

BRASÍLIA:
THE INTERSECTION OF THE PLANNERS' VISIONS FOR THE NEW CAPITAL



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INTRODUCTION

Architecture is itself a domain of intentions - for changing society, repatterning daily life, displaying status, regulating real estate and so forth - which engages other intentions, all of which have consequences in the world. (Holston, 1989, p.11)

The inauguration of Brazil's new federal district in April 1960 configured a critical juncture to a process that had been initiated more than a century before and that, one can argue, is still ongoing. The new city, erected over the impressive time span of nearly four years, was christened Brasília, a name proposed by José Bonifácio, one of the first proponents of the transference of the capital, back in 1823 (Kubitschek, 2000).

From a political perspective, Brasília was a bold and risky endeavor, conducted by the then president Juscelino Kubitschek, popularly referred to as JK. JK made it a central point of both his campaign and his mandate, even though it stirred severe criticism from the opposition. The ambitious plan was to be conducted within a very strict time frame, as it was of his interest to conclude it during his own administration, but also within the bounds of a critical political and economic moment in the country. An adept of the developmentalist policy that struck Latin America at the time (Holston, 1989), Kubitschek saw the transference of the capital as a means to accelerate and intensify his visions for national progress, as will be investigated in the present thesis. Under those circumstances, to public officials Brasília represented not only a monumental object within its own completion, but a means to achieve even further success with the plans of modernization for the country. This dual condition is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the federal district.

If on the political and institutional facet Brasília is considered to be one-of-a-kind, on the physical and constructive aspects it is also unprecedented, especially within the national context.¹The new city built on the until then unexplored Central Plateau draws attention not only through its completed state, but also in regards to the public competition through which it was achieved. The political and economic agitation surrounding the transfer of the capital posed a challenging question, which was then formatted into a public open competition. The documents linked to the competition process, the Public Notice, the Competition entry

¹ It is valid to mention that there were significant figures from international urban planning involved in the competition, such as Le Corbusier, Maxwell Fry, amongst others. For this reason, parallels can be traced between the case of Brasília and preceding urban plans, such as Corbusier's Ville Radieuse (1930), the masterplan for Chandigarh (1951). However, this thesis argues that in an act of consolidation and reaffirmation of the Brazilian Modernist school, Costa and Niemeyer had as a premise to break free from the constraints brought up by its international comparisons. On a second note, there is literature (Rego, 2021) that suggests that Brasília itself became an example for the design of capitals in post-colonial contexts in other countries of the Global South, such as the case of Abuja in Nigeria.

and the Jury Report constitute the primary sources and will be analyzed further on in this research. However, it's safe to say that Costa's entry impressed the majority of the jury and the President himself. In his personal memoirs, Kubitschek mentions his inquietude in not knowing how his grandiose vision for the new capital would be materialized. He later says that Lucio Costa managed to "reflect the plenitude that he was unable to put into words" (Kubitschek, 2000).

Precisely, the central point of interest is the intersection between the planners' intentions: of both Brasília's "political father", Juscelino Kubitschek and of its designers, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer. Three central actors in this grand moment of Brazilian history, with contrasting backgrounds and beliefs, but who found common ground for their aspirations in the Central Plateau. If the competition asked a question, how was it that Costa's proposal answered it so precisely that it persuaded the majority of the jury? What parallels can be established by JK's political discourse, the competition brief and Costa's winning entry?

The aim of this history thesis is to inquire on the competition and design process as a means of achieving an utopian vision, encountering the intersection between the political and architectural discourse. Therefore, the research question guiding this paper is: **What are the different utopias envisioned by Kubitschek and Costa and (where) do they meet each other?**

To support the examination of the main research question, two sub-questions follow:

**How is Juscelino Kubitschek's vision manifested in the competition documents?
What are the architectural/spatial/urban aspects that dialogue with the two so-called "utopian visions"?**

In order to answer the supracited questions, the methodology for this research consists first on the analysis of primary sources, being these the documents related to the National Competition for the Pilot Plan of the New Capital of Brazil. Added to it, a few excerpts from newspapers at the time will be analyzed in order to inquire on the public reaction and press coverage of the Brasília project. As this constitutes a whole new order of research, the analysis will be kept brief and will function more as a support or a meter to understand how this new endeavor was perceived nationwide, an extremely important factor considering that Kubitschek made it a leading point of his administration. The analysis of the primary sources as mentioned above will be done observing the timeframe of 1956-1961 and will look exclusively at publications from Brazil. A third primary source is the personal memoirs of Juscelino Kubitschek, in the book "Por que construí Brasília" (in English, Why I built Brasília), published posthumously in 2000.

A collection of secondary sources, including Holston (1989), Epstein (1973) and Williams (2009) will support the discussion on two main points: the first concerning the governmental vision of Brasília and the second in relation to the spatial aspects of the urban plan and

development. While this research intends to build a panorama of both visions (political and spatial) and contrast them, identifying points of convergence and divergence, from the authors mentioned in the indicated bibliography Holston is perhaps that one that has a closer proximity to it.

The thesis will be structured in three chapters. The first will dwell on the socio-political background, focusing on the time span of the 1930s until the inauguration of Brasília in 1960. Schwarcz and Murgel's "Brasil, uma biografia" will be the main source supporting the historiographical review. It is hard to pinpoint and close in on an exact time frame, because as explained before, the transference of the capital was an object of speculation for over a century, but observing the three preceding decades can provide a clearer view on the factors that culminated in JK's decision.

The second chapter will be dedicated to analyzing the documents related to the Pilot Plan competition, including the Public Notice for the Competition, Lucio Costa's entry and the Jury Report. This analysis will look more towards the process and less to Costa's proposition, which will be the subject of the third chapter. Even though these are listed as the main object of analysis, in this present research they cannot be observed detached from the historical and political context and this is an important aspect of the whole Brasília enterprise.

The third and last chapter will look closely at Lucio Costa's proposal and towards some of the central elements of the Pilot Plan. The objective here is to analyze how these support the materialization of the architect's vision and to inquire if they contribute to fulfilling the "governmental" vision. At last, a conclusion will be drawn in order to respond to the proposed research question.

Architecture is politics and Brasília makes it clear that the political game can be played through architecture. Personally, I see both dimensions as inseparable. In the opening quote, Holston says: "Architecture is a domain of intentions (...)". For a further opportunity of research and writing on the matter, I ask myself, whose intentions were made alive through Brasília? Is it the intention of a single political figure, of a group of architects or is it the intention of a nation? Discussing the success or failure of both Kubitschek or Costa's project provides an entire new topic of research, but I am deeply interested in understanding how Lucio Costa and Niemeyer, who had declared convictions of their own, reconciled their own ideology to the political project that Brasília represented. I believe that being able to reconcile opposite or contrasting positions with your own in order is both a challenge and a skill to be learned as an architect.

CHAPTER 1 | THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

The width of the Brazilian land towards the sertão is something I do not deal with, because until now no one has walked it, due to the negligence of the Portuguese, who being great conquerors of land do not take advantage of them, contenting themselves to walk them scratching along the seaside as crabs. (Salvador, 1627, p. 5)

As described by Frei Vicente Salvador, known to be the first historian in Brazilian history, since the earliest days of the Portuguese colonial occupation, Brazil is characterized as being a coastal country. Needless to say the land was already inhabited by indigenous people, spread out through the 8.000.000km² of territory, but the first attempts at establishing urban settlements took place mostly along the coast. The map that follows (Figure 1), presented in the IBGE Demographic Census of 1960 clearly indicates that the tendency of coastal occupation persisted for several decades. This scenario was one of the main arguments of those who defended the march towards the Center West of the land and consequently, the transference of the capital. In his book “Brasília, Plan and Reality” David Epstein (1973) makes use of J.O. Meira Penna’s idea of a “continental destiny” for Brazil.

The patterns observed in the urbanization and the growth of the country were closely tied to what was the economic locomotive of the country in the colonial period: the maintenance of large estate slave plantations, whose merchandise was later shipped out through the port regions such as the ones in the Southeast region, in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Santos and in Salvador, in the Northeast portion of the country. With great focus towards the ports and the coast, the government overlooked what was going on or what could be done in the hinterland. However, this raised an alert to certain thinkers. Epstein (1973) claims: “Many statesmen and thinkers regarded more effective use of the vast interior as a necessity, if only to keep other nations from taking it over.” (p. 41) With the booming success of the coffee business, the economic potential of the unexplored hinterland was not a matter of great speculation, with the exception of a few incursions towards the North for the extraction of feedstock from the forest regions. However, this did not represent a significant shift of the economic basis or of the settlement patterns.

1.1 The transference of the capital

Meanwhile, one of the discussed strategies to promote governmental occupation of the Midwest was the transference of the capital, a charged debate that dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. Salvador, in the Northeastern state of Bahia, was the first Brazilian capital, through the years of 1549 and 1763. Following that, the center of government was transferred to the city Rio de Janeiro, where it remained until 1960. Those who advocated for

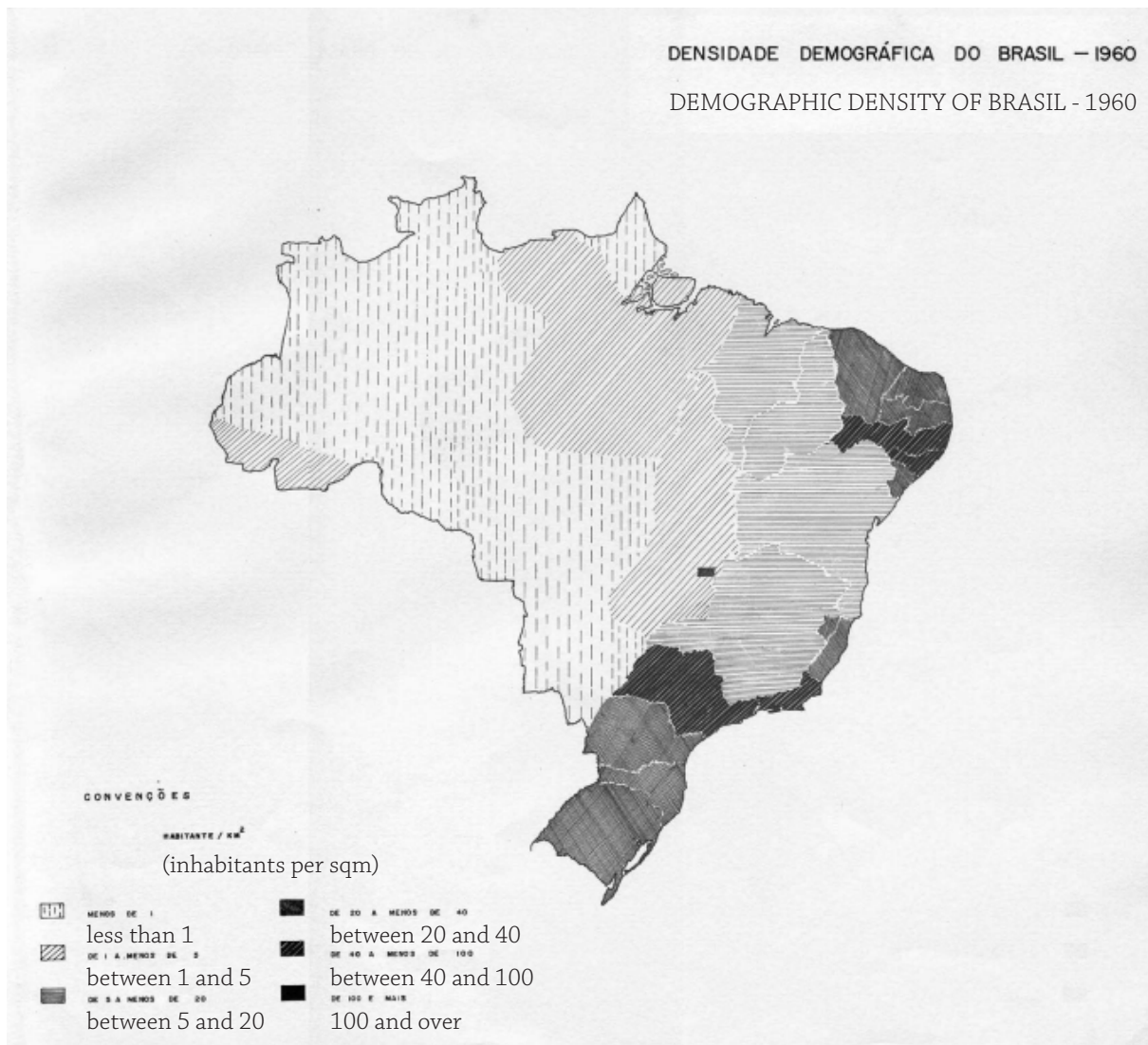


FIGURE 1 | Demographic density map - 1960
Source: IBGE - Sinopse Preliminar de 1960, p. 13

the march towards the West pointed out that both Rio de Janeiro and formerly Salvador put the government in a vulnerable position in relation to maritime attacks, as well as it suscited a difficulty in communication, due to the peripheral locations. What is speculated to be one of the first attempts at transferring the capital to the hinterland, specifically to the state of Minas Gerais, took part during the Inconfidência Mineira in 1789, an idea however that was never confirmed, according to Epstein (1973). Over the course of the next years there were other debates regarding the move of the center of government, but the first formal effort came only in 1823, when José Bonifácio de Almeida forwarded a document to the Constituent Assembly proposing the construction of a new capital. The “patriarch”, as José Bonifácio is commonly referred to, defended the new location in the hinterland, situated close to some of the most important hydrological basins and far away from the coast, thus reducing military vulnerability of the capital. Bonifácio suggested the new capital be named either Petrópolis, in honor of Emperor Pedro I, or Brasília, a self explanatory tribute that would later be chosen by Juscelino Kubitschek (Epstein, 1973). However, at this point the discourse of interiorization (in Portuguese, interiorização) did not gain quorum, mostly due to the economic situation. Epstein (1973) points out:

Although the idea of a new national capital remained present during the nineteenth century, it ran up against the techno environmental obstacles of the lack of easy communications from the coast, over the mountains and into the interior, and the reality of the limited resources of a technologically backward, stagnant, and dependent political economy. (...) it was rather that the social conditions in a country that remained a dependent outpost in the international economic system made such talk completely impractical. (p. 44)

The establishment of the Republic in 1889 once again ignited the discussions surrounding the construction of a new capital and most importantly, it was formalized in the Provisional Constitution of 1890 (Epstein, 1973). Also indicated in the constitution was the new location, an area of 14 000 square kilometers in the central plateau. This motion opened the way for the first exploratory commission, commanded by then president Floriano Peixoto, whose most significant outcome was the demarcation of a quadrilateral in the terrain where the construction of the new capital should be initiated.

Holston (1989) argues that all the miscarried attempts, as described in the previous paragraphs, indicate the level of uncertainty with which political figures saw the project of transferring the capital. More than the fear of debt and economic drawbacks, most were not willing to undergo the risk of initiating something that would most likely not be completed within a single administration period.

In parallel, it is fair to mention, even if briefly, the construction of the capital cities of the states of Goiás and Minas Gerais, which border the land where the Federal District would

futurely be built. Both Belo Horizonte, which dates back to the last years of the 19th century and Goiânia, completed in the late 1930s, constitute important precedents in the case of Brasília on two main aspects. Firstly because they indicated perhaps the first ventures of interiorization, abandoning the traditional southeastern coastal axis and setting a new direction for urbanization and foremost, for the construction of a previously planned urban development. On a second note, Goiânia is closely tied to the political unravelments that would, a few decades later, contribute to Juscelino Kubitschek's election. As pointed out by Epstein (1973), the capital of Goiás was "in part a product of the 1930 revolution that installed Getulio Vargas as Brazil's president".

1.2 The political scenario

On a global perspective, the last years of the 1920's observed signs of economic recession, which finally culminated in the Wall Street Crash of 1929. With this, Brazil's long lasting economic model, based on the large estate plantations, was no longer demonstrated to be successful. The decrease in the exportation rates of coffee indicated the need to diversify and invest in other forms of economic activity and development. Brazilian politics at the time were based on a system of alternance of power between mainly the prominent states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, often referred to as the "Café com Leite" politics. The insistence in the old and surpassed economic models and the lack of reaction from these oligarchies in face of the global events led to general discontent and questioning of the political structure. This led to the Revolution of 1930, triggered by the rupture of the traditional "Café com Leite" politics, when then president Washington Luís supported the campaign of Julio Prestes, also from São Paulo. If the threat of economic recession did not seem to appall the traditional regional elites from São Paulo and Minas Gerais, the abandonment of the "agreement" certainly did, and Getulio Vargas spearheaded this movement. In a series of conturbated events, which some classify as a coup d'état, Getulio Vargas deposed the winning candidate Julio Prestes and stepped up to power. With this, the end of a period denominated the "First Republic" was declared, inaugurating the Vargas era, which lasted nearly fifteen years.

The Vargas Era is often divided by historians in different phases, but for the purpose of this research it is sufficient to approach the main aspects of Getulio Vargas' gubernatorial period in order to understand the context it created for the election of JK and later for the approval of the Brasília project. It is important to say that Getulio Vargas' long lasting mandate began with armed actions spread throughout the country that culminated in the deposition of the then elected president, Washington Luís. During fifteen years, Vargas' government was marked by nods to authoritarianism and radicalism. On one side, he negotiated with the masses through the concession of labor rights, on the other, he refrained from any possibility of organization of workers' union and popular groups out of the State's sight, under the pretext of fighting any kind of communist initiative. In the year of 1934, a new Constitution

for Brazil was enacted. It was in theory a Constitution that would reflect a modernizing intention for the country as well as promote important gains in the exercise of citizenship, but in practice it proposed very little in the sense of altering the already outdated economic and political structure. Foremost, instruments were foreseen in the Constitution that would allow the implementation of the state of siege in Brazil, in line with the increase of a non-democratic trend observed worldwide during the late 1930s tied to the overshadowing fear of economic recession. (Schwarcz et.al., 2018) In fact, Getúlio Vargas, backed by high-ranking military figures, not only did not express any condemnation to the rise of fascism and nazism in Europe at the time, but also made use of the fascist machine and propaganda that unraveled in Brazil at the time. The demonization of communism initiated at that time in Brazil has left severe marks that persist until the present day and that in fact can be related to more recent political events. Scholars argue that the sustenance of such a radical form of governance during the first decade of his mandate was only possible due to the figure of Getulio Vargas himself (Schwarcz & Murgel, 2018). An example of that was that he was the only civilian in Brazilian history to command a dictatorship.

Surprisingly, those were great years from a cultural perspective. Vargas saw culture as a matter to be dealt with by the state and he, alongside figures such as the nominated Minister of Education and Health Gustavo Capanema, invested in the “construction of a triumphant nationality, sustained on one end by the authenticity of popular culture and on the other, by the heterogeneous mixture of cultural elements originating from different regions of the country.” (Schwarcz & Murgel, 2018, p. 518) It was an important advance as up to this point, Brazil, especially the elite, struggled with promoting and enjoying the national culture. Williams (2009) points out: “Culture was presumed to originate in Europe, and the political elite looked to Paris, rather than to Rio or São Paulo, for its role models.” (p.100)

It was the outbreak of World War II that provoked a shift in Vargas’ plans. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the population gathered on the streets demanding an official position and reinvidicating that Brazil joined the war immediately, fighting alongside the Allies. In parallel, Vargas was heavily investing in the development of a national industrial park as a means to modernize the country, and in that sense, the approximation with the United States under the command of Roosevelt was extremely interesting. In fact it was thanks to this commercial alliance that Vargas’ established in 1942 one of Brazil’s main steelworks companies, Vale do Rio Doce. It was a first, but very important step, towards the promise of industrializing and modernizing the country.

However, in October of 1945, Vargas was deposed by the military. His long lasting government was interrupted for the course of five years, when general Eurico Gaspar Dutra stepped up to govern Brazil. An administration period marked by a disastrous economic conduction, in an attempt to repair the inflation caused by the years of war. With this, the industrialization process in the country was halted and the levels of unemployment spiked. This created the ideal setting for the return of Vargas. In “Brasil, uma biografia” Lilia Schwarcz and Heloisa

Murgel (2018) state: “He had already readjusted the main points of his old nationalist and industrializing project to suit the new international context, highlighting two core points: development and social welfare.” (p.547).

Getulio Vargas won the elections by a wide margin and in the year of 1951, walked up the stairs of the Palácio do Catete in Rio de Janeiro once again. That same year, he forwarded to Congress what would be his last great deed: the creation of Petrobras, the state petroleum company and a valuable asset in order to ensure the independence of the country, eliminating the need of importing oil from an already very competitive global market. Petrobras was one of the two essential steps to give leverage to the industrializing and modernizing process. The other one was the development and installment of infrastructure that would amp up the national capacity of energy production. Eletrobras, the state company of electrical energy started functioning only in 1962, but Vargas’ last period in office certainly laid out the bases for it. Schwarcz and Murgel (2018) highlight that, unlike his oppositors, Vargas saw the answer to the question of his modernization and industrialization project within Brazilian companies and territory, with the promotion of an “ideology of national developmentalism”. The decline of Getulio Vargas’ last administration commenced when the leader realized that he was not familiar with the mechanisms of a democratic government. A succession of strikes and demonstrations indicated that the Brazilian economy deteriorated in response to the unraveling of the Cold War and to the withdrawal of North American funds from national investment programs. Amid demands that he resign, both from the population and his allies, in August 1954, Getúlio Vargas committed suicide. The months that followed Vargas’ suicide were of uncertainty and instability. Opposition tried to hinder the elections scheduled for October of that same year and there was even speculation regarding a civil war, as pointed out by Schwarcz and Murgel (2018).

Understanding the political events of the years that lead up to JK’s period in office, especially those under the figure of Vargas, is of extreme relevance because they provided Kubitschek with his two main electoral bases: the population’s desire for economic and political stability and the continuity of a dream of national modernization. It was thanks to both of these that he was elected and that he later fulfilled the long dreamt “continental destiny” of Brazil.

1.3 “Fifty years in Five”: The figure of Juscelino Kubitschek

Juscelino Kubitschek was elected president of Brazil in October 1955, alongside vice-president João Goulart. Goulart had been close to Getulio Vargas and in his last months of life, Vargas made sure to pinpoint Goulart as his successor. Thus, to the oppositors, the victory of the Kubitschek-Goulart duo represented a victory of Vargas’ legacy. For this reason, even before he officially came to power, Kubitschek was confronted with threats of a military coup, based on the arguments of an illegitimate election.

However, since the beginning of his administration, Kubitschek, a born populist, understood that he would have to negotiate with the opposition, embodied mainly in the military. According to Schwarcz and Murgel (2018), he “attracted the military to occupy increasingly more space inside strategic organs of the federal administration, especially in Petrobrás and in the department of Public Security” (p. 568). His main interest in conducting such conciliatory politics could be justified by his main governmental instrument, the Plan of Goals (in Portuguese, Plano de Metas). Scholars argue that the JK’s Plan of Goals was the first and most ambitious modernization program presented in the country. It was fundamental in consolidating the president’s popularity. Schwarcz and Murgel (2018) narrate:

It assigned to the State the task of assembling an agenda which made accelerated economic growth viable, deepened the industrialization process and privileged the industrial sector of durable consumer goods, changing the habits and daily life of the population, which, dazzled and amazed, began to live with an infinitude of new products.(p. 569)

The Plan was composed of thirty one goals, divided into four categories. His first priority concerned the allocation of investments towards mobility, specifically towards the road sector and to the development of a national automobile industry (Schwarcz et. al, 2018). In fact, the expansion of the road and interstate road system was one of the highlights of JK’s government. It was also a factor that contributed to his visions of interiorization. Schwarcz points out that during his government, between the years of 1956 and 1961, over 6000 kilometers of new roads were built. Until 1956, the total spread of roads in national territory added up to no more than 4000 kilometers. In his personal memoirs, Kubitschek himself explains the construction of the Goals, expressing his concern towards what he calls the traditional solution of administrative continuity. He stated that the construction works which, due to their size should not be concluded within his administration, should be left at a stage where their conclusion would become compulsory for the succeeding administrations (Kubitschek, 2000). However, on a certain level Juscelino’s Plan of Goals received criticism, as it failed to address severe social problems that ravaged Brazil at the time, as depicted in the cartoon on the next page². He promoted the idea of a national development through a series of goals that were dear to him and to his developmentalist agenda, but it was not totally clear how these would tackle the serious social issues.

In an authentic Brazilian expression, JK “made of lemons, a lemonade”. Stepping into power in very unstable and hostile conditions, he pushed through with his Plan of Goals, charming not only his political pairs but a large portion of a disoriented population, distrustful in the

² The cartoon is undated, but the completed National Congress probably indicates that it is from after 1961 - which provided the press and population with hindsight on the success (or not) of Kubitschek’s Plan of Goals.



FIGURE 2 | Newspaper cartoon portraying Juscelino Kubitschek (n.d)
 Source: unknown authorship, available online in Almanaque Déc. 50

The cartoon shows a man on the ground pointing his finger at Juscelino saying: “Not to mention hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, the agrarian issues...”. On the background, a television crew films the new National Congress in Brasília. On top, Juscelino flies in an airplane, with the banner “Fifty Years in Five” saying: “Enough, in my government pessimists have no place”.

State institutions on account of the prior decades as aforementioned. Consecrated in history as one of Brazil’s greatest populists, Juscelino promoted the idea of a modernizing nation not only through great infrastructural works nationwide, but by showcasing a new way of life in the households of millions of Brazilians. In the inner workings of the government, JK was adhering to a theory of development promoted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America during the 1950s, as pointed out by James Holston (2009), which “stressed state-directed industrialization as the means by which underdeveloped

On that account, this thesis argues that JK’s greatest achievement perhaps, was fostering developmentalism with a true Brazilian accent to it. He picked up on the important cultural gains observed in the late 1940s during the Vargas administration, with the pride and reaffirmation of an authentic Brazilian culture. He fostered industrialization and the

enhancement of the national energy production system, extending the plans initiated by his predecessors. Contradicting a Brazilian, and perhaps Latin America trend to cast Europe and North America as their role models, Kubitschek conveyed a grandiose vision for the country while looking inwards, while looking West. Accordingly, Brasília, what he personally entitled the Synthesis Goal (in Portuguese, Meta Síntese) was the greatest product to showcase his vision.

The project of JK was sustained on the belief that the construction of a new society depended on the will of the State and on the collective desire of a people that, at last, would have found their place and destiny. (Schwarcz & Murgel, 2018, p. 571)

Brasília, with all the symbolism it carried, was to be the proof that at last, those people had met their place and destiny. The question that stands, corroborated by the newspaper cartoon, is what was the destiny Brasil needed and what was the destiny Juscelino foresaw.

CHAPTER 2 | THE NATIONAL COMPETITION

This chapter will, in a first moment, analyze Juscelino Kubitschek's discourse regarding his vision for Brasília, using as exhibits of such discourse his personal memoirs and campaign material³. A second analysis will look at the Public Notice for the National Competition, the process through which the Competition was carried out and the final Jury Report.

2.1 Brasília's First Father

The idea of modernizing and inhabiting the country towards the West had been a constant in JK's speech, thus his campaign slogan: "fifty years in five". From early on in his campaign, he advocated for the development of a national industry. In 1950, when Vargas was elected for one more mandate in the Federal government, JK won elections for Governor for the state of Minas Gerais. As pointed out by Epstein (1973), his campaign had strong emphasis on public works, amongst which figured the expansion of the electrical energetic matrix in the state. Furthermore, even if not officialized, he was publicly seen as the successor to Vargas and he conveyed his intentions to carry on and intensify the development plans for the country. But in his personal memoirs, Kubitschek narrates the exact moment where, during his campaign, he committed to what would be both his biggest challenge and his greatest feat. On the account of a personal and highly symbolic choice, the candidate's first rally took place in Jataí, a city as he puts it "lost in the ends of Goiás" (Kubitschek, 2000). On that occasion, in response to the recent and one may argue, not very democratic, events in Brazilian history, Juscelino stated that his government would be based on the integral fulfillment of the law and that therefore, he would strictly comply with the Constitution. At that moment, a voter questioned him if that included the long speculated and awaited transference of the Capital. JK narrates that, a bit hidebound because he had already laid out his Plan of Goals and the new capital did not figure amongst them, he replied that if elected, he would not ignore that Constitutional device and he would abide by the construction of the new Government headquarters (Kubitschek, 2000). Therefore, what he would later call his Synthesis-Goal, was actually a late addition to the original plan.

On September 19th 1946, the elected president enacted the law that confirmed the construction of the new Capital in the Central Plateau, as stated in the 1946 Constitution, which was then forwarded for approval of the Congress. The law also included provisions for the establishment of a new state-owned urbanizing company, that should be dedicated exclusively to this venture. With this, Companhia Urbanizadora da Nova Capital (NOVACAP) was founded and Israel Pinheiro, a political figure from the state of Minas Gerais and an old

³ newspaper excerpts (Hemeroteca Digital, n.d.)

ally to JK was nominated to the presidency. The first tasks performed by NOVACAP were more focused on the infrastructural side of the transference of the capital rather than on the spatial aspects of the new capital itself. Among these were the construction of the Paranoá Dam, which would supply the new region with hydroelectric energy, the water and sewage system and the development of the large-scale transportation network, in order to ensure that the new capital would be connected to the already bustling urban centers, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Epstein, 1973). However, Epstein highlights that while there was great attention drawn to bringing infrastructure networks to the Central Plateau, there was little or no effort in terms of colonizing the area or of thinking of regional development with Brasília as its central point, something that would also later characterize the Public Notice for the National Competition.

JK received severe criticism for the entirety of the process. Political pairs and the population, distrustful in the governmental institution, especially in sight of the complexity of the deed, did not believe the president would succeed in transferring the Capital. Others did bet on the beginning of the construction, but they were not convinced he would be able to fulfill it by the end of his administration. In “Porque construí Brasília”, the president’s personal memoirs which were published post-mortem in 2000, JK stated that he believed some of the representatives that would later vote in favor of Brasília did it because they saw Brasília as his “political grave”. One of the main targets of criticism was the fact that even before the law was passed in Congress, the president had allowed NOVACAP to initiate its work, which included the organization for the National Competition. (Kubitschek, 2000).

In November 1956, a piece was published in the Art section of the *Correio da Manhã*, one of the most read newspapers in Rio de Janeiro (and perhaps in Brazil) (Hemeroteca Digital, n.d.), describing the competition for the design of the new Capital. The article explained, based on an interview with Israel Pinheiro, that based on consultation with the Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil (IAB - in English, Institute of Brazilian Architects), president Juscelino Kubitschek had decided to organize a national competition for the Pilot Plan. The article points out that there had been requests for international participation, but that JK had made the choice for Brazilian architects, in a gesture of valorization of the class. Juscelino would later reinforce this, by saying that in the case of an international competition with an international jury committee, he feared that jurors would have been influenced by the beauty of a design, overlooking the peculiar character of the city to be built. In his words,

Brasília would not be an urban center in conventional patterns, but a different realization. It would be a city embodied in a new conception, both with regard to the intentions that guided its location, and in relation to the socio-economic meaning that should be reflected in the urban context that would compose its image.” (Kubitschek, 2000, p. 62)

This movement of Juscelino stood in line both with his own campaign discourse, but also with the cultural movement started in the 1930s that sought to promote a truly authentic Brazilian culture. JK had a clear vision of what Brasília should mean and represent, an unique masterpiece, and he made reference to it whenever he would discourse about the new Capital. However, he repeatedly stated that even though he had a vision, there was a struggle to materialize what the future capital should look and function like. JK says:

Despite the enthusiasm with which I dedicated myself to the company, I did not have, at the beginning, an idea formed about the type of city that would be constructed. Conceptual expressions came to mind - "metropolis of the future", "interplanetary urbis", "city of the year 2000" - which, overloaded with an undeniable ghostly accent, did not crystallize into a concrete reality of representing, in short, what, for a long time, I had in my mind. (Kubitschek, 2000, p. 69)

2.2 The national competition

Through the creation of NOVACAP and by means of his close relationship with Israel Pinheiro, Kubitschek entrusted to them the structuring of the National Competition. But the primordial figure in the process was Oscar Niemeyer. The Brazilian architect was a right-hand man to the President, as he recounts in his memoirs (Kubitschek, 2000). Niemeyer took part in the very first excursions to the Central Plateau and he would later be put in charge of designing the first buildings, which due to their urgent character, would be built before the Pilot Plan. Niemeyer had previously collaborated in the design of governmental buildings. One of the most noteworthy projects was the Palácio Capanema, built in Rio de Janeiro in the late 1940's to host the Ministry of Health and Education. Niemeyer participated as an intern for his professor, Lucio Costa and the project also counted with consulting from Le Corbusier.

Experiences as the Palácio Capanema elevated Oscar Niemeyer to the status of one of the most celebrated aspiring architects in the country and one of the main exponents of the Brazilian Modernist school⁴. Thereby, Kubitschek turned to him when taking on the challenge of building Brasília. Alongside Kubitschek and Costa, Niemeyer is often referred to as one of the fathers of Brasília. In 1956, JK appointed Niemeyer as the director of the Architecture Department of NOVACAP (Tavares, 2004). Moreover, he was responsible for structuring and writing the Public Notice for the National Competition, together with Raul Pena Firme and Roberto Lacombe, two important architects and scholars at that time. The competition brief was published in the Official Union Diary on September 30th 1956 and

⁴ Holston (1989) unveils an important discussion regarding the notions of Modernism and Modernization, that will be resumed in the concluding remarks.

expounded the conditions for participation, the procedures of the competition process and the required information for the proposed plans. Analyzing the text from the Public Notice allows us to observe the emphasis that NOVACAP and the Commission for the Construction and Transference of the Federal Capital gave to the technical matters of the endeavor. The two mandatory products listed in the competition brief were:

- a) a basic layout of the city, indicating the positioning of the main elements of the urban structure, the location and interconnection of the various sectors, centers, facilities and services, distribution of open spaces and communication routes (scale 1:25,000) and b) a justificative report for the proposed project. (Comissão de Planejamento da Construção e da Mudança da Capital Federal, 1956)

Beyond the mandatory products, the public notice suggested that the contestants submitted other materials in order to support their proposal, such as a mapping scheme for the area of the Federal District, indicating the zones for industry, agriculture, a calculation of the supply and demand for water and electrical energy, a development scheme foreseeing the future stages of the city, amongst others. This emphasized NOVACAP's highly technical approach and also hinted at the urgency of the process - the proposed design needed to prove itself to be realistic and feasible. In addition to explaining the required products, the notice gave more information on the format of the presentation and the procedures. The inscriptions to take part in the competition would be open for 15 days and after that, contestants would have 120 days to work on their proposals. It also described the composition of the jury, which consisted of two representatives from NOVACAP, one representative from the IAB, one representative from the Clube de Engenharia (an engineering institution) and two foreign urban planners. Finally, the notice denoted the prize. First to fifth place would be granted a financial prize, being the winner awarded Cr\$ 1.000.000,00 (a million cruzeiros)⁵.

It was a Competition Notice, therefore it needed to be informative and objective, but little of Kubitschek's grandiose vision can be seen in the document. In his discourse, Juscelino mentioned the uniqueness of the city to be constructed. As this thesis describes, the transference of the capital represented an unprecedented deed and it would be achieved in an unprecedented way - timewise, policywise and designwise. With the plans of transferring the capital, JK foresaw a new way of life for Brazil, one that would shift the development axis in the country but that he hoped would also rethink the traditional dynamics between Brazil and the rest of the world, especially with the United States and Europe. Holston states:

⁵ Since 1942, when the cruzeiro was instituted as the official currency, the country observed several changes to its monetary system in an effort to standardize the money circulating within the country. According to online converting calculators (<https://calcularconverter.com.br/conversor-de-cruzeiro-para-real/>), the amount of Cr\$ 1.000.000,00 would currently add up to R\$0,364.

Thus, he maintained that Brasília would produce both a new national space and a new national epoch, the first by incorporating the interior into the national economy and the second by being the decisive mark on the timeline of Brazil's emergence as a modern nation. (Holston, 2009, p. 18)

All of these aspects were exemplified in his way of doing politics, and moreover, it was a narrative that had been initiated decades before, during the Vargas era. Brasília should be therefore, the substantiation of it, the materialization of an idea and a vision for Brazil.

2.3 The competition entries

An interesting aspect of the National Competition was the discrepancy between the entries by the contestants. There were 26 entries from firms from different parts of Brazil. JK gives his account of this. On the occasion of the competition, all works were to be exhibited at the Ministry of Education, in Rio de Janeiro. While Costa's winning entry was presented with no flourishes, other contestants invested largely in the presentation. Kubitschek mentions the one by São Paulo based firm Construtec, which used maquettes and aluminum frames for their drawings, spending approximately Cr\$400.000,00 (four hundred thousand cruzeiros). Moreover, Costa's proposal differed from the rest in regards to the presented products. While others complied with the Public Notice's focus on the technical aspect, including spreadsheets, statistics, calculations in their own presentations, Costa stood out by the simplicity of the presented proposal.

Nevertheless, on March 15th 1957 the Jury Committee published the report that would announce Lucio Costa as the first place winner. The committee was composed by Israel Pinheiro, NOVACAP's president; Paulo Antunes Ribeiro, representing the IAB; Oscar Niemeyer and Stamo Papadaki, on behalf of NOVACAP'S Architecture Department; and as international jurors, sir William Holford, from England and french architect André Sive. Regarding the choice of members, especially the international ones, Tavares (2004) points out that it was a clear indicative of how the committee, from the very beginning, was already leaning towards a modernist solution, as three of its seven jurors were direct exponents of the Modernist discourse. Holford and Sive were actually substitutes for Charles Asher and Maxwell Fry, who collaborated together with Jane Drew in Corbusier's plan for Chandigarh. Another aspect highlighted by Tavares (2004) is how the jury was mostly composed of professionals who had a good relationship with Niemeyer. As expected, the seven contest finalists had proposals that envisioned a Modernist approach for the new Capital. The report describes that the selection was based on two criterias - the first one related to the functional elements of the proposals and the second one denominated the "architectural synthesis", which was divided into the overall composition and the expression of the new governmental headquarters (Holford et

al., 1957). According to the report, Lucio Costa's proposal was the one that best balanced the two established criteria. Tavares (2004) points out the strong influence William Holford had over the decision, as he had previously stated how the jury was seeking an idea for an administrative city and how the competition should be seen as a competition of details.

The jury's choice for Costa's proposal faced a wave of criticism (Tavares, 2004, p. 90). As a matter of fact, the entirety of the competition process is seen as controversial - both due to the political background to it and to the way the competition itself was carried out. A part of the criticism was directed more towards the judging procedure than to the winning proposal. The judging procedure was actually a matter of disagreement between the members of the committee, which resulted in IAB's representative, Paulo Antunes Filho, not signing the final Jury Report. Others disapproved of the composition of the jury, arguing the potential bias that could come from the jurors' relationship with Oscar Niemeyer. Finally, there was some criticism aimed at the simplicity of Costa's presentation. As Kubitschek himself pointed out, while other teams invested heavily in the presentation, bringing maquettes and dozens of posters to the exhibition, the proposal by Lucio Costa was conveyed by a couple of typewritten pages followed by a few croquis.

Such discrepancies and the intense criticism pushes us to investigate what elements of Costa's proposal captivated the jury so assertively to the point he was voted winner by five of the six jurors, despite the simplicity of his presentation. Furthermore, what elements in Costa's proposal spoke to Kubitschek's vision for Brasília and is it possible that perhaps that was the reason for his triumph? Having now elucidated the political background to the transference of the Capital, as well as the procedures regarding the National Competition, the following chapter will look closely at Lucio Costa's proposal for Brasília.

CHAPTER 3 | WHEN PLAN MEETS PLANNERS

In his writings, Kubitschek recounts his perception of Costa's proposal for Brasília:

His ideas coincided, exactly, with what I felt in relation to the problem. Brasília could not and should not be an ordinary city, equal or similar to so many others that existed in the world. Having to constitute the basis of irradiation of a pioneering system that would bring, to civilization, an unrevealed universe, it would have to be, necessarily, a metropolis with different characteristics, that would ignore the contemporary reality and turn, with all its constitutive elements, to for the future. And that was, without a doubt, the thought that guided my action, in the determination to build it. (Kubitschek, 2000, p. 71)



FIGURE 3 | Juscelino Kubitschek (on the left) and Lucio Costa visiting site of the future capital, 1957
Source: Photography by Mario Fontenelle, Copyright © Francisco Aragão

The quote above reflects the President's satisfaction towards Lucio Costa's proposal. Costa captivated the jury but also met, and perhaps surpassed JK's expectations in regards to the shape of Brasília. Both of them, with the support of Oscar Niemeyer, were able to showcase their visions for the future capital. Even though Costa and Kubitschek had different motivations concerning the construction of Brasília, and were forged in different backgrounds, they were able to find common ground in the Central Plateau. Beginning with a brief analysis of Lucio Costa's proposal for the Pilot Plan, this chapter will investigate what level of parallelism can be observed between the architectural and political discourse that shaped Brazil's new capital. In regards to the architecture of the new development, what elements respond to the visions presented by Juscelino and by Lucio Costa?

3.1 Lucio Costa's *Plano Piloto*

As previously discussed, the material submitted by Costa was succinct. A plan, followed by

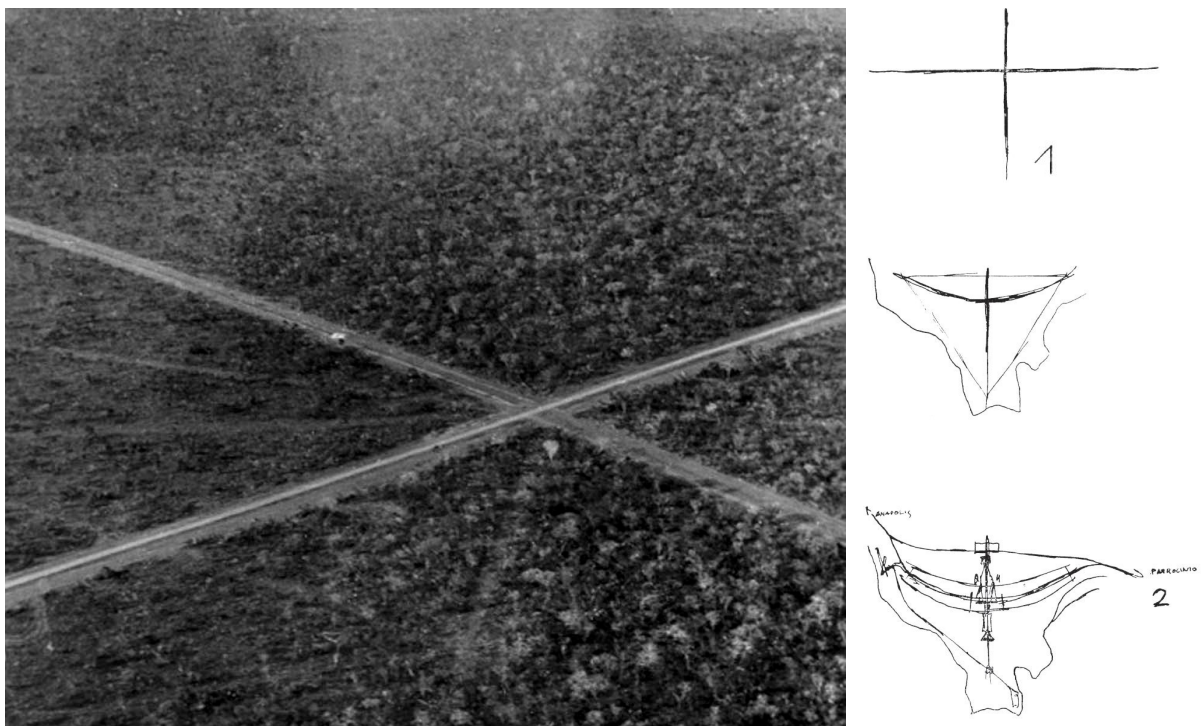


FIGURE 4 [right] | Sequence of sketches by Lucio Costa in the competition entry

Source: Costa, 1957

FIGURE 5 | Ground zero for the New Capital in the Central Plateau, 1957

Source: Photography by Mario Fontenelle, Copyright © Arquivo Público do Distrito Federal - ArPDF

a few sketches and a manifesto written by the architect himself, in which he defends the proposed design as well as briefly explains some technicalities which were not expressed in the drawings. The poetic quality of the text impressed the jurors (Williams, 2009, p. 105) and it perfectly complements the collection of sketches by the architect, by providing rich descriptions which deepen the ideas presented in the drawing. One of the most symbolic images of Costa's proposal and perhaps of Brasília is the visual of the two axes (pictured on the previous page). Two crossing axes, that prolong themselves infinitely until proven otherwise, enhance the idea of a new centrality for the country and brings a counterpoint to the idea of Brasília being built in the middle of nowhere. The Central Plateau would no longer be "nowhere" once the new Capital had been transferred, hence the symbolism and strength of this initial gesture. A primary gesture that would be the base to Costa's design and organization for the new city.

Following the crossing of the axis, Costa developed his plan into what resembles the shape of an airplane⁶, an image that inhabits the imagination of Brazilians and visitors when flying over Brasília. The two sides of the horizontal axis, referred to as the "Eixo Rodoviário" (in English, Road Axis) define the Asa Sul and Asa Norte (South and North wings), while the vertical axis, known as the "Eixo Monumental" (Monumental Axis) organizes the governmental, institutional and commercial functions. On the superior end of the axis are the Ministry buildings, arranged along a promenade which is known as the Esplanada dos Ministérios. On the far end of the Esplanada, Costa, taking advantage of the visual perspective, placed the Praça dos Três Poderes. That is where the Congress stands, housing both the Federal Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. On the opposite end of the Monumental Axis are located the sport facilities (Stadiums, Racetrack and the TV tower). In the intersection between Eixo Monumental and Eixo Rodoviário, Costa placed the autarchy sectors, commercial sectors, entertainment sectors and hotel sectors. On the North-South directions are the living functions for the new inhabitants - residential areas (which would host the renowned Superquadra) and functions that would serve the population, such as schools, churches and other leisure and smaller commercial areas. Of the aforementioned public and institutional buildings, only two were designed by Lucio Costa - the television tower and the bus station, which will be discussed further on. The great majority of the institutional, and especially governmental buildings, were designed by Oscar Niemeyer. Despite its commented simplicity, Costa's proposal presents a solid understanding of the topographical and technical conditions that surrounded the transference of the capital, even though that was not the main focus of his proposal. As mentioned before, Lucio Costa captivated the jurors by presenting an idea, a vision for the new capital and certain elements play an important role.

⁶ As a curiosity, the name attributed to the competition, Pilot Plan, is just a coincidence. According to Tavares (2004), the name was in fact a suggestion of Le Corbusier, in a letter to the Brazilian Embassy, in which he offered to develop a project for the New Capital, which he referred to as Plan Pilote. Nonetheless, some Brazilians still argue that Brasília is in fact an airplane and that JK was the pilot flying it.

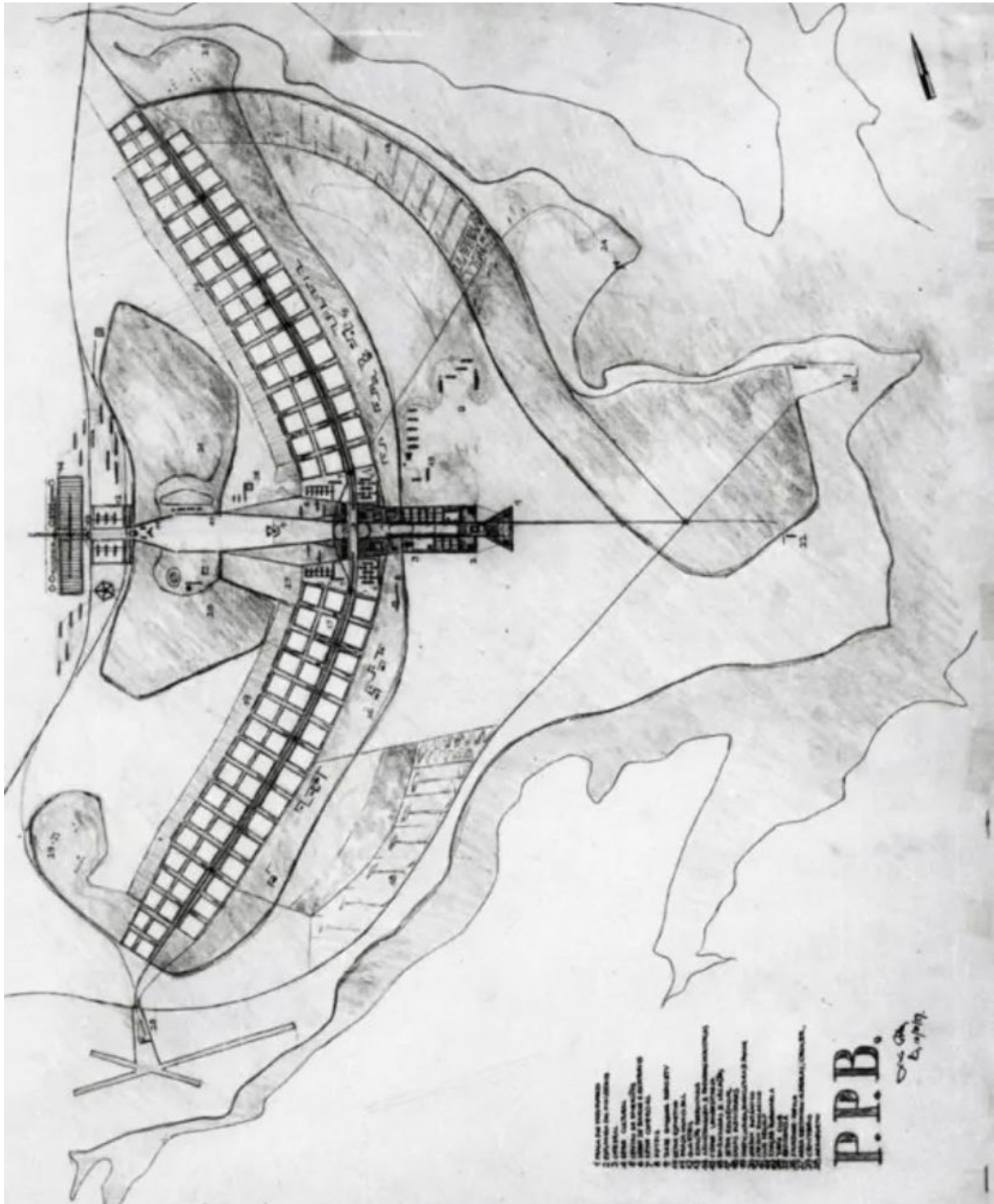


FIGURE 6 | Plano Piloto masterplan by Lucio Costa, 1957
 Source: digitized image from Serapião, F. & Wisnik, G. (Eds.). (2019). Infinite Span: 90 Years of Brazilian Architecture. Lars Muller, Copyright © Casa Lucio Costa, Portugal

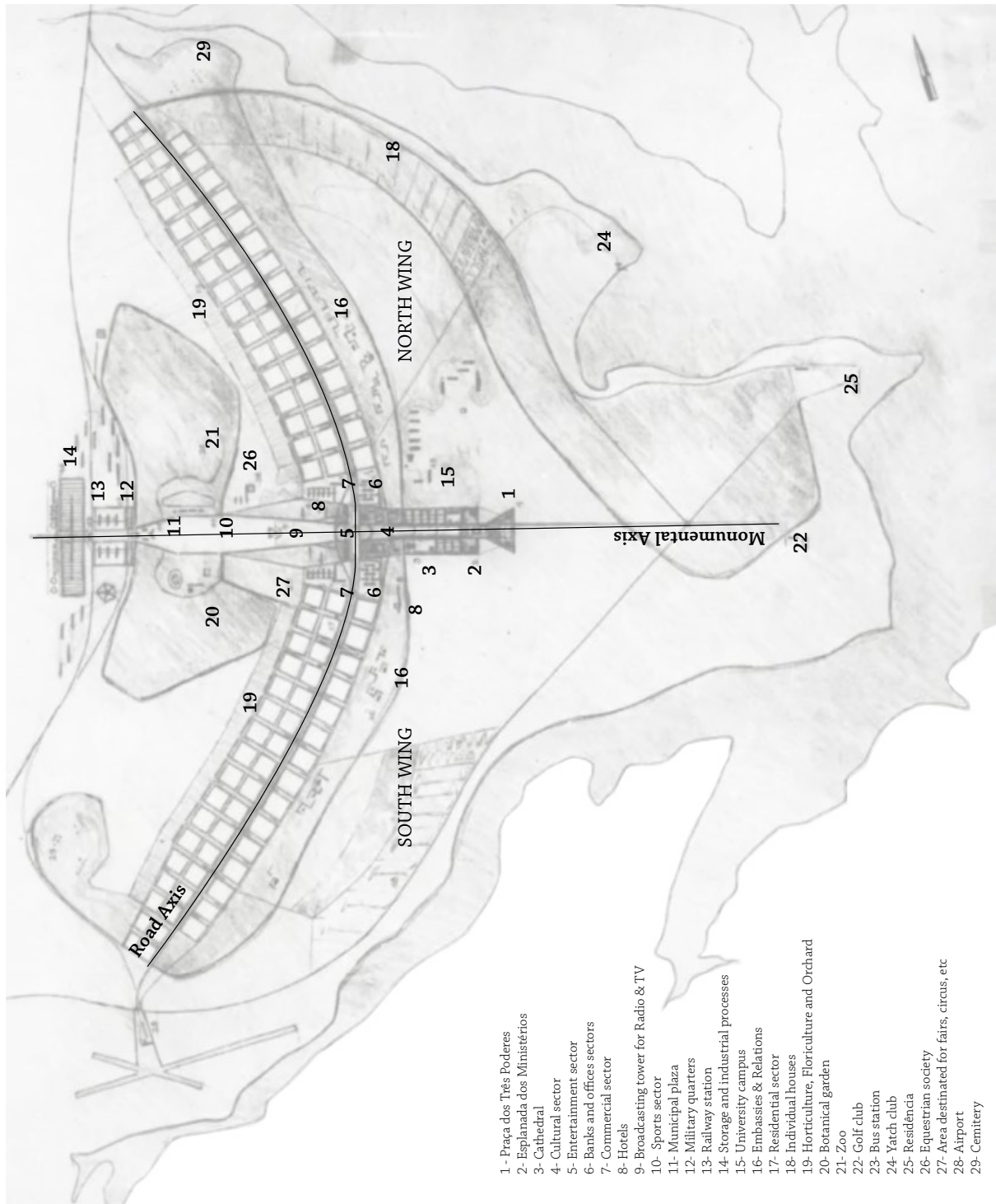


FIGURE 7 | Scheme and translation of Plano Piloto masterplan
source: own authorship

3.2 “The monuments of progress”

In his book entitled “Brazil”, Williams (2009) discusses what he calls the “monuments to progress” in Brasília. The first “monument” is the automotive dominated landscape of Brasília. Anyone who has ever lived or visited Brasília will be able to affirm that it is nearly impossible to get around in the city without a car. Not surprisingly, one out of two axes is called the Eixo Rodoviário, a motorway that crosses through the extension of the city. Costa introduced his own interpretations of a motorized traffic dominated plan, with the design of the clover-leaf intersections for example. But most importantly, the extensive space given to automobiles within the Pilot Plan complied with the developmentalist policy which JK was carrying out. Williams (2009) points out that up until JK’s period in office, the car was not so much of a popular product or desire, but by encouraging the establishment of a national automotive industry, JK made the search and the desire for private vehicles spike. Already consolidated

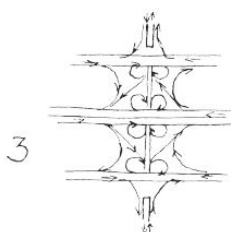


FIGURE 8 [above] | Television Tower and Monumental Axis
Source: Archdaily, n.d, Copyright © Joana França, color edited by author

FIGURE 9 | Costa’s sketch for the cloverleaf interchanges
Source: Costa, 1957

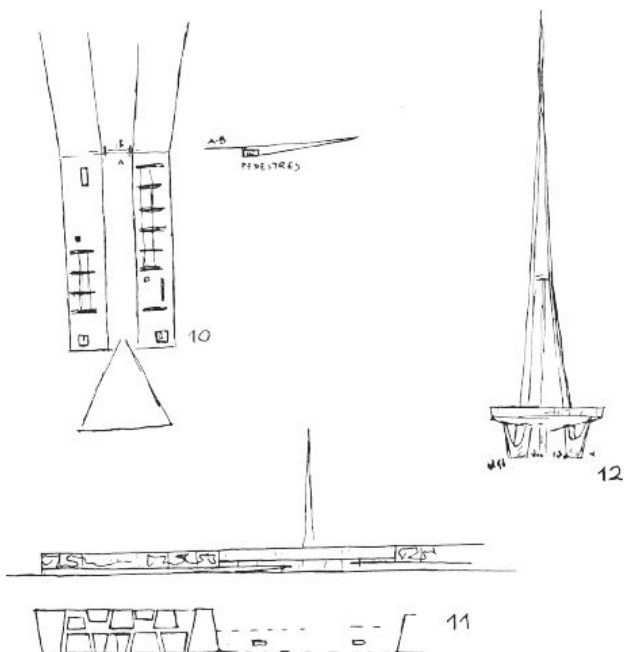


FIGURE 10 [above] | Television Tower, one of the few buildings designed by Lucio Costa in Brasília

Source: Archdaily, n.d, Copyright © Joana França, color edited by author

FIGURE 11 | Sketch by Lucio Costa showing positioning and design for Television Tower

Source: Costa, 1957

urban centers, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, adjusted to the new mobility logic⁷, with the introduction of projects such as the Aterro do Flamengo, but Brasília was the first case of a city built around the figure of the car and almost as a celebration to it.

A second element discussed by Williams is the Television Tower, one of the few buildings of Lucio Costa's authorship and one of the few to figure in the competition proposal. The reason Williams mentions the tower is due to its strategic position, diametrically opposite to the Praça dos Três Poderes and to its height - the Tower is the highest building in the city, a characteristic to which the author attributes a symbolism. Williams (2009) says:

It is significant that the tallest building in the city is not part of the political city - it could easily have been the National Congress - but a symbol of the city's modernity and connectedness. Where the Congress draws on archaic imagery, the TV Tower is, through its function, contemporary, and has remained so (...). (p. 111)

Perhaps something to add to Williams' argument is the representation of communication suscitated by the Tower, a structure that hosts the main media vehicles overlooking the newly created city - and furthermore, showcasing it to the rest of the nation. Kubitschek made great use of the image of Brasília during both his campaign and his mandate, and in order for such imagery to achieve full potential it should be largely publicized. Additionally, another possible interpretation is the idea that, by means of the TV tower, the nation had its eyes over the city where the main political decisions were to take place.

3.3 The immaterial agenda of Costa's proposal

To conclude, there are three non-tangible aspects of Lucio Costa's proposal for Brasília that are worth mentioning. Firstly, the "state of the city" illustrated in Costa's proposal. One of the requirements of the competition's brief was to forecast the development of Brasília over the course of the succeeding decades. While some of the other competitors did so by means of population growth estimates, calculations regarding the infrastructure development and other technicalities, Costa presented a design solution for an "adult city", a vision or an idea that would not rely on a few decades to be completed. His vision for the Pilot Plan showcased the completed state of Brasília, specifically of the most symbolic parts, i.e. the political wing. This did not mean that, when built, the city would be fully occupied, but that at least the

⁷ In the case of São Paulo, the municipality had been implementing the Plano de Avenidas, a road system plan developed by Francisco Prestes Maia and João Ulhôa Cintra in the late 1930s, but whose works lasted until the end of the 1970s.

part that concerned the governmental functions would be fulfilled - a vision that had great appeal to JK. As aforementioned, he feared the tradition of administrative discontinuity that ravaged Brazilian politics. He disliked both the idea of having to leave office with an uncompleted project - especially one like Brasília - a fact that would stir and legitimate the criticism from his oppositors, but he also despised the idea of having to share the authorship of the deed with a succeeding President.

A second and crucial point is exemplified through the very first statement in Costa's project defense (or manifesto). When describing the proposed solution, the architect stated: "It was born from the primary gesture of whoever marks a place or takes possession of it: two axes crossing each other at right angles, that is, the sign of the cross itself" (Costa, 1956) . The notion of taking possession is of utter importance, because it dialogues so precisely to the "myth" Juscelino had been constructing all along. Holston (1989) explains:

Following the pattern of other foundation myths, the plan suggests that the founding of a capital city is a civilizing event. It gives form and identity to an uncivilized geography (the Central Plateau) which is tamed and settled by a race of heroes who are at the same time reliving their past (...). (p.67)

The picture by Mario Fontenelle, included in the beginning of this chapter, and one that made the pages of the major national newspapers, captures it precisely. JK tirelessly explored and promoted the idea of conquering the untouched hinterland which was indeed part of Brazil's territory but more importantly, part of its destiny. This alignment, between the President's and the architect's discourse, evidentiates the dialectics of the process that permeated the construction of Brasília.

One final aspect, related to the latter, which highlights the synergy between Lucio Costa's plan and JK's vision is what Holston (1989) refers to as an "instrumental conception" (p.83) of Brasília. Both Kubitschek, Costa (and Niemeyer) saw Brasília not as a result of regional planning, but as a cause for it. Trusting the strength of the symbol itself, both of them believe would be the genesis for the occupation of the hinterland, for economic growth and for the development of a new mentality - including one for Brazilian architecture.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude, I'd like to make use of Holston's expression "consensus of utopian intentions" (Holston, 1989, p.84). It refers to the symbolic aspect both planners and president saw in Brasília. While Brasília was constructed on the basis of a discourse that promised to elevate the Midwest and the interior with the already developed and powerful Southeast region, what stood behind the discourse was an utopia. The utopian vision that, in fact, it would be the rest of Brazil (Southeast included) that would have to level up to reach Brasília's status'. Holston argues (and this research upholds it) that the employment of Modernist architecture was therefore instrumental in this project. Brasília should innovate in all aspects: in its road system, housing, education, urban planning, amongst others. To that end, the participation of Niemeyer and Costa was not by chance - the two architects had demonstrated to be tuned in to the discussion of Modernism that happened abroad, but more importantly, they were able to conceive a Modernist monument in true Brazilian fashion. In that sense, they fully succeeded. Brasília became not only a celebrated architectural masterpiece, but also served as precedent for many other developments of the same sort, especially in late urbanizing countries.

However, the main research question this essay aimed to address was "What are the different utopias envisioned by Kubitschek and Costa and (where) do they meet each other?". At this point in the research, the question is partly answered. The previous chapters have inquired on the convergence between the architectural and political discourse that shaped Brasília, which allows us to answer that yes, the utopian visions of Architect and President do meet. Nonetheless, certainly there are diverging points and that itself could constitute an entire new order of research. I will briefly discuss and indicate paths for future research, some of which have already been initiated by James Holston in "The Modernist City" (1989). In his book, Holston discusses what he calls the "Plan's Hidden Agenda"⁸. I would argue that perhaps one of the greatest examples of such "hidden agenda" is Costa's proposal for Brasília's housing units, the superquadras.

Costa deposited in the Superquadra and in the general organization of housing in his plan the hope of breaking (or at least not reproducing) a pattern of social stratification observed in the majority of the Brazilian cities. To put it in a very brief way, in his plan Costa did not designate housing areas for those that, in other cities, would be referred to as the lower classes - janitors, guards, custodians, drivers, etc. Moreso, he condemned the construction of satellite cities or other forms of housing for the described class of people, which implied that they would have as much of a right and access to the superquadras as the higher

⁸ Important to state that when Holston refers to the Hidden Agenda he is referring to both Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's work.

officials which would also populate Brasília. This small example provides a glimpse at Costa's notion of social progress and how it was represented in his proposal for Brasília.

More than 60 years have gone by since the inauguration of Brasília, and after all this time we have seen declarations from both Niemeyer and Costa indicating their affinity to a left-wing or some may say, Communist politics. When questioned about their political divergences, Niemeyer responded: "We never discussed politics, either his or mine" (Holston, 1989, p. 94). On that account, we may argue that their own personal convictions might have been contradicted by JK's vision for the future of Brazil, but notwithstanding, they took on the project with great mastery. On the architect's perspective, Holston (1989) describes: "They viewed the state's project to build a new capital as the opportunity to construct a city that would transform, or at least strongly push the transformation, of Brazilian society - a project, moreover, of social transformation without social upheaval"(p. 78).

The author also dwells on Kubitschek's perception of the architects' agenda and suggests a possible lack of interest or a level of naiveness towards the social intentions of Brasília's planners (Holston, 1989) and towards their own political stance. Brasília, as a result itself, embodies the conceptions of social progress of all parties. The answer to that, according to Holston, lies in the affinity between Modernism and Modernization. This intersection is a very interesting discussion and could provide ground for additional research. He says: "In the case of Brasília, we may suggest the nature of this affinity by explaining how it is that the same symbols can appeal to those who hold differing, even at points opposing, interpretations of those symbols" (p. 94). For example, Costa saw Brasília and specifically his proposal for the housing sector as a means to bridge a gap of social inequality that produced concrete and unpleasant manifestations in other large Brazilian cities. However, we can speculate that in regards to the whole political symbolism that the new capital had in Kubitschek's vision, the social aspects were nearly confined to the backdrop - something that is also illustrated by the lack of "colonizing" policies for the new reason. In JK's vision, Brasília had a clear political structure and with Costa and Niemeyer's aid, also a spatial configuration, but there was scarcely any consideration to what should be an innovative social structure. Even though Juscelino made this "new way of Brazilian life" a central part of his discourse, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, his own vision for Brasília did not clearly respond to what this new way meant to the people who would actually live there. Moreover, throughout the country there were a series of social issues that were left to the background in sight of his ambitious Plan of Goals. Costa, on the other hand, did however subtly address or at least acknowledge it through some of the elements in his plan, as we discussed previously, in an example of the intentions of the architect to contribute to what he considered a new way of life. Perhaps, the visions of Brasília's three "fathers"; Kubitschek, Costa and Niemeyer, were not at all antagonistic. But they certainly had different emphasis - Brasília's monumentality meant something different to each of them.

Its role as a driver of national development and innovation may be questioned, as well as its

promises of social progress. The emergence of satellite cities for the workers of Brasília, the persistence and strengthening of the Southeast economic axis (São Paulo-Rio de Janeiro) and the still sparsely populated Center East are some indicators of this. Briefly (because this gives way to an entire new and very intriguing line of research), I would argue that this is tied to the utopian character of the whole competition process for Brasília. On this note, Holston (1989) adds:

Modernist planning arose in the context of the European avant-gardes as an attempt to develop alternatives to bourgeois capitalist society and consciousness. (...) I have argued that its failures derive from the utopian nature of its counter-formulations, especially from its dehistoricizing and decontextualizing premises. (p. 315)

Yet, Brasília fulfills itself as a symbol, reconciling the visions of its “fathers”, Juscelino Kubitschek, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, as diverging as they might have been at times. To me, Brasília’s great strength is showcasing the power of a vision and the materialization of a discourse.

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Figure 8: França, J.(n.d.). *Television Tower and Monumental Axis* [Photograph]. Copyright © Joana França. Available online in: <https://www.archdaily.com.br/br/763844/classicos-da-arquitetura-torre-de-tv-de-brasilia-lucio-costa>. Retrieved April 1st 2022.

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