

---

**THE MATERIALIZATION OF ULRICH BECK'S CATASTROPHIST THEORY IN VIEW OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE URBAN EXODUS MOVEMENT IN THE STATES OF MINAS GERAIS, BRAZIL**

***A MATERIALIZAÇÃO DA TEORIA CATASTROFISTA DE ULRICH BECK EM VISTA DA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19 E O MOVIMENTO DE ÊXODO URBANO NO ESTADO DE MINAS GERAIS, BRASIL***

**DANYELLE AVILA BORGES**

Master student in Environmental Law and Sustainable Development at Escola Superior Dom Helder Câmara (ESDHC). Post-Graduations in Environmental Law (Universidade Estácio de Sá/RJ) and Tax Law (PUC-Minas). Bachelor of Law at UNIFAA (Valença/RJ). Member of the Environment Committee of OAB/MG and Researcher in Group MAPPS/ESDHC. ORCID: 0000-0002-9760-3312 / E-mail: [danyelleab.adv@gmail.com](mailto:danyelleab.adv@gmail.com)

**MARALUCE MARIA CUSTÓDIO**

PhD in Geography at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) with Université d'Avignon (France). Master's in environmental law and Sustainable Development. Masters in law at UFMG. Master's in environmental law at Universidad Internacional de Andalucia (Spain). Graduated in Law at UFMG. Professor at ESDHC. ORCID: 0000-0003-2048-7883/ E-mail: maralucemc@gmail.com

**MARCELO KOKKE GOMES**

Post-doctor in Environmental Public Law from Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (Spain). PhD and master's in law from PUC-Rio. Specialist in Constitutional Process. Professor at Escola da Advocacia-Geral da União and Escola



---

Superior Dom Helder Câmara. ORCID: 0000-0002-8636-2787 / E-mail: marcelokokke@yahoo.com.br

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** For the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2019), modern society is experiencing a disruptive moment and is becoming a risk society, a phenomenon that does not respect classes or borders and generates unknown consequences for human health and the environment. Based on this context, the problem proposed in the present research is to analyze whether the Covid-19 pandemic, understood here as the materialization of Beck's catastrophist theory, accentuated or not the migratory flows from the city to the countryside, the so-called urban exodus, especially in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The objective of the research is to draw a parallel between the humanitarian and sanitary catastrophe and its supposed influence on migratory flows, analyzing whether the State of Minas Gerais experienced a real migratory flow from large urban centers to smaller cities due to fear caused by the pandemic. This migratory flow both from the point of view of cataloging data of the new social demands and from the point of view of the offer of real estate in view of this new way of living.

**Methodology:** the method used is hypothetical deductive, through qualitative, quantitative, exploratory and descriptive research, especially bibliographical, having as theoretical reference the ideas of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck.

**Results:** it is concluded that the State of Minas Gerais does not have official data on these migratory flows during the pandemic period, however, as some municipalities with a more peaceful lifestyle, belonging to the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte, registered a high demand for real estate, there is a suggestive bias that the hypothesis of the present research is confirmed.

**Contributions:** the scientific contribution gained is the continuous and resilient need to revisit the nuclear and peripheral concepts related to the theory of risk developed by Ulrich Beck, its effectiveness and its implementation towards a new modernity, as such risks do not respect classes or borders and the awareness of global risk creates space for alternative modernities.

**Keywords:** Catastrophist Theory; Ulrich Beck; Pandemic; Migration; Minas Gerais.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** para o sociólogo alemão Ulrich Beck (2019), a sociedade moderna vive um momento disruptivo e transforma-se em uma sociedade de riscos, fenômeno que



---

não respeita classes ou fronteira e gera consequências desconhecidas para a saúde humana e para o meio ambiente. Ao partir desse contexto, o problema proposto na presente pesquisa é analisar se a pandemia de Covid-19, entendida como a materialização da teoria catastrofista de Beck, acentuou ou não os fluxos migratórios da cidade para o campo, o chamado êxodo urbano, especialmente no Estado de Minas Gerais, Brasil. O objetivo da pesquisa é traçar um paralelo entre a catástrofe humanitária e sanitária e sua suposta influência nos fluxos migratórios, analisando se o Estado de Minas Gerais vivenciou um fluxo migratório real dos grandes centros urbanos para as cidades menores em razão do medo causado pela pandemia. Fluxo migratório esse tanto sob o ponto de vista da catalogação de dados das novas demandas sociais, quanto sob o ponto de vista da própria oferta de imóveis ante essa nova forma de viver.

**Metodologia:** o método utilizado é o hipotético dedutivo, por meio de pesquisa qualitativa, quantitativa, exploratória e descritiva, especialmente bibliográfica, tendo como referencial teórico as ideias do sociólogo alemão Ulrich Beck.

**Resultados:** conclui-se que o Estado de Minas Gerais não possui dados oficiais sobre esses fluxos migratórios durante o período pandêmico, no entanto, como alguns municípios com um estilo de vida mais pacata, pertencentes à Região Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte, registraram uma alta demanda por imóveis, há um viés sugestivo de que a hipótese da presente pesquisa se confirma.

**Contribuições:** a contribuição científica auferida é a necessidade contínua e resiliente de revisitar os conceitos nucleares e periféricos relativos à teoria do risco desenvolvida por Ulrich Beck, a sua efetividade e a sua implementação em direção a uma nova modernidade, eis que tais riscos não respeitam classes ou fronteiras e a consciência do risco global cria espaço para modernidades alternativas.

**Palavras-Chave:** Teoria Catastrofista. Ulrich Beck. Pandemia. Migração. Minas Gerais.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

According to the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2019) in his work *Society of risk: towards another modernity*, modern society passes through a moment of historical rupture, as occurred with feudal society in the transition to industrial, but instead of extinct, modern society is reconfiguring and transforming itself into a (modern) society of risks.



---

As such risks do not respect classes or borders and the awareness of global risk creates space for alternative modernities, it is intended to analyze whether the migratory flows from cities to the countryside, the so-called urban exodus, were intensified in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil, due to the Covid-19 pandemic (understood as the materialization of the risk theory).

The hypothesis set up is based on the point that although the migratory phenomenon of urban exodus was common in some places, in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil, this movement was inexpressive until mid-2020. However, as the Covid-19 pandemic provided a moment to experience multiple emotions related to the place in which one lives, highlighting, at the time, aspects of the wear and exhaustion of urban life, with the scientific proof of the increased risks of contracting Covid-19 disease when living in large centers, one believes that affirmatively, the Covid-19 pandemic intensified the migratory flow from the city to the countryside, especially in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil, a place under analysis.

The concern that underpines this research is to analyze whether the catastrophist theory of risk of Ulrich Beck (2019), materialized through the Covid-19 pandemic, influenced or not the migratory movements of urban exodus in the State of Minas Gerais.

The present research is divided into Introduction, three chapters dealing with each of the themes that concern this research, the hypothesis and finally there is a conclusion to confirm or not the hypothesis posed.

In general, the first chapter provides considerations about Ulrich Beck's Catastrophist Theory (2019), describing important aspects of the concept of risk in the first and second modernity and the role of humanity in these social and historical contexts. Finally, it is pointed out that the choices of humanity have strengthened the risk, which is why the catastrophe is certain within this scenario.

The second chapter deals with the pandemic theme and its catastrophic bias, addressing the issue of the phenomenon as a product of the risk society and, succinctly describing the impacts of the pandemic on society with the objective of linking the phenomenon and migratory movements. The chapter is divided into two subchapters for better organization and understanding.

---



---

The third and final chapter deals with migratory flows and is subdivided into two other subchapters. First, the research seeks to describe the relationship between the movement of urban exodus and the search for better living conditions; and secondly provides some information about the migratory movement registered in the real estate sector of the State of Minas Gerais, during the Covid-19 pandemic, although there are no official data.

The conclusion provides clarification on the hypothesis considered for the research, remaining suggested a confirmation of it, but without official data.

Finally, the method used is the hypothetical deductive, through qualitative, quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive research, especially bibliographic, having as theoretical reference the ideas of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2019).

## 2 THE CATATROPHIST THEORY OF ULRICH BECK

Etymologically, the word *risk* is related to a probability of danger, which threatens humanity or the environment. Therefore, one cannot think of risk without associating two other concepts: society and environment. However, the concept of risk from this bias is relatively recent, having its origin in modernity, which coincides with the origin of industrial society and suffered influences from the globalization process.

The development model adopted as of the Industrial Revolution, based on the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, the intensity of production and the technological innovations and in the promotion of consumerism as a means for the circulation of wealth among a privileged minority, also intensified the circulation of risks. Such development, however, occurred without respecting this same group represented by the privileged minority, since the consequences of these risks do not take into account social class, borders or generations.

In the early 1990s, the concept of risk began to deserve a more careful look among sociologists, especially environmental and technological risks. This movement is justified in the fact that social theories adopt these two references as

---



---

starting points to understand issues related to social conflicts, crisis of science (especially related to the conflict between knowledge built on the basis of science, methodical and lay or common-sense research), new assumptions in the way of making politics and acting of agents of the political sphere derived from this context (GUIVANT, 1998).

Before this period, it was believed that the risk was objectively defined (HANNIGAN, 1995) and that this definition took place in the field of science and engineering, thus an essentially technical community. Therefore, the questioning of such concepts and definitions carried out outside the scientific community were seen as an attitude without legitimacy. In 1982, however, American anthropologist Mary Douglas and political scientist Aaron Widalvsky published the book *Risk and Culture: an Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers*, seeking to understand why people prioritize certain risks to others and attributing this choice to a cultural influence (HANNIGAN, 1995; GUIVANT, 1998).

The theory argues that disputes over risks should not be reduced to an antagonism of laypeople and experts, being on the one hand ignorance and on the other hand rationality. In fact, the experts do not represent the rational, but one of the rationalities that act in the dispute of risks (DOUGLAS; WILDAVSKY, 2012), since studies tend to have variables to be analyzed (culture and fact, for example), like any human science, not being exact as mathematical formulas.

It began to be defended, therefore, that contrary to what was believed, the risk would be something perceived from the social constructions, relativizing the concept until being known and accepted. From this discovery, it can be concluded that, even if decisions on the definition of risks were made based on scientific evidence, they would still be subject to social judgments, since the different perceptions of risk would be intrinsically related to the social distribution of risks and exposure to them.

In parallel to this movement of relativization of the concept of risk, another concern arose in the social field: would the humanity, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, be living in the same era of enlightenment which began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or modernity, as it was known, that have come to an end?

---



---

The theoretical framework of this research, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2019), agreed with the postmodernist current in the sense that, with so many social changes felt, it no longer made sense to adopt as references the "modern" criteria as they were known in the 19th century or 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, he also agreed that some modern bases (notion of human rights and rationality, for example) still predominated, which is the reason why he argued that the modern era had not been overcome, but only transformed.

According to Beck (2019), the first modernity, with characteristics that delineated industrial society and that perceived nature as an endless deposit of resources, had given way to the second modernity, characterized by a social order that the sociologist called a *risk society*.

According to Beck (2019), the risks that characterized industrial society, first modernity, were known or calculable risks, such as diseases, natural disasters or those arising from human activities directly, but as the scope field was known, such risks could be prevented.

On the other hand, the risks that characterized the society of the second modernity, called *risk society*, are uncertain, incalculable. The intangible risks (social, environmental, political, economic, etc.) that now arise are triggered by the gradual and systematic human action itself in nature, so that they can be classified as socially produced natural risks. Examples can be cited: the massacre of Jews at Auschwitz, the migratory flows of refugees from wars, the torrentially abnormal rains that plague communities, the great floods, the pandemic, the climate imbalance, etc., that is, uncertainties triggered by human action itself.

By Beck's Catastrophist Theory (2019), the concern with the risks shifted from the external field and began to have as its protagonist humanity itself, which would have the ability to transform and destroy living conditions through the creation of new risks.

In the society of the second modernity (present), threats cannot be determined by science, because they are beyond the ability to understand them. At first, there is no way to prevent them, as happened in the first modernity. In this





---

context, three reference areas can be determined that mark the modification brought by the society of risk.

First, there is the relationship of modern industrial society with the resources of nature and culture, on which existence it is built, but that are being dispelled in the emergence of a widely established modernization. This applies to non-human nature and human culture in general, as well as to specific cultural ways of life [...]. Second, there is the relationship of society with the threats and problems produced by it, which in its part exceed the bases of social ideas of security [...]. This applies to the component of society, such as business, law or science, but becomes a particular problem in the area of political action and decision-making. Third, collective and group-specific sources of meaning (e.g., class consciousness or belief in progress) in the culture of industrial society are suffering from exhaustion, disintegration and disenchantment. These supported Western democracies and economic societies during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their loss leads to the imposition of every effort of defining individuals; this is what the concept of the "process of individualization" means. (Beck, 1997, p.17-18)

The theory of catastrophism has as its starting point an alarmist principle: it focuses on the global impact of a process of destruction caused by human action, without return and with consequences far beyond environmental, but vital for the species of the planet.

Although the solutions to environmental problems are linked necessarily with the interdisciplinary involvement of the various branches of knowledge, there is no doubt that the greatest obstacle lies in the economic field; it is essential to discover how to reconcile economy and sustainability, so that the economic growth of a nation necessarily reflects in the improvement of the quality of life of its inhabitants, moreover with regard to the enjoyment of social and environmental rights and ultimately vital for all forms of life.

To turn the scenario even more catastrophic, it is important to mention that the so-called *risk industry* is attracted by the cheap and abundant labor of those who have no alternatives other than to subject themselves to extreme risks, in an unfair and perverse exchange: hunger as an imminent evil and at first, which is insuperable.

Beck (2019) clarifies that between visible wealth and invisible and imminent risk, one chooses "wealth" without thinking twice, and this is where risk strengthens and catastrophe is certain.





---

### 3 THE PANDEMIC AND ITS CATASTROPHIC BIAS

The Earth's ecosystems are a complex symbiosis between fauna, flora, bacteria, fungi and viruses, the latter being essential to the natural cycle of the environments and their circulation does not generate significant impacts on balance.

An increase of the world population and the unbridled search for industrialization due to the development through the exploitation of technologies and natural resources, even more the previously untouched natural spaces are exposed to human action. In this scenario, the living beings who lived there are forced to move to other environments, including urban ones, in search of food and other resources for survival. Of course, humans and those living beings, including bacteria, fungi and viruses are getting closer and closer, in an interaction that can sometimes be dangerous and fatal.

In the so-called first modernity, there was also a risk due to this contact of the human being with other living beings; its consequences were detected sensorially; besides that, usually the appearance of diseases was related to the lack of hygiene. In the second modernity, however, those risks became invisible and essentially more fatal. Moreover, they do not result from a sub-provision of hygienic technology, on the contrary, its causes are linked to industrial overproduction (BECK, 2019).

The Nobel Prize in chemistry, Paul Crutzen, denominated the second modernity *Anthropocene* era (SACHS, 2008); an era in which the Planet is dominated by humans – the *homo faber*. According to Sachs (2008), this time is unique when it comes to technology, population growth and economic growth. Although dynamic and interconnected, paradoxically, the Planet is being pushed into collapse as a consequence of this mistaken and irresponsible model of development.

In this sense, even highly contagious diseases that from time to time arise and cause severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS (2002); Avian Influenza (2004); H1N1 (2009); Ebola (2014-2015); Zika Virus (2015-2016); and the new coronavirus (COVID-19) are already associated with the action of *homo faber*.



---

A 2016 report prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) flagged this as a matter of global concern. Every year there are on average three new infectious diseases in humans and 75% of them are zoonotic<sup>1</sup>. In this sense, several studies indicate that the causes of Covid-19 include human actions and environmental degradation and the main way to protect oneself is precisely preventing the destruction of nature; where ecosystems are healthy and biodiverse, with resilience and adaptability, these diseases are naturally regulated (UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, 2016).

According to a recent UN report on biodiversity and health, prepared with the participation of 22 experts from around the world, it is estimated that there is a risk of infection by up to 850,000 unknown viruses in nature, which demands actions of the authorities immediately, as there are vital and real risks to the health of the population. This report relates human activities to the pandemics. The following is a translated excerpt from this document:

The pandemics have their origins in several microbes transported by animal reservoirs, but the emergence is entirely driven by human activities. The underlying causes of the country are the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change. These include changes in land use, expansion and intensification of agriculture, and wildlife trade and consumption. These changing factors bring wildlife, livestock and people closer, allowing animal microbes to move to people and lead to infections, sometimes outbreaks, and more rarely in true pandemics that spread across road networks, urban centers, and travel and trade routes. The recent exponential increase in consumption and trade driven by demand in developed countries and emerging economies, as well as demographic pressure, has led to a number of emerging diseases that originate primarily in developing countries, driven by global consumption patterns. (IPBES - Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics, 2020, p.05)

Therefore, it is indisputable that the pandemics are a disastrous and fatal product of the irresponsible and predatory action of the *homo faber* on the Planet, becoming the materialization of Beck's theory of catastrophism (2019) and the latest problem for humanity.

---

<sup>1</sup>According to the definition found on the website of the Ministry of Health, in commemoration of World Zoonosis Day (July 6), zoonotics are infectious diseases naturally transmitted from animals to humans.



---

Moreover, with regard to Beck's theoretical formulations (2019) and health phenomena, the new conditions of inequality within the risk society stand out, since added to the conflicts involving the social distribution of wealth are conflicts arising from the social distribution of risks, such as wars and inappropriate areas for housing that generate environmental displaced persons increasing the chaos.

### 3.1 GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The risks translated into the second modernity give rise to what is called civilizational threats. These are risks that affect from the economically disadvantaged to the richest of the economic classes. These threats are forms that do not respect geographical, social, or technological levels and move around the world at the same speed and ease as people and information. This is one of the legacies of the globalized world.

Moreover, approaching the research to the theoretical framework, it is important to highlight that Beck (2019) already predicted that humanity would suffer the effects of its own actions and the pandemic of Covid-19, despite the existence of other previous pandemic outbreaks materialized its theory of risk.

Supposedly sourced in China, city of Wuhan, Covid-19 spread rapidly, so much so that due to the increase in cases in and around China, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared on January 30, 2020, that the outbreak of the disease caused by the new coronavirus (Covid-19) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Importance. Later, on March 11, 2020, the WHO characterized COVID-19, transmitted by SARS-CoV-2 as a pandemic, at which time the world already had 118,000 confirmed cases and 4,291 fatalities, according to the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in a statement in Geneva, Switzerland.

SARS-CoV-2 is an RNA virus, which makes it possible to mutate numerous times. Transmission of the virus, according to studies, occurs between human interactions through saliva droplets circulating in the air, feces and urine of infected



---

people, even before the first symptoms (MANZINI *et al.*, 2021), which are very close to the common symptoms of other respiratory diseases.

For this purpose, the disease was initially treated as an unknown pneumonia, reaching 27 cases, 7 of them in serious condition. Only on January 7, 2020 the Chinese Ministry of Health identified that it was a possible infection by a new coronavirus, being called 2019-nCoV (VARGAS; ACOSTA; BERNILLA, 2020; MANZINI *et al.*, 2021).

In March 2020, the movement of many countries that decided to bet on collective immunity through contamination was initially created, as they saw it to preserve their economic interests. Italy reached the level of 80,539 confirmed cases and 8,165 deaths, almost a third of the deaths in the world at that time, which served as a warning to the denialist governments (Italy itself, including, followed by Belgium, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands) that decided to take an active attitude towards the disease. However, others decided to keep the bet on minimizing the disease, among these Brazil.

According to data from the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, published on its website and dated 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus produced repercussions not only of biomedical and epidemiological order on a global scale, but also repercussions and social, economic, political, cultural and historical impacts unprecedented in the recent history of epidemics, such as income losses and jobs.

The United Nations reports that the "crisis caused by Covid-19 has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and structural problems, such as lack of access to basic sanitation and health services" (ANNUAL REPORT 2020, UN BRAZIL, p. 8). Therefore, it implemented a response plan composed of three strategic priorities: (i) to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and to reduce morbidity and mortality; (ii) to call for the deterioration of human resources and rights, social cohesion and livelihoods, and (iii) to protect, assist and advocate for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), immigrants and host communities particularly vulnerable to the pandemic.



---

The objective of the Global PRH was to complement and support existing government response plans and national coordination mechanisms, with due regard to humanitarian principles, either by providing laboratory materials for testing, medical equipment, and protective supplies to health professionals, or by bringing water to places where humanitarian work is essential.

In addition to seeking to interrupt the transmission of Covid-19, this plan also sought to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in the world, tracing the following objectives:

Beyond the theories of the response plans, what has been witnessed in more than two years was a humanitarian tragedy. In Brazil and other parts of the world, human suffering has reached a thoughtless level because the risks of yore, predicted by Beck (2019) have become an everyday experience in view of the collapse of health, economy, social, educational systems, among others.

Due to this reason, the idea of well living (ACOSTA, 2016), seeking better living conditions especially for the population living in large cities due to greater exposure to the risks of the disease became manifest.

Consequently, societies not only in Brazil, but throughout the world began to promote a type of migratory flow contrary to what occurred in the era of the Industrial Revolution, the urban exodus with a bias of achieving higher quality and better living conditions.

#### **4 THE MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS OF SOCIETY**

As societies have undergone and still undergo deep transformations, migratory movements also have this dynamic character and have accompanied the natural tendencies of the human being. This is an element of socio-spatial structuring, whether in the context of metropolises, in the population centers of natural areas or rural areas of cities; humans always seek better ways to adapt the world to their needs or meet them in environments that they feel more welcome.



---

According to Bauman (2017), regardless of the perspectives generated in connection with the attempt to define situations such as displaced, migrant, migration, immigrant and refugee, the act of migrating is as old as humanity itself. The character of Bauman's *humanistic sociology* (2005) transcends the academic barriers since he, of Jewish origin, suffered persecution in his country and this awakened him to an awareness about the fact that belonging and identity did not have the solidity of a rock, but presented themselves as something negotiable and revocable.

Migration is a global phenomenon, complex and growing, determined by the movement (voluntary or not) of people seeking better economic and social opportunities, as well as different experiences and lifestyles. Whether in the first modernity or in the second, denominated risk society, such migratory movements have always existed (BAUMAN, 2017).

Generally speaking, and dealing with the pre-pandemic period, it can be perceived that the crisis of capitalism, which began in 2008, highlights certain events such as a manifest reduction in the protection of human rights and the already perceived situation of refugees. The most recent UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) report, dated June 18, 2020, shows that 68% (approximately 16,3 million) of the entire flow of refugee migrants, including Venezuelans, originated from only five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar, while Turkey alone received the largest number, 3,6 million people.

However, the bias of this research is limited to dealing with migrations that occurred in the risk society, more specified in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, which since 2020 has been haunting the world. Were these migratory flows influenced by the pandemic? If so, in what proportions?

It is widely known that the human being, in view of uncertainty seeks the familiar, the known and the safeness. Based on this behavior, the human being moves, looking for the resurgence or guarantee of their collective identities with territorial roots and, in this conflict between globalization and identity, borders become even more porous, in constant flows of goods and people (WALDMAN, 2011). However, it is clear that such human movements in a risk society materialize

---



---

in many ways, either through the flexibilization of the exchange of jobs, technologies, or by combating exclusion, economic losses, lack of social benefits and insecurity; conditions that force many people to migrate.

Due to the pandemic of Covid-19 and in view of uncertainties as to the origin of the disease, its forms of contagion, possible risk groups, the possibility or not of discovering a vaccine and later the safety of the vaccine itself, again what was seen in society was an outcrop of the need for an anchor, something familiar and known that could welcome humanity. Migratory flows began to have another connotation: the search for well-living (ACOSTA, 2016), far from the marked risks of contracting the disease in large urban centers.

Dealing with the national scenario, for example the inGaia platform (2020), measures the impact of the pandemic on the used real estate market and brings the steps that make up the process of property sales, presented in weekly, monthly, annual comparisons and also according to the evolution of the pandemic in Brazil.

From January to December 2019, inGaia (2020) recorded the general value of R\$13,5 billion in real estate purchase and sale transactions and R\$1,2 billion in the overall value of rental transactions. In June 2020 there was more property sales than in the pre-pandemic period. When June 2020 was compared to the same month of 2019, there was a 47% increase in the number of contracts closed (3,367 versus 2,200), according to data on that platform.

Another growth also perceived in mid-2020 by inGaia (2020), which is a system that serves about 7,200 Brazilian real estate, referred to the profile of the properties negotiated: there was a greater demand and acquisition of houses than apartments, which suggests that people realized that they could work long periods in *home office* and, perhaps, they will look for places not only to dwell, but to live.

Datastore (2020), another platform widely used to keep up with changes in the real estate market, showed a 66.9% increase in the intention to buy real estate in the rural area between April 2021 and April 2022. The pandemic was the fundamental factor in the search for more tranquility and contact with nature. The study brings figures that prove the strengthening of the sector, reflecting the desire of





---

Brazilians to acquire real estate in the field in various parts of the country, although the platform does not deal with the State of Minas Gerais.

#### 4.1 INFORMATION ON THE MOVEMENT OF URBAN EXODUS IN THE STATE OF MINAS GERAIS DURING THE PANDEMIC

According to data from the Secovi Institute (2020), a tool that allows consultations in real estate market analyses in the cities of Belo Horizonte and Contagem, both in the State of Minas Gerais, only in September 2020 compared to the previous month (August 2020) sales of lot recorded a jump of 23.13%. Comparing the 12 months to September 2020 with the same period until the same month of 2019, the expansion reached 47.92%.

In research conducted by ZAP+21 entitled *Housing Trends - Purchase*, comparing consumers in the States of Brazil of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais there was a tendency of the population of Minas Gerais to prefer houses to apartments, which also suggests a change in pre-pandemic ways of life:

#### General Characteristics

##### Real Estate (old vs. new)

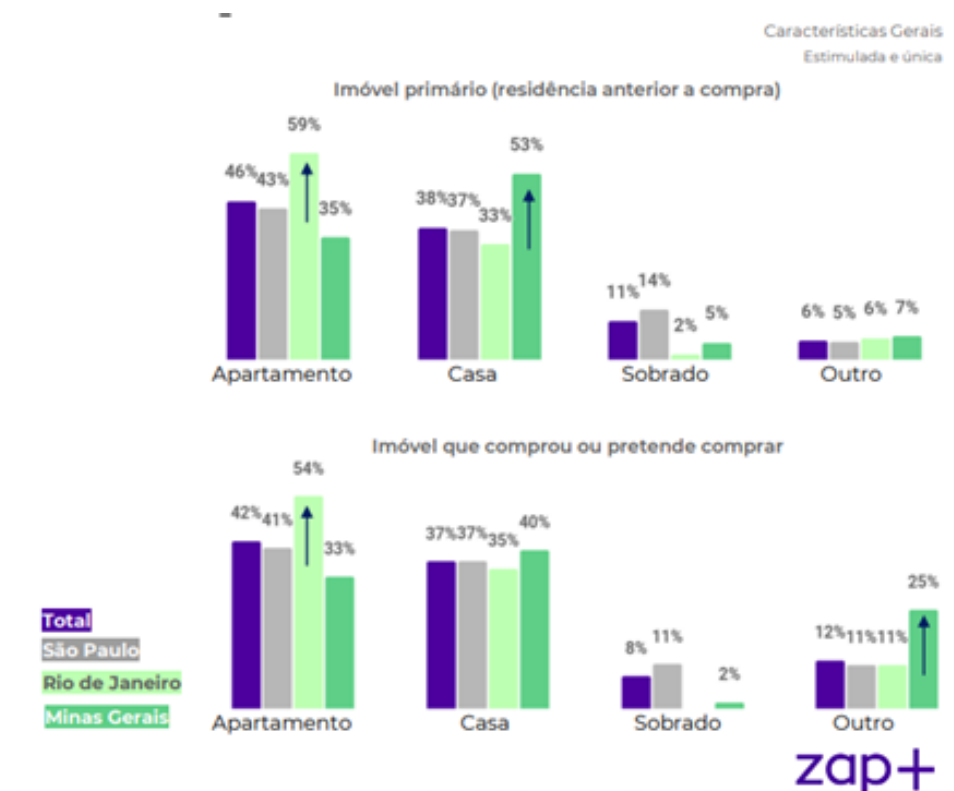
##### Type of Real Estate

In the State of Minas Gerais, the type of primary real estate is house (54%)

1 in each 4 dwellers of the State of Minas Gerais see other types of real estate to acquire

In Rio, the preference is for standard apartment being current (59%) or the real estate to hunt (54%)





Source: (DATA ZAP 21, 2021).

It is important to highlight that the Foundation Institute of Administrative and Accounting Economic Research of Minas Gerais does not keep its database / research updated, being the last available report of the real estate market of Minas Gerais dated 2019, which impaired the comparison of the pre-pandemic period with the pandemic period.

However, although there are no official data released, the research found with unions and the Regional Council of Realtors of Minas Gerais (CRECI/MG) information that the demand for real estate in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte/MG was accentuated with the pandemic, excluding the Capital Belo Horizonte, that is, suggesting that the hypothesis of this research can be confirmed.

In the city of Lagoa Santa, State of Minas Gerais, for example, there is information published on the CRECI/MG website dated January 4, 2022, that the demand for real estate exceeded supply and real estate companies were already struggling to offer what buyers were looking for.



---

For this purpose, the CRECI/MG website also states that, due to the high demand in the city of Lagoa Santa, State of Minas Gerais, construction companies began to accelerate construction and real estate began to capture real estate to offer to this new public, worn out by social isolation and willing to adapt to live closer to nature, but still close to the capital Belo Horizonte of the State of Minas Gerais.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The research aimed to analyze whether the Covid-19 pandemic, understood as the materialization of Beck's catastrophist theory (2019), accentuated or not the migratory flows from cities to the countryside, that is, the urban exodus increased, especially in the State of Minas Gerais.

In other words, the objective was to draw a parallel between the humanitarian and health catastrophe experienced by society since 2020 and its influence on possible migratory flows, whether motivated by the wear and tear and/or exhaustion of urban life in large cities and especially the fear of contracting the disease in places where there are higher concentrations of people.

It is based on the hypothesis that, until the year 2020, the migratory movements from the city to the countryside in the State of Minas Gerais were not very expressive. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the (forced) change of habits, whether social, personal, interpersonal, professional, etc., society has resonated its relationship with the place where one lives in search of a higher quality of life.

Therefore, in addition to the influence on public policies obviously affected by said migratory phenomenon of the urban exodus, one of the focus of the research is the possibility of evaluating whether the State of Minas Gerais market would be prepared for this new public, both from the point of view of cataloguing the data of the demands and from the point of view of the real estate supply itself.

However, after the research, it was concluded that it is not possible to confirm the proposed hypothesis since there are no data available in the real estate market and in entities related to the sector.

---



---

The Foundation Institute of Administrative and Accounting Economic Research of Minas Gerais, for example, provides data on the real estate market only until 2019, a pre-pandemic period, which made comparative analysis difficult.

In any case, based on information disclosed by the Regional Council of Realtors of Minas Gerais (CRECI/MG), as well as on some digital platforms, as published in DATASTORE, inGaia and ZAP+21, it was possible to confirm a trend of the State of Minas Gerais estate market in seeking a higher quality of life outside the capital of the State. This is the reason why some cities of the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte as Lagoa Santa, for example, with a more peaceful pace of life, recorded high demand for real estate, which is supposed to be an indication that the research hypothesis can be confirmed.

It is indisputable that the pandemic, as materialization of Ulrich Beck's risk society (2019) changed the way of life of society. Whether for reasons of exposure to risk of the disease or by the very moment in which the second modernity experiences, it is the fact that society is plunged into a humanitarian chaos and this rescue of the natural, of the house as a shelter, as a family nucleus, this search for better living conditions reflects, among other issues, that society is sick.

To give a new meaning to life with the change of habits and styles of housing, with the search for moments of leisure with the family, with the search for contact with nature in a simpler life integrated into the environment, perhaps is the tip of something much greater and decisive for the maintenance of life on the planet.

## REFERÊNCIAS

ACNUR. - Alto Comissariado das Nações Unidas para Refugiados. **Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019**. 2020. Available at: [https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37/#\\_ga=2.170446246.78468436.1592938837-1821496490.1592938837](https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37/#_ga=2.170446246.78468436.1592938837-1821496490.1592938837) Access on: Jul. 25, 2022.

ACOSTA, Alberto. **O bem viver: uma oportunidade para imaginar outros mundos**. Tradução de Tadeu Breda. São Paulo: Autonomia Literária, Elefante, 2016.



---

BAUMAN, Zygmunt. **Identidade**: entrevista a Benedetto Vecchi. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 2005

BAUMAN, Zygmunt. **Estranhos à Nossa Porta**. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2017.

BECK, Ulrich. **Sociedade de risco**: rumo a uma outra modernidade. Trad. Sebastião Nascimento. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2019.

BECK, Ulrich. A reinvenção da política: rumo a uma teoria da modernização reflexiva. In: GIDDENS, Anthony, BECK, Ulrich, LASH, Scott. **Modernização reflexiva**: política, tradição e estética na ordem social moderna. São Paulo: Unesp, 1997.

CMI/SECOVIMG. Câmara do Mercado Imobiliário e o Sindicato de Habitação de Minas Gerais. DATASECOVI. **Mercado imobiliário da Capital fecha 2020 com retração de 6,5%**. 2021. Available at: <https://www.secovimg.com.br/noticia-detalhes.php?noticia=220>. Access on: Aug. 1, 2022.

CRECI/MG, Conselho Regional de Corretores de Imóveis de Minas Gerais. **Região metropolitana de BH vira refúgio e vive boom imobiliário**. 2022. Available at: <https://www.crecimg.gov.br/regiao-metropolitana-de-bh-vira-refugio-e-vive-boom-imobiliario> Access on: Aug. 9, 2022.

DATASTORE. **Tag Store**: Mais de 12 milhões de famílias pretendem adquirir um imóvel nos próximos 24 meses, aponta estudo realizado pela Datastore. 2020. Available at: <http://hubimobiliario.com/tag/datastore> Access on: Aug. 10, 2022.

DATAZAP+. **Tendências de Moradia datazap+**: compra. Outubro, 2021. Available at: [https://emailcdn.s3.sa-east-1.amazonaws.com/lp\\_zapmais\\_conteudo/tendencia\\_moradia/relatorio\\_tendencias\\_compra\\_final\\_revisado.pdf](https://emailcdn.s3.sa-east-1.amazonaws.com/lp_zapmais_conteudo/tendencia_moradia/relatorio_tendencias_compra_final_revisado.pdf) Access on: Aug. 5, 2022.

DOUGLAS, Mary; WILDAVSKY, Aaron. **Risco e cultura**: um ensaio sobre a seleção de riscos tecnológicos e ambientais. Tradução de Cristiana de Assis Serra. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2012.

FIOCRUZ, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. **Impactos sociais, econômicos, culturais e políticos da pandemia**. 2021. Available at: <https://portal.fiocruz.br/impactos-sociais-economicos-culturais-e-politicos-da-pandemia> Access on: Aug. 8, 2022.

GUIVANT, J. S. A trajetória das análises de risco: da periferia ao centro da teoria social. **Revista Brasileira de Informações Bibliográficas**. São Paulo: ANPOCS - Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais, 1998.

---



---

HANNINAGN, J. A. **Environmental** sociology - asocial constructive perspective. Routledge, London, 1995.

INGAIA. **Plataforma inédita mostra em tempo real impacto da pandemia no mercado de imóveis usados.** 2021. Available at: <https://www.ingaia.com.br/plataforma-inedita-mostra-em-tempo-real-impacto-da-pandemia-no-mercado-de-imoveis-usados/>. Access on: Aug. 1, 2022.

IPBES. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform On Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. **Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics.** Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. 2020. Available at: [https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2020-12/IPBES%20Workshop%20on%20Biodiversity%20and%20Pandemics%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2020-12/IPBES%20Workshop%20on%20Biodiversity%20and%20Pandemics%20Report_0.pdf) Access on: Aug. 3, 2022.

IPEAD Face/UFGM, Fundação Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas, Administrativas e Contábeis de Minas Gerais. **Mercado Imobiliário.** Belo Horizonte, 2017. Available at: <https://www.ipead.face.ufmg.br/site/publicacoes/mercadoImobiliario> Access on: Aug. 10, 2022.

MANZINI, Suzane et al. SARS-CoV-2: sua relação com os animais e potencial doença zoonótica. **Veterinária e Zootecnia.** Botucatu, v. 28, 2021. Available at: <https://rvz.emnuvens.com.br/rvz/article/view/602> Access on: Aug. 5, 2022.

MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE. Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde. **Dia Internacional das Zoonoses.** Available at: <https://bvsmis.saude.gov.br/06-7-dia-mundial-das-zoonoses> Access on: Jul. 26, 2022.

ONU, Organização das Nações Unidas. **Plano de Resposta Humanitária Global COVID-19.** Apelo Coordenado das Nações Unidas. 2020. Available at: <http://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgs/noticias/arquivos/plano-de-resposta-humanitaria-global-2013-covid-19-versao-em-lingua-portuguesa> Access on: Aug. 1, 2022.

ONU, Organização das Nações Unidas. **Relatório Anual 2020 Nações Unidas Brasil.** 2020. Available at: [https://brasil.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/RelatorioAnual\\_2020\\_ONUBrasil\\_WEB\\_0.pdf](https://brasil.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/RelatorioAnual_2020_ONUBrasil_WEB_0.pdf) Access on: Jul. 30, 2022.

ONU, Organização das Nações Unidas. **Relatório Sobre Biodiversidade e Pandemias.** 2022. Available at: <https://news.un.org/pt/tags/relatorio-sobre-biodiversidade-e-pandemias> Access on: Jul. 26, 2022.



---

OPAS, Organização Pan-Americana da Saúde. **OMS afirma que COVID-19 é agora caracterizada como pandemia.** 2020. Available at: <https://www.paho.org/pt/news/11-3-2020-who-characterizes-covid-19-pandemic>  
Access on: Aug. 2, 2022.

SACHS, Jeffrey. **Economía para um planeta abarrotado.** Buenos Aires: Debate, 2008.

UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme. **UNEP 2016 Report: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern.** Nairobi: UNEP, 2016. Available at: [https://wesr.unep.org/media/docs/assessments/UNEP\\_Frontiers\\_2016\\_report\\_emerging\\_issues\\_of\\_environmental\\_concern.pdf](https://wesr.unep.org/media/docs/assessments/UNEP_Frontiers_2016_report_emerging_issues_of_environmental_concern.pdf) Access on: Aug. 4, 2022.

VARGAS, Ciro Maguina; ACOSTA, Rosy Gastelo; BERNILLA, Arly Tequen. El nuevo Coronavirus y la pandemia del COVID-19. **Rev Med Hered**, Lima, v. 31, n. 2, p. 125-131, abr./jun. 2020. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20453/rmh.v31i2.3776>. Access on: Aug. 5, 2022.

WALDMAN M., Gilda. Identidades y extranjerías. Divagaciones a partir de Zygmunt Bauman. Andamios. **Ciudad del México**, v. 8, n. 16, maio-ago., 2011. Available at: <http://www.scielo.org.mx/pdf/anda/v8n16/v8n16a4.pdf> Access on: Aug. 6, 2022.

