, 2005, p. 149).

incomplete formalization emerges.

The distinction in relation to neighboring concepts is fundamental to clarify the theoretical contribution of the article. Four categories deserve direct confrontation:

- (a) Precarious tolerance (Gonçalves; Santos, 2021): describes the condition of territories not yet regularized, in which the State allows permanence without ensuring full integration. Incomplete formalization, on the other hand, refers to territories that have already gone through the regularization process, but whose urban integration remains partial and selective. They are different conditions: one is pre-formal; the other is insufficient post-formal.
- (b) Precarious integration (Nunez, 2022): a concept developed in the Argentine context to describe the limits of dominial regularization in villas in Buenos Aires. Incomplete formalization incorporates this perspective, but broadens it to include dimensions of territorial citizenship — belonging, mobility, access to equipment, and social participation — and is not restricted to land registration.
- (c) Insurgent citizenship (Holston, 2013): describes the production of rights from the bottom up in the Brazilian peripheries, through collective struggles for infrastructure and recognition. The incomplete formalization does not negate this dimension, but analyzes the moment when state recognition arrives and, even so, proves to be insufficient — describing the gap between the citizenship granted by the State via registration and the lived citizenship claimed by the residents.
- (d) Informality as a mode of regulation (Roy, 2005): describes the structural production of informality by the State. Incomplete formalization advances this diagnosis by identifying how state regulation can perpetuate forms of exclusion even after the formal act of legalization — that is, how the state can include legally without including materially.

Thus, incomplete formalization designates processes in which the institutional incorporation of popular territories occurs without the corresponding democratization of the conditions of urbanity. There is incomplete formalization when legality advances, but the infrastructure remains insufficient; when possession is recognized, but mobility remains precarious; when the territory enters the urban registry, but remains distant from public facilities, centralities and economic opportunities.

The passage from the informal city to the formal city should not be understood as a linear movement of inclusion: between full irregularity and substantive urban integration there are multiple intermediate forms of recognition, in which formal legality and material precariousness coexist under the same legal title. This category allows us to shift the debate from the question "has the territory been regularized?" to a more substantive question: what kind of urban integration has been produced? From this perspective, land regularization should be understood as a political-territorial process, and not only as a technical-legal procedure.

5 TERRITORIAL PRODUCTION OF URBAN IRREGULARITY AND THE SOCIO-SPATIAL TRAJECTORY OF THE INFORMAL URBAN NUCLEUS

The analysis of land regularization processes requires conceptual precision as to the territorial object under examination. Not every popular settlement is, by definition, informal or irregular; There are housing complexes produced by the government, allotments of social interest with legal recognition and popular neighborhoods inserted in the formal city, even if marked by urban precariousness. For this reason, this article adopts the notion of informal urban nucleus (NUI) to designate occupied and consolidated territories on the margins of legal-land and urban regularity, in which the permanence of the population precedes full recognition by the State.

This distinction is fundamental because it avoids confusion between urban poverty and legal informality. Socioeconomic precariousness, by itself, does not define territorial informality. What characterizes the informal urban core is the combination of consolidated occupation, absence or insufficiency of titles, inadequacy to formal urban parameters and partial insertion in the city's institutional systems. In the Brazilian legal system, Law No. 13,465/2017 defines an informal urban center as one that is clandestine, irregular or in which it has not been possible to carry out the titling of its occupants. Castelhana, Maciorowski and Beck (2024), when analyzing the state's performance in the production of the informal city in Florianópolis, demonstrate that the classification of these nuclei involves legal-land and urban dimensions, with the absence of formal ownership or possession being a decisive criterion.

The formation of NUIs results, to a large extent, from the structural inability of the formal land market to guarantee access to urbanized housing for the low-income population. Regularized land, endowed with infrastructure and well located, remained subject to processes of valorization incompatible with the income of the majority of the working population (Maricato, 2003; Santos, 2020). Progressive occupations, irregular subdivisions, self-construction and the consolidation of neighborhoods without legal recognition constituted social responses to this exclusion.

Lefebvre's (2008) contribution is indispensable to understand that urban space does not constitute a neutral support for social relations — it is produced by practices, conflicts, uses, representations and appropriation strategies. Thus, even though the NUI is classified by the State as irregular, it is already socially produced, lived and appropriated by its residents. Holston (2013), when discussing insurgent citizenship in the Brazilian peripheries, demonstrates that these territories were also spaces of political vindication: the struggle for infrastructure, regularization, transportation, and public equipment transformed many NUIs into arenas of dispute for the right to the city.

The relationship between the NUI and the State is marked by ambiguity. Gonçalves and Santos (2021) call this condition precarious tolerance: permanence occurs under legal instability, dependent on institutional arrangements that do not guarantee full integration. This trajectory is decisive for understanding incomplete formalization: regularization does not inaugurate the territory, it arrives after it has already been socially produced. If the NUI already has social and territorial density before regularization, the challenge is not only to integrate it into formal legality, but to recognize and strengthen its forms of appropriation. When regularization disregards this trajectory, it runs the risk of imposing a rationality that recognizes possession without understanding the territory as a lived space.

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW OF INFORMALITY AND LAND REGULARIZATION IN BRAZIL

The thesis of incomplete formalization requires support in evidence on a national scale that demonstrates the magnitude of the phenomenon. This section analyzes data from official repositories — IBGE Demographic Census, João Pinheiro Foundation (FJP) and IPEA — with the objective of identifying descriptive patterns of the mismatch between legal formalization and urban integration. From the outset, the temporal heterogeneity of the sources used is recognized, as detailed in a footnote.

The starting point is the magnitude of urban informality in the country. The 2022 Population Census recorded the existence of 12,348 Favelas and Urban Communities, in which 16.4 million people reside (8.1% of the total population). The highest proportions of the population residing in these communities are found in Amazonas (34.7%), Amapá (24.4%) and Pará (18.8%) — data that deconstruct the view that informality would be a phenomenon exclusive to the metropolises of the Southeast (IBGE, 2024). The housing deficit totaled 6.2 million households in 2022, equivalent to 8.3% of occupied dwellings (FJP, 2024).⁴

In terms of land regularization, IPEA documents that, between 2019 and April 2022, 312,799 titles were issued in settlement projects. Of this total, 84.7% (264,822 titles) corresponded to Concession of Use Contracts (CCU) — provisional instruments that do not confer full ownership and keep the resident dependent on state renewals. Only a minimal fraction reached the stage of definitive Domain Titles (TD) (Gómez; Vieira Filho, 2023).⁵

The material dimension of the mismatch becomes evident when crossing the titling data with those of infrastructure. According to the IBGE (2024), 86.4% of households in Favelas and Urban Communities are connected to the general water network. However, adequate sanitary sewage reaches only 74.6% of these units — a difference of 11.8 percentage points that reveals the selectivity of the state provision of services. In states such as Amapá, where only 28.1% of households in urban communities have adequate sewage, material precariousness coexists with legal informality in an especially severe way. It should be noted that this correlation does not imply a direct causal relationship between titling and provision of sanitation: the provision of services depends primarily on political investment decisions and is not conditioned, in itself, by the legal situation of possession.

The convergence of these indicators points to the persistence of a pattern of exclusion that remains even in the face of normative advances. The preponderance of provisional titles, combined with the lack of infrastructure in significant portions of popular territories, describes a scenario in which the regularization policy operates on an insufficient scale and with instruments of limited effectiveness. These data provide the substrate for the analyses of the following sections, which will examine the legal mechanisms of this selective integration (Section

⁴ The FJP housing inadequacy data (2021) refer to the 2016-2019 period, while the housing deficit data (FJP, 2024) and the Census data (IBGE, 2024) refer to 2022. The juxtaposition of these indicators is used in this article exclusively for contextual, not comparative, purposes.

⁵ Verification calculation: $264,822 / 312,799 = 84.66\%$, rounded to 84.7% in the text of TD No. 2851 (Gómez; Vieira Filho, 2023). The small difference between the percentage and the absolute value is due to rounding in the original publication.

7) and its implications for territorial citizenship (Section 8).

Table 1 - Summary of the main indicators of informality and land regularization in Brazil

Indicator	Value	Source / Base Year
Favelas and Urban Communities	12,348 communities; 16.4 million people (8.1% of the pop.)	IBGE (2024) — 2022 Census
Housing deficit	6.2 million households (8.3%)	FJP (2024) — 2022
Bonds issued in settlements (2019–Apr 2022)	312,799 titles; 84.7% provisional (CCU)	GÓMEZ; VIEIRA FILHO (2023) — IPEA TD nº 2851
Access to the water network (favelas)	86.4% of households	IBGE (2024) — 2022 Census
Adequate sanitation (favelas)	74.6% (25.4% without adequate access)	IBGE (2024) — 2022 Census
Pop. in favelas — largest proportions (states)	AM: 34.7%; AP: 24.4%; BP: 18.8%	IBGE (2024) — 2022 Census
Adequate sewage — Amapá (favelas)	28.1% of households	IBGE (2024) — 2022 Census

Source: Elaboration by the author based on the sources indicated.

7 LAND REGULARIZATION AND SELECTIVE INTEGRATION: THE LIMITS OF THE LEGAL FORMALIZATION OF THE TERRITORY

A critical examination of the regulatory framework for land regularization in Brazil, especially after the enactment of Law No. 13,465/2017, reveals the legal substrate that sustains incomplete formalization. If the previous normative framework — embodied in the City Statute and Law No. 11,977/2009 — sought to articulate the security of tenure with urban and environmental integration, the current legislation operated a paradigm shift. Under the argument of administrative efficiency, the center of gravity of urban policy was transferred from the social function of property to the economic function of land (Alfonsin, 2019).

7.1 The legal mechanism of selective integration

This normative inflection is what this article calls selective integration. The central mechanism of this logic lies in the relaxation of the infrastructure requirements for the granting of the title. Law No. 13,465/2017 allows consolidated informal urban centers to be subject to regularization without the government or the beneficiary agents carrying out all the urbanization works required for the formal city. Thus, a regime of exception is produced: the State recognizes the legitimacy of the occupation at the legal-cadastral level, but tolerates the perpetuation of precariousness at the material level.

The data analyzed in the previous section give empirical support to this criticism. The preponderance of Concession of Use Agreements (84.7%) in relation to definitive Domain Titles demonstrates that legal formalization operates in layers of precariousness. By delivering provisional documents in territories without adequate sanitary sewage — a reality of 25.4% of households in favelas (IBGE, 2024) —, the State does not promote full urban integration; He manages the irregularity under formally mitigated conditions. However, one should avoid the inference that this dynamic is necessarily intentional: it can also result from budgetary

constraints, the technical fragility of the municipalities and the administrative complexity of regularization at scale.

7.2 Limits of regularization as a redistributive instrument

The category of land legitimation, introduced by the new legal framework, exemplifies these limits. By allowing the original acquisition of property by means of an administrative act, the instrument accelerates individual titling, but may relieve the public entity of redistributive investment goals. As Rolnik (2015) warns, this strategy focuses on the insertion of real estate assets in the formal market, ignoring that the appreciation of land in regularized areas — without the proper protection of permanence — can trigger processes of displacement of lower-income residents.

The analysis of the limits of legal formalization allows us to conclude that land regularization, as designed in the current legal framework, presents a structural risk of acting as a mechanism for the incremental management of urban poverty, and not as a vector of redistributive urban reform. It should be noted that this conclusion is descriptive and analytical in nature, not causal in the strict sense: the available data demonstrate the coexistence of titling and precariousness, but do not allow isolating the specific contribution of Law No. 13,465/2017 in relation to other explanatory variables.

8 SOCIAL APPROPRIATION OF SPACE, BELONGING AND TERRITORIAL CITIZENSHIP

The exegesis of incomplete formalization reaches its point of greatest tension when confronting the technical rationality of the State with the lived dimension of the territory. If the previous sections demonstrated the gap between legal registration and material infrastructure, it is now appropriate to examine the implications of this mismatch for the construction of citizenship. The social appropriation of space is not an accessory datum, but the condition of possibility for the right to the city to transcend normative abstraction and become a daily practice (Lefebvre, 2008; Santos, 2007).

The distinction established by Lefebvre (2008) between habitat and inhabitation is, in this context, of great analytical value. While the contemporary land regularization policy focuses on the production of a legalized habitat — reduced to the minimum portion of the lot and to the notarial registry — it tends to neglect the complexity of inhabiting. Inhabiting presupposes the subject's ability to recognize himself in space, produce neighborhood bonds and access the totality of the networks that make up urban life. Incomplete formalization runs the risk of producing a citizen whose relationship with the city is mediated by the inauguration document, but whose experience of urbanity remains fragmented by the absence of sanitation, lighting, and living spaces (Rolnik, 2015; Maricato, 2003).

The notion of territorial citizenship is used in this article as an analytical category — not as a directly observable empirical datum. For analytical purposes, territorial citizenship can be operationalized in four dimensions: (a) legal dimension: security of tenure and protection against arbitrary removal; (b) material dimension: access to infrastructure, sanitation, mobility

and public equipment; (c) relational dimension: belonging, community bonds and social recognition of the territory; and (d) political dimension: ability to participate in decision-making processes about the territory. Incomplete formalization acts primarily in the legal dimension, leaving the other dimensions in need of intervention.

This discussion dialogues with Holston's (2013) thesis of insurgent citizenship. For the author, the struggle for infrastructure in the Brazilian peripheries constitutes the engine of a new way of doing politics, in which the right is conquered from the bottom up. The incomplete formalization tensions this insurgency by offering the title as a point of arrival, a kind of legal closure that can relieve the government of redistributive goals. Territorial citizenship is not realized when the document is signed; It is effective in the real ownership of the city, in access to quality transport, in public health in proximity and in the infrastructure that protects the body and the environment.

As Milton Santos (2007) warns, the territory is not only the support of actions, but a field of forces where the psychosphere—beliefs and affections— and the technosphere— objects and infrastructures— intersect. When the State delivers the title in a territory devoid of adequate technosphere, a split occurs between legal recognition and material reality. Belonging, in this context, tends to manifest itself not as a guarantee of security, but as resistance: the residents belong to the place not because the State authorized them via registration, but because their trajectory of self-construction and collective struggle conferred on the ground a sense of place that paper, by itself, is not capable of granting (Holston, 2013; Santos, 2007).

Ultimately, social appropriation and belonging function as indispensable dimensions to evaluate the results of an urban policy. A territory that is formalized, but not integrated in its material, relational and political dimensions, remains an enclave of precariousness under the cloak of legality. The challenge that is imposed on the research agenda and public management is to overcome this phantom formalization⁶ in favor of processes that articulate the security of tenure with the democratization of urban living conditions.

9 CONCLUSION

The investigation undertaken throughout this article allowed us to examine the limits of the land regularization policy in Brazil from the perspective of incomplete formalization. The central hypothesis — that there is a structural mismatch between the legal recognition of possession and the democratization of the material conditions of urban life — found descriptive support both in the theoretical debate and in the national indicators analyzed. The analytical path revealed that regularization, as designed by the current regulatory framework, presents a risk of operating less as a vector of socio-spatial integration and more as a device for the incremental management of urban poverty and the insertion of assets in the land market.

On the theoretical level, the main contribution of the article consisted in operationally differentiating the category of incomplete formalization from neighboring concepts already

⁶ The comparative evaluation of land regularization in countries such as Peru (COFOPRI), Mexico (PROCEDE) and Colombia reveals both convergences and divergences with the Brazilian model. For a comparative synthesis, see Smolka and Mullahy (2007).

established in the literature — precarious tolerance, precarious integration and insurgent citizenship. This delimitation is necessary for the category to fulfill a precise analytical function: to describe not the condition of territories that are still informal, but the condition of territories that, even after regularization, remain in a situation of partial and selective urban integration.

On the empirical level, the data analyzed — 2022 Census, FJP and IPEA — provide descriptive support for the thesis. The finding that 84.7% of the titles issued in settlements between 2019 and 2022 are provisional, combined with the disparity of 11.8 percentage points between water network coverage and adequate sanitation in favelas, describes a pattern of legal recognition without material integration. It should be noted, however, that these data do not allow us to isolate the specific effect of land regularization on the living conditions of the territories — for this, longitudinal research of trajectories in the post-regularization would be necessary, which constitutes the main limitation of the article and the most urgent agenda for future investigation.

In terms of citizenship, the analysis showed that the delivery of the property title, in isolation, is insufficient to ensure the right to the city. Territorial citizenship, operationalized here in legal, material, relational and political dimensions, requires that regularization be accompanied by investments in infrastructure, protection of the permanence of residents and strengthening of participation channels. The production of a low-intensity territorial citizenship — restricted to the legal dimension — perpetuates segregation and fails to break with the logic of the divided city.

In view of this scenario, overcoming incomplete formalization requires a paradigm shift in national urban policy. It is necessary that land regularization ceases to be treated as an autonomous technical-legal procedure to become an inseparable part of integrated urbanization projects. An urban reform agenda committed to socio-spatial justice must prioritize: (a) the articulation between titling and urbanization; (b) the protection of the permanence of families against the pressures of the real estate market in regularized areas; (c) the strengthening of social participation in regularization processes; and (d) the longitudinal monitoring of the territories in the post-regularization.

In summary, this article contributes to the academic debate by proposing and delimiting an analytical category that qualifies the nuances of contemporary urban exclusion and by identifying the structural limits of the current model of land regularization in Brazil. It is hoped that the evidence and reflections presented here will stimulate new empirically denser investigations on the trajectory of territories in the post-regularization, as well as the formulation of policies that recognize the right of all to the city in its material and political fullness.

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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:** Jeane Aparecida Rombi de Godoy; Sandra Medina Benini.
- **Data Curation:** Jeane Aparecida Rombi de Godoy; Sandra Medina Benini.
- **Formal Analysis:** Jeane Aparecida Rombi de Godoy; Sandra Medina Benini; Allan Leon Casemiro da Silva.
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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We, **Jeane Aparecida Rombi de Godoy, Sandra Medina Benini and Allan Leon Casemiro da Silva**, declare that the manuscript entitled "**Formalize Without Integrating? Land Regularization, Citizenship and Social Appropriation in the Mismatch between the Informal City and the Formal City**":

- **Financial Ties:** Does not have/has financial ties that may influence the results or interpretation of the work. (Detail here, if applicable: "This work was funded by [Name of Institution or Entity]"; or "No institution or funding entity was involved in the development of this study").
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