

SÃO PAULO – FROM MEGACITY TO METROPOLIS

Urban Age Academic Workshop, 3 December 2008

Organised by Prof Regina Meyer and Prof Marta Grostein, LUME at FAU/USP



Abandoned industrial facilities have been demolished to accommodate residential development. (photo: Nelson Kon)

The Academic Workshop inaugurated a renovated space at the architecturally prized FAU building, the Congregation Room or “Sala da Congregação”. Provocatively titled ‘From Megacity to Metropolis’, the discussions focused on the historical formation of the City of São Paulo and the challenges it faces with consolidation of the 21st century city. Prof. Regina Meyer presented a detailed evolution of the city from the initial pre-industrial configuration in the early 20th century, highlighting the most important transformations illustrated by a series of spectacular historical images. She argued that the actual configuration of the city has its origins in a model of planning that couldn’t guarantee a structural perspective in the urban planning. Following her presentation, Christiane Muniz and Fernanda Barbara from UNA Architectes presented a project for a

train station over the Tiete river transforming an old railway bridge in to a new articulation point for the city explaining that these kind of interventions have the potential to rearticulate the fragmented city and could be a good example of punctual project with a significant urban impact.

Prof. Marta Grostein then presented her analysis of São Paulo’s urban sprawl, confronting the processes of the 60’s and 70’s and the territorial dispute that currently operates in the peripheries of the city. The discussion centred on the Masterplan of São Paulo and its capacity to ordinate the territory. Prof. Burdett provoked the discussion by outlining the main features of the London Masterplan. The normative aspect of the Sao Paulo Masterplan was criticized by participants while others defended the important advances it presented in adhering to the innovative federal law, the “estatuto das cidades”. In the concluding session, Prof. Ricardo Toledo presented the infrastructure challenges the city will face in the future and the ways in which the city might evolve through the current economic and climate change crises. – Frederico Ramos



Thematic Structure

The theme for the Urban Age South America Academic Workshop at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism in the University of Sao Paulo on 3 December 2008 had the objective to discuss with specialists of several fields the physical, spatial and functional re-structuring of the metropolis of Sao Paulo. The main goal

was to introduce the group of 30 academic participants a new panorama of the metropolis of São Paulo based in four elements: a) the impact of new forms of urbanization in the consolidated territory; b) the territorial, spatial, social and functional demands of the new productive structures; c) the new aspects of spatial distribution of society in the territory d) the infra-structural systems (transport, water supply, drainage, etc) proposed in the metropolitan scale.



Cidade Jardins is a gated complex of ten towers and includes a massive shopping centre.
(photo: Tuca Vieira)

Since the 1990s, a new complex process of transformation has been experienced intensely by the metropolis of Sao Paulo. Initially it was defined, simply, as the *urban dimension of globalization in an emergent metropolis*. From this very beginning the metropolitan territory, including the already consolidated space, was understood in academic circles as an active agent of the process and, by no means, a simple reflection of social and economic change dynamics.

However, in essence and in practice, urban planning as an instrument of development is once again a working premise for public authorities, to the extent that there is a clear need for the economic and social development for a metropolis like São Paulo. Among the countless issues that have arisen in this area, one that is constantly indicated as being decisive for the new posture toward urban planning is the role of large, expensive urban infrastructures.

It is important to remark the changes that have occurred in the use of traditional infrastructures, to the extent that deregulation has caused difficulties for the economic development of the metropolises. The tumultuous relationship between local and regional interests at the moment of implementation of infrastructures on a metropolitan and regional scale has also been mentioned frequently. Another significant aspect that partially explains the timid recovery of urban and regional planning is the increased number of disputes between the principles to protect the environment and the needs of broad infrastructure systems committed to the new uses of metropolitan and macro-metropolitan territories.

This theme should be understood within this context of urban restructuring. In other words, it is part of the process of change that is taking place in the metropolis of São Paulo, the characteristics of which are in a process of consolidation. A research project like that described here is intended as an aid to a return to metropolitan urban planning committed to public intervention in precarious and substandard territories, serving as a basis for private investments. It is felt that the



amount of information the agents of this process have will be directly proportional to the technical and political quality of the decisions addressed at improving the living conditions in the metropolis and in the Expanded Metropolitan Complex (EMC).

The bulk of this discussion topic is to broaden the observations and analyses of the physical, spatial and functional features of the changes now going on in the metropolis. The predominantly industrial cycle, also often referred to as 'industrializing industrialization,' whose main trait was the *expansion of the periphery* and *deficient urbanification*, is opening up a new cycle of change that we are characterizing from the perspective of production as the 'industrialization of services.' In this new cycle, industrial activity will operate in conjunction with, or merely ancillary to, tertiary activities characterized by a strong thrust of modernization of urban sectors. This process is referred to here as *precarious, or substandard, modernization*.



To achieve this objective, it is necessary to identify more complex aspects inherent to the metropolitan dynamics and research operations in different scales. The first objective involves issues of a metropolitan dimension, such as the Circular Expressway (Rodoanel), the expansion of the Metrô System (see left), the Water Supply Systems, the plan for transportation on tracks, urban environmental policies, among others that simultaneously affect the three scales that the project intends to face. In other words, the public policies of an urban profile that relate to

issues of the regional and macro-metropolitan range are already facing the dilemma of being held responsible for their impact on the intermediate scales and, at the same time, for failing to carry out projects that would reduce the difficulties that the broader projects should deal with.

– Regina Meyer

Urban Age South America – Academic Workshop

“SAO PAULO – FROM *MEGACITY* to *METROPOLIS*” “SÃO PAULO – DE *MEGACIDADE* A *METRÓPOLE*”

Location: Sala da Congregação
Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo
Rua do Lago, 876 Cidade Universitária
December, 3th , from 14:00 to 17:00

Co-chairs/Moderadores:
Ricky Burdett and Suzana Pasternak



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Speakers

14:00 / 14:15

Sao Paulo – from *megacity* to *metropolis* (A route from territorial dimension to urban cohesion and quality)

São Paulo – de *megacidade* a *metrópole* (Uma rota da dimensão territorial à coesão e à qualidade urbana)

Regina Meyer

14:15 / 14:30

Transportation systems and urban articulation projects

Sistema de transporte e projetos de articulação urbana

Una Arquitetos

14:30 / 15:15 **Debate**

15:15 / 15: 30 **Coffee Break**

Speakers

15:30 / 15:45

São Paulo Metropolis - Patterns of urban sprawl

São Paulo Metr6pole - Padr6es de expans6o urbana

Marta Dora Grostein

15:45 / 16:00

Metropolitan complexities of scale and scope in infrastructure development

Complexidades de escala e de escopo no desenvolvimento da infraestrutura em 6reas metropolitanas

Ricardo Toledo

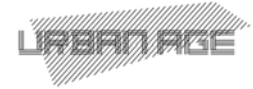
16:00/ 17:00 **Debate**

Organization

Laboratório de Urbanismo da Metrópole (LUME), FAUUSP, São Paulo

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Participants

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Researcher, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and DUSP/MIT, Cambridge

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Prof. Dieter Lappele Professor of Regional and Urban Economics, Institut für Stadt- und Regionalökonomie, HafenCity Universität, Hamburg

Prof. Fabio Casiroli Professor of Transport Planning, Polytechnic of Milan
Chairman and Founding Member, Systematica, Milan

Ms. Fernanda Barbara Architect, Una Arquitetos

Mr. Gerald Frug Professor of Law, Harvard School of Law, Harvard University, Boston

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- Mr. Rick Rubens Department of Counseling & Clinical Psychology and
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- Mr. Ricky Burdett Director, Urban Age, LSE, London
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