ABSTRACT

This paper uses the cases of the Teatro São José and the Teatro Municipal to explain how and why performance space in the city of São Paulo became an increasingly public issue between 1854 and 1911. Specifically, I analyze the ways in which the notion of the theater as a public good evolved both in the discourse of paulistas and in the practice of legislation and contract negotiation. This paper thus interprets planning history as a history of ideas and assumes cultural policymaking to encompass both government and nongovernment actors, to this end utilizing legislation, government records, blueprints, and the press as sources. I argue that theaters’ “publicness” in São Paulo was rationalized along three lines: theaters’ potential accessibility to a broad audience, their visibility, and their high cost. While public spending on the São José was justified on the grounds of economic development and moral and civic education, the Teatro Municipal garnered support as a project of Progressive Era urban reform that sought to place São Paulo within the ranks of the civilized world.

INTRODUCTION

On the morning of February 15, 1898, the Teatro São José burned down. No one knew precisely what had happened, only that the fire had begun backstage and had been fueled by a violent wind and the gas of the stage lights.1 By the time the fire squad doused the flames, São Paulo’s elite had lost its premiere theater and leisure space. The São José was no grand opera house; constructed between 1858 and 1876, it had been intended for a city of just over 30,000.2 Nevertheless, it was the “heart of the city,”3 the stage to renowned actress Sarah Bernhardt as well as homegrown musicians Alexandre and Luiz Levy.4 As one reporter lamented, the flames of that windy summer morning had robbed the state capital of its only theater suitable for world-class companies and, implicitly, world-class audiences.5

That same reporter went on to argue for a solution to the city’s loss: a municipal theater. Unlike the São José, which was the product of a contract between the province of São Paulo and a private investor, this new theater

2 Marcilio (2004), 262.
3 Schmidt (1954), 107.
would be initiated and at least partially funded by the municipality of São Paulo. The idea was hardly original; since 1895, the Municipal Chamber had approved various bills authorizing the construction of a theater that would improve upon the acoustic, hygienic, and aesthetic defects of the São José. The destruction of the latter spurred both the state and city legislatures into action, but the result, as urged by the *A Noite* contributor, ultimately lay in the city's hands: the monumental Teatro Municipal, inaugurated on September 12, 1911.

This paper uses the cases of the Teatros São José and Municipal to explain how and why performance space in the city of São Paulo became an increasingly public issue between 1854 and 1911, a period that begins with Antônio Bernardo Quartim’s proposal for a provincial theater and ends with the inauguration of the Teatro Municipal. Specifically, I analyze the ways in which the notion of the theater space as a public good evolved both in the discourse of paulista lawmakers and journalists and in the practice of legislation and contract negotiation. This paper thus interprets planning history as a history of ideas, focusing more on the discourse that surrounded the two theater’s development and less on the design process itself. I also assume cultural policymaking to encompass both government and nongovernment actors, and to this end utilize legislation, government records, blueprints, and the press as sources for understanding ideas about theater space and its “publicness.”

I argue that theaters’ publicness was rationalized along three lines: their potential accessibility to a broad audience, and thus the need to regulate their activity and structure; their visibility, and thus function as symbols of material and cultural progress; and, more pragmatically, their high cost, and thus the need for a supervising body with both extensive resources and longevity. While public spending on the São José was justified on the grounds of economic development and moral and civic education, the Teatro Municipal garnered support as a project of Progressive Era urban reform that sought to place São Paulo within the ranks of the civilized world. These ideas were reflected in the two theaters’ development: while the former was initiated by a private citizen, who in exchange for covering half of the costs was given the freedom to oversee construction, the latter was a government project from start to finish, with the prefecture appointing the architecture firm and the Municipal Chamber micromanaging the theater’s functions and design. In the realm of cultural politics, then, Brazil’s financially and politically rocky transition from empire to republic did little to erode government power; if anything, the First Republic (1890-1930) witnessed an increase in the promotion and regulation of the arts. For the case of São Paulo, this trend would eventually lead to the creation of the Department of Culture and Recreation in 1935, the first of its kind in Brazil.

Such efforts by the paulistano government can in part be explained by the dramatic redistribution of national political and economic power in the late nineteenth century. First, São Paulo’s regional coffee boom, along with the

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6 *Paulista* is used to describe someone or something of the province or, after 1889, state of São Paulo. By contrast, *paulistano/a* is a descriptor referring to the city of São Paulo.

7 One source that the reader may find lacking is the *Correio Paulistano*, the unfortunate consequence of the APESP’s closure while I was conducting research for this paper.

8 I define “publicness” (my own term) in this paper as the condition of being in the public interest and thus meriting government funding and/or management.
development of an extensive railroad network in the 1870s and 1880s, transformed the city into a bustling and wealthy entrepôt—the Chicago of Brazil. Second, the coup that toppled the Brazilian empire in 1889, with the aid of the province’s Republican Party, offered paulistas the opportunity to steer national politics in the name of “order and progress.” The coup also cut off arts patronage by the Court, which had built and subsidized theaters in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador da Bahia while ignoring São Paulo. As São Paulo grew in population, wealth, and political influence, paulista lawmakers became increasingly concerned with the condition and cultural reputation of their capital city. The theater, with its ability to accommodate and thus impact a broad swath of São Paulo’s population, became a medium for implementing new visions of modernity, whether through performance, architecture, or the regulation of audience behavior.

ACCESSIBILITY

At the center of debates about the publicness of a theater lay the question of who constituted the public. When in 1854 Antônio Peixoto, a member of the São Paulo Provincial Legislative Assembly, concluded that a theater was a “business” rather than a “public service,” he defined the public as the provincial taxpayer, that is, free men of property. The possibility that coffee and sugar planters residing hours or days from the capital city might be excluded from the benefits of a province-funded theater thus worried Peixoto, as it did Antônio Barbosa da Cunha a year later. In the age of railroads, however, long distances were a less insurmountable hurdle. Moreover, the beneficiary public of a theater was expanded to encompass all those inhabiting a government’s jurisdiction regardless of ownership status, race, sex, or nationality. Worries of socioeconomic exclusivity by some legislators thus replaced those of geographic exclusivity. In 1900, for example, State Senator Ezequiel de Paula Ramos couched his claim that a state theater would serve only a limited population in an explicit language of class, urging senators to reconsider releasing “2,000 contos so that the rich and powerful classes can frequent the theater.” A better investment, Ramos proposed, would be to establish an Institute of Fine Arts accessible to all paulistas.

Ramos’s concern for the accessibility of a state theater was justified by the former São José’s reputation as a space for elite sociability, a reputation that by 1900 the majority of lawmakers were no longer interested in upholding. Broad accessibility, in other words, was at the dawn of the twentieth century an aim worth defending, as Senator Carlos Guimarães did. “I do not agree with those who consider the theater as an exception made in favor of the rich,” he stated, going on to explain that the São José’s replacement would have “different levels, different prices, and therefore accommodation for all social classes.” The final blueprints for the Teatro Municipal, presented in 1903, held true to Guimarães’s vision, featuring five floors of seating, including a

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9 see Simões (2001).
10 Silveira (1978), 25.
11 Annaes da Assembléia Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo (1854), 212.
12 Annaes da Assembléia Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo (1855), 221.
13 Senado do Estado de São Paulo, Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1900, 139.
14 Senado, Annaes 1900, 175.
gallery for which ticket prices would often, although not always, be comparative with those of working-class theaters. Moreover, while the São José’s 1855 plan offered a ratio of only 500 rowed seats to 82 boxes, the Municipal had 1,187 seats to its 89 public boxes (Figure 2). Neither theater, though, allowed for standing audiences.

For Ramos and Guimarães, equal access was not only a matter of principle, but also a means for reforming a population plagued by the “social question.” In the era before the cinema and radio, the theater was seen as a crucial platform for educating and, specifically, moralizing the public. The notion that a theater was a “school of morality” was already a strong justification for the São José’s establishment in the 1850s, both in Antônio Quartim’s proposal and in the Assembly hall. This belief carried through the 1870s in defense of continued spending on the São José’s construction. As Assembly member Manoel Arouca expounded, “since Antiquity the theaters have always been considered a great school for polishing, perfecting, correcting humanity’s customs.” This was especially true for women, for whom the São José would serve as a “pretty school for learning, for illustrating the noble sentiments that should beat in wives’ hearts!” Arouca’s arguments were applied at the fin-de-siècle by paulista legislators to the population at large. Like Arouca, José Manoel de Azevedo Marques harked back to the age of Athens, but emphasized the enormity of theaters in which “an entire population could access that powerful means of education.” Similarly, for Augusto Miranda de Azevedo, the theater was a tool for “combating the lack of education of the people,” especially in contrast to the vices propagated by the rise of gambling halls and boxing rings.

As Miranda de Azevedo implied, if the theater were to be an educational institution meriting government support, its curriculum would need to meet government standards. In the words of one A Noite contributor, “The theater should educate the public... and since most of the time impresarios have few scruples, it would be just for there to exist a superior power that would prohibit the performance of the obscenities that we frequently see on stage.” Theater censorship and inspection by the province of São Paulo was in place at least as early as 1837, a testament to the idea that the government should “maintain the fine arts, conserve good taste and good traditions.” In the 1890s, however, the inspection of and distribution of permits for theater productions

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15 see Moraes, 179, for an analysis of Teatro Municipal prices and Table AE2 for an extensive list of theater ticket prices. All currency is in mil-réis: 15 or 15000 = 1 mil-réis, 1:000$ = 1 conto, 1.000:000$ = 1,000 contos.
16 Annaes (1855), 486.
17 Antonio Bernardo Quartim and Marcellino Gerard (12 Mar 1854), ALESP, Base de Dados: Império: Documentos, No. CF54.077; Annaes (1854), 212.
18 Annaes das sessões da Assembléia Legislativa da Provincia de São Paulo (1874), 463.
19 Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, Annaes da sessão ordinaria e extraordinaria de 1898, 362.
20 Deputados, Annaes 1898, 363.
22 Joaquim José Pacheco, Oficio (2 Nov 1837), APESP, Viver em São Paulo: O Poder e o Cotidiano.
23 Annaes (1855), 221.
Figure 1 - Jules Martin. Seating chart of the Teatro São José, date unknown, lithography. In Amaral, História dos Velhos Teatros de São Paulo, 1979, n/n.

Figure 2 - Seating chart of the Teatro Municipal. In Marcia Camargos, Teatro Municipal de São Paulo, 2011, 29.
became the task of the state police rather than its district judges, in this manner mirroring the expansion of the notion of public security.\textsuperscript{24} Theater inspection also became an increasingly regulated and niche duty. By Decree 494 (30 Oct 1897, Art. 83), inspecting police delegates were required to attend all performances, always arriving early; maintain “order, decency and silence” among the audience; and check actors’ fidelity to the approved script. Approval was granted ahead of time by the inspector if the work did not insult any religion, offend morality and “public decency,” or defame a particular individual. A decade later, Decree 1714 (18 Mar 1909, Art. 6) replaced religion with politics, prohibiting the offense to any national or foreign institution or functionary, as well as to “good customs and public decency.” The decree also outlined unacceptable audience behaviors, subject to a 20$ to 50$ fine, but urged supervising police to exhibit “prudence” while enforcing the decree.

The morality of a theater’s activity was not legislators’ only concern at the turn of the twentieth century; the theater’s structure itself was also submitted to scrutiny. The very accessibility of a theater—its capacity to hold and mix hundreds if not thousands of men, women, and children—rendered it a laboratory for experiments in sanitation and civil engineering. True to the Progressive Era,\textsuperscript{25} hygiene, safety, and spatial aesthetics were ubiquitous themes in the debates and contracts related to the Teatro Municipal, but were entirely absent from the planning of the Teatro São José. For example, the São José contract ratified as law on April 9, 1855, restricted the theater’s design only in terms of its seating arrangement and location, with the condition that the final plan be approved by the Province. By contrast, the 1898 contract approved for the replacement of the São José explicitly dictated that the new theater meet “all of the modern demands of architecture, luxury, elegance, hygiene, acoustics, and safety” (Law 561, 23 Aug 1898). In a later decree, State President Fernando Prestes de Albuquerque elaborated on these demands, requiring rectangular staircases that did not obstruct hall entrances; high quality masonry, marble, and roof tiling; a metal curtain and other fire blockers; ventilation equipment; a sufficient number of toilets away from sight and smell; ornamentation and colors without exaggeration; and so forth.\textsuperscript{26}

Such specificity was part of a larger trend of increasing micromanagement of entertainment spaces by São Paulo’s governments. The global wave of urban reform that was transforming cities such as London, Paris, and Chicago was in São Paulo reinforced by the high number of engineers wielding political power, as well as the quadrupling of the city’s population between 1890 and 1900.\textsuperscript{27} Furthermore, the Teatro São José had taught lawmakers to mistrust private initiative.\textsuperscript{28} Inspections of the theater by engineers before its formal inauguration in 1876 found deteriorating beaming, crumbling mortar, and an unsound foundation.\textsuperscript{29} A municipal report conducted in 1896 already

\textsuperscript{24} State Decrees 13 (20 Jan 1892), 121 (29 Oct 1892), 264 (27 Oct 1894), 395 (7 Oct 1896), 491 (29 Dec 1896), 437 (20 Mar 1897).
\textsuperscript{25} see Rodgers (1998).
\textsuperscript{26} Decree 624 (7 Dec 1898)
\textsuperscript{27} In that decade, São Paulo’s population leaped from 64,934 inhabitants to 239,820. In Prefeitura de São Paulo, “População nos anos de levantamento censitário,” Histórico Demográfico do Município de São Paulo.
\textsuperscript{28} Annaes (1898), 280.
\textsuperscript{29} Joaquim Saldanha Marinho, Relatorio (24 Apr 1868), Anexo 2, p.2.
prophesied a fiery death for the São José, warning that the theater was “a true furnace filled with fuel, where a single spark could kindle a terrifying fire without a minimal recourse for salvation.”

It was thus understandable that as the state and municipality began to erect sewage systems and regulate private construction, they also began to engage more meticulously in the design of mass public spaces such as theaters. The 1894 Sanitary Code (Decree 233, Mar 2) featured a section of 22 articles devoted exclusively to theater architecture. The majority of its statutes were preventive measures in case of fire—adequate ventilation, metal curtain, unobstructed corridors—but a few were concerned with the audience’s and performers’ comfort and health—sufficient toilets and coatrooms, clean dressing rooms, a visible stage. Similarly, Decree 1714 (1909) dedicated its third section to “safety, hygiene and public comfort,” which called for accessible exits, numbered seats, daily sweeping, and the banning of large hats in the first ten rows. A fourth chapter regulated the usage and supervision of lighting, while a tenth chapter addressed fire safety in terms of personnel, storage, and the flammability of materials.

**VISIBILITY**

There was another aspect of the theater’s structure that planners and observers frequently raised in conversation: the edifice’s monumentality. The assumption that the São José would be a sight to behold was so engrained in 1854 that the Municipal Chamber advised the Provincial Assembly to not locate its theater next door to the Governor’s Palace. The theater would be a “work of such transcendence,” the Chamber worryingly explained, that it would rob the Palácio do Governo of its view and diminish the latter’s stature. The Chamber need not have fretted; while by 1862 the São José was considered one of Brazil’s largest theaters, it was still far from being a “monument of art.” The lack of elegance led lawmakers in 1875 to explicitly demand “beauty” in the building’s final construction, now supervised by Antônio da Silva Prado, the planter and industrialist who would become São Paulo’s first mayor. It was the difference of beauty that led one reviewer to declare, upon the São José’s 1876 inauguration, that the structure was no longer an “unqualified mass of bricks that only served to embarrass us. Now it is a good theater.” When the good theater met its fate in 1898, beauty had already become a staple requirement in theater regulations and contracts. Municipal representative Pedro Augusto Gomes Cardim in 1896 proposed that the city establish an elaborate theater featuring dance and banquet halls of “elegance and luxury,” as well as cafés and bars “with taste and comfort.” Two years later, luxury and elegance were among the Municipal Chamber’s top considerations in judging entries for its theater design competition. The prefecture’s eventual

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31 Câmara Municipal, Ofício (29 Jul 1854), APESP, Viver em São Paulo: O Poder e o Cotidiano.
32 João Jacinthe de Mendonça, Relatorio (19 Mar 1862), 34.
33 Art. 15 of contract between Prado and the Provincial Assembly, in Amaral (1979), 86.
35 Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo, 1896, 31-32.
36 “Concorrencia publica para a construcação de um teatro municipal,” OESP (18 Feb 1898): 3.
delegation of the project to Francisco de Paula Ramos de Azevedo, and the final product’s close resemblance to the Paris Opéra, attested to the prioritization of monumentality.

The publicness of theaters, in other words, was in part wrapped up in these spaces’ visibility. The embarrassment that the Estado de São Paulo reporter felt in 1875, and that would be echoed in A Noite after the São José’s destruction, offers one insight into paulistas’ concerns. Specifically, many perceived the São José and the Teatro Municipal as necessary testaments to the region’s membership in the civilized world—assuming that these theaters were indeed as well executed as those of Paris, Vienna, and Buenos Aires. As state Senator Frederico Abranches summed it up, “When the foreigner visits us, one

Figure 3 - Militão Augusto de Azevedo. Teatro São José, ca. 1870. In Campos, “O capitão Antônio Bernardo Quartim ou o ABC da Engenharia,” Informativo AHM (Jul/Oct 2009).

Figure 5 - The Teatro Municipal, ca. 1912, postcard. In Viver em São Paulo: Galeria de Fotos, APESP, http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/viver/galeria/galeria.php.

37 see Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens (2010).
of the things that most leaves an impression is the lack of a theater.”

In the 1850s, an elegant theater was understood to be a means of boosting the capital city’s reputation and economy. By the 1890s, such an edifice was conceived as a monument to the region’s economic and political success, as well as a medium through which that success would be matched in the cultural realm. In the words of Municipal Chamber member Gomes Cardim, a palatial public theater would show the world that “paulistas are not indifferent to the love of art,” as well as prove that “material development is closely accompanied by, if not realized through, moral and intellectual elevation.”

The physical presence of a theater was thus in itself a source of civic pride at the fin-de-siècle. For state representative Azevedo Marques, the establishment of a world-class opera house was a matter of “paulista patriotism”: “These days, we see among the civilized world the care and scrupulous zeal with which public powers work to maintain these centers of art... It is therefore neither too much nor too early for the artistic capital of this advanced State to have a theater worthy of it.” An A Noite contributor agreed. If São Paulo were to live up to its title of “artistic capital of Brazil,” conferred by Sarah Bernhardt in 1893, it would have to build “a temple of Art... a decent, modern theater that fulfilled the end for which it was destined and honored paulistas.”

The importance of this temple’s role in honoring and shaping the city’s identity was affirmed by the central location of the Teatro Municipal: a high perch above the newly landscaped Anhangabaú Valley and the historic center to the east of it.

As civic landmarks located in the city of São Paulo, both the São José and the Teatro Municipal raised debate over their representativeness. In 1854, Assembly member Prudêncio Cabral defended the future São José on the basis that it would, despite its location, commemorate the entire province as well as the Brazilian empire. In particular, the theater would be required to host events in honor of the annual opening of the Provincial Assembly, the emperor’s birthday, and other key civic dates. After the 1889 coup, November 15 became the most sacred of political dates in Republican São Paulo: the original proposal for Municipal Law 200 specified that the future Teatro Municipal would be annually reserved for civic festivities on that day. While the bill’s final draft omitted this article, advertisements in the paulistano press indicate that the Teatro Municipal, once inaugurated, did host celebrations on the republican anniversary. Both the Municipal and the São José also displayed their extra-municipal loyalty in the form of a box reserved for the provincial/state president, a requirement in the original São José contract (Law 503, 9 Apr 1855) and in the state contract for the São José’s replacement (Decree 624, 7 Dec 1898).

39 Senado, Annaes 1900, 143.
40 Annaes (1855), 224; Francisco Diogo Pereira de Vasconcellos, Relatorio (22 Jan 1857), 23.
41 Actas, 1896, 31.
42 Deputados, Annaes 1898, 362.
43 Aladino, “Capital artística.”
44 Annaes (1854), 215.
45 Art. 10, Projeto 4, Actas, 1896, 19.
46 e.g. “Teatro Municipal,” OESP (13 Nov 1912): 11.
COSTS

The theaters’ function as elaborate, patriotic monuments helped justify the high public cost of their construction, but so did the costs themselves. In the eyes of lawmakers, the scale of such a project was beyond the pocketbooks and organizational capacity of private investors both in the 1850s and the 1890s. For Assembly member Antônio da Cunha, the São José would require provincial funding because paulistano “capitalists [were] so distrustful” that they were unwilling to initiate new ventures “as was done in other places.” 47 In 1898, the Chamber of Deputies was more forgiving, laying the blame on the high standards that a new theater would have to uphold: “it is obvious for us to conclude that private initiative alone is insufficient for carrying out the effect so desired.” 48 Moreover, in both cases, the dispossession of property for the clearing of land was a task that only the government could financially and legally undertake, and only for the sake of unambiguous “public utility.” 49

Nevertheless, neither in 1855 nor in 1898 was the government alone in funding and planning the construction of a new theater. It was Antônio Quartim, already the impresario of the Teatro da Ópera and inspector of the Public Garden, who proposed to São Paulo’s provincial president the establishment of a new theater in the provincial capital. When that theater burned down half a century later, it was José Nabor Pacheco Jordão, the São José’s contractor and a civil engineer by training, who offered to negotiate with the state the theater’s reconstruction. In the end, however, the Jordão contract never materialized. Instead, what would become the Teatro Municipal was born from the Municipal Chamber and, after eight years, executed by a committee of architects appointed by the municipal executive, former São José impresario Antônio Prado.

A comparison of Prado’s rescues of the Teatros São José and Municipal helps to explain where the public-private partnership failed and how it consequently changed over time. In the case of the São José, Prado stepped into the role of contractor as a private citizen, Quartim’s replacement, in order to expedite the theater’s completion. Quartim’s contract with the province, first signed on September 16, 1854, and ratified into law with a few alterations on April 9, 1855, was based on the premise of equal financial burden, with the exception of expropriation costs, which the province would underwrite. As the location and design of the proposed theater changed, expenses increased. Within a decade, the province spent 171:045$073 on the São José, well over the original allocation of 50:000$. 50 When the São José was provisionally inaugurated, São Paulo’s President Francisco Mello was still echoing his predecessors in praising Quartim’s “perseverance and activity” in the public’s service. 51 President Joaquim Marinho, however, ended that legacy in 1868, accusing Quartim of taking advantage of the provincial coffers and threatening to rescind the contract. 52 This troublesome relationship was captured in the press through

47 Annaes (1855), 217.
48 Projeto 48, Deputados, Annaes 1898, 280.
49 Annaes (1855), 219.
50 Vicente José da Costa, Ofício (23 Jul 1863), APESP, Viver em São Paulo: O Poder e o Cotidiano.
51 Francisco Ignacio Marcondes Homem de Mello, Relatorio (24 Oct 1864), 30.
52 Joaquim Saldanha Marinho, Relatorio (2 Feb 1868), 84.
cartoons and quips that painted the São José as, at best, an unwieldy “monstrosity.” When the São José contract was renegotiated with Prado in 1875, it placed all of the financial burden on the impresario’s shoulders. The Municipal Chamber attempted to replicate this strategy in 1895 (Law 159), 1896 (Law 200), and 1898 (Law 336), but the results were disheartening. In all of these years, the city offered tax exemptions and the dispossession of property as benefits for the contractor of a new theater. To spur initiative, the 1896 and 1898 laws created competitions, which were lauded by some in the state congress as appropriately “liberal and reasonable” for the capital of republicanism. In the midst of a financial crisis, however, no proposing team was able to raise the funds necessary to construct a theater that would meet the contest’s guidelines. In 1901, the prefecture finally signed a contract with Giacomo Leoni, but this time the quest for funds led Leoni to Europe, where he unexpectedly passed away. The final attempt at a municipal theater was thus entirely directed and funded by the city, with the assistance of the state in the form of expropriated territory. This complete reversal—the conversion of the Teatro Municipal into a publicly funded good—was only possible in light of recent organizational and financial changes in the municipal government. Given the city’s rapid growth in population and wealth since the 1870s, the Municipal Chamber voted in 1898 to create an elected executive, whose administration would be referred to as the Prefecture of São Paulo. The first prefect, Antônio Prado, was handpicked by the Chamber and oversaw countless urban reform projects, from the widening of roads to the setting of an electric grid, before the end of his term in 1911. The Teatro Municipal was therefore one piece of a much larger vision for São Paulo’s transformation into a civilized city, a vision more efficiently executed with a clear, long-term director atop the political hierarchy. While spending still needed the approval of the Chamber, it was the prefecture that proposed the amount and organized its fundraising, hired architects Ramos de Azevedo and Domiciano and Claudio Rossi (the latter of whom had briefly been a São José contractor), supervised construction, and appointed an inauguration committee.

The funding of the Teatro Municipal also demonstrates the way in which the publicness of entertainment spaces shifted from the provincial to local level in the second half of the nineteenth century. When the need for a theater in the capital city was debated in the 1850s, paulista legislators divided over whether the Municipal Chamber should assist with the high cost of constructing the São José. For Antônio da Cunha, the fact that other towns such as Sorocaba and Campinas were fundraising internally to erect theaters could only mean that the capital city’s lack of “a good theater [was] due to a sort of egoism.” Most Assembly members disagreed, however, supporting instead Manoel Eufrazio de Toledo’s reasoning that capital cities the world over were the face of a state and, if anything, should boast a theater more resplendent than those of its

53 Diabo Coxo 1, no. 7 (Sep 1864): 7, in Campos (2009), note 10.
54 Amaral, 86.
55 Deputados, Annaes 1898, 364.
56 Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo, 1901, 240; Amaral, 392.
57 Municipal Laws 627 (7 Feb 1903), 643 (25 Apr 1903), State Law 861-A (16 Dec 1902).
58 Annaes (1855), 222.
neighbors.\textsuperscript{59} The absence of investors in the city, as claimed by Eufrázio, combined with the municipality's limited power to tax, thus justified spending on the part of the province. While the same arguments were made in 1900,\textsuperscript{60} the cards soon changed: the municipality stepped in as the needed investor. With plans and architects in hand, the municipality was also able to dedicate more funds than could the state. The result was a state-municipality collaboration, a public-public partnership in which the state ceded to the city recently dispossessed terrain and the municipality took over as fundraiser, manager, and engineer.

CONCLUSION

A comparison of the planning of the Teatro São José and the Teatro Municipal thus sheds light on the city of São Paulo's increasing investment in cultural spaces and production. In establishing the Teatro Municipal, paulistano lawmakers perceived themselves as reforming and thereby reshaping the identity of their rapidly growing city. They rationalized the high financial and administrative costs by pointing to the absence of capable private investors and to the theater's function as an educational institution and civic landmark, as modernly engineered and tastefully embellished as the theaters of the world's leading cities. In other words, the theater's accessibility, visibility, and costs made the Teatro Municipal a project worthy of public debate and of public funding. As the case of the Teatro São José illustrates, the terms of that debate changed over the second half of the century as Brazil's politics and economy and global calls for urban reform added pressure on São Paulo's leaders to establish a theater worthy of the state's advancements. Today, as municipalities redefine theaters' publicness in the new spirit of urban renewal, the renovated Teatro Municipal continues under the Prefecture of São Paulo, touted as a monument to another century of paulista and paulistano progress.

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