

THE CITY'S ARCHITECTURE AS REPRESENTATION OF POWER: A parallel between Brazil and Italy through the plans of Goiânia (1933) and Sabaudia (1933).

VALVA, MILENA D'AYALA ¹
COELHO, GUSTAVO NEIVA ²

*Universidade Estadual de Goiás (UEG), Anápolis, Brasil.*¹
midayala@gmail.com

*Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Goiás (PUC-GO), Goiânia, Brasil.*²
gncelho@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the early 20th century, Italy and Brazil lived with authoritarian governments, defending, each in its own way and bearing in mind the respective proportions, the expansion and the occupation of areas considered of great importance for national development and integration. It was the era of Italian Benito Mussolini and of Brazilian Getúlio Vargas. This work aims to present a comparative analysis of the projects of Sabaudia, in the region of Latium (Italy), and Goiânia, the new capital of the State of Goiás (Brazil), two new cities founded in the same year of 1933.

THE MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE POLITCS OF AUTHORITARIANISM

The first decades of the 20th century, especially after the First World War, brought to the world's political scene the deployment of several authoritarian governments, both right and left-wing, and not only in Europe but also in America and Asia. It is the period in which, associating elements of an developing architecture with the proposals made at the International Exposition of Decorative and Industrial Arts, in 1925, arises an architectural typology – known later as Art Deco – that somehow becomes interesting, as a representative model, to these new political regimes, mainly due to its possibilities of monumental representativeness, and to its link with a concept of modernity, unknown until then.

The world's political effervescence in this period demands from the professionals linked to project and construction a political engagement, which in its turn leads architecture, at certain times or even according to certain characteristics, to be associated with movements, regimes or ideologies of strong social impact.

The architecture, seen as the ideal of representation by rulers linked to authoritarian regimes, and the slogans based on progress and modernization complement this relationship, therefore prompting these governments to invest heavily in the construction of buildings that hallmark, or even represent, their political thinking.

¹ Architect and urban planner, teacher and researcher at the State University of Goiás (UEG). Master in Architecture from the Federal University of Minas Gerais - UFMG, (2001), PhD in Project, Space and Culture by the University of Architecture and Urbanism of São Paulo FAU-USP (2011), with one year of internship at IUAV-Venice, Italy.

² Architect and urban planner, teacher of theory and history of architecture and urbanism at PUC-GO, Master in history from the Federal University of Goiás – UFG (1997). Researcher and author of several books on architecture of Goiás, since its creation in the eighteenth century till the production of mid-twentieth century.

Without the same political context found in Europe and in some other countries – mainly South American, such as Brazil and Argentina – the art deco finds in the United States a fertile ground, especially in the period immediately after the depression, with President Roosevelt's New Deal policy. At that time, the American architecture takes up the aesthetic elements already under development in Europe, incorporating them into its basic values, wherein it becomes clear its relationship with industrial production and technological progress. The industrial design dictates norms from household objects and the ubiquitous symbols of the age are the aerodynamic shapes found in the design of airplanes, cars, locomotives and ocean liners. Objects for the most varied uses, such as lighters, cocktail mixers, vacuum cleaners and even pencils, are drawn with aerodynamic shapes, which in some way come to meet the general enthusiasm for speed and technological progress (Gossel and Leuthauser, 1996).

However, it is in the official architecture, representative of the authoritarian and dictatorial governments, that these characteristics will find ways to a better development. Countries such as Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Brazil all assimilate the model, each of them adding its own regional flavor and thus eliciting enthusiasm from the people, as well as divulging its canons with greater intensity. And starting from the buildings of public interest that hallmark the presence of authoritarian governments in these countries, both residential and commercial architectures will abundantly use the Art Deco's characteristic style. It is within this concept that we can see Brazil, during the Vargas Administration, and Italy, with Mussolini in its political command, as two of the best examples where Art Deco architecture found the perfect soil for its development.

ART DECO ARCHITECTURE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GOIÂNIA

The proposal for transferring the capital of the state of Goiás from Goiás to Goiânia, in the first decades of the XX century, took place within an ample project of changes defended by the Getúlio Vargas government, that included broader topics related to progress and modernization, and more specific ones such as The March to the West, which intended to incorporate the wide regions of the West, Northwest and North, left abandoned and of low productivity until then. The creation of the new capital of the state of Goiás, then, represented a series of changes, starting from the ones of political instance, with the replacement of old oligarchies by new unfamiliar-to-power groups, in the economic foundations, with the governmental incentive to implant industries, and in the agricultural production and commercial processes. There was also the replacement of the traditional Portuguese colonial architecture for another, representative of modernity, internationalization and the future.

In order to install this new theater of enactment for the recently installed power, Atilio Correa Lima was hired in the federal capital, having arrived recently from Europe and being thoroughly compromised with the new forms of modern planning concerning both the urban area and the projects for buildings. Now, in what concerns architecture, both the buildings projected by Atilio and the ones projected by his successors, started to present the typical art deco features, not because of the trend or personal preferences of their authors, but for being the most appropriate architectural style for the identification of Vargas authoritative power and its local representatives.

It is worth observing that the former capital, despite all its mentioned political problems, also carried the traditional traces of seventeenth century colonial cities,

15th INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE

an antithesis to the modernity intended by the new political-administrative context that commanded the country. A new capital would be, then, according to Chaul

the symbol that would take the state out of its politic-economical apathy and also represent the "new era" building up in the national horizons. It was a part of the "new Brazil"; of the new time, the New State. A new capital would be, overall, the image of progress (Chaul, 1988, p.80).

This progress concerned both the local situation – since Goiás was then considered the second poorest state in Brazil – and the national interests of progress and development, which the New State looked forward to implement within its actions. The nationalist way modernity was grasped by, during the government of Getúlio Vargas, can be noticed in the report that Armando de Godói presented to the mediator in Goiás, even before the first contacts with Atílio Correa Lima to execute the project.

In this report, Godói says that,

the modern city is a work center, a big school in which it is possible to educate, develop and perfect the main elements of the spirit and the body of men, a source of powerful energies without which populations would not progress and prosper. It is from the modern cities that the vigorous collective impulses come, and they're where the coordination of the movements and activities of a nation occurs (Monteiro, 1979, p.49).

Some years later, the mediator's enthusiasm with the construction of the new city was such that, in a memorial sent to the president Getúlio Vargas, he affirmed that, for the capital to grow by itself, it was only necessary the construction of two hundred houses.

Hiring Atílio Correa to create the plan of the new city comes in the direction of the modernization concept that oriented the whole idea of change in the capital of Goiás. Part of the contract was the execution of the pilot plan for the new city, along with projects for its main public buildings. Though the contract was closed with Atílio, it is worth remembering that the first name the change-supporters came up with, to elaborate the plan to Goiânia, was of Alfredo Agache, the French city planner. However, since Agache was no longer in the country, his name was replaced by two other professionals considered capable of the incumbency, in addition to being connected to the French master works: Atílio Correia Lima and, later, Armando Augusto de Godoy.

Atílio, as city planner and as Agache's disciple, supports himself on the principles introduced by the master, the whole city thought as architecture, and the building as a fundamental element, definer of the public space. It is important to notice that, though recognized as one of the main Brazilian modernists – mainly due to his project for the Hydroplanes Station in Rio de Janeiro-, the projects developed for the capital of Goiás, such as The Government Palace, the Justice Palace, The General Secretary, The Great Hotel, The Security Direction, among others, show strong deco features, impregnated with a strong and monumental rationalist feeling, which, with their straight lines and clean sober façades, impose themselves, independently of the great dimensions and exaggerated volumetry present in the official architecture of other periods. The same feeling can be observed on the projects found in the region of Mato Grosso Goiano (hospitals, hotels and airports), elaborated by the Fundação Brasil Central (Central Brazil Foundation) within the same ideal of the March to the West.

15th INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE

In what concerns Agache's work, he was the first city planner to bring to Brazil, with the plan for the city of Rio de Janeiro, the possibility of a debate about issues such as the industrial city, mass transportation, air navigation, water supply and sanitation, worker's habitation and the use of the soil, issues under discussion in Europe since the previous year.

The influence of Agache's thoughts in the reports of Correa Lima and Godoy is clearly perceivable: the wide avenues with trees, the preoccupation with the water supply – which appears in Correa Lima's proposal as a justification for a change of the chosen site -, the green areas, and the control of population densification, with a proposition for creating satellite cities.

In Correa Lima's case, these issues come about clearer, mainly when he talks about zoning, defending the creation of sectors in accordance to the urban activities. The creation of sectors, according to him, would facilitate the organization of attendance services and also solve problems of some kinds, technical, economical, sanitary, and also aesthetic.

In Godoy's report we can notice his preoccupation in proposing full integration of the elements in his project, such as the zoning, the tracing of many public parks, the division of the terrains in allotments, the water supply and sewage system, the electric energy supply, tree planting, pavement collocation, to try to bring economic solutions to the table. These worries associated elements of modern thinking with issues related to the economic use of the already diminishing resources that were to be used by the enterprise.

As for the proposed tracing, the drawing itself already shows its monumental and symbolic character. The areas of residency, commerce and industry are clearly defined and justified, and so is the positioning of two large public places of integration (civic and political) for the population. The first is the Civic Square (the square of power) and the second, the Worker Square, is situated in the proximities of the industry sector, the popular neighborhood (residential) and the railroad station (regarded, then, as one of the main elements related to work, progress and modernity). They are connected by a broad avenue, 60 meter-wide, punctuated on all of its extension by a series of elements, symbolic and monumental themselves. In the central area, the permeability provided by the profundity of the blocks, the rationalist sobriety of the public buildings, the use of decorative deco elements in the commercial buildings, well-define the character of modernity intended by the federal government.

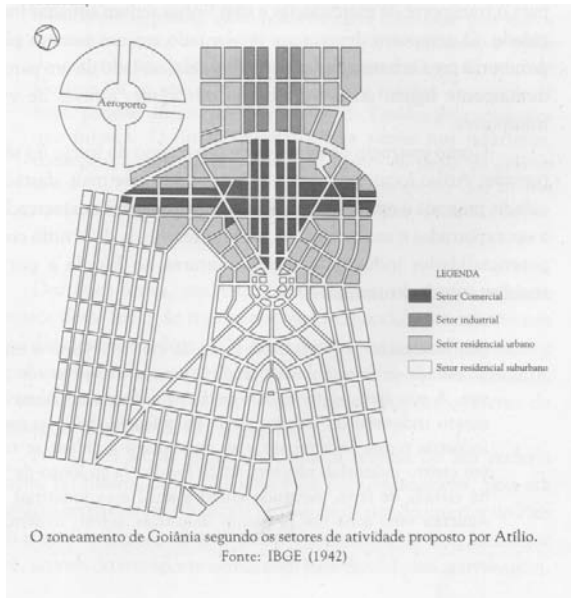


Figure 1 – *Map of Goiânia by Atilio Correa Lima*. DAHER, 2003, p.97.



Figure 2 – *Perspective plan of Atilio Correa Lima*. IBGE.



Figure 3 – *Goiânia Civic Square, in the 1930s*. IBGE.

ARCHITECTONICAL RATIONALISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SABAUDIA

In the beginning years of 1930's, the fascist regime in Italy developed politics for the foundation of new cities. Based on regionalist ideas, Mussolini implanted programs for the creation of rural areas and urban decentralization, aiming to act through politics of demographic re-balance in a territorial scale, using regional planning methodologies. These politics agreed with other various initiatives in European countries, and even in the United States, that stimulated the creation of agencies specifically designed to face development problems. They would look for alternatives within their specific characteristics and objectives, so that the regional planning could be internalized and that it may come of use when in face of the challenges put by the urban growth.

The essence of the rural-inclined fascist regional politics, based on the construction of new nucleuses, was actually anti-urban, according to some authors. Lucia Nuti believes that the new foundations were the opposite of an urbanization program for the rural population, since what was being intended was the de-urbanization; absorb the exceeding work force of expanding centers and transfer it to controlled areas with more job possibilities. Mussolini's intention, according to Ofteland (2001), was to control overcrowding cities, keeping people in the field through propaganda, projects and programs of resettlement. What was intended, according to the author, was the institutional control over the workers, easing the upper classes fears concerning the unemployed mass.

In 1928, Mussolini wrote an article "Escaping the cities. Ciphers and deductions", where he described his worries about the habitational deficit and that its solution prescribed the impediment of immigration to the cities, clearly leading to anti-urbanistic conclusions. The word of order, according to him, should be: facilitate exodus from the urban areas with all possible means – coercion, if necessary, hamper the abandon of rural areas and oppose the immigration wave in the cities. (Ciucci & Dal Co, 1990)

One of the regions that received this kind of attention was "Agro-Pontino", a great rural area located next to the city of Rome. There it was founded the cities of Littoria, Sabaudia, Guidonia, Pontilia, Aprilia and Pomezia. One of the resources used was the system of concourses, which obtained bigger attention in the city of Sabaudia, considered as "the model of a new city". The national concourse in 1933 for the development of a community center, or agricultural center – terms that substituted "city", in consonance with the anti-urban idea preached by Mussolini – was won by a group called "gruppo dei quattro", composed by Luigi Piccinato, together with Gino Cancellotti, Eugenio Montuori and Alfredo Scalpelli.

The project for Sabaudia presented a modest drawing, both in the tracing and the buildings, and one intention: translating it into a regional plan. Piccinato is known for his trajectory of "constructing cities", having designed almost a hundred plans in diverse scales; he represented and translated the aspirations of almost a whole generation. In this project, the city planner rejected the term city in its past meaning, as of something "closed, walled, something that opposed the field", expressing his attention for a "science of territory", a passage that only occurs when the city, the territory and the society are thought as one.

"No more of the walled city that opposes the field, the city that impose huge expenses and does not produce, the city with an end in itself and that does not conclude, but new open urban forms and decentralized, reasonable and

15th INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE

balanced with its role... A city thoroughly connected to its territory..." (Piccinato, 1941, p.2)

A fast route that leaves Appia Road connects Sabaudia with the territory, which is connected to the sea. A double scheme of intern and peripheral roads was designed to interconnect the various agricultural centers. The road widens when it approximates the city and creates an axis that goes up to the urban center, which provides an axial view from the municipality seat tower. The main square is located opposite to the city hall, where we have a small urban center. The city's design is organized by two big squares, and the project dedicated great attention to the official buildings construction. The surrounding natural landscape is an important element in the city's project, Monte Circeo can be observed from the city hall's square.

The two squares create a type of "L" system and the general composition of the public spaces, with the system of routes and stretches around the squares, guarantees a restriction of movements in these places. As it was thought as an agricultural center, not a city, the zoning is limited to few categories and distributed with maxim simplicity.

According to the analysis by Maffei and Strappa (1998), the squares' drawing provides a spatial continuity between the territorial scale, the city scale, its urban tissue and buildings. The urban continuity comes from the structural elements, the buildings and the civic center, all in a solid hierarchy, where the building is structured by ways and knots. According to Ofteland (2001), various news about the project were published by the press, together with the justification, probably dictated by the regime, that one of the squares was destined to civil life and the other to the great rural and political assemblies and that the new buildings' architecture was inspired by a great sense of modernity and practicality.

The architecture of Sabaudia's buildings was connected to the principles of modernization and rationalization in the country and society. At a moment when the estate interfered directly on the city's issues, art and architecture, with the intention of creating a centralized system of public work management, the whole architecture system was being constructed on essential principles, based on a pure and abstract theory. Sabaudia's construction contributed to providing new arguments in favor of rationalism in a debate about architecture that had been circulating in magazines for a while.

In the 1920's Italy, the relation between aesthetic hues and political content was in the center of the debate. It was quite clear that the intention of the Italian architects was to "create a style" that could be the synthesis of the nationalist values of the Italian Classicism and the structural logic of the machine time. At the same, Fascism intended to create a "mass preference", estate architecture, in accordance with the spirit of the time.

The beginning of the Italian rationalist movement is associated to the publishing of some articles by the Gruppo 7 (composed by Caragnoli, Figini, Frette, Larco, Pollini, Rava, Terragni) that focused the debate on the relation of tradition and modernity. There was a great contradiction in the center of the debate, about how to abandon the academic architecture that receded with the use of new baroque, and how to reinterpret the modern language, attentively considering the specificities and internal situations. This group of young nationalists affirmed that modern architecture was not a denial of the past, but the expression of a "new spirit". (Biraghi, 2008)

15th INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE

The architectonic scenery of Sabaudia positioned around two great public spaces, one of them being destined to eventual political meetings, represented a commitment of the form with its ideology. A form based on a geometrically closed system, and crowned with an architecture known for its vertical elements, the tower, the city hall and the church's tower.



Figure 4 - *The map of Sabaudia.* <<http://piliaemmanuele.wordpress.com/2008/04/>>



Figure 5 - *The place of the revolution.*
<<http://www.radio3.rai.it/dl/radio3/programmi/archivio/ContentSet>>

ARCHITECTURE AND CITY PLANNING IN THE SERVICE OF POWER

To analyze two cities from such distinct contexts may lead us to some interesting reflections. If, at a first moment, the motivation to this study was the evident similarity between the foundation of the two cities, projected in the same year, political and ideological instruments of authoritarian right-wing governments that used a rationalist architectonic expression to reach monumentality, as the research progressed, the differences also revealed themselves worthy exploring.

The conducting thread in this study has been the reflection about power manifestation through architecture and city planning. To understand the intentions of those who order the construction is fundamental to comprehend the ways the author adopts to make those objectives real. Goiânia and Sabaudia allowed us to

15th INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE

transit through a moment of rupture between the traditional and the modern, in search of an “art of our time”, but that also carried the lessons from the past. Both governments – Getúlio Vargas’ and Benito Mussolini’s – aimed to construct not only the city, but also the country, in a modern and efficient way.

The search for urban scenery, in both projects, mainly through perspectives and collocation of architectonic pieces, was important to construct an image that well expresses its political ideology. The protagonist in the composition of both cities is without a doubt the public space, the most efficient place for exultation of the central power and its local representatives. The Civic Square in Goiânia and the Revolution Square in Sabaudia fulfill the expected role of a new city constructed in service of power. In Goiânia, the attention to topography and the choice of the highest place to implant the square was essential to reach the expected, and in Sabaudia, the construction of the 43 meter-high tower was the most efficient resource to create a striking element of communication. The monumentality, reached in both examples, was more than an issue of scale; it was represented by an aesthetic of power valorization as element of modernization, advance and search for inserting the country in a process of international development towards the future.

Both cities are documents of an epoch’s history and they help clearing the meaning of “modern” in the two nations. In the Brazilian case, the architecture’s modernity shows itself not only through the typical elements of architectural rationalism, but also in the use of materials, until then, unknown in the countryside of Goiás; in the Italian case, the choice befalls over more durable material, rescuing the past for a future reference. In both cases, the striking feature in the main buildings was the straight line, representative of the art deco that privileges a more geometrical and abstract drawing. The use of simple material, in both cases, was also related to issues of economic limitations.

If, in Brazil, the March to the West, meant the possibility of urbanizing the big empty that used to be the center of Brazil, and the construction and consolidation of Goiânia marked Brazilian modern city planning, launching the political and urbane bases so that in the decade of 1950 the process of interiorizing peaked with the construction of Brasília – the most well finished manifesto of a modern city; in Italy, the construction of new cities in the same period meant the possibility of keeping men in the field, strengthening the rural bases, also through a modern ideal of a city. We can say that Goiânia has meant the prediction of the idea of a city in the field, and Sabaudia, the accomplished discourse of a no-city.

REFERENCES

- BIRAGHI, Marco. Storia dell’architettura contemporânea I. 1750-1945. Torino: Einaudi, 2008.
- CALABI, Donatella. Storia dell’urbanistica europea. Milano: Mondadori, 2004.
- CIUCCI & DAL CO. Architettura italiana del Novecento. Milano: Electa, 1990.
- CHAUL, Nasr N. F. A construção de Goiânia e a transferência da capital. Goiânia: Cegraf, 1988.
- COELHO, Gustavo N. A modernidade do Art Déco na construção de Goiânia. Goiânia: Ed. Do Autor, 1997.
- DAHER, Tania. *Goiânia: uma utopia européia no Brasil*. Goiânia: ICBC, 2003.
- DONATI, Chiara. Città di fondazione fascista. La pentapoli Pontina. Rivista online di storia & informazione. nº 36, dicembre 2010. < <http://www.instoria.it>>.
- GODOY, Armando de. Exigências elementares do edifício público. Revista Arquitetura e Urbanismo, mar./abr. de 1937.
- GOSSEL, Peter; LEUTHAUSER, Gabriele. *Arquitetura no século XX*. Colônia: Taschen, 1996.
- GRAEFF, Edgar A. *O edifício*. São Paulo: Projeto, 1986.

15th INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE

GRAEFF, Edgar A. Goiânia: 50 anos. Brasília: MEC-SESU, 1985

MAFFEI, G. Luigi. & STRAPPA, Giuseppe. The foundation town of Sabaudia: reading and design. IN: International seminar on urban form "new town: morphogenesis and development" Paris, 3-5 July 1998. < <http://w3.uniroma1.it/strappa/>>

MANSO, Celina F. A. Goiânia: uma concepção urbana moderna e contemporânea – um certo olhar. Goiânia: Edição do Autor, 2001.

MENEZES, Eduardo de. Ídolo das ideias e símbolo do poder. Humanidades, Brasília, v. 7, n. 2, 1991.

MONTEIRO, Ofélia S. N. Como nasceu Goiânia. Goiânia: Líder, 1979.

NUTI, Lucia. La città nuova nella cultura urbanistica e architettonica del Fascismo.

OFTELAND, Hanne Storm. Sabaudia 1934: materializing the fascist, corporate town. Thesis of Degree of Cand. Philol.; University of Oslo; Institut for Art History, 2002.

PICCINATO, Luigi. Costruzione-Casabella, 1941, n° 157.

RICALDONI, Américo M. El concepto de lo monumental en arquitectura. Arquitectura e Urbanismo, Rio de Janeiro, mar./abr. 1938.