



Office buildings: a new typology for Quito's modern development

Los edificios de oficinas: una nueva tipología para el desarrollo moderno de Quito

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^{1,2}Juan Carlos Villagómez Rodríguez, ³Clara E. Mejía Vallejo

¹Universitat Politècnica de València, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura, Camino de Vera s/n 46022 Valencia, Spain.

²Universidad Central del Ecuador, Av. Universitaria, Quito 170521, Ecuador. juavilr1@doctor.upv.es. ORCID: 0000-0002-3048-1314

³Universitat Politècnica de València, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura, Camino de Vera s/n 46022 Valencia, Spain. cemejia@pra.upv.es. ORCID: 0000-0002-4104-3053

Abstract:

This article aims to show how modern office buildings, built between the 1950s and 1970s in Quito, were important actors in defining the city's growth and contributed to giving it a certain character. The article is structured in four parts. First, it contextualizes the conditions that contributed to Quito's development during the second half of the twentieth century, reviewing the guidelines established by the urban plans drawn up during that period. The aim is then to show how these planning instruments and the marked topographical conditions of the city's location led to a linear development based on ample avenues. Once the framework has been defined based on these issues, the conditions under which high-rise buildings, the towering symbols of progress, appeared in the new development areas of the city of Quito will be presented. These buildings not only promoted the need for a new understanding of the form of the town but also gave rise to the introduction of new building typologies, which in turn led to the incorporation of new technologies and construction systems that necessarily implied changes in the morphology and image of the new buildings. The article closes by presenting some of the most relevant examples of office buildings constructed in Quito between the years under study.

Keywords: Quito; geography; urban development; urban planning; modern architecture; office buildings.

Resumen:

El objetivo del presente artículo es mostrar cómo los edificios de oficinas modernos, construidos entre los años 1950 y 1970 en Quito, fueron actores importantes en la definición crecimiento de la ciudad y contribuyeron a dotarla de un determinado carácter. El artículo se estructura en cuatro partes. En primer lugar, se contextualizan las condiciones que contribuyeron al desarrollo de Quito durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX, haciendo una revisión de los lineamientos establecidos por los planes urbanísticos redactados durante la época. A continuación, se pretende mostrar cómo estos instrumentos de planeamiento, unidos a las marcadas condiciones topográficas del emplazamiento de la ciudad, condujeron a un desarrollo lineal, a partir de grandes avenidas. Una vez definido el marco a partir de estas cuestiones se expone en qué condiciones se dio la aparición de los edificios en altura en las nuevas zonas de desarrollo de la ciudad de Quito. Estos edificios no solo promovieron la necesidad de un nuevo entendimiento de la forma de la ciudad, sino que también dieron pie a la introducción de nuevas tipologías edificatorias que a su vez conllevaron la incorporación de nuevas tecnologías y sistemas constructivos que necesariamente implicaron cambios en la morfología y la imagen de los nuevos edificios. El artículo se cierra presentando algunos de los ejemplos más relevantes de edificios de oficinas construidos en Quito entre los años objeto de estudio.

Palabras claves: Quito; geografía; desarrollo urbano; planes urbanísticos; arquitectura moderna; edificios de oficinas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modernity arrived in Latin America through diverse channels and actors. The transformation of their cities represented a complex process that had particular rhythms and characteristics depending on their socioeconomic conditions and geography. The city of Quito, due to its complex orography, presented very particular growth patterns. The modernization process began in a practical way when the city began the construction of a network of basic public services (electricity, sewerage, drinking water, etc.) (Del Pino; 2020). This process involved a series of parallel operations aimed at "modeling" the geography of the city. The need for connection between the different areas led to a structural modification of the territory through the intervention of the channeling of water from natural streams and wetlands that hindered its expansion.

In 1928, the Military Geographic Service, the entity in charge of preparing national cartography, published a series of topographic maps of Ecuador divided by zones. Sheet number 40 contains information on the area surrounding Quito. This map identifies the geographical limits of the city and the topographical differences that the territory presents. To the west are the hills of the Pichincha volcano, being able to observe how the different ravines descend to the central platform and identified in the southwestern end the hill of natural conformation called El Panecillo as the limit of the city. The approach of the checkerboard urban layout that, despite its irregular topography, makes up the old city can also be appreciated. On the east side there is another natural boundary delimited by the slopes of the Machángara River, a tributary that crosses the city. In the north center, it is possible to identify an area with less relief, called La Carolina, which is where the modern city found a place to expand (Figure 0).

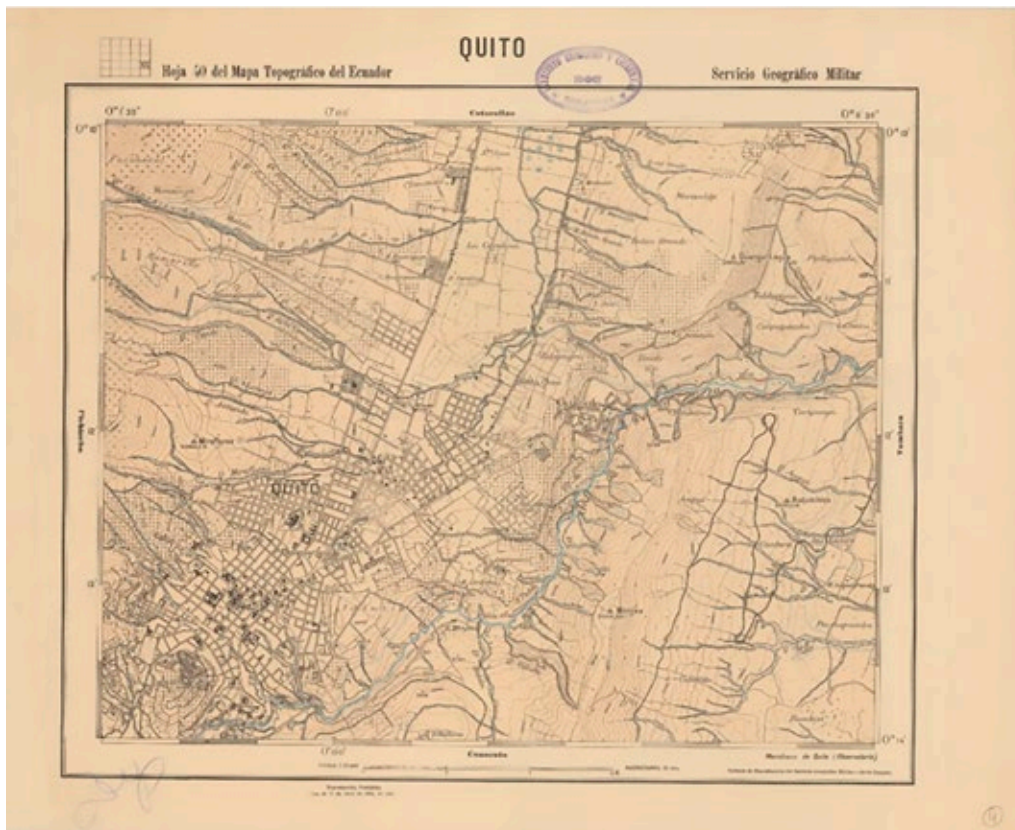


Figure 0. Topographic map of Quito. Military Geographic Service (1928).
Source: National Geographic Institute: <https://www.ign.es/web/catalogo-cartoteca/recursos/html/001749.html>. [Consulted: 1 September 2024].

2. THE ORIGINS OF QUITO'S GROWTH

Until 1920, the city of Quito was almost exclusively made up of its Historic Center. From those years onwards it suffered an increase in the number of inhabitants, although the structure of land ownership did not change. During this period, the beginning of a longitudinal growth of the city took place, which caused modifications in the urban layout. The inhabitants moved to the north of the city, infected by the concepts of a modernity that evoked good living and comfort for the wealthy class. The migratory flow from the countryside also became more evident, and these new inhabitants settled in the center and south of the city (Figure 1).

In the mid-twenties, the automotive fleet began to have a certain presence. By that year, there were two hundred and twenty-two gasoline vehicles in Quito, including cars and trucks (Miño 2018). In 1930, the bus appeared, gaining ground thanks to

the ease with which it could move around the difficult topography of the city, since it did not need rails to travel, unlike the electric tram.

During the decade of the thirties, Quito was overcrowded as a result of the migration of the population from the countryside to the city. This situation led to concern for urban planning, given that its growth was taking place in an unorganized and uncontrolled manner. It was an urgent situation that needed to be addressed by the authorities. In 1939, the engineer Eduardo Pólit Moreno and the president of the Illustrious Municipal Council of Quito, Gustavo Mortensen, presented a Regulatory Plan composed of isolated, spontaneous and partial ideas, which did not become important (Carrión & Vallejo, 1992, p. 98).

Editorial Chimborazo published the photolithograph of the city of Quito in 1931 where the longitudinal growth of the city in a south-north direction is observed, the

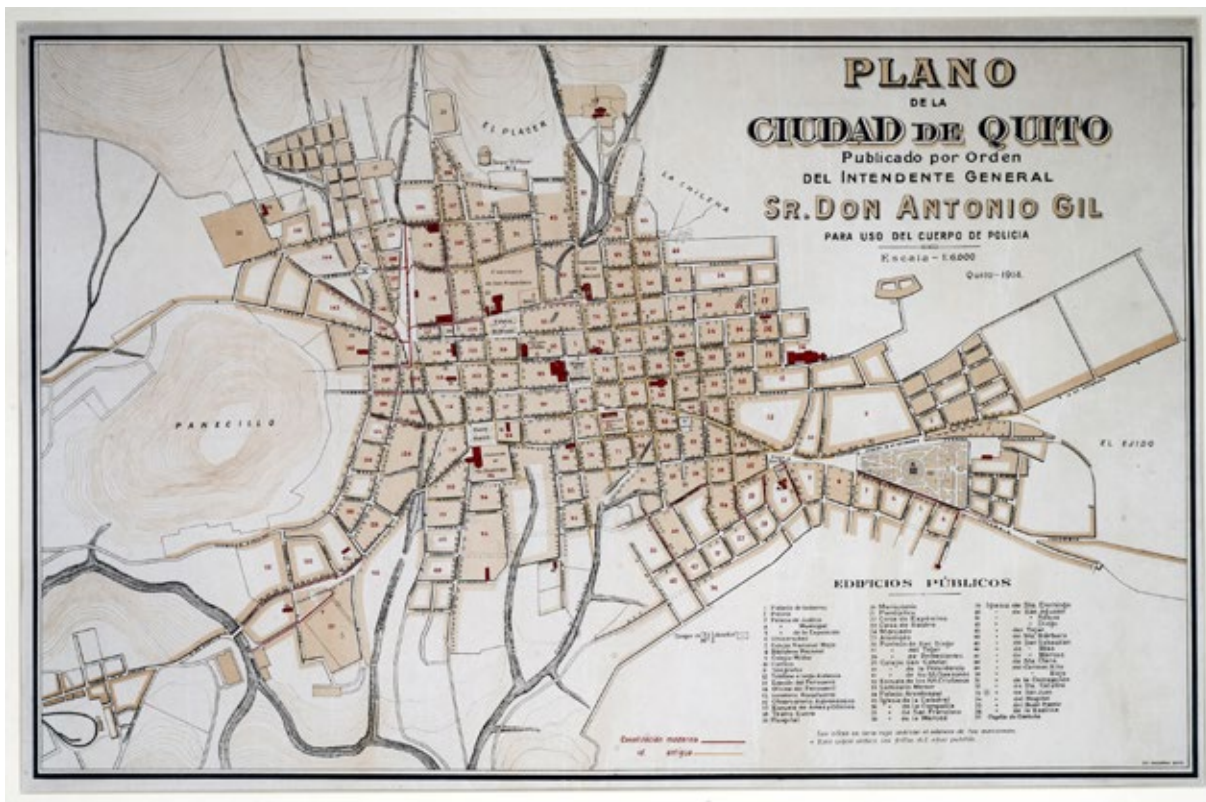


Figure 1. Plan of the city of Quito, Antonio Gil, Plan for the use of the police force, 1914. Source: Damero, 2007, A. Ortiz Crespo.

historic city clearly identified with its check-board layout and the location of the most important buildings (Figure 2).

In 1940, the Military Geographic Service, the entity in charge of preparing national cartography, published plans such as the one that collects information from geological studies of the area surrounding Quito (Figure 3).

Researcher Silvia Arango Cardenal contextualizes the arrival of modernity in the different cities of Latin America and attributes the responsibility for the beginning of modernity in Ecuador to the so-called progressive generation (1945-1960) (Arango, 2020, p. 273). The Second World War, although it did not have a direct impact on Latin America, did have a special impact on some of its cities, which were places of welcome for a select immigration of intellectuals, including numerous architects exiled from the European continent. In Quito, the presence of professionals from Europe, the United States and Uruguay was particularly relevant.

After a first failed attempt to provide the city of Quito with a Regulatory Plan and the preparation of cartographic documents, it was necessary to wait a few more years before a clear process of regulation of the

city's growth began. In February 1942 (Municipality of Quito, 1949) Guillermo Jones Odriozola, Uruguayan architect, was hired to undertake the design of the preliminary project of the "Regulatory Plan of Quito", this being one of the first technical works carried out on the urban approach of the city. For the drafting of this plan, Jones Odriozola had the collaboration of three other architects also from Uruguay: Gilberto Gatto Sobral, Jorge Bonino and Alfredo Altamirano.

It should be noted that, in 1943, at the invitation of Francis H. Taylor, director of the Metropolitan Museum of New York, Guillermo Jones Odriozola traveled to the United States. There he met some of the most prestigious architects of the time, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Eliel Saarinen, José Luis Sert, Antonio Raymond, Philip Goodwin, William Lescaze, Marcel Breuer, William Wurster and Katherine Bower (Domingo, 1991). This information allows us to suppose that Jones Odriozola may have been influenced by some of the architects with whom he had contact in the United States, and that it is possible that he used part of this knowledge in the structuring of the Regulatory Plan.

In November 1944, Jones Odriozola concluded the Quito Regulatory Plan, having

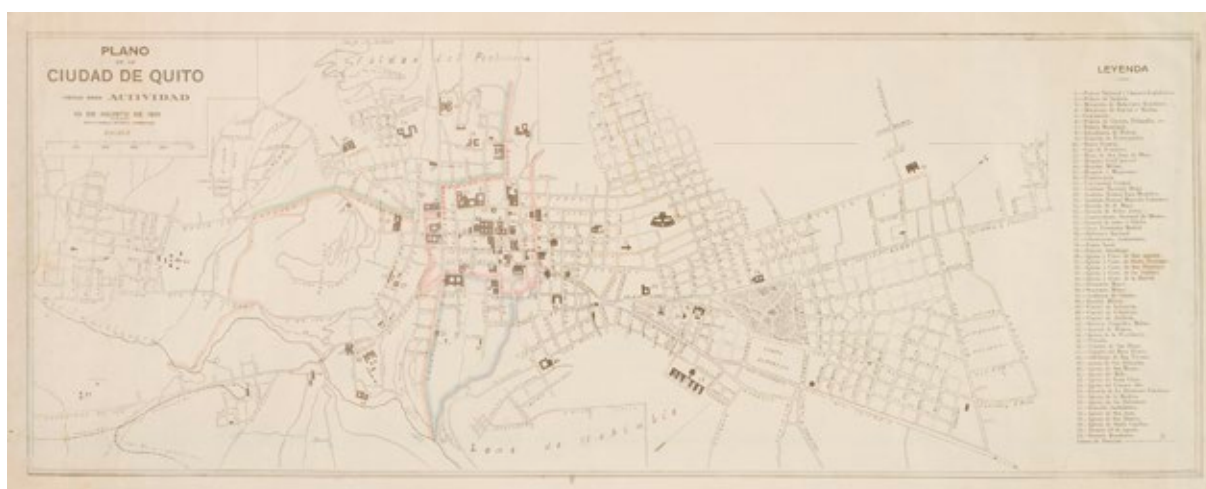


Figure 2. Map of the city of Quito, Photolithography Editorial Chimborazo, 1931. Source: Damero, 2007, A. Ortiz Crespo.

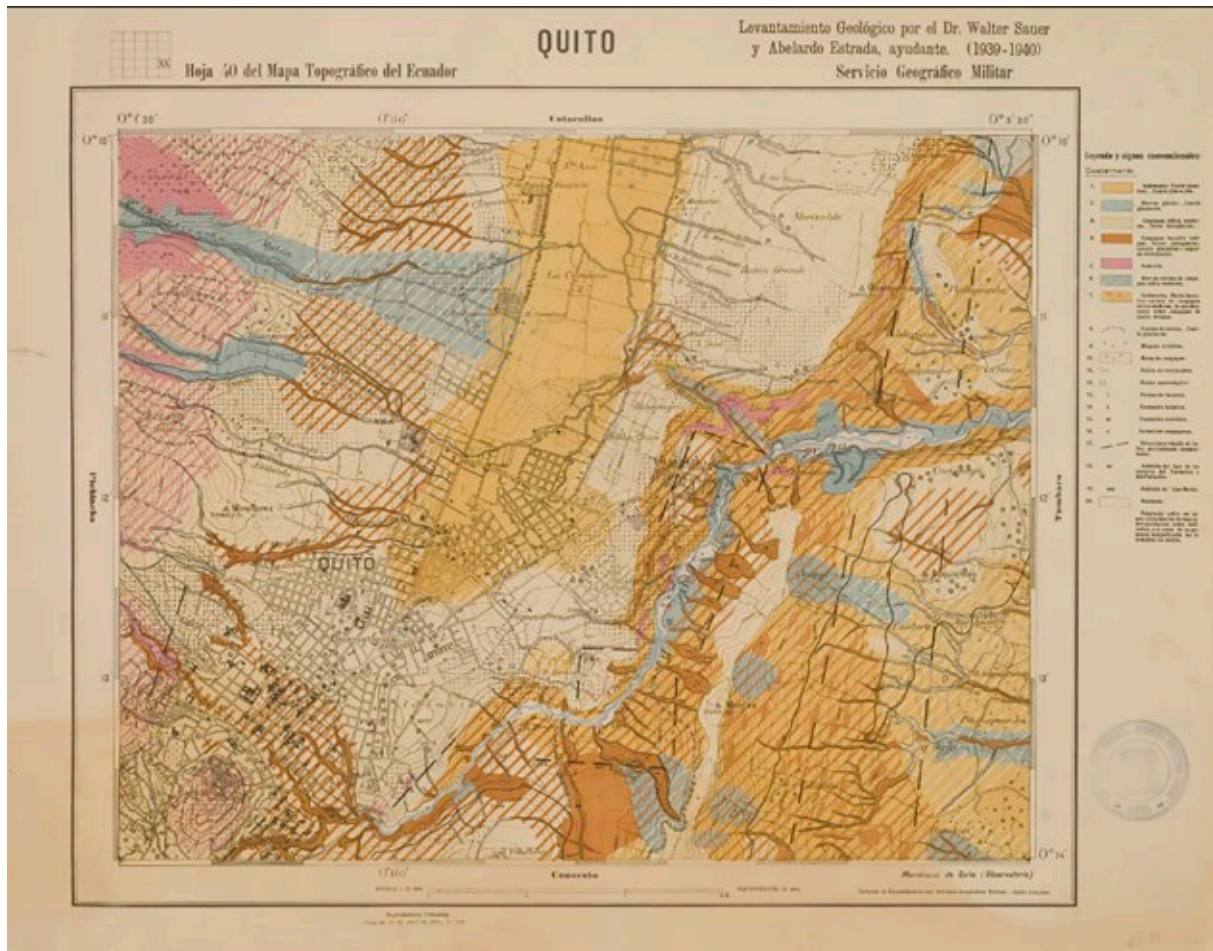


Figure 3. Sheet 20 of the Topographic Map of Ecuador, Geological Survey by Dr. Walter Sauer, and Adalberto Estrada, 1939-1940. Source: Damero, 2007, A. Ortiz Crespo

to leave Ecuador due to visual health problems. He then delegated the responsibility to Gilberto Gatto Sobral, who finally presented the draft of the Regulatory Plan to the Municipality of Quito and to the Congress of Ecuador (Domingo, 1991). The approval by the Municipal Council of Quito took place on April 20, 1945, with the following words: "Este plan es guía, normativa para la modificación de la antigua ciudad de acuerdo con las necesidades para una expansión ordenada en el futuro", "This plan is a guide, normative for the modification of the old city according to the needs for orderly expansion in the future."

2.1 Regulatory Plan of 1942–1944

The Regulatory Plan of Quito, applying the concepts of functionalist urbanism spread from Europe, proposed a growth of the city

towards the north, respecting the rich historical and architectural heritage of Quito. The plan included four centers: the Government Center, El Barrio (which was the housing unit with its communal center), the University City, and a Sports Center (Municipality of Quito, 1949) (Figure 4).

It was considered that the Civic Center of Government should represent the three branches (Executive, Legislative and Judicial) and together with the buildings that should house them, buildings were proposed to house offices for the different ministries, the Comptroller's Office, the Treasury and other public entities (Figure 5).

Each neighborhood had the vocation of being an independent unit with its shops, schools, recreation and health centers, and offices for different uses, both public

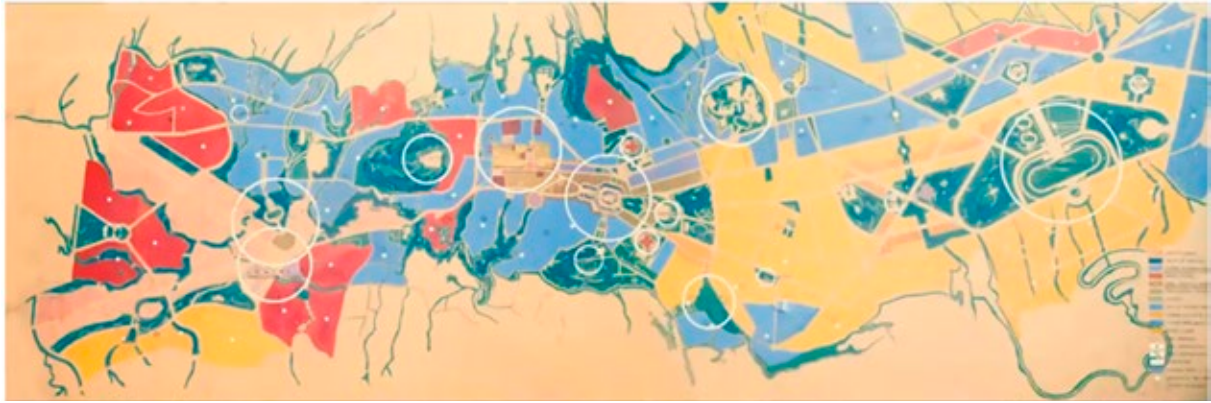


Figure 4. Plan of the Regulatory Plan of 1942 by Guillermo Jones O., Plan zoning and characterized centers of the future (project), Regulatory Plan of Quito, 1942.

Source: Metropolitan Directorate of Territorial Planning

and private. It was contemplated that these complexes would be in some way inaccessible to vehicular traffic outside the neighborhood. It was stipulated that, as far as possible, the avenues bordering the sector should be tree-lined and contain playgrounds for children. The northern area of the city was destined for the development of housing and garden neighborhoods (Municipality of Quito, 1949).

It was considered important that the University Center had easy and logical access for citizens, and for this reason it was proposed to be centralized with respect to the other living areas of the city. The intention was for the University Center to form a harmonious whole from both the functional and formal points of view (Municipality of Quito, 1949).

The Sports Center was proposed as a place that would bring together all kinds of courts and facilities necessary for the practice of various sports. The area destined for these activities was located to the north of the city, in the area called La Carolina.

In 1974, Jones Odriozola made a visit to the city, at the invitation of the Municipality of the city of Quito, thirty years after the drafting of the Regulatory Plan of Quito. The objective was to review together with the municipal staff what had been executed in the 1942 plan. In the interview conducted

by Walter Domingo with Jones Odriozola in July 1991, the latter comments: "[...] of the plan that I had prepared very few things were carried out and certainly the most important things were not carried out [...]". The Regulatory Plan of 1942 was not fully executed due to the high cost to the Municipality of Quito of the expropriation of the properties for the large areas destined for public space and communal facilities planned by Jones Odriozola (Ortiz Crespo, et al., 2007).

The city of Quito, based on the Regulatory Plan of 1942, projected a longitudinally oriented growth following the north-south axis according to its topography. In an east-west direction, growth was restricted by natural limits, to the east the ravines to the valleys and to the west the foothills of the Pichincha volcano. Before this plan, Quito had the characteristic of being a static center. Subsequently, its development changes in a longitudinal direction, marking growth towards the extremes: to the southeast due to the influence of the train and the nascent industry and to the north due to the presence of the agricultural area and the growth of a new city linked to the proliferation of "luxurious buildings, avenues, villas, citadels and charming parks with all kinds of services and transport" (De la Cruz, 1947). The historic center is strengthened as a point of articulation between the two large sectors.

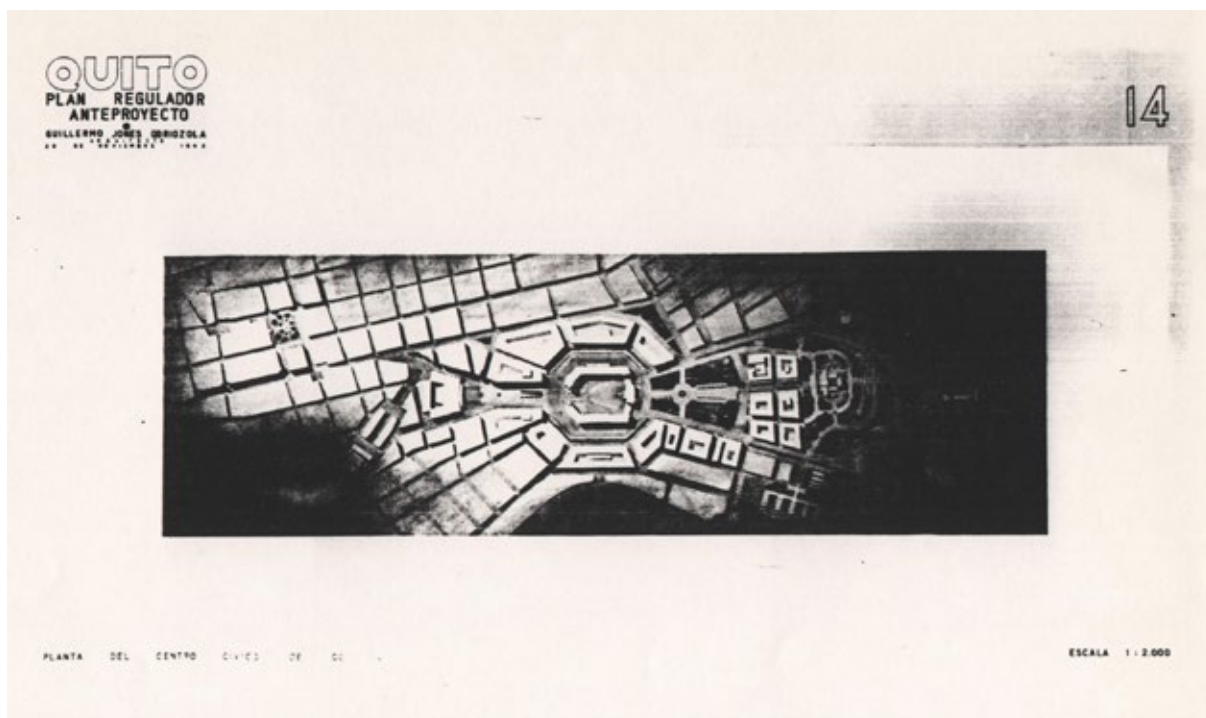


Figure 5. Plan 14, Photograph of the model Plan of the Civic and Government Center, scale 1:2000 (preliminary project), Regulatory Plan of Quito, 1942.

Source: Retrieved from the archive of Jaime Andrade Heyman, (2020)

2.2 San Francisco de Quito: Urban Planning Master Plan 1967

In 1963 work began on the drafting of the Master Plan for the city of Quito. By means of ordinance 1165 of June 27, 1967, the Master Plan of Urbanism of San Francisco de Quito 1967 came into force, a document made after 20 years of use of the Regulatory Plan of Quito by Jones Odriozola, which was outdated.

This document was prepared in the Planning Division of the Technical Department of the Municipality of Quito, in charge of the architect Javier Dávalos Velasco (Department of Planning & Office of the Metropolitan Area, 1973), who had a team made up mostly of professionals graduated from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Central University of Ecuador (created in 1959) and by a smaller number of professionals graduated abroad. In addition, students in the last years of the faculty col-

laborated in the Planning Division (Carrión et al., 1992).

Quito was going through a process of transformation, modernization and expansion at that time. There was little control of urban growth due to disorder in the subdivision and use of urban land. This was a consequence of the emergence of commercial subdivisions, the appearance of spontaneous and informal settlements on the outskirts of the city and the uncontrolled fractionation of land-by-land speculators, who created neighborhoods where the large landowner exploited the small one, whose only dream was to have a house of their own where the price of land was more affordable. During these years, the city expanded both in the north and in the south outside the limits proposed in the first plan. Another important aspect was the creation of the Ecuadorian Housing Bank¹ and the Mutual Savings and Credit Societies, which responded to the housing deficit on a larger

1 The Ecuadorian Housing Bank (BNV) was created by Emergency Decree-Law No. 23, published in Official Gazette 223, on May 26, 1961.

scale. This situation gave rise to a phenomenon of speculation with land value.

The Master Plan, as a working methodology, divided the city into four territorial planning units whose purpose was to achieve a more orderly and sectorized result. These units were: South Zone, Historic Center, General Services Center and North Zone whose growth was mostly disorderly and outside the urban limits.

The document addressed five main aspects (Municipality of Quito, 1967). These were: the study of the occupation of the territory, a zoning regulation, the study of the location of the facilities based on a polycentric system, the evaluation and proposal for the historic area of Quito and the study of the main system of roads that would allow the adequate connection between the north and south of the city (Figure 6). The north and south areas were intended for housing.

3. THE GROWTH OF THE FINANCIAL AXIS AND THE PROCESS OF METROPOLIZATION

The process of metropolization of Quito's area of influence began in the years following the formulation of the Master Plan of 1967. This plan remained as a draft, since it was not officially approved by the Municipal Council; however, it served as a guide for the 1981 Plan, which was also not approved.

In the Odriozola plan, the presence of an axis that linked El Ejido Park and La Carolina Park was already identified. On this same plan, the yellow color represented the garden neighborhood, a low-density area, and in some places near La Carolina Park and in front of the tracks, a strip of high-density housing was projected. The latter will become a part of the financial axis (Av. Río Amazonas) changing its use from housing to offices and commercial area.

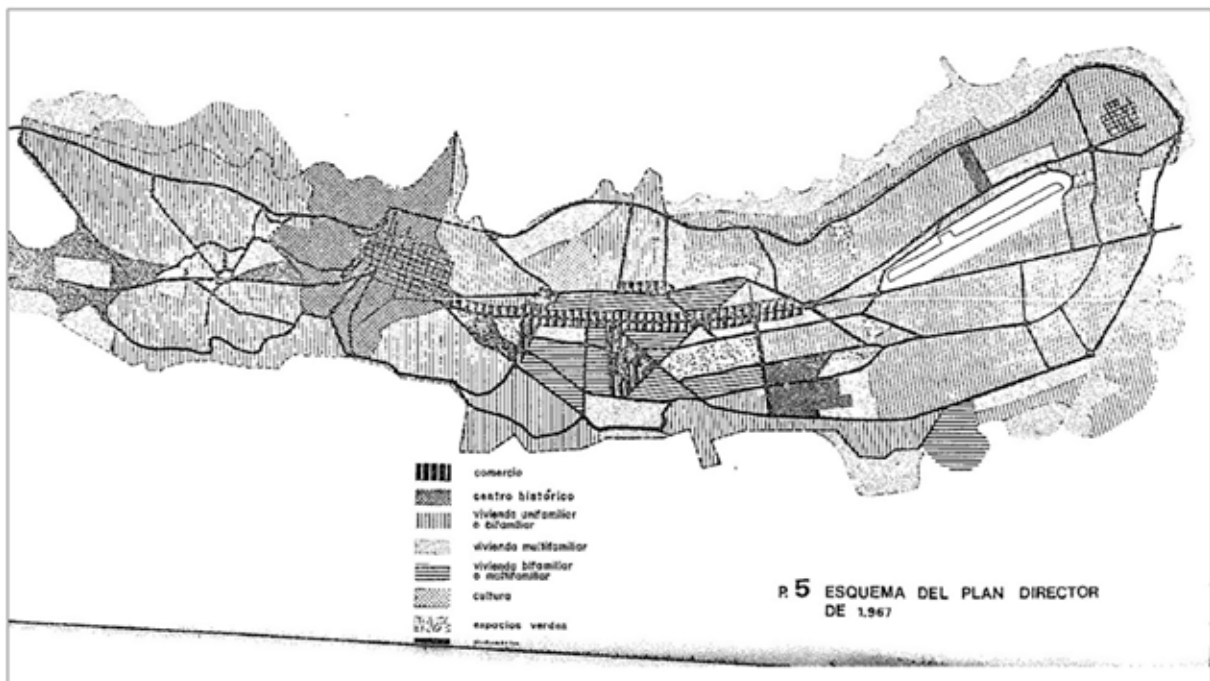


Figure 6. Plan 5 Outline of the Master Plan 1967, Land Use for the City of Quito, Master Plan for Urban Planning of San Francisco de Quito, 1967.

Source: Edited by the authors, June 2022

In the different plans made by the Military Geographic Service (1928 to 1947), the importance of the four main roads that connect the central sector with the northern sector can be observed, areas that, with the passage of time, will become commercial axes. It should be noted that possibly the axis that managed to be the most important was that of Río Amazonas Avenue due to the diversity of activities that took place in the sector and the large number of buildings that were built later (Figure 7).

Río Amazonas Avenue was initially linked to the Mariscal Sucre sector and later to the La Carolina area (later to the Ñaquito sector). Its route began on Patria Avenue and crossed longitudinally the Mariscal Sucre sector, until it reached Orellana Avenue, ending this road at the Eloy Alfaro Military College. The image and scale of the garden neighborhood was progressively replaced by high-rise buildings, constructions of international language. The Amazon River Avenue grew with the city to the north (Figure 8).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the area of La Carolina was part of a hacienda owned by the Condes de Casa Jijón family, being lands for agricultural and livestock use. The Jijón family began the sale of these lands, giving rise to the growth of the city in that area. In 1935, the Municipality of Quito expropriated certain lands, transforming them into a green space destined to be a public space that was considered necessary in the future. Due to the growth of this sector, in 1939 the Municipality of Quito additionally received the donation of a large part of the La Carolina hacienda owned by María Augusta Urrutia. In this way, as a sum of these two actions, the park of La Carolina was created for the city.

The Ñaquito neighborhood was created in the sixties, and due to population growth, the city was adapting to the needs of its inhabitants. As a result of these changes, the city underwent permanent modifications in relation to the growth it experienced (Figure 9).

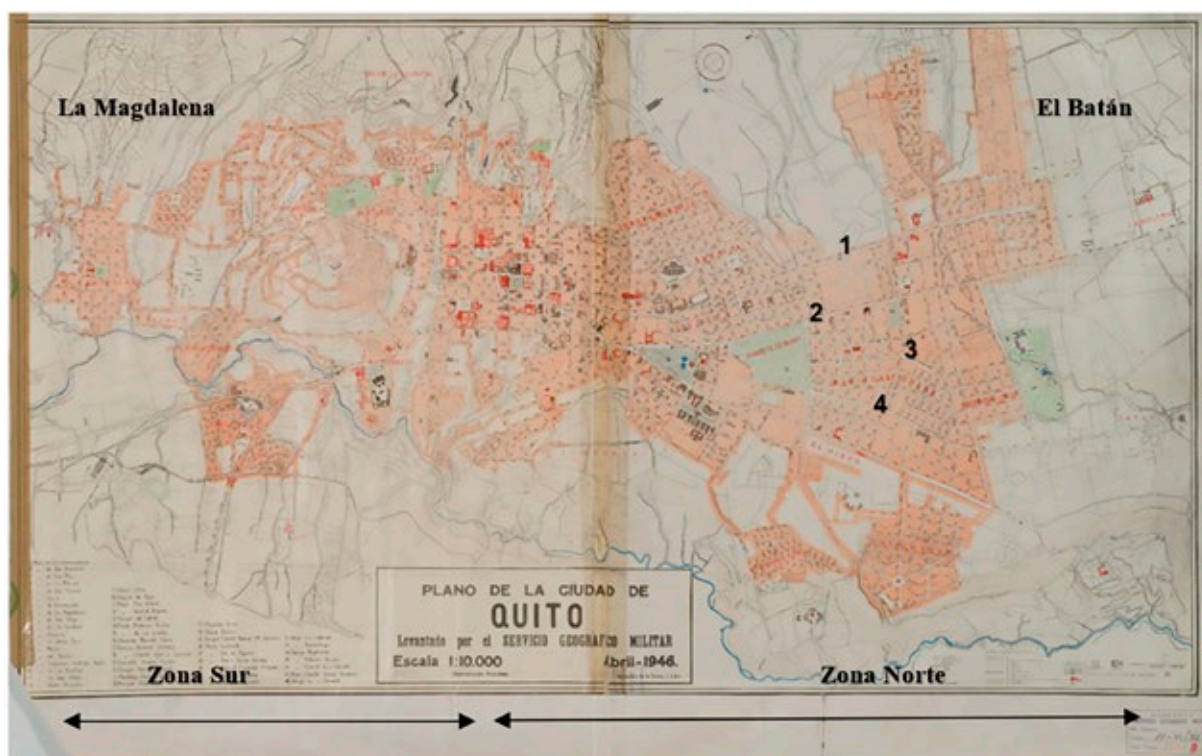


Figure 7. Map of the city of Quito, 1946. Scale 1:10,000. Important roads in the northern sector identified from west to east: 1. Av. América, 2. Av. Diez de Agosto, 3. Av. Río Amazonas and 4. Av. Seis de Diciembre. Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022



Figure 8. Aerial photograph of the La Mariscal sector, Quito, 1959. Av. Río Amazonas between El Ejido Park and the Eloy Alfaro Military College. Main south-north road axes 1. Av. América, 2. Av. Diez de Agosto, 3. Av. Río Amazonas and 4. Av. Seis de Diciembre. Transversal road axes 5. Av. Patria, 6. Av. General Veintimilla, 7. Calle Luis Cordero, 8. Av. Cristóbal Colón and 9. Av. Francisco de Orellana.
Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022



Figure 9. Aerial photograph of the sector of La Carolina and Ñaquito, Quito, 1961. The truncated Río Amazonas Avenue is identified at its two ends to the south making a connection with the future Mariana de Jesús Avenue distant from the Eloy Alfaro Military College and to the north ends at the United Nations Avenue, the main south-north road axes 1. Av. América, 2. Av. Diez de Agosto, 3. Av. Río Amazonas 4. Av. Seis de Diciembre, and the transversal road axes 5. Av. Francisco de Orellana, 6. United Nations Avenue, the area of La Carolina Park is already consolidated and the stadium finishing off the sports area.
Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022

The geometric configuration of the urban layout of the Ñaquito neighborhood was not consolidated; there were extensions of land without a defined urban fabric. In the northwest end of the park, some trails were proposed that will become the future roads,

specifically in the diagonals that cross already defined avenues such as Amazonas and Diez de Agosto. Next to the main axis, of Diez de Agosto Avenue, the buildings are located on the west side of the road so that they consolidate a single side (Figure 10).

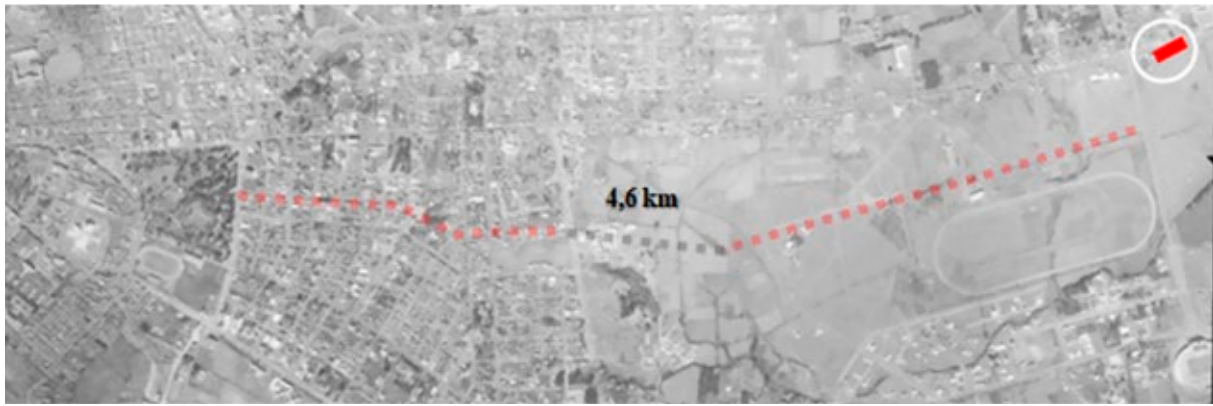


Figure 10. Aerial photograph of the sector of La Carolina and Iñaquito, Quito, 1961.
Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022



Figure 11. Political Plan of the City of Quito, 1970. Scale 1:20,000, It can be identified in this plan that La Carolina Park is not considered a green space, but not the Alameda, El Ejido and Quito Tennis.
Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022

In the late sixties and early seventies, the construction of the Iñaquito Shopping Center (1971) fostered the economic and urban development of the northwest area of the park. In this area, a pole of economic and real estate development began to be generated, becoming a few years later the economic center of the capital. The implementation of several office buildings, bank agencies and residential buildings generated an urban dynamic different from the one that previously existed in the city.

In the political plane of the city of Quito carried out in 1970, the growth of the city is already identified, the limits are moving further and further away from the historic center to the south the Chimbacalle neighborhood and to the north Cotocollao, and

more and more rural areas are becoming urban land (Figure 11).

It is in this scenario, that the development of the new financial axis began, the architectural projects that were designed and built were responsible for the configuration of a new urban physiognomy. This was characterized by an intensive use of the land, by the presence of mainly high-rise constructions, using construction technologies based on reinforced concrete and by the presence of specific activities such as banking, commerce, administrative and housing.

A new scale was expressed through verticality. Development was manifested with greater force in the northern area of the city, through the implantation of buildings along

the main roads such as 10 de Agosto, Patria, Amazonas, Shirys, 12 de Octubre, 6 de Diciembre avenues, and through the consolidation of sectors such as Larrea, González Suarez, Mariscal and Ñaquito.

All the urban plans mentioned above seek to improve the conditions of the city. In this review, the contributions made in each of them are described, as well as how these actions contribute to changing the image and growth of the city. For more details, see Table 1.

During these years, Latin America was immersed in a process of modernisation due to social and political conditions. The differential situations of the different countries gave rise to differentiation. For the purposes of this study, the continent is divided into two zones: the Pacific zone (Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Chile) and the Atlantic zone (Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina). See Table 2.

In this context, the United States Department of State is guiding a series of urban studies to determine the role that Latin America could play in the new post-World War II political context. The strategy is to enhance urban planning and architecture as appropriate means to enable economic growth and social development, thus en-

suring a path of progress (Tarchópulos Sierra, 2022).

To understand this phenomenon more clearly, it is important to mention Town Planning Associates (TPA), a New York City-based urban planning and design firm. Its founding partners, Josep Luis Sert (1902-1983), Paul Lester Weiner (1895-1967), and, later, Paul Schulz, were commissioned to carry out the urban design of several Latin American cities. Sert, as an active member and president of CIAM (1947-1956), was able to apply the principles and theories of CIAM to the urban design of these projects.

The plans by Sert and Wiener, through TPA, consist of a detailed study based on previous experiences that define the land use systems, the height regime and standards for buildings, population densities, as well as the profiles, cross sections, intersections, parking, lighting and tree-lined roads. In addition, aspects such as the planning of public services and the way in which supplies should be executed are addressed, considering, in general, all the factors necessary for the good development of the city.

On the other hand, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina are the countries that initi-

Table 1. Stages of development in implementing the plans and contribution to the change of the city

Planes	Year Created	Contribution	Action in the city	Year of execution
Eduardo Posit Moreno and the president of the Quito Council, Gustavo Mortensen, presented a Regulatory Plan composed of isolated ideas	1939	First attempts at organization and modernization of the city		
Quito Regulatory Plan	1942-1944	Four centers: Government Center, El Barrio (which was the housing unit with its community center), the University City, and a Sports Center	The creation of working-class neighborhoods in the south of the city of Villaflores	1946
			The creation of the University City	1947
			Creation of the Atahualpa Olympic Stadium Sports Center	1948
			National Congress Building	1956
			Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building	1957
			Central Bank of Ecuador Building	1963
			Building of the Comptroller General of the State	1965
Creation of the Airport in Quito	1968			
San Francisco de Quito Urban Planning Master Plan	1967	Division of the city into four Territorial Planning Units	South Zone, Historic Center, General Services Center and North Zone	1968
		The northern and southern areas destined for housing	Implementation of housing plans by the Ecuadorian Housing Bank and the Mutual Societies in the south and north of the city	1961
		Study of the occupation of the territory	Change of land use from housing to offices and commercial area north zone (sectors of La Mariscal and La Carolina)	1970
		Zoning Regulations		
		Study of the location of the facilities based on a polycentric system	Implementation of buildings along the roads, northern area of the city	
		The study of the main system of roads that would allow the adequate connection between the north and south of the city	Execution of main roads developed throughout the city to make connections between the south and the north (Av. 10 de Agosto, Av. Amazonas, Av. 6 de Diciembre and Av. América), a series of overpasses are executed	1970
Evaluation and proposal for the historic area of Quito	Creation of the nueva avenida Occidental y los túneles	1973		
	Se declara a Quito Patrimonio de la Humanidad por la UNESCO	1978		

Table 2. Urban Plans in Latin America, Early Modernity

City	Country	Year	Plan Type	Designers
Rio de Janeiro	Brasil	1929	Urban Proposal	Le Corbusier
Santiago de Chile	Chile	1929	Preliminary Draft of the Regulatory Plan	Karl Brunner
Montevideo	Uruguay	1931	Centenary Regulatory Plan	Mauricio Cravotto
Punta del Este	Uruguay	1935	Punta del Este Regulatory Plan	Gómez Gavazzo
Buenos Aires	Argentina	1938	Buenos Aires Master Plan	Le Corbusier, Juan Kurchan y Jorge Ferrari Hardoy
Montevideo	Uruguay	1939	Plan the Montevideo	Le Corbusier
Quito	Ecuador	1942	City Regulatory Plan	Guillermo Jones Odriozola, Gilberto Gatto Sobral
Ciudad Dos Motores	Brasil	1944	New City	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Chimbote	Perú	1946	Intervention in the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Lima		1947	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Tumaco	Colombia	1948	Expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Medellin	Colombia	1948	Expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Bogotá	Colombia	1949	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Le Corbusier + Sert, Wiener, Schulz (asesores) 1ra etapa
		1950	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz + Le Corbusier (asesor) 2da etapa
Cali	Colombia	1950	Expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Puerto Ordaz	Venezuela	1951	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Ciudad Piar	Venezuela	1951	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Pamona	Venezuela	1951	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
La Habana	Cuba	1955	Pilot plan for the expansion of the existing city	Sert, Wiener, Schulz
Brasilia	Brasil	1956	New City	Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer

ated urban studies early on, managing to establish regulations and policies that favored orderly growth. Between the 1940s and 1960s, urban planning ideas in South America significantly transformed cities across the continent. As the idea of an urban future in the Americas moved further and further away from European schools of urbanism, especially from the 1940s onwards, South American planners engaged in an exchange of practical experiences and theoretical approaches centered on functionalist regional planning, which came to define the principles of urban development in the 20th century.

4. OFFICE BUILDINGS. A NEW TYPOLOGY LINKED TO GROWTH

4.1 The pioneer buildings

It is evident that, since the beginning of the forties, Quito was preparing to enter modernity with the contracting of the planning of the Regulatory Plan and its implementation, offering a basic but indispensable infrastructure for its development. The expansion of the city limits, the widening of the avenues, the new buildings with modern approaches and the zoning changes will give a new image to the city.

Issue 16 of TRAMA Magazine, published in 1980, was dedicated to Banking Architecture in Ecuador. In one of the texts that make up this issue, Evelia Peralta stated that it was in the 60s when the growth of the city and the architectural production of banking entities intensified (Peralta, 1980). These entities were among the first to be installed as offices and generated a solid and reliable image through the buildings.

In Ecuador, specifically in Quito, one of the first buildings built more than two stories high was the Banco del Pichincha (1906), a building intended for bank administration with three floors and a neocolonial style.

In 1935, the first clearly modern office building was built. It was a mixed program building to house the offices of Banco La Previsora and a commercial area. This was the first high-rise building built in the historic center of the city designated as the Palace of Commerce and inaugurated in 1939 (figure 12). The architects John Hopkins & Dentz (USA) were responsible for the project, who proposed that the first two

levels be a commercial passageway, later transformed into a double height where the bank's largest branch would operate. To access the bank's offices, they designed a separate entrance for the first two floors. The next five levels were used for offices for the lease of administrative, commercial and service firms. The eighth floor was reserved for the La Previsora Employees Club.

For the construction of the La Previsora building, the use of reinforced concrete, called "new technology", was proposed. The adobe was left aside, which was replaced by brick masonry. Modern electrical and mechanical installations were also included, and the elevator was installed for the first time in a building in Quito. The building contrasted with the surrounding buildings built in previous times, with characteristics typical of the colonial or republican architecture typical of the city of Quito during the early twentieth century.

Towards the end of the 40s, the architect Sixto Durán Ballén created the firm ARQUIN (Associated Architects Engineers),



Figure 12. View of the site of the old Municipal House, Quito 1960.

Source: Image retrieved from the <<https://www.facebook.com/359490914137939/photos/a.611480072272354/1247680575318964/>>, [Accessed: January 12, 2021]



Figure 13. Mosaic of office buildings various authors 1934 to 1970 in the city of Quito.
Source: Edited by the authors, June 2024

responsible for some of the most notable examples of office buildings of the time. Among them, it is worth mentioning the Guerrero Mora buildings (1951), intended for doctors' and lawyers' offices with a commercial ground floor, and the complex composed of the Bolívar building and the Atahualpa theater (1958) (figure 13), whose ground floor was intended for commerce and the upper floors for administrative and office use (figure 14). All the office buildings designed by ARQUIN during this time were structured by means of the open plan and centralized services.

In 1954, the Organization of American States (OAS) designated Ecuador as the venue for the XI Pan-American Conference of Foreign Ministers (XI CPC), scheduled to be held in 1959. For this purpose, in 1956 the Construction Office of the XI CPC was formed, which depended directly on the Ministry of Public Works and Communications. Sixto Durán Ballén was the minister of that State portfolio and oversaw the works planned for that event together with the Construction Commission, whose head was Luis Ponce Enríquez, brother of the President of the Republic of Ecuador Camilo Ponce Enríquez. For external and internal political reasons of the country, the conference was suspended, with the X being the last conference held in Caracas in 1954.

Gilberto Gatto Sobral, settled in Ecuador and established an office in association with architects and engineers, under the name GADUMAG, an acronym for Gatto Sobral, Duran Ballén, Moreno Loor, architects and Arroyo Páez and Gortaire Iturralde, engineers. GADUMAG carried out a series of architectural projects that incorporated innovative approaches, such as the lightness of the buildings, and the use of new materials. One of the most significant works was the building destined for the headquarters of the Caja del Seguro (1957) – Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security (IESS), (figure 13), a building composed of a triple-height base where the activities intended for the public are carried out, and the tower destined for the administrative activities of the IESS.

In 1961 Jaime Dávalos P. oversaw the architectural design of the new headquarters of Banco La Previsora Norte. This building left the limit of the historic center and was located in the new growth area of the city in a northerly direction. The building on its ground floors was intended for banking services, while the rest of the floors were offices and apartments. This building was designed using a construction system in reinforced concrete porticoes, fixed steel, iron and glass carpentry, being the first building to incorporate a curtain wall in Quito. It was the first bank agency that included a drive-in bank in its design.



Figure. 14 View of the Bolívar building, designed by Sixto Durán Ballén, 1958.
Source: Photograph by the authors, June 2024

It is worth mentioning other relevant office buildings built during this period: the Edificio Sud América Compañía de Seguros (1952), by Eduardo Geisbouhler; the Legislative Palace (1956), by Alfredo León; the Banco de Préstamos (1962) and the Central Bank of Ecuador (1963), by Ramiro Pérez; the Office of the Comptroller General of the State (1965), by Andrés Chiriboga; the Benalcázar Mil building (1969), by Flores, Najas and Rosero; and the La Filantrópica building (1970), by Diego Ponce, among others (Figure 13).

Not only did banks drive this growth, but also private investors generated medium-sized buildings for rent and sale of offices such as the Philips Building (1955) by Lionel Ledesma, the Pérez Pallares Building (1963) by Oswaldo de la Torre, the Durán

Ballen Building (1969) by Sixto Durán Ballén, the Professional Condominium (1973) by Vélez, Peñaherrera y Mora and the Computec Building (1977) by Diego Ponce (Figure 15).

The office buildings built in Quito during the 1950s and 1960s are clearly heirs to the modern European and American tradition. All of them have similarities at the volumetric, typological, compositional and constructive level. In practically all cases, these are buildings configured by a base of two or three heights and a laminar building arranged on top of it with a height ranging between 5 and 10 floors. The facades are composed by means of a grid system that manifests the structure or by means of homogeneous curtain walls.



Figure 15. Mosaic of medium-sized office buildings various authors 1955 to 1980 in the city of Quito.
Source: Photograph by the authors, June 2024

4.2 The seventies in Quito. Context

In the seventies, Ecuador experienced very important changes due to the exploitation of oil, and due to the change in commercial activities caused by this phenomenon. The oil bonanza in the country allowed its insertion into the world market. The sale of oil generated significant economic resources, given the situation of its rising price. Ecuador became more attractive for investments and for the operation of foreign banks. This event allowed the State to undertake the construction of architectural works in different areas, typologies and scales.

In power was the Military Junta, an entity that sought to strengthen the State, through the creation of some technical institutions such as, among others, the Planning Board and the National Housing Board. Due to this and the growth of the cities due to the significant migration of inhabitants from the countryside, the institutions of the State in-

creased and with them the bureaucracy. At the same time, the demand for housing, equipment and services grew.

In this framework, urban equipment works took an important role and together with these there was an increase in the density and growth of the city in height. The works that were planned by the public and private sectors reflected a new urban scale in the capital of Ecuador. The high-rise buildings, whose construction was possible thanks to the use of the reinforced concrete structure and the elevator, gave a new profile to the city.

Like any circumstance of change, this one was based on an existing reality, and on certain ways of generating and making architecture. The use of new technologies was seen not only as the implementation of instruments for the execution of the architectural work, but also as tools that allowed reducing execution times and therefore

generating a greater number of solutions in accordance with urban growth. This produced a change of image in the city, going from a city concentrated in the historic center with a building height of up to three floors, to a more extensive city, marked by high-rise buildings, which gave Quito a new image of modernity.

During the seventies, high-rise buildings intended for use as institutional offices sought to achieve maximum use and greater organizational efficiency on the ground floor, generating a certain speculation on the land. As can be seen in the selected examples, the number of heights grew significantly, and from the base-laminar block model there was a clear transition to the base-tower typology with an imported language.

However, in some specific examples it is possible to observe the desire to create solutions with a materiality and formalization not directly extracted from foreign models. These are mainly office buildings for individuals.

Among them, it is interesting to mention the Condominio Profesional building (1973), proposed as a self-commission by the partners of the professional office called *Arquitectura y Consultoría Cía. Ltda* (Rafael Vélez, Andrés Peñaherrera and Renán Mora). Initially, the civil engineer Fernando Merino, the project's calculator, joined this project as a partner, although before finishing the work Merino disassociated himself from the company. It was a project carried out under horizontal property. It is located on Manuel Larrea Street on the corner of Santiago Street, on a small lot of 171 m² that was part of a larger property located on the west side of the building.

It is important to note that in this last building it is possible to observe a more local response to the problems derived from the growth of the city and the new character of the buildings that accompany it. Proof of its importance at the time is that in May 1977 the Professional Condominium Building was awarded the Quito Ornament Award

(Moya Peralta & Peralta Busleiman, 2014) in Category "F" (Private buildings with a program outside the home). The verdict of the qualifying jury highlighted "the optimal use of the land, clarity of circulation and functions, adequate use of materials and good treatment of the main access" (description included in the diploma of honor given to each of the designers).

Office buildings play an important role in urban configuration, as they confer a new profile to the city. This is a consequence, among other things, of the use of technology, specifically the use of reinforced concrete in the structure, which allows for larger spans and a greater number of floors. This phenomenon is, in turn, the result of the new zoning and land use proposed in the Urban Master Plan of San Francisco de Quito (1967).

In this context, some fundamental aspects are considered, among which densification and land use stand out. Office buildings, due to their structure, contribute to a higher density of land use, which maximizes the use of space in plots that may have a high cost, as is the case in the sectors of La Mariscal and Ñaquito.

In addition, employment zones create areas where diverse economic activities are clustered, encouraging the concentration of banking and administrative areas. This, in turn, can generate other types of complementary commercial activities, such as restaurants, shops and professional services, enriching the economic activity of the city's established and new sectors.

On the other hand, the concentration of workplaces in office buildings can influence urban transport planning. This phenomenon leads to a greater need for mobility and transport of people, which can lead to new public transport lines or an increase in routes and frequencies.

In addition, in most cases, the design of office buildings includes public space, such as squares and recreational areas. These

spaces can contribute to urban life and improve the inhabitants' quality of life, facilitating social interaction. Similarly, buildings' aesthetics influence the city's image, contributing to their identification as urban landmarks that show progress and modernity.

Finally, the functional renovation that La Mariscal underwent allowed it to become a multi-purpose urban centre in the 1970s. The change of use from the original dwellings to offices and shops revitalised the sector and transformed its image.

In short, office buildings not only fulfil an economic function but also impact the configuration of the city in terms of design and functionality. By considering these aspects, their planning and development have contributed positively to improving urban quality.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Geography clearly conditions how cities are configured and, consequently, the architecture that makes them up. As Inés del Pino points out, until the first half of the twentieth century the square was the starting point of the city of Quito, while, in the second decade of the century, it was the communication routes – the large avenues – that assumed this configuring role (Del Pino, 2020). The architecture that is born within this framework is unfailingly influenced by the scale and character of these wheeled axles.

However, this phenomenon is not specific to the city of Quito or Latin American cities. In the mid-nineteenth century, both in Europe and in the United States, there was an expansion of industry, thanks to the implementation of the railway. In turn, this fact implied an increase in financial activity that modified the way banks, cooperatives, and insurance firms associated with them work. As a result, administrative work, both in the state and in the private sector, grew and more bureaucratic jobs were generated (Hascher et al., 2005). This phenomenon

led to the proliferation of new office buildings, and a restructuring of workspaces. At the urban level, the great change of scale that led to the modern city began at the end of the nineteenth century in the city of Chicago, and then became widespread with the vertical city promulgated by the CIAM and the Modern Movement.

Over time, buildings linked to workspaces evolved towards the open plan and functional indefiniteness. This process of purification of the elements of the plant, in which the user is somehow excluded, occurs in parallel with the evolution of the city in which vehicles become the protagonists. For this reason, it is important to study examples of office buildings that are committed to a different way of understanding the relationship with the city and with the user. These buildings contributed to defining the relationships between architecture and the use of public space, as well as reconfiguring the city's own image through their typological and constructive solutions. Modern architecture in Quito offers interesting examples in this regard, which this article seeks to highlight.

Office buildings are essential for the transformation and urban revitalisation of cities like Quito, as they contribute to densification and efficient land use and facilitate economic development and infrastructure improvement.

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Figure 1. Plan of the city of Quito, Antonio Gil, Plan for the use of the police force, 1914. Source: Damero, 2007, A. Ortiz Crespo.

Figure 2. Map of the city of Quito, Photolithography Editorial Chimborazo, 1931. Source: Damero, 2007, A. Ortiz Crespo.

Figure 3. Sheet 20 of the Topographic Map of Ecuador, Geological Survey by Dr. Walter Sauer, and Adalberto Estrada, 1939-1940. Source: Damero, 2007, A. Ortiz Crespo

Figure 4. Plan of the Regulatory Plan of 1942 by Guillermo Jones O., Plan zoning and characterized centers of the future (project), Regulatory Plan of Quito, 1944. Source: Metropolitan Directorate of Territorial Planning

Figure 5. Plan N° 14, Photograph of the model Floor Plan of the Civic and Government Center, scale 1:2000 (preliminary project), Regulatory Plan of Quito, 1942. Source:

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Figure 6. Plan 5 Diagram of the Master Plan 1967, Land Use for the City of Quito, Master Plan of Urban Planning of San Francisco de Quito, 1967. Source: Edited by the authors, June 2022

Figure 7. Map of the city of Quito, 1946. Scale 1:10,000. Important roads in the northern sector identified from west to east: 1. Av. América, 2. Av. Diez de Agosto, 3. Av. Río Amazonas and 4. Av. Seis de Diciembre. Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022

Figure 11. Political Plan of the City of Quito, 1970. Scale 1:20,000, It can be identified in this plan that La Carolina Park is not considered a green space, but not the Alameda, El Ejido and Quito Tennis. Source: Mapoteca Instituto Geográfico Militar, edited by the authors, June 2022

Figure 12. View of the site of the old Municipal House, Quito 1960. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/359490914137939/photos/a.611480072272354/1247680575318964/>