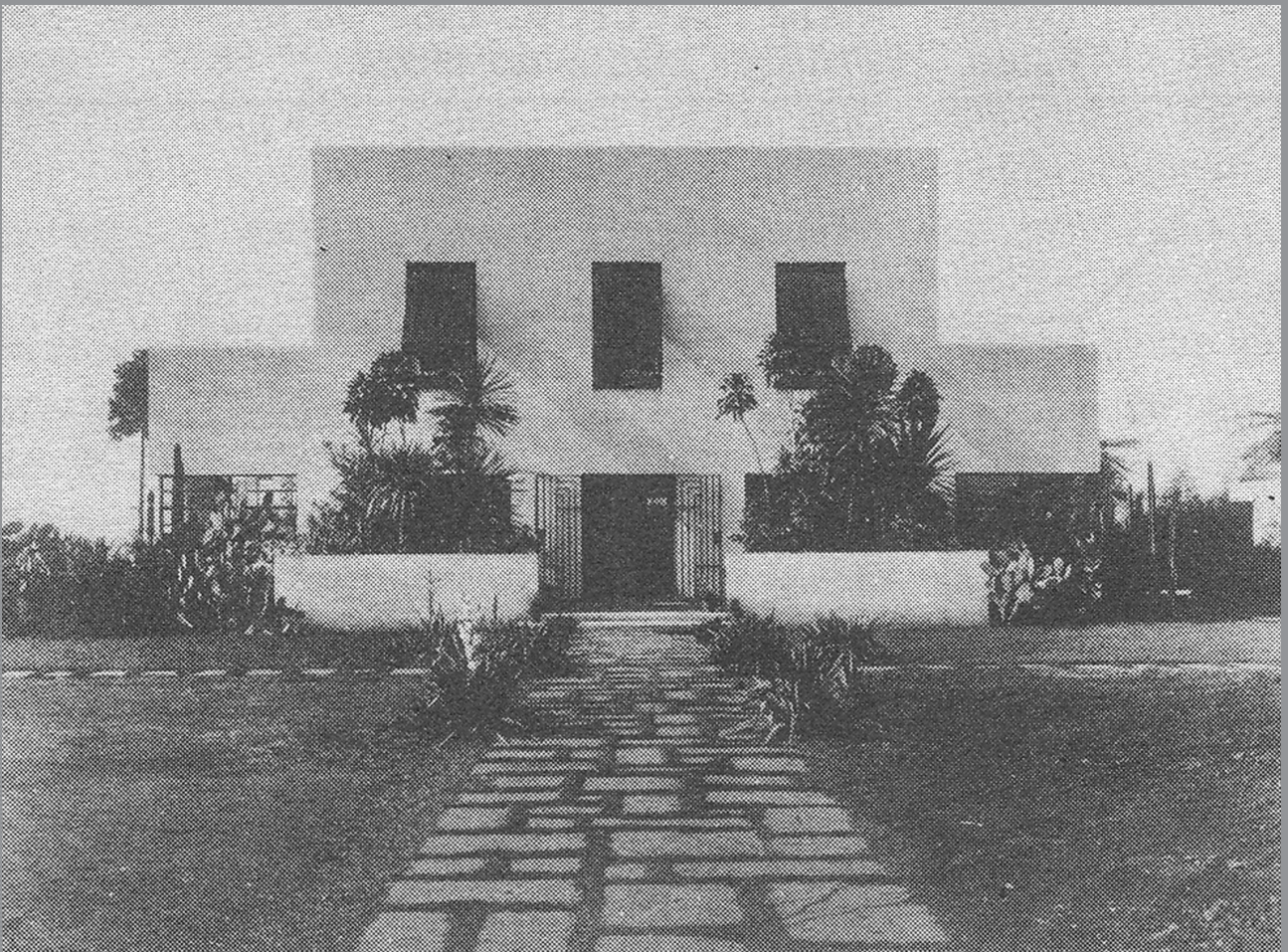


The Teaching of Architecture and Urbanism in Brazil: 1930–1970

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The objective of this article is to present the scene which gave rise to the consolidation of the teaching of Architecture and Urbanism in Brazil in accordance with the precepts of Modern Architecture. Between 1930 and 1970 professional training and practice were intimately related to Brazilian political, social and economic contexts. This fact has led to the structuring of this article into three periods. In the first (1930–1945) the debates concerning the strengthening of the profession that took place. In the second (1945–1960) the courses disassociated themselves from the teaching of the Academies of Fine Arts and the Engineering Schools. In the third (1960–1970), despite the economic growth of the previous decade, the recognition of a Brazilian architecture and the consolidation of the system of teaching based on the precepts of Modern Architecture, Brazilian society saw itself turn into a dictatorial political regime. The years 1930 to 1970 were critical in strengthening Brazilian Modern Architecture, as well as being the decades that saw the launching of the basis of a teaching that echoes to the current day.

By Ana Maria Reis de Goes Monteiro

1930–1945: The Affirmation of Brazilian Architecture and of its Teaching according to the Precepts of Modern Architecture

Up to the beginning of the 1930s the teaching of Architecture in Brazil can be divided into three phases. In the first, starting from the middle of the 17th century, Portugal established Military Academies in Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, São Luis, Recife and Belém. The military engineers trained there were responsible for religious and civil architectural projects and works and for the planning out of various cities. In the second, in 1827, the Architecture course was initiated at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts (AIBA), in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The course, which was unique in the country, followed the French academic model, aiming to create the architect-artist in the service of the Portuguese Court, which had been transferred to Brazil in 1808. In the third, the AIBA ceased to exist and the National School of Fine Arts (ENBA) was created in its place, mirroring the republican regime that came into being in 1889. However, during the first three decades of the 20th century the teaching of Architecture was little changed from the now extinct AIBA. As a counterpoint, 1894 saw the inauguration of the Polytechnic School of São Paulo, an institution inserted into a city in the free process of industrialisation. There, there was no place for the architect-artist, but there certainly was for the engineer-architect.

However, from the 1920s onwards, events like the Modern Art Week of 1922, Gregori Warchavchik's man-

ifesto *About the Modern Architecture* [figure 1], amongst others, contributed so that the Modern ideas that were circulating gained followers among professionals and students of the subject. To this, add the first visit to Brazil by Le Corbusier (1929) and the teaching reform at the ENBA as proposed by Lúcio Costa, which gave rise to the introduction of the canons of Modern Architecture to the teaching of Brazilian architecture.

In 1930 Lúcio Costa, who had already aligned himself to the corollary of Modern Architecture, assumed the directorship of the ENBA. He proposed the contracting of teachers and professors aligned with the concepts of Modern art, with the aim of developing a suitable Architecture course for the *machine civilization*. From that moment onwards, given that as until then the sources of inspiration were the *Concours d'école* and the *Concours Chénard* of the Paris School of Fine Arts, a different theoretical and project reference came about. Lúcio Costa intended a reform of teaching that would prepare "a School of a technical-scientific education, as far as possible perfect, and to guide the teaching in to a sense of a perfect harmony with construction. The classics to be studied as disciplines, the historic styles as critical orientation and not for direct application" (Costa, 1995). In September 1931 Lúcio Costa was released from the role of Director and disconnected himself from the ENBA. However his academic proposals had a profound influence on the direction of teaching and on Brazilian architectural production.

It was at that time when the Ministry of Education and Health was inaugurated [figure 2] and which saw the training of Oscar Niemeyer, Carlos Leão, Luiz Nunes, Jorge Moreira, Alcides da Rocha Miranda and Affonso Eduardo Reidy [figure 3], names that transformed Brazilian Architecture.

< Figure 1. First Modern house in Brazil. Project by Gregori Warchavchik, 1927, in São Paulo. Source: Yves Bruand, *Arquitetura Contemporânea no Brasil*, São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1981.

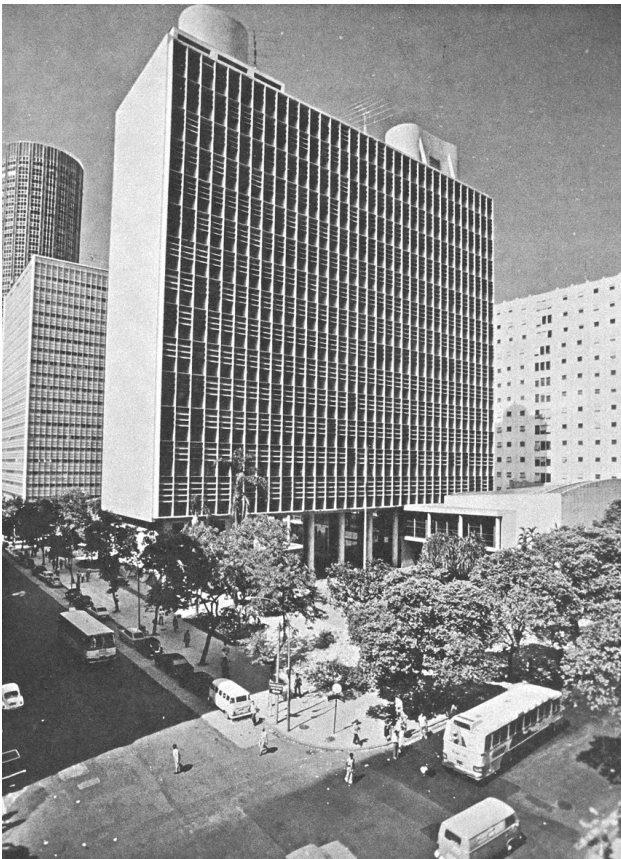


Figure 2. Ministry of Education and Health, the current Gustavo Capanema Palace. Project by **Lúcio Costa**, **Affonso Eduardo Reidy**, **Carlos Leão**, **Ernani Vasconcelos**, **Jorge Moreira** and **Oscar Niemeyer**, 1936, in Rio de Janeiro. Photo by Hugo Segawa. Source: Sylvia Ficher e Marlene Milan Acayaba, *Arquitetura Moderna Brasileira*, São Paulo, Projeto Editores Associados, 1982.



Figure 3. Social Housing Mayor Mendes de Moraes-Pedregulho. Project by **Affonso Eduardo Reidy** in collaboration with **Francisco Bolonha**, 1950-1958, Rio de Janeiro. Source: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, *Affonso Eduardo Reidy*, Rio de Janeiro, Solar Grandjean de Montigny, 1985.

In spite of the architects sharing European ideas with respect to art, architecture and society, the Brazilian reality was quite distinct. The architects were concerned about their professional affirmation. The times gave rise to the expansion of various urban centers, creating new working opportunities. For an effective answer to be given to these new demands it was necessary that training were specific and autonomous, and that more architects be trained. In this context new courses were opened¹ and new strategies drawn up.

1945-1960: the Winning of Autonomy for Architectural Courses as a Reflection of Professional Affirmation

It's a fact that in 1945 [figure 4] the Brazilian Modern Architect had been affirmed in the national field of culture and had won international prestige. However, Architecture courses still placed themselves in opposition to the precepts of Modern Architecture. At the time the Brazilian Institute of Architects presented a series of events which discussed the teaching situation and recommended the creation of new faculties of Architecture within Universities. In 1945, as an outcome of this initiative, the Decree Law nº 7918 talked about the closing of the ENBA and the creation of the National Faculty of Architecture, whose regulations considered the organization of courses of Architecture and Urbanism² across the entire country, disassociating themselves from Engineering courses. As a consequence of this the Faculties of Architecture and Urbanism at the Mackenzie Presbyterian University and at the University of São Paulo were created in São Paulo, though in a different context to that of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

From the second half of the 1950s the academic community proposed the implementation of the Minimum Curriculum for the whole country, based on the professional profile developed by the Modern movement and disassociated from the teaching at the Academies of Fine Arts and Schools of Engineering. The Minimum Curriculum, approved in 1962, foresaw that the training of architects would include broad social actions that would show themselves through Architectural projects. At that time the Urbanism course was incorporated into Architecture courses forming, from then on, the professional Architect and Urbanist. There were various innovative experiments such as those in São Paulo [Figure 5], Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte. In this context the Faculties of Architecture and Urbanism were created at the Federal Universities in the States of Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Pernambuco, Paraná, Ceará, and Pará and also at the University of Brasília and at the Catholic University of Goiás.

Architecture came to be known as a "total" work of



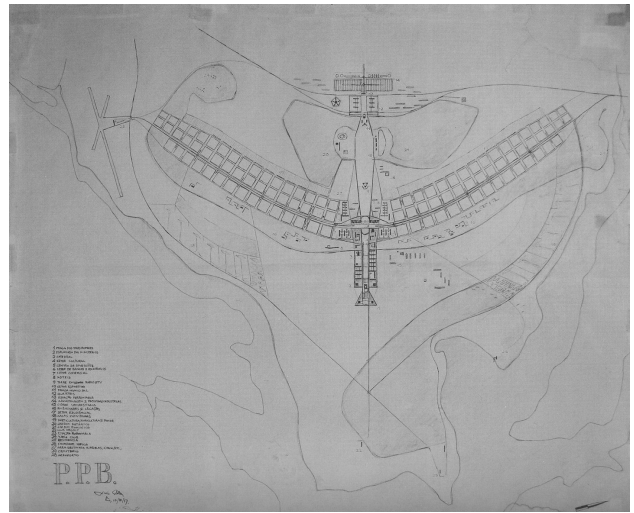
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art. In this scenario the house and all the everyday objects were subject to being planned. The city came to be expressed as a functional unit in which its functions should be rethought and planned, as it happened in Brasília. The argument was about the teaching of architectural projects, rather than architectural styles, and this necessitated the incorporation of the use of a language more in keeping with the architectural projects that presented themselves. Allied to such circumstances, political-will transformed Modern Architecture into an opportunity to show the world the modern face of a predominantly agricultural country.

1960–1970: Under the Regime of Exceptions

In 1960 Brasília was inaugurated. Lúcio Costa's pilot plan [figure 6] associated itself with the principles claimed in CIAM, especially in the Athens Letter. His project expressed a functional rationality that imagined itself capable of stimulating the birth of a new man, of a new, fair and harmonious society [figure 7]. Oscar Niemeyer was charged with planning the institutional buildings [figure 8]. However, despite the concepts and utopias present in Brazilian architecture at the time, in 1964 the country descended into a Military Dictatorship which lasted until 1985.

Between 1964 and 1970 a series of institutional acts were implemented that guaranteed an absolute hegemony for the Military Regime. Such measures affected, in a violent way, the direction of Brazilian universities and culminated in the Reform of Higher Education, undertaken in 1969. Its objectives were to privatize Higher Education, eliminate student interference in university administration and to structure Universities in a business mould. The result was that private initiative had unprecedented growth. Between 1961 and 1970 the field of Architecture and Urbanism showed the greatest percentage growth in relation to other areas of study. In 1974 there were 30 schools of Architecture and Urbanism³ located primarily in the South, South-East and North-East regions and the majority in private institutions.



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Figure 5. Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the State University of São Paulo. Project by **João Baptista Vilanova Artigas** and **Carlos Cascaldi**, 1961-1968, São Paulo. Source: Photographic Archive, Vilanova Artigas Foundation.

Figure 6. Pilot plan of the Brasília Project. Project by **Lúcio Costa**, 1957, Brasília. Source: Collection of House of Lúcio Costa.

Figure 7. Monumental Axis (Eixo Monumental) in Brasília. Photo by Fabio Colombini. Source: Exhibition Catalogue Brasília 50 years-half a century of the capital of Brazil, Madrid, 2010.

Furthermore, the repression that descended from 1964 onwards meant a brutal setback in professional practice as well as in the teaching of architecture. The Regime supported the Minimum Curriculum of 1962 and it was then reduced until it was transformed into a set of juxtaposed and disconnected disciplines. Such a scenario had disastrous consequences for the teaching of architecture and urbanism, since it would define a model of teaching that, whilst supposedly based on professional practice, prepared a style of workmanship that would really only serve the productive system in force at the time.



Figure 4. Aerial view of Ibirapuera Park. Project by **Oscar Niemeyer, Hélio Ulhôa Cavalcanti, Zenon Lotufo, Eduardo Kneese de Melo, Gauss Estelita** and **Carlos Lemos**. Landscape architect: **Otávio Augusto Teixeira Mendes**. 1951–1955, São Paulo. Photo by Percival Tirapeli. Source: <http://brazilbusinesstourism.blogspot.com.br>.



Final Considerations

The years before the implementation of the Minimum Curriculum of 1962 were fundamental for the consolidation of the teaching of Architecture and Urbanism and demonstrated a continual quest for better conditions. From 1964 onwards the Military Regime developed a cultural, social and political repression without precedent. It implemented reforms of higher education that gave rise to the start of the commercialization of higher education. The result was that Brazil during the 1970s had nothing new with respect to the training of architects and urbanists, as the majority of new Schools limited themselves to repeating and impoverishing the existing models. Only at the end of the 1980s did they return to the debate, approving new quality standards in Architecture and Urbanism courses.

Notes

1. In 1933 the School of Architecture of Minas Gerais was opened in Belo Horizonte, the first Architecture course not associated with the Schools of Fine Arts or Engineering.
2. At that time Urbanism courses were separate from Architecture courses. Urbanism Courses had a duration of two years and were administered by those who had concluded courses in Architecture or Civil Engineering.
3. Today, according to data from the Ministry of Education, there are more than 350 courses in Architecture and Urbanism in Brazil.

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