
URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL IN THE 60'S

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In the 1960s, a combination of new political, social and economic processes led to a change in urban and regional planning in Brazil. On the one hand, the economic planning that had been introduced in an incipient manner into the federal government's agenda since the end of the Vargas Era acquired greater importance and played a growing role both in sectorial and public spheres. On the other hand, increased and more complex team building both in public bodies and in private engineering and architecture offices was a response both to a new territoriality in the urbanization process and to an increase in demands created by this new government agenda. The present study analyzes the formation and the modus operandi of the urban and regional planning offices and teams in the 1960s, especially in São Paulo. The professional and political trajectories of the technicians who comprised the teams in these offices reveals the different concepts and trends in urbanism adopted in the various Plans drawn up for different government spheres.

Keywords

Urban Planning, Regional Planning, Urbanism and Politics, São Paulo Brazil Urban Planning

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FROM URBANISM TO URBAN PLANNING IN BRAZIL

The main aspects of a transition from urbanism to urban planning in Brazil were changes to the scale of the object of intervention, the coordination between plan and management and the expansion of planning into all spheres of intervention (federal, state and municipal).

The change in scale features in the initial plans for urbanized areas, which included suburbs as part of the urban area. The concept of agglomerations as a unity for recognition of urban problems and for proposing public policies that exceeded political and municipal administrative limits, meanwhile, featured in the studies conducted by SAGMACS for São Paulo at the end of the 1950s.

The coordination between plan and management became more evident during the Estado Novo period. A radical modernization of the roads system carried out by teams of municipal engineers was documented through guidelines for road extensions, enlargement and remodeling in plans drawn up at the end of the 1920s for São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and in the 1930s and 1950s for the Recife, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte cities.

URBAN PLANNING IN SÃO PAULO IN THE 1950S

In the 1950s, three events signaled changes in urban planning in São Paulo. The first was the creation of the Department of Urbanism in 1947, which consolidated and institutionalized urban planning in the São Paulo Mayor's Office.

Additionally, the arrival of the priest Father Lebrez and the creation of the SAGMACS consultancy and technical assistance offices, created fertile ground for the training in urbanism of militant young Catholics who combined a reformism based on the concept of solidarity with empirical research methodology linked to action¹.

Finally, there was an effective separation between the teaching of architecture and of engineering. Following an autonomization process in the 1940s, this separation enabled the training of an autonomous body of professors that followed the principles laid down by the International Architecture Congresses.

The creation of the Department of Urbanism in São Paulo in 1947² within the structure of the State Works Secretariat signaled an increasing institutionalization of planning. The Department was entrusted with the “drawing up, execution and defense of Plano da Cidade (city plan)” and had specialized sections divided into Research, Regulation and Advertising; General Planning; Development of the Plan, Library and Archive Services, Urban Research Services and Technical Services.

The Decree-Law also created the Committee for the City Plan, which was comprised of representatives from the executive and legislative powers, from universities and from professional bodies. Its function was to appraise, upon request from the Municipal Executive or Legislative Powers, the projects linked to the City Plan and the problems related to public utility services. Furthermore, the Committee would put forward studies and suggestions related to urbanism.

In addition to the Department of Urbanism, the decree created the Departments of Architecture and Public Works. This resulted in a separation, within the municipal administration, of the professions of architect, engineer and urban planner.³

On a national level, another organization was being established in the form of a Committee which would be responsible for drawing up studies and plans for the country's five regions (North/South/Center/East/West). On a state level, a proposal was put forward for the creation of an urbanism council, for the drawing up of a plan to analyze population and activity distribution and the obligation (based on the French model) of organizing plans for cities whose population exceeded a certain number.

ECONOMIC E HUMANISM MOVEMENT ▪ THE SAGMACS TEAM IN SAO PAULO

The Economie and Humanisme Movement was founded in 1942 by French Dominican priests, and it intended to create the bases of a new project to confront the social doctrine of the catholic Church. This project took on a new direction after the visit of one the founders, Father Louis Joseph Lebret to Brazil and new ideas and concepts were embraced. One and certainly the most important for the local social reality was the concept of under development. Brazil and other countries in Latin America continent became a kind of laboratory of research on social problems and transformed and enlarged the fundamentals of the Economie et Humanisme Movement. The research teams resulted in the formation of a new generation of young urbanists, architects, sociologists and economists, who were involved in a project for transforming society through urban and regional development projects. They had an important role in transforming the urban planning milieu in Brazil.

The first years after the formation of the Economy and Humanism Movement in Brazil cast a light upon the religious and political circles in which Lebret moved and the way in which he established his network of contacts. At the time, the congregation of Dominican priests in Brazil was directly linked to the Province of Dominicans in Toulouse, which favored maintaining regular contact between Dominicans in France and Brazil. It was in conservative, Catholic political circles that the first contacts were made. But, with the start of research work, relations became increasingly restricted to more progressive circles. Lebret's approximation to Christian democratic politicians made it possible to set up a support network for the Economy and Humanism ideas.

The first opportunity for Lebret to visit Brazil was provided by the Dominican clergyman Father Dale, who invited him to give a course at the institution where he taught, *ELSP Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política* [Free School of Sociology and Politics].

Lebret arrived in São Paulo in 1947. In his PhD thesis, Denis Pelletier emphasizes the new theoretical direction that was impressed upon on the Movement, now clearly influenced by Marxist ideology; this became public knowledge in the course that Lebret taught at the ELSP [School of Sociology and Politics in São Paulo] from April 14 to June 5, 1947. The lectures for audiences of students and intellectuals and later organized into four books were a first attempt at synthesizing human economics as being practical and a theoretical response to the impasses of political economics. Four of the longest chapters are dedicated to Marxism and two to Leninism and the Soviet economy. The book, "*Introduction générale à l'économie humaine*"⁴ [General introduction to human economics] in four volumes was never published.

According to Pelletier⁵, the course was "a key stage in the intellectual journey of Lebret". It closed the cycle that had been initiated in 1938 and that was linked to the war years and the community utopia that underscored the start of the Economy and Humanism Movement. In the reencounter with Marxism and while he was in Brazil, he prepared an economic and political reflection.

In the period during which he remained in São Paulo, Father Lebret set up a local Economy and Humanism Movement study center and SAGMACS⁶ research office, organized along the same lines as the French SAGMA team.

The essential characteristic of the second half of the 1950s was the progressive independence of the SAGMACS research office vis-à-vis the Economy and Humanism Movement. Difficulties in Catholic circles contributed to this distancing. In March 1954, the hostility of the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo with regard to Economy and Humanism ended up bearing fruit and the director of the movement in São Paulo, Father Benevenuto de Santa Cruz, was transferred to the monastery in Rio de Janeiro and forbidden from coming to the Diocese of São Paulo. This sanction, as well as the internal tensions within the team, brought laypeople into essential positions of responsibility in SAGMACS, thus renewing the link with the start of the association.⁷

SAGMACS in São Paulo was set up in accordance with the French model and conceived of as a social research laboratory. As was previously observed, the political involvement of SAGMACS was wide-ranging and contacts in the Church went from Catholic integralist circles to young Catholic workers. Furthermore, as the action of the group became more consolidated around carrying out research, the alliances grew closer.⁸

São Paulo, having been a relatively unremarkable city in the early twentieth century with just a little over 200,000 inhabitants the intervening half century had dramatically transformed the city. Its population had reached 2,150,000 inhabitants and had expanded to occupy an area of 420 square kilometers. During the same period, São Paulo's economic base shifted from a coffee monoculture to become the foremost industrial centre of Brazil. This transformation of the industrial base was accompanied by a process of rapid metropolitanisation. In 1957, Wladimir de Toledo Piza, then mayor of São Paulo, commissioned SAGMACS to draw a detailed study concerning urban planning for the municipality of Sao Paulo⁹.

In the research commissioned by the São Paulo city administration, SAGMACS studied the São Paulo agglomeration. The region was divided into 360 units of analysis, defined as an “elementary echelon of collective life” and grouped into 4 major areas for the basic field research: east, north, mid-south and west.

“The idea was that the needs, equipment and services of an urban region could be thought of in three echelons of collective life: some elementary units being attracted by a better-equipped unit, forming a complex echelon, and, in turn, some complex units being attracted by a very well-equipped unit or a complete unit¹⁰.

The hypothesis of the proposal was that the tendency of the São Paulo agglomeration was to structure itself in a polynuclear manner into secondary centers, in order to give different regions a relative autonomy. This gave rise to sub-regions that were articulated and all attracted by the main center. Data collection was done using observation forms and questionnaires for interviews. Analysis was carried out by sampling, in such a way as to characterize all 360 units of analysis. The research provided elements and data that were transformed into numerical assessments of the real and relative situations, in which each indicator of the level of life of the local residents and existing equipment and services were ascribed values from 0 to 4. These marks were used to draw sector graphs, called “daisies,” that presented a summary of the levels in each analysis unit. More general graphs were also prepared in the form of carpets, or dual entry matrices, in which the variables were inter-related on the lines and the elementary units were grouped by complex and complete units on the columns. Each small square intersection was colored white for the best situations and black for the worst, with intermediary hachures for marks 1, 2 and 3, thus creating a patchwork on which it would be easy to identify where the neediest parts were and what they were most in need of.

The dynamics of attraction and perceived displacement of the population were mapped out, linking the points of origin and destination with lines of different color for each variable and of a thickness proportional to the intensity of the dependence of the interlinked units and the direction of the displacement. So, a map was obtained of school, purchases, health service attraction etc, which gave the true polarization tendency and its deficiencies in equipment, road and transport links, with a simultaneous summary and analytical view capable of providing guidance for corrective measures that were needed and choice, based on priorities for an action program and suggestions of development and regulation policies.

For urbanistic research, the type of occupation and use of the land was established. A set of 14 homogenous units were chosen as samples that covered the diversity of types established. In this survey, as in the others, we were able to identify an empirical and inductive basis that demanded a profound knowledge of the complexity of the urban agglomeration. Moreover, this knowledge was accessible to the greatest possible number of agents involved in the decision processes and linked in one way or another to the destinies of the city it was intended to transform.

The evolution from research methodology to intervention proposal was achieved by the precise characterization of the needs, possibilities and priorities of the entire urban area and the entire population, considering their way of life and living conditions.

The suggestions made centered on removing congestion from the main center of São Paulo, so that it could conveniently respond to its multiple functions of national projection, as this major agglomeration's economic and state government administrative center and its local and municipal service and commercial function. It was necessary to save the center from drowning. An innovative subway solution was proposed, following the line of the Pinheiros and Tietê Rivers, joining the secondary centers that had been formed on their banks: Penha, Tatuapé, Belenzinho, Santana, Pinheiros, and Lapa.

It was a proposal of another type of organization, different from the concentric radius that had prevailed until then in São Paulo urbanistic plans. It also foresaw links with a large turnpike road linking São Miguel with Santo Amaro, crossing the Anchieta Highway, as well as other long-term proposals that stimulated new types of business and of breaking with real estate market trends. It included proposals for decentralizing major political, management and administrative activities to increase the value of new areas, such as the city's east end. It contained proposals for a new location for the seats of both the city administration and state government.

The Urban Structure of the São Paulo Agglomeration research (Current structures and rational structures) developed the urban and regional study in an articulated manner. The first part "Historical, demographic and economic prospects of the São Paulo agglomeration," a critical analysis of the dynamic nature of São Paulo, proposed limits to urban growth based on demographic data. For the first time ever, an urban planning study of São Paulo included studies into the history of the formation of the city from its foundation, via its colonial and empire phases to its transformation into a metropolis in the 20th century. In the second part, "Urban Structure of São Paulo," a method was applied for identifying the forms of social organization in the whole urbanized area of the São Paulo agglomeration, including the municipalities of São Paulo, Santo André, São Bernardo and Guarulhos. The third part of the study consisted of the "Sociological Aspects of the São Paulo.

THE EXPANSION OF PLANNING INTO OTHER GOVERNMENT SPHERES

By the end of WW2 there was an increase in planning as a form of political and economic management in all government spheres.

According to Lafer (1972), initial attempts at planning the economic system were restricted to preliminary documents such as the Simonsen Report from 1945 or diagnoses such as that produced by the Brazil-USA Joint Committee.

However, between 1956 and 1961 the theoretical possibility of planning in the economic and political fields started to emerge. The Target Plan, which was designed and executed during the Juscelino Kubitschek Government, was of a different nature (both in terms of its complex agenda and of its impact). This was the first plan coordinating the private and the public sectors – thus substantially raising its share in investments. It was also the first plan to have a formal monitoring of targets through a Development Council created in 1956. Also according to Lafer, the Target Plan inaugurated a new period of political participation.

Economic planning, which had been introduced in an incipient manner into the federal government's agenda as of the end of Estado Novo, gained importance through the Target Plan and saw its scope grow both at sectorial and government levels.

The second important plan of this period was the Triennial Social and Economic Development Plan (1963-1965), which was designed by a team coordinated by Celso Furtado. This was not an ambitious plan (it was drawn up in only six months) and its goal was to tackle small-scale economic problems while nonetheless offering an overview. The Triennial Plan is considered an advance in view of its wide-encompassing approach to economics and its focus on social problems.

On a regional level, two plans stood out at the beginning of the 1960s: the Action Plan, drawn up by the São Paulo State Planning Group (Carvalho Pinto Government - 1959-1963) and the SUDENE Program. The former, which was restricted to the state government, was drawn up by a small group of technicians directly linked to the governor and had the merit of establishing clear links between the budget and the work plan. Despite not being very ambitious in terms of its diagnosis and scope, the plan showed clear results and established a new form of integration between physical and financial planning.

An Economic Policy for the Northeast drawn up by a group appointed by the Presidency of the Republic led to a radical change to ways of tackling the drought in the region. The creation of the Superintendence for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE) in 1959 was crucial for this policy, as SUDENE became the institution encumbered with planning and coordinating a series of measures to change economic development conditions in the region. Following the 1958 drought, SUDENE proposed a different vision to Celso Furtado's "hydraulic approach", alongside the implementation of engineering works to tackle the drought problem.

In addition to the need for more personnel, the complex process of setting up teams in public bodies and in engineering and architecture offices was a response to a new territoriality in the urbanization processes and to an increase in the demands created by the new government agenda.

In the 1950s, offices such as Hidrobrasileira, which was founded in 1954, and Hidroservice, which was created in 1958, developed projects for water supply works, hydroelectric power plants and highways. In the field of engineering, throughout the 1960s these offices put together increasingly complex teams which included professionals specialized in economic planning and in urban and regional planning.

BASELINE REFORMS AND THE POLITICIZATION OF THE URBAN QUESTION

During the Juscelino Kubischek Government several proposals were put forward to change the economic, social and political structures in order to tackle underdevelopment and reduce inequality in Brazil.

These proposals were included in the political agenda during the João Goulart Government. They were known as baseline reforms and included structural changes in different sectors: financial, fiscal, education, agrarian and urban.

In 1961 the National Council for Popular Housing Planning was created. This Council was entrusted with "coordinating the activities of the Federal and Municipal Government into a joint action to guide a national policy for low-income housing. This included participation from autarchies, semi-public enterprises, institutions comprised of professional architects, engineers and agronomists, and private entities" (Decree 50,488, from April 25th, 1961 – article 2). In 1961 the National Municipalities Agency (SENAM) was created. It was assigned with coordinating the relations between municipalities and federal government bodies and providing technical assistance to the municipalities.

It is also important to mention an event considered a landmark in social reform proposals: the Workshop on Housing and Urban Reform, which was organized by the Brazilian Architects Institute (IAB) with support from the State Civil Servants Pensions Institute (IPASE). The first session was held at Hotel Quitandinha, in Petrópolis,

in Rio de Janeiro,¹¹ over July 24th to 26th, under the coordination of architect Jorge Wilhelm. The second event took place at IAB's headquarters, in São Paulo, over July 29th to 31st, under the coordination of architect Joaquim Guedes

An urban reform project was drawn up during the meeting for the purpose of being included in the broader set of Baseline Social Reforms. However, the proceedings were interrupted by the implementation of the military regime in March 1964.

THE CREATION OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING AND URBANISM AGENCY (SERFHAU)

The 1964 military coup was the result of a long process of political alliances that became radicalized between 1964 and 1969. The 17 Institutional Acts enacted over the subsequent five years affected political structures as well as civil and political rights. Amid growing radicalization, these Institutional Acts eliminated political parties, imposed indirect elections, dissolved Congress, removed the right to habeas corpus and approved the death penalty for political terrorism crimes.

Repression of opponents (especially communists) to the military regime that had deposed the João Goulart constitutional government in March 1964 became state policy, which grew fiercer after the enactment of Institutional Act nº 5 in December 1968 (which suspended "habeas corpus" and individual rights). The persecution, expulsion, arrest, torture and murder of left-wing professors, students, militants and intellectuals became an official policy which led many to go underground and seek exile.

After the military coup, the creation of the Federal Housing and Urbanism Agency (SERFHAU) in 1965 was an attempt to draw up a national urban planning policy and centralize the instruments and funds for its implementation.

The creation of this institution resulted in a transfer of municipal planning responsibilities to the federal level. It was only in 1968, after architect Harry Cole took over the institution's leadership, that SERFHAU became adequately structured to draw up and coordinate national urban planning policies.

The implementation of a Fund for the Financing of Planning (FIPLAN) with resources from the Brazilian Development Bank (BNH); the drawing up of the Concentrated Action Plan (PAC) and incentives to the Local Plans for Integrated Development (PLDI) created the necessary conditions for the setting up of state, metropolitan and municipal institutions. Furthermore, the granting of resources for integrated development director plans relied on the creation of "permanent local planning and development bodies".

According to Feldman, "Technical assistance activities for the municipalities became institutionalized on federal and state levels and for the first time a federal body was entrusted with approving the municipal governments' hiring of consultancies for drawing up plans".

The creation of SEFHAU and its activities were part of the ambiguities and contradictions of that period. "If on the one hand the military's rise to power in 1964 hindered the implementation of the proposals put forward during SHRU, the military dictatorship's new government structure enabled the implementation of the institutional reform that was necessary to carry out part of the transformations proposed by the Workshop. Thus, the military were able to adjust the discourse of the event's participants¹²"

During its eight years of activity, SERFHAU provided technical assistance and financed the drawing up of plans for municipalities. It developed a methodology that was extensively applied without distinguishing regional and local singularities – thus drawing a great deal of criticism.

At the same time that local planning was being defined as a national policy, planning scales on a local and metropolitan level became the object of plans and the cause of the creation of increasingly complex institutions.

Perception about the growth and conurbation process undergone by the main Brazilian cities had been an object of research and of proposals since the 1950s. Research conducted by SAGMACS under the leadership of Dominican priest Louis Joseph Lebreton about São Paulo's agglomeration was one of the references for the plans drawn up for São Paulo: the Basic Urban Plan of 1969, for the municipality; and the Metropolitan Plan for Integrated Development – the first plan that covered the São Paulo metropolitan region.

RUPTURES AND NEW TENDENCIES

By the end of the 1960s, few changes occurred in the urban structuring process compared to what had been done during the peripheral expansion of Brazilian cities. The implementation of housing policies through the construction of large housing projects and investment in large infrastructure projects has redefined the growth axis in the cities and affirmed a new metropolitan regional character. However, it was through the creation of nine regions¹³ in 1973 that the institutionalization of the metropolis was acknowledged in Brazil as necessary for territorial coordination.

Amid political rupture and the expulsion of professionals, politicians, technicians and intellectuals who were forbidden from remaining and working in the country, this process suffered gradual fissures that manifested themselves through recurring political and technical practices and through the emergence of forms of resistance that would gradually upset the system.

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Endnotes

- 1 See the formation of the movement in São Paulo, Lamparelli , Celso “Joseph Louis Lebre et a pesquisa urbanos regional no Brasil- crônicas tardias ou história prematura” in Espaço & Debates no 37 , 1994
- 2 Decree-Law 431 7/7/47
- 3 According to Feldman, Sarah, 1996, opus cit p 27
- 4 According to Pelletier , Denis opus cit, p 101
- 5 According to Pelletier , Denis opus cit, p 127
- 6 Sagmacs – Sociedade de Analise Grafica e Mecanografica Aplicada Complexos Sociais [Society for Graphic and Mecanographic Analyses as applied to Social Complexes.]
- 7 According to Pelletier, Denis, 1996 opus cit, p 321
- 8 Research into the social problems of minors was prevented as a result of the intervention of a Catholic institution, and the Jockey Club, which had made it possible to set up the SAGMACS office in São Paulo, suspended its funding after research was published that denounced the wretched living conditions of jockeys. According to Le Duigou - Santa Cruz correspondence, dated May 15, July 29, and November 27, 1949, NA 45 AS 104, after Pelletier, Denis, 1996, opus cit, p 299.
- 9 “Estrutura Urbana da Aglomeração Paulistana. (Estruturas atuais e estruturas racionais)Study prepared by Sagmacs and by the Comissão de Pesquisa Urbana da Prefeitura de São Paulo [Urban Research Commission of the São Paulo city administration].São Paulo, 1958
- 10 According to architect Celso Lamparelli, in an interview hold on May and June, 2000
- 11 See this event’s influence on urban planning in São Paulo Antonucci , Denise”Plano Diretor de São Paulo 1991 Avanços e Permanências”, Master’s Degree thesis from FAU USP , 1999
- 12 According to Bonduki, Nabil and Koury, Ana Paula opus cit.
- 13 São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Salvador, Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Fortaleza and Belem - each had its own planning agency.