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City and regional center: forms and commercial uses in Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Abstract

This paper aims to present some forms and commercial uses in Juiz de Fora (Brazil). Methodologically, the studies of the city's urban history is referred to in order to highlight the arcades as marks of a city strongly influenced by the industrial heritage and the shopping malls as expressions of a city that means to grow up and root. It is concluded that the expansion of the commerce to the outskirts of the city's historical nucleus' limits, besides showing the strength of the subcenters, shows the classic implantation of a shopping mall in areas which bear great urban equipment. In Juiz de Fora's case, the city's commercial sector growth in the past few years, with the implantation of many shopping malls, marks the adjustment that the old industrial city is making to fit in as a regional center which receives a floating population avid for expenditure.

Keywords: Commerce, Mall, Urban Space, Public Space, Juiz de Fora (Brazil).

1 – Introduction

This paper is a result of part of a research, which wedges eminently bibliographic, about the relationship between the commerce and Juiz de Fora city (located at the southeast of Minas Gerais State, Brazil) under the Architecture and Urbanism point of view. This research, as well as other related investigations, has been developed in the scope of *Ágora Research Nucleus*, linked to the Department of Architecture and Urbanism and the Post-graduation in Built Environment Program, both at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora.

The paper's main goal is to present some forms and commercial uses in Juiz de Fora, together with the time and place of their implementation. For that, we start from a methodological approach grounded on the evidence of commercial activity participation in the city ever since its establishment, in 1850, until nowadays.

The paper is structured in four sections, besides this introduction and the final considerations. It begins with the contextualization of Juiz de Fora in the Brazilian scenery, highlighting some relevant historical and morphological aspects for the city's formation and consolidation. Then, we approach the commercial sector, highlighting the logics of the tertiary sector. On the fourth section the arcades' (which are a prominent architectural typology in the city) path is shown until the consolidation of shopping malls. Finally, it is possible to conclude that the commercial expansion to the outskirts of the city's historical nucleus' limits presents itself as an icon on the city's commercial dynamic in the first decade of the twenty-first century and as a mark of the industrial city's adjustment to the post-Fordist and global competition capitalism time (Harvey, 2008; Borja e Castells, 1997).

2 – Brief contextualization of Juiz de Fora in the Brazilian scenery

Juiz de Fora is a city that was established in the mid nineteenth century, in 1850. It had its growth accelerated by the connection between Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais states, by the old 'Gold Path' and worked as a resting point for drovers. However, different from many other cities in Minas Gerais state, Juiz de Fora's urban evolution is not directly tied to mining activity. The city's consolidation happened from the coffee economy's expansion and the industrial development, mainly textile, which lead the city to be called 'Manchester Mineira' in the beginning of the twentieth century (Oliveira, 1966). The city also received other nicknames such as 'Europa dos pobres', 'Atenas mineira' e 'Barcelona mineira'. These nicknames highlighted the

effort Juiz de Fora made to civilize up and modernize, which at the time was the same as become as close as possible to Europe or, more specifically, to France. Soon, following the trail of other Brazilian cities, towed by the expansion of the industrial sector, the commercial sector consolidated in offer of goods and services in the central nucleus in order to meet a demand of the bourgeoisie at the beginning of the twentieth century avid for expenditure (Benjamin, 1999).

Morphologically, the city's historical nucleus can be described as a triangle conformed by Rio Branco Avenue (part of the old Paraibuna Road and first street in Juiz de Fora), by Getúlio Vargas Avenue (part of the old UniãoIndústria Road) and by Presidenteltamar Franco Avenue (old Independência avenue, resultant of the canalization of a tributary stream from Paraibuna River in the second half of the twentieth century) [Picture 1]. According to Abdalla (2000: 10), Rio Branco, Getúlio Vargas and Itamar Franco avenues form together what is considered the living heart of Juiz de Fora city, not only the city's central birth place, that is, this is the place where the urban life happens and it is possible to watch local citizens, the urban every day, the city's culture, the society, the debates and regional problems, anyway, it is the place where the city exposes its own things.



FIG1:

Central triangle in Juiz de Fora. Source: Braida (2008: 99).

The crossing between Halfeld street (inserted in the referred triangle, parallel toltamar Franco avenue) with Rio Branco avenue is considered the city's neuralgic point and heart, especially for the connection between Halfeld Park and Halfeld Street's Boardwalk, elements that contribute to the formation of the city center's

landscape. It is in this context that the arcades are highlighted, as typology of singular appropriation in the city (Braida, 2011).

Nowadays, Juiz de Fora is considered, within the Brazilian scenery, as a medium sized city with an estimated population of 517000 inhabitants. Under the economic point of view, the services sector prevails in the city, followed by the secondary sector, in which the manufacturing of food and beverages, textile products, clothing pieces, metal products, metallurgy, furniture and vehicle assembly can be highlighted. The commercial and service render emporiums are, basically, located in the city's central and adjacent areas, where are also the main bank agencies.

Even though it is possible to watch, nowadays, to other nucleuses and centralities formation process, such as Santa Terezinha, Benfica and São Pedro neighborhoods, and even at Cascatinha, where Independência Shopping, object of study for this paper, is located, the original city center is still an integration and city vitality center, and, therefore, a place of symbolic reference which participate in the Juiz de Fora's citizen's urban imaginary. It is an urban center animated by social relations due not only to the maintenance of residential uses but also an extent commercial net, which besides leisure and culture options, with a certain tendency to exhaustion (Colchete Filho e Maya-Monteiro, 2003).

3 – The commercial sector in Juiz de Fora

Juiz de Fora's commerce, just like many other cities, is imbricated with the urban development itself (Vargas, 2011), in our case, being instituted since the arrival of the first Portuguese in the region bearing the New Path (royal road that gave access to Minas Gerais). It was the commercial emporiums, mainly the warehouses, which stimulated the thriving of the local population. According to Guimarães (2008: 34), the Portuguese immigrants were the ones who, later, fixed themselves in the city and 'in majority, established financially by small popular commerce emporiums such as bakeries, bars and pubs'.

It is also possible to verify that a great influence in Juiz de Fora's commercial sector was promoted by Syrian and Lebanese immigrants, who saw, in this activity a path to financial prosperity. Their commercial emporiums, usually fabric shops and haberdashery, place where they also lives, were installed in areas of urban concentration such as the city central ways and the proximities of the Train Station (Guimarães, 2008: 50).

This way, Juiz de Fora's downtown was being constituted by a balanced mix of functions (commercial, services, inhabitation and leisure), which guaranteed, until nowadays maintenance of vitality. In this context, the presence of arcades' presence associated to the boardwalks, configuring, according to Braida (2011), a space of 'net of paths'. So, Juiz de Fora's downtown acts as an 'outdoor mall', situation favored by its spatial configuration which encompasses ways, boardwalks and arcades 'which, through labyrinth spaces connect many blocks present there' (Abdalla, 2011: 22), easing the pedestrian displacement end, consequently, favoring the exchange of goods and also the symbolic exchanges.

Because of the characteristics cited above, Juiz de Fora still preserves the downtown as an important space inside the city's dynamism, because it has the greatest concentration of infrastructure and of economic and service activities. However, just like other big and medium sized cities, Juiz de Fora already presents some signs of the beginning of a decentralization process or polinuclearization. The intensive use of soil in the central region of Brazilian big cities generates an elevation of the soil price, taxes and rents of the buildings installed there. This way, not only the dwellers, but also 'firms, companies and activities that can't maintain themselves and pay for the high land prices, displace or decentralize' (Schwenk & Cruz, 2005: 182).

Motivated by financial questions, many marketers and service providers end up looking for other places to settle. For example, the 400% readjustment on building rents downtown, making their medium value rise from R\$2000,00 (two thousand Reais) to R\$10000,00 (ten thousand Reais), rebounded in the closing of stores activities which had problems shouldering the costs of central positioning, migrating to other neighborhoods, where the rent prices showed themselves more accessible (Lopes, 2011). This way, the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, until then, predominantly marked by the residential use, have incremented the tertiary sector in their dynamics. Examples of these neighborhoods are: São Mateus, Alto dos Passos and Manoel Honório.

Such decentralization principle has been making the City Hall of Juiz de Fora, through the Economic Planning and Development Secretariat (SPDE), start studies in order to guide the commercial expansion in the neighborhoods. According to the Secretary of SPDE, André Zuchi, the main effort must be made so a downtown emptying and consequent degradation, as occurs in many other cities, won't happen. However, Zuchi highlights that it is important to prioritize the development of different regions in town, implanting in the neighborhoods such equipment as: 'shopping malls, hospitals, parks and gardens' (Lopes, 2011). It is possible to point, then, a worry or, at least, an intention, parting from the city governors, with fomentation and incentive

to the installation of urban equipment in peripheral areas, but, at the same time, ensuring the vitality of the central area.

4 – From arcades to shopping malls: commerce forms in the city

Juiz de Fora can be considered a city marked by the presence of commercial arcades. There are more than fifty passageways in the city center and some more spread on adjacent neighborhoods. These arcades, articulated with boardwalks (pedestrian streets), still full of vitality, are witnesses to the city's commercial dynamic and history.

According to Duarte (2006: 98-99), 'in each period of time we can see a series of highlighted architectonic elements, which differ certain activities from the set of social-spatial experience, marking, decisively the city's forms'. Some of these elements presented by the author, divided in three historical moments of the city, are: (1) traditional or pre-industrial city: the great religious monuments, symbols of secular power, the great public markets, the theaters, aqueducts, bridges and central squares; (2) industrial or modern city: the train stations, department stores, commerce arcades, the great factories and the workman villages, the great peripheral residential sets, the public parks, the skyscrapers, highways, viaducts, parking lots and slums; and (3) contemporary city: shopping malls and closed house complexes.

This way, it is possible to say that the modern program of commercial architecture was built by great stores, by markets and, most particularly, by the commercial arcades. 'In them elements of different languages are combined: the Academicism, the modernism, the Chicago School and so called 'functional tradition' originated at the Industrial Revolution' (Aguerre and Landoni, 1990: 96). The arcades in Juiz de Fora are, then, heritage of this time of accelerated economic, technical and industrial growth.

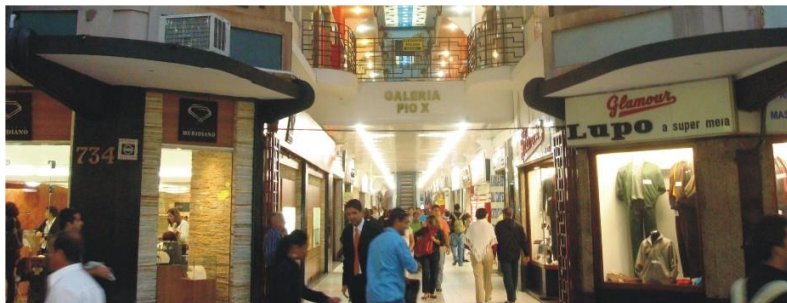


FIG 2 Pio X Arcade, Juiz de Fora's first arcade. Source: Braidá (2008: 105).

The construction of arcades in Juiz de Fora began in the beginning of the past century. According to Junqueira (2006: 66), important works for the city's downtown configuration were the construction of Pio X Arcade [Picture 2], the first arcade building in the city, built in 1923 by the Pantaleone Arcuri Contractors and Cine Theatro Central, in 1929.

For Abdalla (1996: 67), the form generated by the arcades is representative of a post-industrial context in Juiz de Fora, of a tertiary period, once the economic analysis point the golden period of industrialization between the fourth part of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. This way, the elevated number of arcades can be verified after the 'technological-mechanical city' lived before the Second World War. Also, according to Carvalho (2006: 36), the first arcades in Juiz de Fora were not very successful at the beginning and "The occupation would happen with the beginning of the strong economic stagnation of the traditional industry in the city in the 1950's, period which is coincident to the increase of little family jersey industries, main sector to occupy them with their retail stores (...)" (Carvalho, 2006: 37).

However, according to Abdalla (1996: 11), Juiz de Fora's arcades 'are like a mark for the city's urbanization, because they represent an important contribution to the urban and public space'. In this sense, Junqueira (2006: 81) says that, with the streets parallel to Halfeld Street, 'the arcade buildings form a peculiar net, main urban characteristic in downtown Juiz de Fora'. According to Carvalho (2006: 59-60), "While the arcade typology spread around the country, in Juiz de Fora it reached another scale of importance, practically being incorporated to the traditional urban mesh. This way, a few years later, the trace of the center streets would almost be confounded with this new urban system that began to leap up".

Abdalla (1996: 66-67) still points some factor that contributed to this formation, amongst them we can highlight: (1) the law, evidenced in the Edifications Code and Soil Use and Occupation Law, because they limit the uses and concede permissions to determined buildings; (2) the market, which would make viable the incorporation a determined kind of enterprise; and (3) the society as a whole, which accepts this typology well. According to Carvalho (2006: 63), this urban micro cosmos in Juiz de Fora mentioned by Abdalla meets one of its main success reasons at the 'favorable feature of downtown urban morphology, mainly because of the design of many 'lanky' blocks, fit for fragmentation and transformation of their inner parts in public spaces'. The urban micro cosmos formed by arcades present in downtown Juiz de Fora

is also due to the fact that it is possible to find in them all the five urban uses: housing, commerce, services, industry and leisure (Abdalla, 1996: 31).

The arcades are, mostly, buildings of mixed use, spread the following way: (1) on the ground floor, the use is mostly commercial, because there are shops there, but there are also a few accesses to the other floors of the building; (2) in some cases, on the following upper floors, usually second and third floors, there are some stores, spaces for service provision, such as beauty salons and sewing workshops and classrooms, usually with preparatory courses; (3) in most cases, the other floors are occupied with apartments. According to Abdalla (1996: 29-30), the building-arcade continuity forms a space called 'center-mall, in a similarity with what is used in geography to determine the Central Business District (CBD)'.

The maintenance of Juiz de Fora's center as a big 'outdoor mall', formed by commercial arcades and boardwalks, that is, by net passageways, and even more by those that connect to Halfeld Street Boardwalk, are fed by the local power, shared by marketers and accepted by Juiz de Fora's people in a general form.

However, nowadays, the arcades coexist with a new commercial typology, with a sign of contemporaneity: the shopping mall. Mumford (2004: 475), referring to the European commercial arcades, affirms that 'even though most part of those commercial arcades still exist successfully, they haven't been broadly imitated; or before that, only with the creation of anti-urban shopping malls, built for the accommodation of the motorized traffic, that this conception was established in a different way'. This way, from the commercial arcades to the shopping malls, the commercial buildings are leaving traces in the urban history and witnessing the time and place they are built, with features particularly meaningful to Juiz de Fora.

5 - The expansion of commerce to the outskirts of the central area: Independência Shopping as an expression of the commerce in contemporary Juiz de Fora

In Juiz de Fora, after the economic crisis in the 1980's, it is possible to watch the growth, fed by the condition of regional commerce and services center. It is around the same time that are inserted in the commercial dynamic of the city's central and adjacent areas, until then strongly marked by the presence of arcades, the enterprises that held very shy typological characteristics of shopping malls. Mister Shopping (inaugurated in 1988), Santa Cruz Shopping (inaugurated in 1991) and Alameda Mall (1999) are three examples that marked the city until 2008, when the opening of

Independência Shopping happened, commercial typology established for decades, but characteristic in the contemporary Juiz de Fora and in the city's commercial polinuclealization movement.

Following, practically, the same logic of the arcades set in Juiz de Fora's downtown, in November, 26th 1988 Mister Shopping was opened, presenting 23000 m² of built area spread on three floors, with 120 stores and a parking lot with capacity to park 1000 cars per day. According to the mall's webpage, 'Mister Shopping is strategically located in Juiz de Fora's center and, for 23 years, lives in complete harmony with the arcades which are one of the city's trademarks' (Misters Shopping, [20--?]).

Approximately three years after Mister Shopping's opening, Santa Cruz Shopping was opened in July 15th, 1991. The mall was installed at the building of the old Santa Cruz Spinning and Weaving Company, inaugurated in the 1910's and closed in the 1980's. It is possible to say that the Condominium of Santa Cruz Building was one the first commercial complexes in Minas Gerais' Zona da Mata, consolidates as reference in the retailer segment, even more in the 1990's. Of bigger proportions as Mister Shopping, and with equipment such as movie theaters, food court and rotating parking lot, Santa Cruz Shopping has, according to its own webpage, more than 360 active stores, which contribute, economically, 'to Juiz de Fora's development, providing more than 120 direct jobs in its administration and other 1500 indirect jobs' (Santa Cruz Shopping, [20--?]).

We must highlight that the main similarity between the two malls cited above is their central location. Also in downtown Juiz de Fora are other enterprises that, even though received the name of mall, they, architectonically must be fit as arcades, as in the case of Garden Shopping, Central Shopping, Marechal Center Shopping Rio Branco and JF Shopping.

In 1999, with the expansion of commerce to regions outside the central area, Alameda Mall is opened, established in the city's south part. Also presenting movie theaters, parking lot and food court, the mall brought to the city the concept of street mall, a way to ally the shopping space of a arcade with the dynamic of the sidewalk. This is the same logic adopted at Spazio Design, an especially dedicated to decoration mall, inaugurated in 2009, already influenced by the opening of Independência Shopping.

Independência Shopping [Picture 03], projected with a typology of a curve and with a cover that tries to take the maximum of natural zenithal light, it has 85000 m² of built area, distributed in three garage floors and two store floors, 1300 parking spots and approximately 150 stores. Even though it has modest proportions, when compared to other malls in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, or other capitals in Brazil, we

can consider Independência Shopping as the first mall in Juiz de Fora which fits in the mall 'national standart'.

The main difference between these malls and the others in the city, is the existence of four anchor stores (Renner, C&A, Leader and LojasAmericanas), six mega stores (Casas Bahia, Ponto Frio, Centauro, RiHappy, Ricardo Eletro and Saraiva Mega Store) and five movie theaters (UCI Kinoplex), besides a food court compound by local, national and international restaurants, all united in one same space (Independência Shopping, 2010).



FIG 3 Top view of Independência Shopping's implantation, in Juiz de Fora. Available at: <<http://tremdaexquina.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/9750534.jpg>>. Accessed in: Feb. 1st, 2013.

Ever since its opening, Independência Shopping started to exert a great influence in the commercial dynamic of Juiz de Fora, not only in the neighborhood, but also in the territory, and also, because of its location, in the city's skyline. Locally, the mall attracted financial investments, raised the soil value and the realty around it and demanded road changes; territorially, we can verify that the mall attracted to the city relevant brans to the national scenery and has also attracted people from the nearby cities, ratifying Juiz de Fora as city of great influence at Zona da Mata and its region. From the landscape point of view, the mall turned a very sloped piece of land into one

more belvedere to the city. Because of these characteristics, great port and influence, Independência Shopping's project can be considered a Great Urban Project (GUP) (Tasca et. al., 2011), constituting nexus between 'the global location and the local location' (Mouleart, Rodrigues and Swyngedouw 2003: 7; Bauman, 1999) and presenting itself as a paradigm in Juiz de Fora and region's commercial dynamic in the 2000's.

6 – Final considerations

Think the city from the commerce existent in it is to give visibility to a sector that, allied to the residential use, conPictures as one of the most significant about the strategies of territory occupation. According to Lefebvre (2004: 129), each production type had its kind of society and 'each urban type made a specific centrality'. The great society types cited by the author are: (1) The Eastern city; (2) the old city; (3) the medieval city; and (4) the capitalist city. It is in the capitalist city that the 'consumption center' emerges. According to Lefebvre (2004: 130), 'the double character of the capitalist centrality is well known: place for consumption and consumption of places'. It is inside this logic of capitalist and industrial centrality that we highlight the singular structure of nets of arcades and boardwalks in Juiz de Fora's center. This way, this commercial typology brings, in itself, marks of a modernist city, which technicist progress foreseen was evident, including, in the materials used for the construction: iron, glass and concrete.

However, from the industrial city to the city in the advanced capitalism times, a new architectural typology turned to the exchange of good is inserted: the shopping malls, true expression of centrality in the contemporary city. In this context, Juiz de For a keeps its position of commercial relevance and regional center, even more after the implantation of Independência Shopping, which influences extend by the other cities nearby.

Even though the typology of the arcades has not been left out, easily seen by the opening of two new arcades in the 2000's, the construction of new commercial enterprises, which carry the shopping mall typology, has been presented as a reality. According to Tribuna de Minas Newspaper (2012), for 2014, the inauguration of a 14000 m² street mall is foreseen, located in a neighborhood adjacent to downtown (São Mateus), resulting from an investment of a local group (Solar Group), whose investments are in the order of R\$20 million. It also foreseen, according to the same newspaper, the construction of a new mall at the North part of the city, Jardim Norte

Shopping, projected by a local architects' office (Romero, 2013), which also participated in the Independência Shopping project.

Finally, we wish to conclude highlighting Juiz de Fora's particular urban history as strongly linked to the tertiary sector. The city, originated and developed as support in the commercial route, structured their center incorporating the arcades and, later, the boardwalks, as marks of their spatial dynamic and urban personality. Allied to the permanence of residential use downtown, the so wished upon vitality of urban spaces is kept, but already gives signs of exhaustion.

The new commercial typologies in the 1980's and 1990's tried to establish in this very structured mesh, but, the demands for a real shopping mall, in the characteristic shapes of implantation in the new centralities, were only fulfilled with the recent construction of Independência Shopping, which marks the insertion of the shopping mall typology in the commercial dynamic of the first decade of the twenty-first century in Juiz de Fora. Knowing that the commercial success depends on the course of economy as a whole, we ask, in a crisis moment, how the shopping malls in the city would hold up. The commerce in central area has been resisting bravely to the crisis and new commercial typologies built and in building process, but until when? The commercial sector in the city inaugurates a new chapter when it concentrates their investments in a 'new' typology and that shifts its insertion out from the City Center, betting high in the changing from an industrial period to a post-Fordist capitalist time and of global competition, in which the tertiary sector is the propelling spring to dominance in the regional scenery.

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