

The Experience of Modern Urbanism in the city of Rio de Janeiro
Author: Vera F. Rezende

Abstract:

This paper discusses some of the most relevant experiences of modern urbanism which occurred in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, based on the principles approved by the International Congress of Modern Architecture. The inception of modern concepts began with the visits of Le Corbusier to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1929 and 1936. Several articles published by specialized journals spread the new ideals which were adopted initially in architectural constructions and later in urban planning.

The application of these principles, however, was not a simple, short term process. It took place gradually with some adjustments and reveals two aspects of this complex experience: first, the transition from the architectural to the urbanistic planning scale; second, the attempt of surpassing some obstacles put by the modern agenda itself, such as the denial of the city inheritance, followed by the search for a centralizing and vertical urban model.

As modern urbanism was based on architectural principles, architects became the more suitable professionals for conceiving these projects. Lucio Costa, for example, one of the most distinguished Brazilian architects, designed in 1960 the new capital of the country and in 1969 produced the Master Plan for Barra da Tijuca in Rio.

We discuss the impact of modernist innovation in urbanistic projects in Rio and the adjustments which became necessary for the application of the modernist principles. The paper also analyses if, after almost four decades, these projects were successfully integrated to the city and how the city inhabitants are connected to them.

Keywords: modernist influence, planning and project models, modernist principles, urban projects in Rio de Janeiro.