

# VIRUS12

## RADICAL MODERNS

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# EXPERIENCES OF MODERN IN BELEM: CONSTRUCTION, RECEPTION AND DESTRUCTION Celma Vidal

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### Abstract

This paper revisits modern constructs (physical, social, cultural and political) that are observed in Belém since 1930 and that show themselves repeatedly until the 1960s. These are intermittent expressions that are presented on two levels and two different spaces: (1) in the central area of the city with proposals of public facilities and the first buildings modernized in the 1930s and 1940s; and (2) in the urban space in expansion along central roads and their adjacencies, where houses, buildings, schools, public institutions headquarters are constructed following a concept of modernity that were associated, in the 1930s, with the policies implemented in the 'Era Vargas',<sup>12</sup> and in the 1950s, with the policies of development, and with the new demands for housing by an emerging social group. In this sense, the purpose of this paper is to discuss these experiences under three different dimensions: (1) construction (buildings, speeches, and historiography); (2) reception; and (3) destruction of a great part of this experience of the Modern in a capital city of the Brazilian Amazon. The methodology consisted of documentary survey (photographic record and original designs), architectural survey, and redrawing of some work, with a subsequent formal and spatial analysis of the most representative. It is considered that the expressions of the Modern in Belém

addressed here, though manifested in a especially hard economic moment, sought to break with the established codes, promoting, in a certain way, a reorganization of the space and the physiognomy of the eclectic city, being then an experience of the 'radical Modern' in the context of an Amazonian city after the 'rubber period'.

**Keywords:** Belém; Modern architecture; Modernization.

## INTRODUCTION

During the decades 1930-1960, Belém incorporates many of the meanings of modernity in turning points that can be identified by political actions, architectural and urban proposals, implemented or not implemented, in intentions of non consummated modernities. The works and ideas of managers, engineers, and builders, who postulated the ideal of modernity in a Belém still nostalgic of the 'rubber period', as a whole would give visibility to new achievements. For one hand, these works and ideas would reveal themselves as radical not only in the intention of breaking with the past, but also in their own trajectory:—the construction of the new, perceived as a language of power and representation—for certain groups, but subsequently destroyed for the same reasons.—This mechanism also reveals the radical forms of their existence and their disappearance.

These experiences, that goes from an expansion and reception in their diverse particularities to show, at the late 1960s signs of destruction in which a great part of what was structured and built since the 1930s is demolished, abandoned or disappears without trace seems to determinate the end of a stage, but coats itself as a special significance as an 'unfinished modernity', since the modernist houses that were built in the 1950s still resonates in the new constructions that are built in the 1970s and even in some buildings of the 1980s.

However, these changes had already been initiated in a period that here we call 'first modernity' in the mid-nineteenth century; at that time, the secretary of public works of the city and later Intendant João Coelho Gama e Abreu (1855-1894), the Baron of Marajó, realizing the economic potential of the mining activity of *Hevea brasiliensis* (rubber), planned for the city a set of urban actions and policies; those actions and policies were the signals of the modernization that the Intendant Antonio Lemos would accomplish on the city, taking advantage of the growing demand for rubber, its high prices, and its marketing abroad, through dividends and loans made in international banks (Sarges, 2008; Castro, 2010).

This first selective and prescriptive modernity, clearly of European characteristics, would only cease as the rubber's export downfall that started in the early years of the twentieth century, leading to the increased indebtedness from the Lemos' administration, which would lead him to be parted from the Intendancy. As a result of these episodes, the exit of Lemos and the end of the rubber economy, a succession of economic hardships occurred, due to the scarce resources available to improve the city and its services (Penteado, 1968). However, it is clear that the ideas of modernity was still present in the various power levels and in the social and individual aspirations that remained in the following decades as an almost inexorable condition that the so praised *Belle Époque* would kept latent in the memory of Belém.

In this sense, this paper proposes to revisit these 'places of modernity' that are present not only in physical spaces, but also in mental, cultural, and political places.



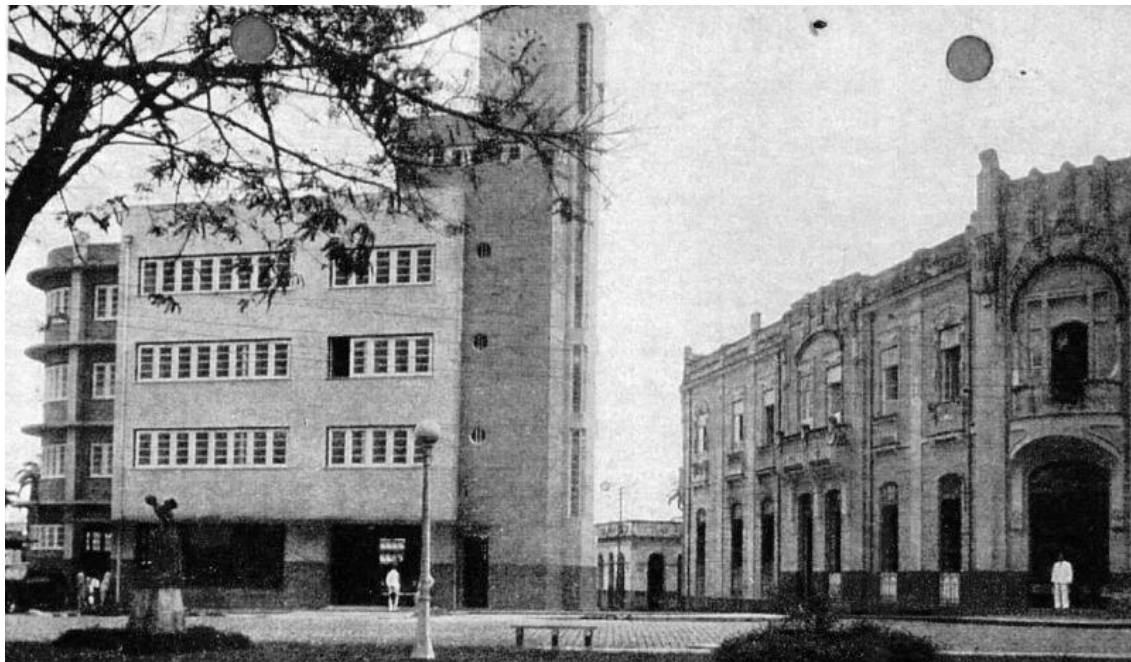
Although the scenario were not the most favorable for achieving the goals aspired by the managers, professionals, and certain social groups in the social space and professional field (Bourdieu, 1999), ideas and proposals were implemented, synchronizing 'a new modern modernity' in the spaces of the 'old eclectic modernity'.

From 1930, policies from the State Intervenor were associated with the State Guidelines established by President Getúlio Vargas to boost urban *Edilícia* (building aesthetic) modernization plans. With the end of the 'Estado Novo' and the Second World War, new modernities are defended: (1) on one hand, those modernities associated with a new direction in getting financial resources, now coming from the North American government; (2) on the other hand, in a reception movement, following the ostensible Modern of the Brazilian central capital cities, new ways of living and expressing the institutional powers fed the imagination and the will of the local society.

## **1 BUILDING EXPERIENCES: THE DISCOURSE AND THE MATERIALITY OF THE MODERN**

The Belém's urban history in the early 1930s shows many signs of new winds blowing there at that moment. Not only the '1930 Brazilian Revolution' signaled that, but also the fact that Magalhães Cardoso Barata in that year took on the post of federal Interventor in Pará State, and fulfilled faithfully the President Getúlio Vargas's modernization policy along with the municipal Intendant (Commissioner) appointed by Getúlio Vargas, Abelardo Condurú (1936-1943). That occasion there were financial constraints to invest in city improvements, but there was a common ground with respect to collective and individual intentions to recover the Belém of the rubber economy period. Also, there were the common desire to turn Belém into a 'modern city' in the broad sense of the term: beautify the city, construct buildings with modern lines using new techniques, carry out the enlargement of the streets.

To recover this Belém implied to build a new story based on the new repertoires demanded by the city's modernization. For this experiences and expectations intercrossed in the sense described by Koselleck (2006, p.313), existing a 'tension between experience and expectation that, for an ever different way, raises new solutions, defining the historical time'. Managers and social groups in privileged positions at the Belém of the 1930s, formulated future actions (expectations) based on the evaluation of the past (experiences) (Koselleck, 2006), building a new temporality in a space also marked by the presence of an eclectic past (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1:** Costa Leite Building (1938) next to the *Rotisserie Suisse*, eclectic building of the early twentieth century.

Source: Laboratório de Historiografia da Arquitetura e Cultura Arquitetônica-LAHCA (Historiography Laboratory of Architecture and Architectural Culture)/Universidade Federal do Pará-UFPA (Federal University of Pará) Collection.

Even with the economic difficulties and the fragile institutionality (in the 1940s, Belém had more than fifteen mayors), the existence of a cultural *Ethos*, as defined by Gorélik (1999), is a renewed ideological will of a culture to produce a particular type of structural transformation. Thus, the city anticipates and welcomes the idea of modernity (Gorélik, 1999; Vicentini, 2004), in which forms are expressed before the processes, evidencing 'different experiences of modernity, situated outside and above the geographical boundaries, the time, the social class, and the local cultures' (Müller, 2011, p.17, our translation<sup>1</sup>). Although there was a historical and temporal detachment of the countries and regions that had not experienced an industrialization process in relation to the centers where those ideas had been boosted, there also was in the architectural productions of these countries the adoption of ideals and aspirations of rationality and functionality. In this sense, the absence of a local debate on this theme did not prevent the adoption of elements of a modern architectural culture (Chaves, 2004, p.76).

In the 1930s, the state and municipal government bodies assume the initiatives of this modernization process, starting with the Avenida 15 de Agosto, recognizing the need to regulate and promote the occupation of this pathway and its surroundings. At that time, the emergence of the first high rising buildings was enabled by a new legislation that favored terrain acquisition (many of them derived from public donations) with a minimum height requirement for construction. Here is where the first signs of the Modern expressed themselves; extending through a continuous axis crossing the city from West to East with buildings and public facilities, undertaking a path that would definitively exclude the eclectic experience from this project of modernity, to raise to new expectations; as Koselleck (2006, p.314, our

<sup>1</sup> **From the original in Portuguese:** 'vivências diferenciadas de modernidades, situadas por fora e acima dos limites da geografia, do tempo da classe social e das culturas locais' (Müller 2011, p.17).

translation<sup>2</sup>) states: 'one can only conceive modernity as a new time when expectations become increasingly distant from the experiences made so far'.

New buildings, institutional and private, are built to meet the expectations of a 'future-present', including: (1) Post Office headquarters, in 1938; (2) the Booth Line company's headquarters by the German Architect Oswald Massler opened in 1945; (3) the Bern building (1940s), the first to include an elevator in the city; (4) the Dias Paes building, opened in 1945; (5) the Piedade (1949) and the Renaissance (1950) buildings, both by the Engineer Judah Levy; (6) the Instituto de Aposentadorias e Pensões dos Industriários (IAPI) (Institute of Retirement and Pension of Industrial Workers) building, today Instituto Nacional do Seguro Social (INSS) (National Social Security Institute) opened in 1958, work of Architect Edmar Penna de Carvalho; and (7) the most visible bulwark of this Modern, the Manoel Pinto da Silva building, built in three different phases, the first one opening in 1951 and the last one, in 1960 (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2:** Above, the buildings from left to right: Line Booth (1945); Bern (1940s); INSS (1958); Below, the buildings from left to right: Manoel Pinto da Silva (1960), Renaissance (1949), Dias Paes (1945), and Piedade (1950).

Source: LAHCA-UFPA Collection.

From 1940, the discourse on modernization in the city is closely linked with the North American government policies for the Amazon region during the Second World War and the expectations coming from the investments for the resumption of the rubber economy.<sup>3</sup> As part of the Washington Accords (USA)<sup>4</sup>, the city receives

<sup>2</sup> **From the original in Portuguese:** 'só se pode conceber a modernidade como um tempo novo a partir do momento em que as expectativas passam a distanciar-se cada vez mais das experiências feitas até então' (Koselleck, 2006, p.314).

<sup>3</sup> In this period, Fordlândia City is created *ex nihilo* in the heart of Amazon in Pará, investment from Henry Ford in new rubber tree plantation to reheat the rubber economy. This initiative had a strong



new investments, such as the construction of the Air Base of Val-de-Cans, the opening of new avenues on the road between the city center and the airport, and the constant presence of US militaries trading in the city, despite the crisis of the public infrastructures (Chaves, 2013).

Within the context of intentions of the national and local government to plan the city's growth, the Urbanization Plan of Belém<sup>5</sup> was developed resulting from a regulation proposed by Engineer Jerônimo Cavalcanti, named Mayor by Magalhães Barata - whose term of office would last less than six months, from February to August 1943. Although it has not been implemented for lack of financial resources and the early exit of the Mayor, the problems of the capital city pointed out in its diagnosis were taken into account in a certain way by successive State and Municipal administrations whom had adopted measures to confront the serious urban issues of the capital city.

The initiative of modern constructions along the Avenida 15 de Agosto was one of the guidelines of Cavalcanti's plan. Its occupation is was decided from 1945 with new expressions of modernity, combined in a political and economic sense that would definitely include it in the real estate circuit of the city and at the same time would demarcate the expansion of modern high rising buildings in the central areas of Belém. In the Avenida 15 de Agosto, often is bet on building/destroying: the symbolic Grand Hotel was demolished in 1976 to give place to another hotel of an international chain, as the last coup de grace in the transformation of this avenue in the heart of modernity.

The issue of public transportation was another problem pointed by the Jerônimo Cavalcanti's plan. The replacement of the streetcars lines (scrapped and without maintenance) by bus companies resulted in the gradual demolition of the old covered shelters to passengers, constituting itself into another building period of the 'place of modernity'. Urban facilities, then called clippers<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 3,4), were built to serve as stop to the new buses and shelter to passengers. The first and biggest one was probably built between 1936 and 1939<sup>7</sup>, in the administration of the federal Intervenor José da Gama Malcher (1935-1943) and of the Mayor Abelardo Condurú (1936-1943). These constructions in *art déco* style, where sales points were installed for various products - even gas stations, symbolized the new modernity now associated with the North American line design. Later, since 1948, a new mean of transportation begins to circulate in the city, the *zeppelin* buses, mounted on wooden bodies coated in zinc, and possibly inspired by the modern streamlines<sup>8</sup> passenger trains.

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contribution from the State that expanded its presence, creating new institutions and given subsidies to North American projects.

<sup>4</sup> Agreements signed between the two countries in 1942, providing actions of economic and military character. See Oliveira (2001).

<sup>5</sup> The plan consisted of a set of measures for city expansion, as zoning, infrastructure installation, and demolition of the historic center for construction of a modern neighborhood (Chaves, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> This name given by the people is probably making references to the Pan Air aircraft that began to fly over Belém in the government of Eurico de Freitas Valle (1929-1930). Other Brazilian capital cities had this equipment, but only in Belém received this name.

<sup>7</sup> These information is part of research carried out by Architect and Professor Haroldo Baleixe at the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo-FAU (School of Architecture and Urbanism)/Universidade Federal do Pará-UFPA (Federal University of Pará), FAU blog creator, whose survey about the construction of clippers indicates this possible date.

<sup>8</sup> See: <<http://fauufpa.org/2014/06/11/estreamlines-1936-por-chevrolet-motor-company/>> [Accessed 10 March 2016].



**Fig. 3:** Clipper located on Av. Portugal and electronic mockup drawn by José Coelho Bassalo. Source: LAHCA-UFGA Collection. Available at: <<https://fauufpa.org/2015/09/06/fotografia-do-clipper-no1-na-para-ilustrada-de-1939-in-post/>> [Accessed 3 May 2016].

These first devices were located surrounding the *Ver o Peso* dock area, an active trading post since the seventeenth century, and where several lines of public transportation converged, connecting with the Avenida 15 de Agosto, which would become the main axis of the city modernization in intersection with Nazaré,

Independência, and Almirante Barroso avenues. Newspapers of the time<sup>9</sup> reported on the construction of another clipper, authorized to be built on Avenida Boulevard Castilhos França intersection with Avenida 15 de Agosto, which indicates the concern to endow this avenue with more modern equipments, which was consistent with the modernizing project for this área.



**Fig. 4:** Clipper on Largo das Mercês.

Source: Rare Works of Arthur Vianna Public Library. Available at: <<https://fauufpa.org/2014/07/21/merces-estacionamento-e-clipper/>> [Accessed 13 May 2016].

Materialized or just idealized works were part of a strategy, whose discourse was repeated by all managers in the municipal and state spheres of power. This fact confirms that modern Belém was a political priority, as well as a wish of groups of intellectuals, businessmen, and entrepreneurs; however, it was not for the large portion of the population in need of improvements in public services<sup>10</sup>.

## 2 RECEPTION EXPERIENCES: VARIED MODERNITIES

The theme of the flow of ideas and temporalities in relation to aspects of modern architecture is recurrent in the debates in recent decades, and suggests questions about the modernity's identity of Latin American architecture, the need for interpretations which would give it the legitimacy from different times, its constituent processes, and its character.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See: <<https://fauufpa.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/clippers-em-algumas-noticias-de-jornais.pdf>>.

<sup>10</sup> The main actions carried out in the outskirts of the city at this time were concerned to the urban cleaning, expropriation of large areas, and control of rent prices (Chaves, 2016).

<sup>11</sup>Comas (2010); Waisman (2013).





Although, since the mid-1960s, the diversity of 'poetics and attitudes' (Comas, 2010) has been recognized in the practice and disciplinary culture of international modern architecture (Frampton, 1997; Tafuri, 1972), in Brazilian historiography, only in the 1990s an interpretation is presented that requires the recognition of others' manifestations of the modern architecture in Brazil, with the inclusion of unknown productions of other 'processes' that occurred in the country, and the exchange of pilgrim architects who contributed to its spread (Segawa, 1999).

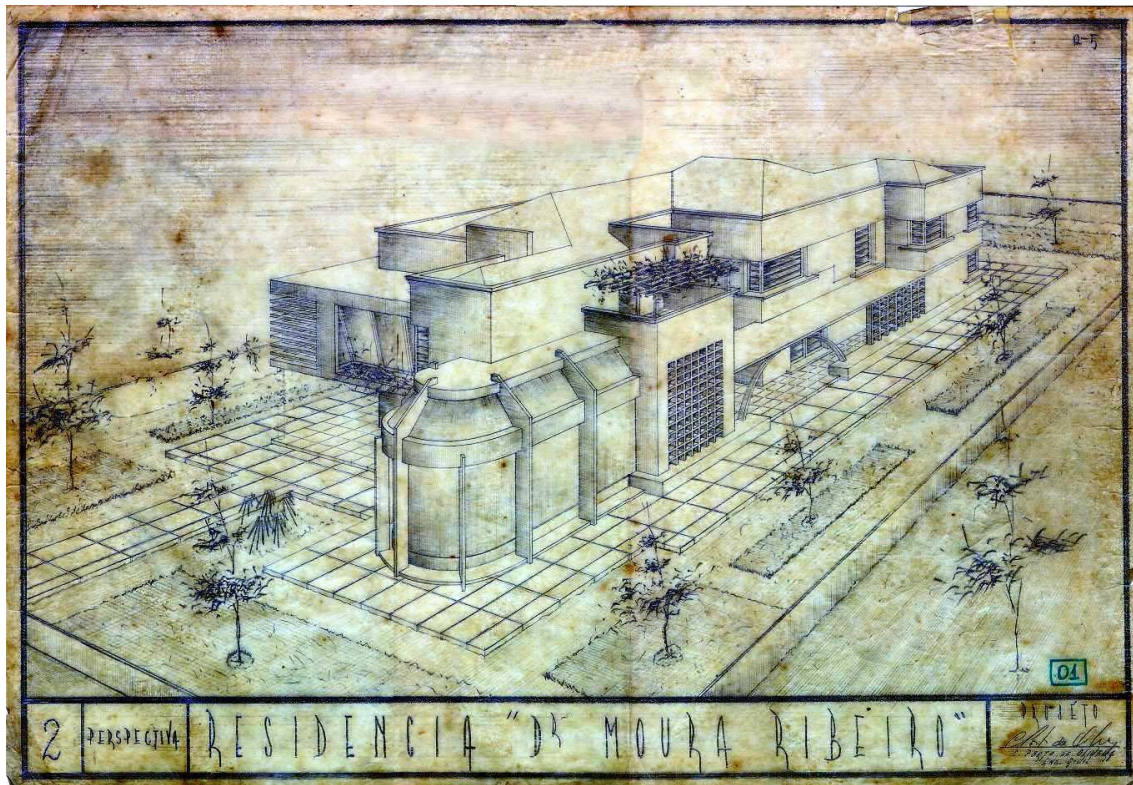
Specifically in the case of the Brazilian Eastern Amazon, where the development of architecture and of the city suffered the influx of their economic cycles and of their geographical and socio-cultural particularities, these questions acquire nuances that cannot be disregarded. During the 1940s and 1950s, a new ascending social class begins to change their way of living as appropriate to their new position as traders, entrepreneurs, and successful professionals, demanding engineers and builders' services - since there were no local titrated architects - to build their homes. The government that understood the modernized buildings as symbols of their representativeness and legitimacy, also encouraged this production type in a joint effort among social groups and institutional systems, producing a common desire for the 'new and modern', in which, technique, functionality, prime location, and new a spatiality made up this scenario of 'modernist Belém.'

A new *reception camp* is prepared in the city for these demands of housing and public institutions headquarters. The new produced spaces are the representation of this Modern that constitute itself in the public and in the private, shaping the social and the physical spaces, in the sense given by Bourdieu (1999, p.160) to these two categories, defining the areas where the new modern homes and new public buildings are located.

In the case of houses, 'distinction spaces' (Bourdieu, 1999) were being required by these groups, as new social habits were incorporated. The residences of Engineer Camilo Porto de Oliveira<sup>12</sup> became models followed by the social circles of the new bourgeoisie; one of them, Moura Ribeiro House (1949) (Fig. 5) is considered the first house with these characteristics. Thus, the reception of these works and of many others built by him start to feed the local modern imaginary.

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<sup>12</sup> Camilo Porto was later titled architect in the adaptation course of two years, installed immediately after the creation of the Architecture course at the University of Pará, in 1964.



**Fig. 5:** Moura Ribeiro House (1949), residence of Camilo Porto de Oliveira.  
 Source: LAHCA-UFGA Collection (belonging to the file of Antônio Couceiro).

Here, reception is understood not just by part of the customers, but by the way that the engineer incorporates in his works the references of this Modern, in the sense that Cohen gives to that term, based on Hans Jauss as 'facts that often redefined the professional identity of architects, even those working at a considerable distance from the buildings they were interpreting, and sometimes emulating' (Cohen, 2014, p.14, our translation<sup>13</sup>).

Therefore, in the architecture produced in that period in Belém do Pará, especially the Camilo Porto de Oliveira's achievements, it is identified, more than an influence, a process in which the selection of formal-constructive elements is clear, which is in line with expectations of his customers and his willingness to integrate them into the regional context, as shown in various productions of modern architecture in different realities in the post-World War II context and especially in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the various projects from 1940s to 1960s made by him, Camilo Porto answers to the constructive and typological purposes of converting the home space in an expression of the new way of life of the ascending social groups in the social space of Belém. Updating the forms, he builds a significant group of houses, usually in open deployment without obstacles to the vision. The house, thus, acquires a public dimension, exposing itself as a modern object in the city, almost as a sculpture (Chaves, 2008), allied to the intention to remain faithful to the local agendas, easing the heat and protecting the place of the high humidity by elevating the floor,

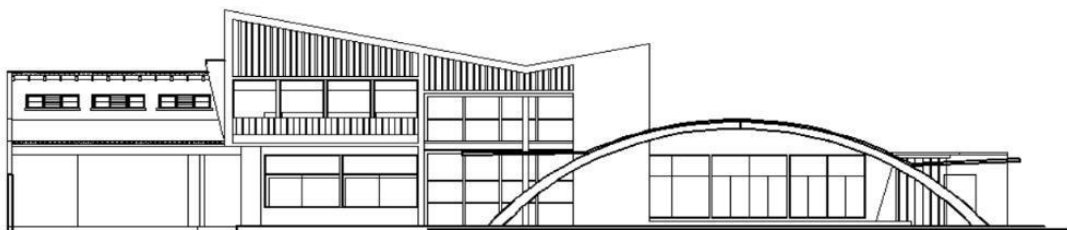
<sup>13</sup> **From the original in Portuguese:** 'fatos que frequentemente redefiniram a identidade profissional de arquitetos, mesmo daqueles que trabalhavam a uma distância considerável dos edifícios que estavam interpretando, e, por vezes, imitando' (Cohen, 2014, p.14).

*brise soleil* (quebra-sol) inclusion, using *cobogós* (hollow elements) (Fig. 6), and marquees.

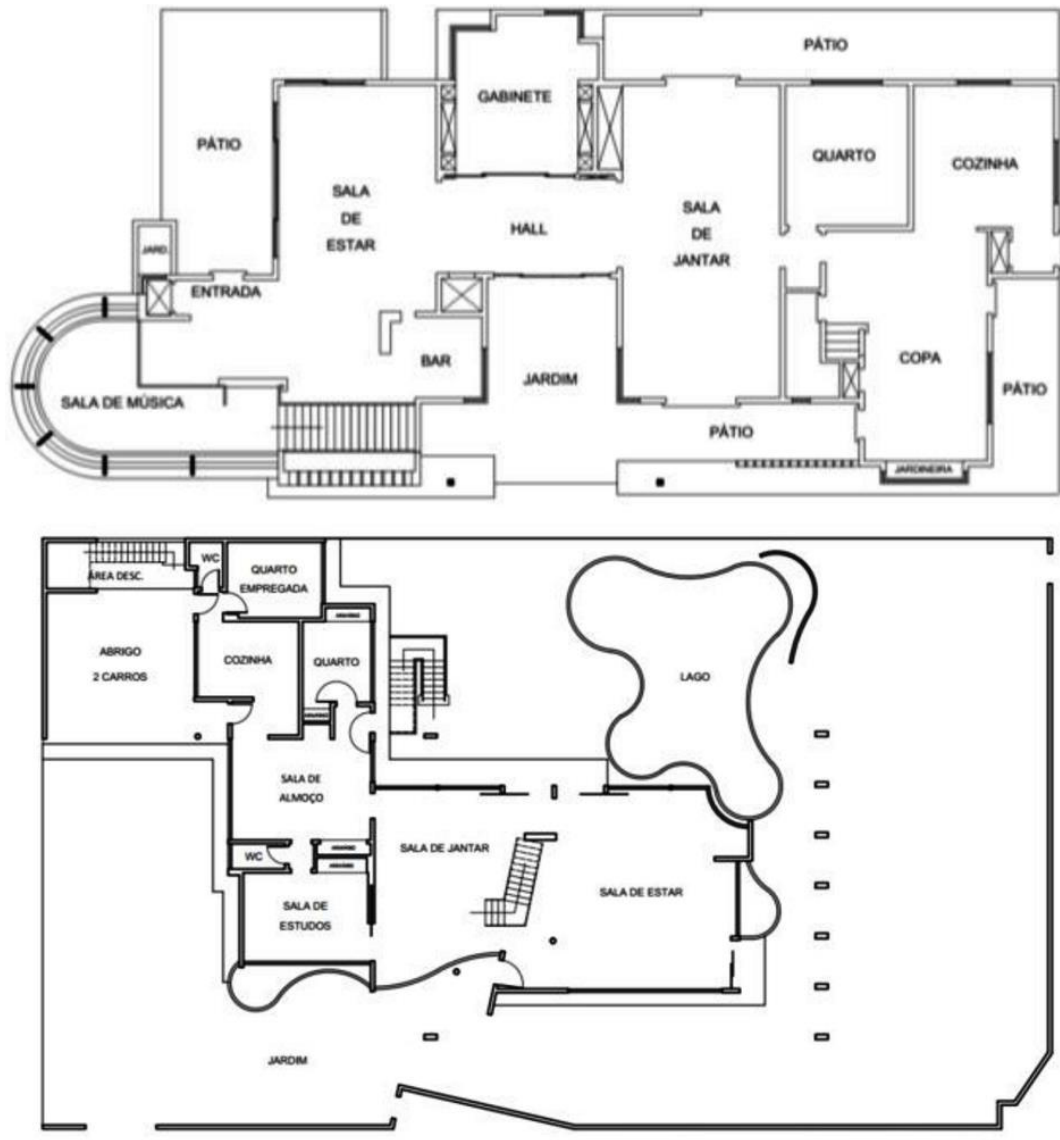


**Fig. 6:** *Cobogó* and *brise soleil* in the Bittencourt House (1950s). Camilo Porto de Oliveira. Source: Oliveira (2001).

Studies on the morphological and spatial transformations performed in these houses and modern apartments (Chaves and Dias, 2015; Chaves and Machado, 2013; Chaves and Silva, 2013) indicate, on the other hand, that the large terrains used for their construction allowed the development of freer and more audacious forms, as well as in the eclecticism; houses that were loosely implanted on the terrain allowed for more inventive solutions. Also, it was noted that the social stratification was still reflecting on the hierarchy and spatial organization, marking in the domestic scope the same physical compartmentalization of the houses of the eclecticism, like the Belisário Dias (Fig. 13) and Moura Ribeiro Houses (Fig. 7, 8).



**Fig. 7:** Highlighted elements on the side facade of the Belisário Dias House (1954). Source: Redesign scheme – Rebeca Dias. LAHCA-UFGA.



**Fig. 8:** Floor Plans of Moura Ribeiro (1949) and Belisário Dias (1954) Houses.  
**Source:** Redesign LAHCA - UFPA.

The 'President Pernambuco' House (Fig. 9, 10, 11), from the late 1960s, embodied, unlike previous works, a Modern more constrained in the forms and reveals a simplicity and regularity in its formal composition expressed especially in its spatiality and volumetric composition of slopes and fine finishes, without the usual repetition of modern referential elements. A delicate panel and large glass windows offer transparency, which is opposed to the dense materiality of the stones and of the concrete.

# V!RUS12

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**Fig. 9:** Presidente Pernambuco House (the late 1950s).  
Source: Revista (Magazine) Belém 350 years. Government of Pará State, 1965.

# V!RUS12

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**Fig. 10:** Mezzanine and main staircase of the living room of President Pernambuco House.  
Source: Chaves (2015).



**Fig. 11.** Presidente Pernambuco House (front).  
Source: Chaves (2015).

In expansion axis towards the city exit routes, also in the 1950s, Benvinda de França Messias School, (Fig. 12) of small dimensions but great inventiveness is built, designed by architect graduated at the School of Fine Arts Edmar Penna de Carvalho and constructed from 1951 to 1957. In this school, the diverse volumetrics, stilts, *cobogós*, ramps, and *brise soleil* refer to modern affiliation of its author.



**Fig. 12:** Benvinda de França Messias (1957) School, Architect Edmar Penna de Carvalho.  
 Source: Chaves (2006).

This school's construction is part of a the set built for the employees of the former IAPI (Institute of Retirement and Pension of Industrial Workers). This set has undergone drastic changes: the houses were extended, floors were added, the garden areas of the units were reduced, mischaracterizing the initial proposal of this kind of social housing set, implemented in many capital cities of Brazil.

Avenida Tito Franco, current Avenida Almirante Barroso, was in the 1950s a place where the prospects to construct modern buildings had grown with the operation of São Brás market, opened in 1911, and of the Estrada de Ferro de Bragança (1889) (Railroad), constituting a good area for new urban facilities' installation. An articulated urban plot<sup>14</sup> in this area, in the period of development, led to the construction of the IAPI set, valorizing an expansion axis throughout this avenue, just where starting this decade other modern buildings would connect the city with the occupied areas.

The buildings constructed along the Avenida Almirante Barroso and in its adjacencies were of varied types like social clubs, public and religious buildings, and residences, but realizing the same idea of modernity (Fig. 14, 15, 16, 17), i.e., to represent different functions by innovative ways in that urban context, changing the built landscape and introducing new interactions between the building and the city, and among the building and its users. In this sense, the reception of the modern building will vary and will occur in the extent that the living habits are transformed, in the case of residences, or as the political and administrative structures assume the Modern as part of ideological legitimacy.

<sup>14</sup>See: Pantoja, L. M. P., 2014. *O Mercado de São Brás e seu entorno: tramas e sentido de um lugar*. Master. Universidade Federal do Pará.



# V!RUS12

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**Fig. 13:** Belisário Dias House, Camilo Porto de Oliveira.  
Source: Chaves (2006).



**Fig. 14:** Affonso Freire Building, 1949 (Headquarters of Secretaria de Estado de Transportes-Setran [State Department of Transportation] Pará, Belém, old Departamento de Estradas de Rodagem-DER [Department of Highways]). Camilo Porto de Oliveira.  
Source: Chaves (2006) – Setran, Pará, Belém.

# VIRUS 12

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I S S N 2 1 7 5 - 9 7 4 x | C C B Y - N C  
D O I 1 0 . 4 2 3 7 / v i r u s \_ j o u r n a l



**Fig. 15:** Water reservoir in the Marco neighborhood.  
Source: Jeová Barros (2016).



**Fig. 16:** Air Force Hospital Chapel.  
Source: LAHCA-UFGA Collection.



**Fig. 17:** Amorim Headquarters of Tuna Luso-Brazilian. Engineer Laurindo Amorim.  
 Source: Hohlenwerger. Available at: <<http://atat-pa.blogspot.com.br/2013/05/arquitetura-moderna-na-sede-campestre.html/>> [Accessed 21 May 2016].

### 3 DESTRUCTION EXPERIENCES: AN UNFINISHED MODERNITY?

The discourses and political practices that promoted the construction of the structures and the modern forms that had been observed since the 1930s in the city of Belém, whose contents referred to the need for replacing the 'old' by a 'new' urban environment, were the same discourse that in a certain way defended or at least omitted itself, in the face of the destruction of those buildings or structures. This construction/destruction process already was coming a long time ago. It began with the demolition of the old kiosks built by Engineer Francisco Bologna in the first stage of this modernization, in the 1930s.

In the 1960s, the lack of investment in the city's infrastructure services was evident in 'public transportation without maintenance, poor electricity services, food supply problems', situation that has dragged on since the 1940s, when the rails of the Estrada de Ferro de Bragança (Bragança Railway) began to disappear. Its disappearance was ordered on August 4, 1966, through the Federal Decree n. 58,992, and the activities were discontinued on December 31, 1965 (Pantoja, 2014, pp.71-72). The decreeing the end of a public service is not the only way that services built over more than three decades were disappearing in Belém.

The bus stops and passenger shelters, the clippers, that would continue to be built until the early 1940s<sup>15</sup>, were gradually being demolished by the order of successive municipal administrators. The last of them was in operation until at least 1972<sup>16</sup>. At the same time that, these devices disappeared, modern constructions continued to be replaced by other modernity forms or left abandoned (Jean Bittar House and Albano Distributor of Camilo Porto de Oliveira) (Fig. 18, 19) as an irremediable invitation to disappear, completely disfigured for the city to adjust to the new

<sup>15</sup> Information available at: <<https://fauufpa.org/2014/05/23/o-porque-do-clipper-no1-ser-da-decada-de-1930/>>.

<sup>16</sup> Information available at: <<https://fauufpa.org/2014/05/23/em-1972-o-clipper-no1-ainda-estava-de-pe/>>.

modernity times (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial-Senai [National Service of Industrial Learning] Headquarters) or yet intended for new uses, while retaining parts of its original configuration (Belisário Dias House, President Pernambuco House).



**Fig. 18:** Headquarters Senai – 1950s.  
Source: Jeová Barros (2011).



**Fig. 19:** Jean Bittar House of Camilo Porto de Oliveira. The residence was modified in the use, and for many years it was used as school. Currently, since demolished, it is used as commercial Bank. Source: Chaves (2000).

It is clear, however, that much of what was built in Belém in this period, although destroyed, survived in the collective memory, and the people would appropriate the modern repertoire, using it in their homes, especially some elements such as columns in V and marquees. Thus, the permanence of that language moves from the walls of the elite's houses to the facades' composition of the houses and villages away from central districts, where this modernity became popular.

## **CONCLUSION: ARTICULATING EXPERIENCES**

The experiences of the Modern in Belém in its construction, reception, and destruction processes allow the of sketching an interpretation that explores its particularities and unveil the mechanisms beyond the materiality of the achievements. Thus, these experiences can be recovered, on the basis of another analysis point, in which 'knowledge instruments forged in central countries', as Waisman warns (2013, p.15), serve as one referential to 'not to run the risk to mistake or to not know our historical-architectural and urban reality.

This mentioned reality invites us to think this Modern, under another point of view that sees as important not only the circumstances, the ideals, the movement of the actors in the social space, but also the materialized objects in physical space, trying not to naturalize historical facts, but to understand the frames and motivations that made them arise.

In this sense, it is interesting to resume the warning of Gorélik on the need to 'call into question the naturalness of the series in which the modernity idea - specifically modern architecture idea - usually comes inscribed'; and here we list two of them that correspond, under our view, to the reality here considered, 'The one '[...]



showing the modern architecture as a structural epiphenomenon of society and of economy [...] and 'the another allocating a particular ideological expression, progressive, internationalist, and radical to the representation of modern architecture' (Gorélik, 2011, pp.10-11).

Conjunctural characteristics, which announced the deployment of an architectural modernity from the 1930s in Belém, resulted from the disruption established with the end of the rubber economy, but at the same time this particular situation established a cultural continuity of mentality, which nourished the desire to return to a modernity already experienced.

It was possible to articulate in this paper the space of the modern Belém, intertwining 'expectations and experiences' as Koselleck states, which turn this period as relevant as the *Belle Époque* to understand the processes that, if not transformed Belém into an ideal city, provided elements to think the real city. This actual city that exhibited disparate moments in the construction of a discourse and practice of modernity, the reception that this architecture and this imperative for modernity affected the ascending social groups, is also the same city that has much of its architecture destroyed from the 1960s to 1970s, as discussed throughout the paper.

It was observed a route that was built in a dissonant universe, 'An adverse economic context to any prospect of material transformation and a fragile political context'. Despite this scenario, achievements in *edilícia* scale sprouted in the main avenues of the city. The 'radical desires' contained in this experience of modernity no longer aligned with the traditional culture of a Frenchified Belém, where eclecticism approached the representation of Amazonian nature are replaced in the decades studied here for new spaces, forms, and structures, in which the modernity would express the place occupied by the cities in the Amazon, in the second half of the twentieth century; they intended to be the new paradigm of urban and architectural modernization, now aligned with the new historical and political moment, which would culminate not only in the Belém experience, but in other cities with experiencing radical transformation in their spaces, either through new cities projects, aiming to put the region on the flexible capitalism circuit organized since the 1930s, or by proposals for specific interventions at different scales as in Belém.

The dynamics observed in the city were characterized by two conditions, 'the difficulty caused by distance and geographical isolation and the lack of economic resources needed for its materialization'. Still, the important contribution of the Characters previously mentioned in the text, who in the years 1940-1960 intend to break with the signs of the city built by the Rubber lords, would create the spaces of the new modern city, a radical attitude face an unfavorable scenario, which left behind changes that are still visible and had resonances in the processes that would occur in the city from the 1970s. The building, reception, and destruction trajectory continues to reproduce on the experiences after the Modern in Belém do Pará.

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