

The future of the city of São Paulo from a pessimistic point of view – mid-twentieth century<sup>1</sup>

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### Short Abstract

From a perspective that combines History, Sociology and Anthropology, this paper proposal is to examine how pessimistic representations of the future of São Paulo, the main Brazilian metropolis, have played in the production of the city itself, in a context of hegemonic optimism.

### Long Abstract

There was a moment, in the mid-twentieth century, in which São Paulo, the main Brazilian metropolis, was considered the fastest growing city in the world. In the 1950s, for example, it was estimated that, on average, a house was built every 20 minutes in São Paulo. The astonishing growth of the city was celebrated by the newspapers, by the public power and by much of the population. São Paulo was seen as the spearhead of the Brazilian development and as an indicative that finally Brazil was fulfilling its “destiny” to become a potency of the future.

However, for a few – such as the engineer, architect and urban planner Luís de Anhaia Mello –, the rapid growth of São Paulo was a “sign of the times”. For him, if the State did not act immediately to contain the expansion of the city, the future would be apocalyptic. Although his point of view was not hegemonic, that pessimistic representation had an important role in the context, because Anhaia Mello occupied a prominent place in the intellectual field of the city.

This paper is part of a study that combines History, Sociology and Anthropology to explore the meanings that the representations of São Paulo’s future had in the production of the city itself, in the symbolic and concrete senses. Here, the proposal is to examine the characteristics of Anhaia Mello’s representations and how these representations have played in the shaping of São Paulo’s future.

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## The future of the city of São Paulo from a pessimistic point of view – mid-twentieth century

The two main objectives of this paper are to present some representations of the future of the city of São Paulo, produced in the 1950s, and to discuss the role of these representations in the production of the city itself, both symbolically and materially. My research problem is to understand the role of representations of future in the *production* of the city. I assume that representations and represented things are produced simultaneously and can not be completely separated from each other. In this sense, the representations of the city and the city itself arise simultaneously and, to some extent, they are one and the same thing (Gorelik: 1999). So the representations of the city's future and its future are also produced together, to the extent that this is a valid relation to any situation. There is a need to clarify, however, that I understand both the future and the past as constituent elements of a social time (Bourdieu: 2007). So, I use the concept of representation to mark that the different moments of the time (past, present, future) are products of a particular social context. That is: to my research it is important to think the representations of the city of São Paulo's future produced in the 1950s as elements of the society which constituted São Paulo at the time.

The 1950s are important in the history of São Paulo because it was at this time that the city became the main Brazilian metropolis, a condition that has not changed since then. The process that led São Paulo to prominence among Brazilian cities is fairly well known among Brazilians with degrees in humanities. However, it is unlikely that the European public, unless specialists in Brazil, has many references about São Paulo. Therefore, even at the risk of having only truisms, I dedicated the first part of the paper to sketch in outlines the city's history from its founding until the moment that interests take a closer look here. This “deviation” by the history intends to show how the context of 1950s has developed and became a moment when the future of São Paulo was viewed with great optimism by the press, by the State, by much of the local *cultural field* and perhaps by most inhabitants of the metropolis (Arruda: 2001). The second part of the article, in its turn, is dedicated to urban planner Luís de Anhaia Mello that, in the 1950s, advocated a contrary view to the hegemonic, seeing in the future of the city chaos and despair, where others saw order and progress. In this second part, I try to identify the social-places that Anhaia Mello occupied throughout his career, especially its policy and professional practice in the 1950s. Then, in the third part, I present the two main branches of São Paulo urban planning at the time and their respective

representations of the future of the city of São Paulo: the hegemonic, optimistic; and the represented by Anhaia Mello, pessimistic. Finally, in the last part, I try to show how the pessimistic urbanism branch was gaining ground, especially in the *intellectual field* in formation, transforming the hegemonic perspective on the city. This transformation was marked by the diversification of the types of professionals who are dedicated to cities study, especially the inclusion of intellectuals coming from the Humanities. It is this last part I try to show how representations of the city at the same time produce and are produced by the city, using the *intellectual field* as an example of sensible space on São Paulo.

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From an economic point of view, since the arrival of the Portuguese in America, in 1500, to the first decades of the twentieth century, Brazil was primarily an agrarian country, dominated by large plantations and producer of primary goods for export (Prado J .: 1942). During the first two centuries of the colonial period, the most economically important region was the northeastern coast, and its main product was sugar (Schwartz: 1999). The city of São Paulo was founded in 1554 within the south-central region of the Portuguese colony and therefore geographically very distant from the then dominant economic center of the territory. The situation began to change in the early eighteenth century, when gold was discovered in the center of Brazil (Russell-Wood: 1999). Since then, the city of São Paulo has grown in importance since enjoyed a privileged geographical position: it was the natural junction of a number of paths connecting three important regions together: the south, producer of cattle and mules; the central region, gold mining and consuming the meat from the south; and the coast, specifically the port of Santos, where the ores were exported (Prado Jr .: 1953). Throughout the eighteenth century, the exploration of gold and diamonds became the main economic activity of the colony, while the Brazilian sugar, though still a major product in the exports, lost ground in Europe, mainly due to the competition with other regions producing, like the Caribbean, for example (Alden: 1999). When, in the late eighteenth century, the mines in central Brazil began to show signs of exhaustion, the city of São Paulo had become a strategic administrative center for the Portuguese crown, although less important than other Brazilian cities like Recife , Salvador or Rio de Janeiro (Morse: 1970).

In the early nineteenth century, the Portuguese Empire faced a deep crisis because of the Napoleonic Wars (Novais: 1995). In this context, there was the transfer of the Portuguese court from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro and the consequent strengthening of the independence claims in Brazil (Bethell: 2001). Because of the exhaustion of the mines, the main economic activity in Brazil has returned to the production of sugar, moving again the economically dominant pole from the interior to the coast. It is important to note, however, that while Europe dealt with Napoleon, Brazilian exports were largely affected. Therefore, even with the recovery of the prominence of sugar, Brazil went through a period of economic hardship. In this context, São Paulo followed the gold movement: being a city mainly linked to the mining activity, it lost economic importance (Morse: 1970).

The political crisis in Europe favored the independence movements in the Americas. Virtually all American colonies of the Iberian countries declared their independence in the first half of the nineteenth century (Lynch: 2001). Brazil became independent from Portugal in 1822 and, unlike all other South American countries, it became a monarchical government (Bethell: 2001). This first half of the nineteenth century, Brazil was marked by a series of political crises and civil wars, whose final settlement occurred only in the 1840s. There was also a major economic restructuring, aimed at trying to diversify the Brazilian production. Furthermore, partly as a result of the efforts for economic diversification, various localities in the south central region of the country (where São Paulo is located) started to plant coffee. Gradually, the coffee took the place of sugar in exports, making it the new main Brazilian product – a situation that was consolidated especially from the second half of the nineteenth century (Bethell; Carvalho: 2001). The city of São Paulo was able, again, to benefit from its geographic situation, since it linked the interior coffee producer with the exporter coast (Morse: 1970; Prado Jr .: 1953). In addition, the city also became the main center of concentration of wealth arising from coffee production. Therefore, the second half of the nineteenth century was to São Paulo a period of consolidation of its political importance, which had already been drawn in the previous century, and the fortification of its economic power, thanks to the accumulation of capital provided by the coffee.

The coffee consolidation as the main Brazilian led to a major demographic movement (Sánchez-Albornoz: 1991). During the colonial and imperial period, the work in Brazil was mainly done by black slaves. Until 1850, slaves were brought from Africa and were sold specially to sugar producers in the northeastern coast. With the prohibition of the slave trade

in 1850, a process of buying and selling of slaves inside Brazil itself began. As the main coffee producing region in Brazil was the center-south and sugar production became less and less interesting, the northeast went on to sell slaves to the coffee plantations of the São Paulo's region. Then, when slavery in the long run become unsustainable, Brazil began to encourage the arrival of European immigrants, especially the Italians, to work also in coffee plantations (Graham: 2001). So coffee stimulated a significant population influx to the south-central region of the country, which during the second half of the nineteenth century received numerous black slaves Northeast and numerous Italian immigrants and other nationalities.

In 1888, slavery was abolished in Brazil. In 1889, the Republic was proclaimed. The south-central region of the country was better prepared for the new labor regime, due to the large number of immigrants received and still receiving. Therefore, this region was reaffirmed as the main Brazilian economic center, a situation that had already been established throughout the nineteenth century. The new political regime, in turn, was also dominated by the powerful center-south region, mainly by São Paulo, largely because of its economic prominence (Costa: 1992). In general, one can say that from 1889 to 1930, Brazil was governed according to the interests of São Paulo's big farmers. This situation created quite wear in several other sectors of Brazilian society (Fausto: 1992).

In 1930, there was a coup in Brazil that toppled President Washington Luís and lifted to power Getulio Vargas. The coup was carried out with the support of regional elites who felt shut out of power and economically disadvantaged due to the almost exclusive focus of the federal government in the interests of São Paulo coffee growers (Fausto: 1992). Vargas remained 15 years in office. Although coffee continued to be the main Brazilian product, in the years that happened World War I, a timid import substitution industry began to emerge in Brazil. During the Vargas period, this industry grew rapidly and, in the years of World War II, there was a strong government incentives for basic industries (Thorp: 1997). The São Paulo's politicians were kept relatively far from the national decisions while Vargas was in power. However, it was in São Paulo that the main Brazilian industry has set. In this sense, even with a limited participation in national politics, São Paulo was quite benefited from the economic point of view, and go through an accelerated process of population growth, due to the attraction of the industry.

It was also in the 1930s that two important cultural initiatives took place in São Paulo: the creation of the University of São Paulo, in 1934 – the first university in the country; and

the creation of the Department of Culture of the City Hall, 1938 – the first State effort in Brazil to produce cultural policies. Both initiatives help to promote the development of a *cultural field* in São Paulo, whose fruits began to be harvested only decades later, when intellectuals, artists, the media and other cultural producers would be able to produce according to its own criteria. This relative autonomy of the *cultural field* has gained clarity precisely in the 1950s, at a time when the University had been established as a reference institution, especially for intellectuals. Therefore, the period was also important for the complexity of the cultural scene in São Paulo, which gradually became a national benchmark in this area too.

Between 1937 and 1945, Getúlio Vargas ruled Brazil as a dictator. It was a period of administrative centralization, accompanied by press censorship and by political persecution of opponents of the government (Diniz: 2007). With the fall of Vargas in 1945, there were elections, and General Eurico Dutra was elected president. It began then a period of relative political openness and administrative decentralization, thus increasing the municipalities and state's capacity for action in Brazil (Almeida Jr.: 2007). The late 1940s and the early years of the following decade were marked by a special mood of optimism, stimulated by both the democratic prospects in the country and the world economic growth. In São Paulo, the optimism was evident, as the city was going through a time of great economic prosperity and was especially politically benefited from the fall of Vargas (Arruda: 2001).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the city of São Paulo has become the economically most important city in Brazil. In 1954, while celebrating the 400th anniversary of the city, São Paulo reached the milestone of 3 million people, becoming the most populous city in the country (Santos: 2009). Only Rio de Janeiro, which had just under 3 million and was the federal capital, was able to challenge the importance of São Paulo at this moment, and mainly because of its political role. However, when in 1956 Juscelino Kubitschek assumed the presidency and made it clear that he would build a new capital in the center of Brazil, the political importance of Rio de Janeiro decreased significantly, while São Paulo was renumbered as the main Brazilian metropolis in almost every aspect.

In general, the 1950s was to São Paulo a time of fast and profound changes. The rapid population growth, the industrialization and the intense urbanization were the flagships of the changes. Internally, there was a major restructuring of the different social classes: the strengthening of the proletariat as a political force; diversification of the urban middle classes,

with the expansion of its activities; and the change in the social composition of the elite, with the entry of immigrant groups (Queiroz: 2004; Miceli: 2001). In addition, this decade was a time of consolidation of the University as lead institution of the São Paulo *cultural field*, ensuring, to some extent, a relative autonomy for cultural producers in the city. In this context, the future of the city was also changed. The expectations about this future were very optimistic at the beginning of the 1950s, but they were becoming pessimistic over the years. A key figure in this process was the engineer-architect Luís de Mello Anhaia, which will be presented below.

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Luís de Mello Anhaia was born in 1891, into a family of liberal and capitalist professionals. His father, also named Luís de Anhaia Mello, was a pioneer of the textile industry in São Paulo and was among the founders of the Polytechnic School (CPDOC: 2001). As the pattern of elite families at the time, Anhaia Mello (the son) made his first studies in a traditional school – the Colégio São Luís, in Itu – and then joined to the higher education. At that time, there were only three colleges available to students: Law, Medicine and Engineering (Miceli: 2001). The young man chose the latter – an indicative that he had incorporated to some extent the paternal interests.

Completed the course in 1913, he left college with the architect-engineer diploma. Five years later, in 1918, Anhaia Mello returned to the Polytechnic School as a professor, and, in 1926, he assumed the cathedra of “Aesthetics: General Composition and Urban Planning I and II” (Bresciani: 2010). Since the beginning of his professional practice, but especially from the time he became professor, Anhaia Mello focused his concerns on urban problems. At the end of the 1920s, he published a series of works in which he defined his main positions within the area in question. Among these positions, three are worth mentioning: 1. the proposition that “urbanism is cooperation”, both between the government and the population, and among professionals from different specialties – because the city planning would be an interdisciplinary practice; 2. the need for planning and that take into account not only the city but the entire region in which the city in question was inserted; and 3. the belief that cities

should have a maximum size to be functional and healthy and that the State should control the growth of cities through measures to distribute the population optimally.

As the historian Maria Stella Bresciani (2010) draws attention, Anhaia Mello remained faithful to these positions throughout his long career. However, it should be noted that the long career of this urban planner, who lived more than 80 years, took place in a society and in a city that underwent profound changes. Thus, in every situation where Anhaia Mello reaffirmed his positions, the meaning that they expressed was different depending on the particular conditions at the time of enunciation. In other words, this means, for example, that the defense of limitation of the population of São Paulo, made in the early years of the 1920s, by a young professor in his early career, when the city had just over half a million inhabitants is significantly different than the same defense, made in the mid-1950s, by a recognized urban planner, which held various public offices, including mayor, when São Paulo reached the milestone of 3 million inhabitants and became the largest Brazilian metropolis. Although the content of the speeches were essentially the same in the two selected occasions, Anhaia Mello occupied completely different positions in each context, and the city of São Paulo had become radically different between the 25 years that separates a situation from another.

Before becoming a reference of the São Paulo city planning, Anhaia Mello had to accumulate political and intellectual capital. As already mentioned, at the end of the 1920s, the urban planner published a series of works defining his positions regarding the main problems of cities (Anhaia Mello: 1928; 1929). These works were accompanied by a significant effort to disseminate his ideas, especially through lectures at various institutions of São Paulo, attended by politicians, businessmen, intellectuals and figures of high society. Anhaia Mello consciously sought to create space for a practice, urban planning, that was still very incipient in Brazil. Consequently, he associated the new practice to his own name.

With the revolution of 1930, the political situation in São Paulo has become quite unstable. Between 1930 and 1934, the city hall had 12 mayors, all by appointment of the federal government (Porta: 2004). And, in the meantime, in 1932, there was an armed movement, formed mainly by São Paulo's people, that tried to overthrow the Vargas' government, but they were defeated after 4 months of fights (Manso: 1977). Therefore, the policies for the city of São Paulo were widely damaged, particularly because the lack of continuity of government and the special political and military tension in the period. Anyway, the Anhaia Mello's effort few years before paid off now, because, of the 12 appointments to



the city hall, his name was chosen twice. His first government lasted almost eight months, while the second, much shorter, was only three weeks – both times were before the 1932 movement. The nominations for the city hall of São Paulo are strong indications that Anhaia Mello had reached a certain recognition as an urban planner and therefore as a competent technician to manage a city. This is most evident considering his political “bankroll” properly, because it was rather small and would not justify the choice of his name to rule the city hall.

The first mayor of São Paulo to pursue a more stable administration after 1930 was Fabio Prado, heir of a wealthy family of farmers (CPDOC: 2001). Fabio Prado ruled from 1934 to 1938. His administration had the constant collaboration Anhaia Mello that, despite not holding any official position, was the main city hall consultant to virtually all urban works carried out at the time (Duarte: 1976). In addition, Anhaia Mello assisted in the development of several projects, including the construction of a number of playgrounds in the city.

When Fabio Prado left the city, who assumed was the civil engineer Francisco Prestes Maia, who ruled São Paulo from 1938 to 1945. Prestes Maia was the great antagonist of Anhaia Mello in the urban planning area. The main difference between them was about what they projected for the future of São Paulo. As we will see below, while Anhaia Mello wanted to limit the growth of the city; Prestes Maia was an enthusiast of large cities. Because of these differences, there was no collaboration of Anhaia Mello in the Prestes Maia administration. During the period, Anhaia Mello devoted himself to teaching and the dissemination of his ideas, reinforcing his reference position in the urbanism area.

At the end of the 1940s, Anhaia Mello participated in the founding of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo and became its first director. This is an important moment of professional redefinition. Until then, practically the only professionals who are dedicated to urban issues were the architects-engineers graduated from the Polytechnic School. With the creation of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, a new set of young professionals also began to devote themselves to the topic. But beyond that, the creation of the new Faculty favored the polarization of the debate on urban issues between two antagonistic positions. The first, represented by Prestes Maia, whose main feature was to defend interventions to prepare the city to keep growing. The second, represented by Anhaia Mello, was characterized by defending more radical interventions, which aimed to stop the growth of the city and even make it decrease. Below, I will discuss more slowly these two perspectives.

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When, in the mid-1950s, São Paulo became Brazil's largest city, the general expectation about its future was that the city would continue growing and growing quickly. This representation of the future of São Paulo was taken for granted – no one imagined that its people could stagnate or even decrease. Among the urban planners, this certainty generated consensus also on the necessity of *planning* (Feldman 2005). The growth of São Paulo could result in two extreme futures: either it would be a “good” future, with order and progress; or it would be a “bad” future, with chaos and despair – and most likely it would be somewhat between both alternatives. Ensuring the best possible future depended on the State and on the labor of urban planners, who should prepare the city to address the problems of overpopulation. Or, in other words, if the growth is planned and controlled sufficiently, the tendency would be a good future; on the contrary, if there were no planning and control at all, the tendency would be the opposite.

The hegemonic interpretation of what should be the urban intervention style in São Paulo had in Prestes Maia its main representative. As previously mentioned, Prestes Maia ruled the city between 1938 and 1945 and the very hallmark of his administration was the implementation of Avenues Plan (Carpintero: 1998). This intervention was characterized by the restructuring of the road system of the city. The historical core of São Paulo was kept as a central reference; around this center, circular avenues were built; and these circular avenues, in their turn, were connected by radial avenues (Meyer: 1991). The overall purpose of the project was to create a system that would improve circulation throughout the city, making the center less congested and optimizing the flow in the other regions. The Prestes Maia bet was that São Paulo would grow around the individual transport and therefore it was necessary to prepare the city for the automobile mass traffic.

The hegemonic urbanism branch was optimistic about the growth of São Paulo. A growing city meant prosperity. The danger was the uncontrolled growth, which could endanger the urban order. To avoid this, from time to time, it was needed occasional interventions – “surgical”, as the expression of these urban planners themselves – to correct the issues that eventually the city faced. This was a proposal that could be summarized in the slogan: “São Paulo can not stop”. The interventions that were more advertising were the ones

related to mobility, however, the problems are not reduced to traffic. Housing, leisure, health, education, sanitation, safety, zoning, etc. were questions that also occupied the urban planners. This hegemonic branch had a pragmatic course of action: identifying the problem, planning a solution and applying the plan. There was not a general theory or an image of a utopian city that would reference this branch. Each case was a case that deserved to be treated in its particularity.

Anhaia Mello represented another branch of urbanism. Although this other branch also believed that São Paulo was destined to continue growing and that only with planning would be possible to avoid the chaos, there was a fundamental difference to the hegemonic branch. To Anhaia Mello and other urban planners near him, any growth of the metropolis was dangerous. The city planning should turn to prevent São Paulo to continue expanding and to promote the redistribution of the population in order to reduce the occupation of the city. This was a proposal that could be summed up in the motto: “São Paulo needs to stop”. The ideal city that theoretically informed this urbanism branch was the English garden city, as designed by Ebenezer Howard. This city model envisaged a maximum population of 30,000 inhabitants, with an urban spot surrounded by a green belt, whose functions are: offering recreational areas; produce food; and prevent the city grew beyond the established limits (Choay: 2010).

Over the years, these two positions were raising allies, arguments in their favor and critical to the opposing perspective. The “optimistic” thesis gathered around a lot of engineers; while the “pessimistic” surrounded itself with architects – which matched, in general, with Anhaia Mello option to dedicate himself institutionally to architecture. On one hand, the main arguments in favor of urban interventions that aimed to encourage the growth of São Paulo were based on working examples found in the city. Engineers sought to demonstrate the validity of their point of view quoting this or that work that would have improved some aspect of the metropolis. On the other hand, the perspective that defended the controlling growth of São Paulo was based in faraway foreign experiments, such as the English garden cities, and in much urban theory. The architects therefore defended their view from almost abstract or totally abstract models. The criticism of the engineers to the pessimistic thesis drew attention to the lack of empirical evidence in their arguments or, when the discussion was fierce, for the lack of sense of reality of the defenders of this thesis. While the criticism of the architects to the optimistic thesis focused on urban problems multiplied

daily and that did not find any solution or, again when tempers were exalted, to the inability of their opponents to perceive the obvious problems of the city.

During the 1950s, the debate became more complex with the inclusion of new perspectives. Until the middle of the decade, the hegemonic thesis was optimistic. There was little room outside the inner circles of the urbanism area to the arguments of the pessimistic thesis. Although Anhaia Mello was known and recognized as an important urban planner, mainly because of their academic performance, his views did not reach greater repercussions. One factor that helps explain why Anhaia Mello could not be heard was the dissonance between the criticism that he did to urban problems and the “feeling” of intellectuals, the State and the press about these same problems. The material I have been consulting to this research has convinced me that the problems pointed out by Anhaia Mello were generally regarded as non-problems by most cultural producers. The best example in this regard is the population: while for Anhaia Mello, the population of São Paulo had reached an outrageous amount; others saw absolutely no problem in overpopulation, instead, saw it as something positive that should be encouraged. The situation starts to just change with the entry of other perspectives in the debate, as I try to show below.

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In this last part of the article, I present the transformation of the hegemonic perspective on the future of São Paulo that happened in the 1950s. An optimistic dominant “feeling” about the metropolis turned into a pessimistic one. The entry of human sciences in the debate about the city was especially important for that change. Anhaia Mello took a decisive position in this context, since it would be through his writings that the human sciences assembled their arsenal to reorient the “feeling” on the city.

The year 1954 is symbolically very important to São Paulo. In this year was celebrated the 400th anniversary of the city, with mobilization of broad sectors of local society. The press consistently celebrated and praised São Paulo. The main urban landmark birthday was the inauguration of Ibirapuera Park, whose project was led by the famous architect Oscar Niemeyer. To this days, the Ibirapuera is one of the postcards of São Paulo and remains the largest urban park in the metropolis. As part of the celebrations, an International Fair was set

up. There was also a series of conferences and exhibitions in various locations in the city throughout the year, and a significant number of publications related to the fourth centenary.

As already I drew attention earlier, it was over the 1950s that the São Paulo *cultural field* reached sufficient autonomy to produce from its own criteria. The production of the intellectuals of Humanities (a subfield of the *cultural field*) followed the same path, with the advantage of having the University of São Paulo (USP) as the institutional bastion of support for their initiatives. Cities in general and specifically São Paulo were becoming objects of study in several disciplines. The Anhaia Mello's insistence to define urbanism as an interdisciplinary practice was another element that reinforced the interest of many professionals on the subject, especially since this time Anhaia Mello had become a key reference in the field.

While São Paulo completed 400 years, the USP completed 20. The University was founded in 1934 by joining the three existing traditional colleges in the city (Law, Medicine and Engineering) and with the creation of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters. The new Faculty began offering several courses that did not exist in Brazil. In this paper, it is important to highlight two of them: Social Sciences and Geography. The highlight of these two courses is explained by the fact that, since the mid-1940s, both sociology as geography started to produce works whose object was the city of São Paulo. During the 1950s, when these disciplines gain stability and recognition in the *intellectual field*, they began to dialogue and to contrapose to the urban planners's discourse.

It is interesting to highlight two of these dialogues: one performed by Florestan Fernandes, and another one by Aroldo de Azevedo. Florestan Fernandes is probably the most important sociologist that Brazil has ever had. And it was precisely in the 1950s that he became a recognized intellectual. Earlier in the decade, Fernandes was a young assistant professor who worked on his doctoral thesis. At the end of it, he was the leader of the so-called Paulista School of Sociology, a group that had dominated the intellectual production of the Humanities during the 1960s in Brazil. Aroldo de Azevedo did not have an equivalent role to that of Florestan Fernandes, but that does not mean that his position was not important. Since the mid 1940s, Azevedo was already a professor in the Geography Department at USP. Therefore, at the beginning and throughout the 1950s, Azevedo had a very prominent institutional position. (Florestan Fernandes, for example, only won a professorship in 1964.)

Both chose the city of São Paulo as one of their research problems. Aroldo de Azevedo had in the urban geography his main theme of study. Therefore, cities in general and São Paulo in particular were at the center of his concerns. Florestan Fernandes, on the contrary, not primarily devoted his career to urban sociology. The problems of the cities were eventually discussed by him, but his main concerns were different. However, it was precisely in the 1950s that the sociologist wrote more about São Paulo.

The key year is again 1954. Both Florestan Fernandes as Aroldo de Azevedo produced texts on São Paulo because of the 400th anniversary of the city. The sociologist wrote to the Congress of Americanists, held in São Paulo as part of the anniversary celebrations of the metropolis (Fernandes: 2008 [1954]). Aroldo de Azevedo, in turn, was involved in a major project: to produce a “definitive” collection on the geography of São Paulo that should have been launched in celebration of the fourth centenary (Azevedo: 1958 [1954]).

The counterpoint to Aroldo de Azevedo is the year 1958, when the collection was actually published (Azevedo: 1958). While for Florestan Fernandes, the counterpoint is 1959, when the sociologist revisits the text 1954 with significant changes in interpretation of the city of São Paulo (Fernandes: 2008 [1959]).

In 1954, the two intellectuals looked at the city of São Paulo with kind eyes. Both sought to analyze the situation of the city at that time from their respective disciplines repertoires. In this sense, they added new perspectives to the urban debate that was consolidated around the two theses of engineers and architects: the “optimistic” and the “pessimistic”. Therefore, the debate on São Paulo, which already had the traditional references of urban planning area, has become more complex with the entry of geography and sociology. However, Azevedo and Fernandes, although supported in different references of the urban planners, not escaped from the established interpretations. In fact, they did not escape from the hegemonic representation of the metropolis. Both reproduced, in 1954, the “optimistic” view of São Paulo. In other words, they understood that the growth of the city was a sign of progress and that its future was promising, since there were urban intervention policies in the Prestes Maia style.

The anniversary of São Paulo is celebrated on January 25. Therefore, the celebration of the fourth centenary began on the first month of 1954 and spread throughout the rest of the year. Although the party was great at first, over the months, tempers were cooling and they is returned to “normal”. In August 1954, the 400th anniversary of the city were almost forgotten

because of the serious political crisis that the country faced. (Getúlio Vargas was elected president again in 1950. Therefore come to power democratically this time. One of his greatest adversaries was the journalist Carlos Lacerda, who was the victim of an assassination attempt at the very beginning of August 1954. Lacerda accused Vargas of ordering the crime and that started the crisis. The military began to articulate a coup, Vargas was being cornered and lost much of its allies. Beyond the attempt, there were a number of corruption allegations within the government, which were becoming increasingly more difficult to work around. The resolution of the crisis was the last political act of Getulio Vargas: his suicide. With the death of the president, out a wave of national uproar broke out and that prevented the progress of the already articulated coup. The Vice President assumed the office and, in the following year, elections were held.)

The political crisis in the presidency is not directly linked to the discussions on the representations of the future of the city of São Paulo. However, it was mentioned as an illustration of the decreasing process of that widespread optimism. And the decline in optimism is also noticeable in the urban planning area. In 1954, the debate on the urbanization of São Paulo was marked by an important contribution Anhaia Mello, although not new. In a lecture given at the end of the year and then published next, Anhaia Mello reaffirmed his positions known from the beginning of his career (Anhaia Mello: 1954). This time, however, his text had a significant impact. The argument was essentially the same, the dissemination strategy had also been used in other times. What had changed was the position of Anhaia Mello in the *cultural field* and the city that supported this field. In other words, in the mid-1950s it had formed in São Paulo a new and sensitive group to urbanist arguments.

In Aroldo de Azevedo and Florestan Fernandes texts, published in 1958 and 1959, respectively, the incorporation of Anhaia Mello ideas is evident, albeit adapted to the interests of geography and sociology. Before, in 1954, as we seen above, the humanities reproduced the “feeling” that the future of São Paulo would be “good”, as the optimistic perspective of engineers gathered around Prestes Maia. In later texts, 1958 and 1959, by appropriating the arguments of Anhaia Mello, geographers and sociologists critically move away from that optimistic position, but without approaching the ideas on the limitation of the metropolis population. But that does not mean that geographers and sociologists entered only in contact with the ideas of Anhaia Mello after 1954. These ideas were known. What had changed was the relationship with these ideas, only possible by the maturation of the position of the

humanities in general in the São Paulo's *intellectual field*. With the increased autonomy of sociologists and geographers (and the case of Florestan Fernandes is particularly illustrative of the situation as he has become a recognized sociologist over that period), both disciplines signed a new position on São Paulo, far from the engineers as well as the architects, but with elements of both.

In short, the humanities began to corroborate the criticisms of both the previous views. That is to say: as the architects, they criticized engineers because their solutions could not manage to solve the city's problems; and, as the engineers, they also criticized the architects for proposing unrealistic solutions to the case of São Paulo. The new perspectives created by these intellectuals attacked what was the heart of the perspectives consolidated until then, in both engineering and architecture: *planning*. The contribution of Humanities to the debate on the future of São Paulo was precisely to draw attention to the inadequacy of the planning that engineers and architects had drawn up so far. However, nor geography or sociology proposed to offer a new type of planning or other solutions to the city's problems. Actually, the human sciences did not had the means to find answers to these problems. Therefore, the "feeling" hegemonic about São Paulo, which at first was optimistic, became pessimistic, but in a new sense, not in Anhaia Mello's one. For him, the future of São Paulo would be chaotic and desperate, but there was hope: the State and the urban planners could intervene to modify the scenario and save the city. For geographers and sociologists, interventions would not be able to ensure a promising future for the city. So there was no "hope". On the contrary, since both solutions available likely to be insufficient, the expectation was that the city's future would be very bleak.

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