

# Utopian visions in the Portuguese City: an interpretation of *Planos Gerais de Urbanização*.

José Cabral DIAS,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Faculty of Architecture of University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

---

## Abstract

One can have many approaches to utopia. While focusing on ideas aimed at transforming a particular context into a non-achievable reality, we are also referring to utopia. Within the context of dictatorship (28<sup>th</sup> of May 1926-25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1974), the Portuguese city, which was planned through *Planos Gerais de Urbanização* (General Urbanization Plans), was also a realm of utopia. This paper will have a non-conventional approach to those plans. It is expressed by a break with the former context. Aspiring to a new urban reality which was focused on modernity, the town planners intended to break up with tradition. Accordingly, the car should be seen as a contribution for shaping urban space through innovative principles. Demolitions and new areas of expansion would be the most visible face of it, among a wide range of features for transforming the preexistent context. However, even taking into account the inadequacy of Portuguese city to its own time, the Government was in opposition with complete ruptures. Instead, the adequacy to financial resources was in the centre of its concerns. In other words, the reality was Government's work scope in contrast to non-achievable goals. The architects, on the contrary, set their own goals well beyond reality.

**Keywords:** Portuguese city, Planos Gerais de Urbanização, Utopia, Estado, XX century urban concepts