

The city of Oporto designed and planned in the first half of the twentieth century based on the interventions of Marcello Piacentini and Giovanni Muzio.

Uses and experiences of the Modern City

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Cities and urban landscapes are dynamic realities formed through successive human interventions, reflecting the needs of adaptation by its inhabitants. The rural exodus, result of the Industrial Revolution, and the fast and concentrated consequent growth of cities in the nineteenth century, led to a detailed reflexion on the themes of the ideal city, based on health and hygiene concerns and on the need of housing for the working class. The Industrial Revolution and its progress led to the creation by several architects in the twentieth century of different visions and utopias of the modern city and its organization, such as the Garden City, by Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), the *Ciudad Lineal*, by Arturo Soria y Mata (1844-1920), the *Cité Industrielle*, by Tony Garnier (1869-1948), the Functional City, by Le Corbusier (1887-1965), or the Brodacre City, by Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959).

The political and economic instability of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries was reflected in a greater discrepancy between Portugal and the most industrialized countries and in the late receipt of the major innovations that occurred in these. In Oporto, urban changes and growth were taking place simultaneously with the need of making renovations and opening new squares, avenues and streets. The modernization of social rituals associated with the demographic growth and expansion of the city and the consequent urban concerns led Oporto to receive, especially in the twentieth century, a series of urban proposals related to different political periods. Among the various proposals, the “General Plan of Urbanization” is particularly relevant. This plan came up with the *Decreto-Lei 24.802* (December 21, 1934) and was established in 1938, during the promotion of the ideology of the *Estado Novo*, by the engineer Duarte Pacheco, who was then the Minister of Public Works. This decree required municipalities to establish by 1939 the Urban Plans, and had as main goal shaping the growth of cities to the image of the regime. Influenced by the french urbanism, Duarte Pacheco had help from Donat-Alfred Agache (one of the most important figures of french urbanism) to draw up some plans.

The “General Plan of Urbanization” addressed different issues and made several proposals to the built areas, urbanizations, tourism and leisure areas, areas of urban and interurban expansion and communication routes. In order to activate this plan, the City Council of Oporto created the Office of Study of the General Plan of Urbanization, which was attended by the Italian architects and planners Marcello Piacentini (1938-1939) and Giovanni Muzio (1940 and 1943), both at Benito Mussolini’s service. The involvement of these architects made possible to look at the city comprehensively, from the perspective of urban planning. Several specialized urban spaces, infrastructures, equipments, and new ways of living arose, based on the principles of the Modern City.

This lecture will explore the importance of urban plans in the morphologic formation of Modern Cities and, in particular, reflect on the urban plans presented by Marcello Piacentini and Giovanni Muzio for the city of Oporto. Both the plans presented as utopian concept and those effectively implemented will be considered and characterized. The various spaces in the urban net that reflect the urban uses and experiences of the population according to the modern urban models will be addressed. Aiming a contribution to the understanding of urbanism in Oporto, the approach will value the integration of data already published in books, catalogs and academic works with data obtained by own research, based on urban plans, urban projects, and photographs.

Keywords: Oporto, Modern City, Urban Plans, Marcello Piacentini, Giovanni Muzio.