



## **The Economie et Humanisme Movement - The Politicization of Urban Planning in Brazil after the Second World War**

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The purpose of this study is to explore the theoretical matrixes and research methods that have guided planning bureaus formed by the Economie et Humanisme Movement in Brazil, with a new generation of young urbanists, architects, sociologists and economists involved in a wide-ranging project of social transformation through urban and regional development plans.

The Economie et Humanisme movement was founded in 1942 by French Dominican priests, and it intended to create the bases of a new project to confront the social doctrine of the catholic Church. This project took on a new direction after the visit of one the founders, Father Louis Joseph Lebreton to Brazil and new ideas and concepts were embraced. One and certainly the most important for the local social reality was the concept of under development. Brazil and other countries in Latin America continent became a kind of laboratory of research on social problems and transformed and enlarged the fundamentals of the Economie et Humanisme movement. In Brazil, Lebreton achieved what he had not succeeded in France in the 1940s. His influence on the different segments of the Brazilian Catholic Church introduced him to politicians in branches of the government in the cities of Recife, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In these cities, he formed local teams and developed new research methods that revealed the socio-economic situation of the communities he analyzed. In 1952, as a consultant for the Commission on Social Welfare, Father Lebreton helped to establish a survey on the standard of living in 34 Brazilian cities.

The research on the possibilities of economic development of the State of São Paulo was carried out through fieldwork, interviews with local personalities and statistical consultations, and it included already existing economic studies previously developed by local experts. The methods employed would serve as a model for later research.

SAGMACS, the local team established by Lebreton in the city of São Paulo combining professionals and academics from different fields as sociologists, architects, engineers, was conceived as a social research laboratory to articulate urban and regional studies. The method of research including the whole urbanized area of the agglomeration of São Paulo consolidated the perception of an urban reality well beyond the limits of a county. Among the main contributions of the method introduced by Lebreton to urban studies in São Paulo is the perception of the socio-economic diversity in the composition of city neighborhoods and the understanding of the existence of the outskirts and their dialectic relationship with the center area of the city. They derive from the concept of development and under-development devised by Lebreton in his studies on Latin America. He established the guidelines for a new generation of researchers committed to the political, social and economic transformation of Brazilian society.

**KEY WORDS:** Planning history, theories and methods on urban planning, urban and social change.