

## Modern Architecture's Unedited Debates: Building bureaucracy in 1950s Portugal

*Ricardo Agarez*

This paper investigates the traces of modern architecture's debates in the documents of building bureaucracy in 1950s Portugal. There, planning and funding applications presented to state and local agencies included specification documents that portrayed not only the functional and technical aspects of the project but also deployed aesthetical, ethical, philosophical and even political arguments in support of private and public building initiatives. Those agencies' official replies, disputing or encouraging proposals, originated an unedited exchange on architecture's fundamentals that was closer to the industrial, pragmatic aspects of practice than most published texts. Drawing on concrete examples of little-known works and agents, I ask what are we to make of this unedited discourse in our understanding of architectural production? Can it be seen as an alternative arena for disciplinary debate, where those who did not publish conveyed their concerns and beliefs? Is it a forum where the critical discourse developing in architecture's higher circles encounters the real conditions of everyday production, codified and regulated?

### Biography:

Ricardo Agarez is an architect (Dip. 1996) and architectural historian (M.Phil. 2004, Ph.D. 2013, RIBA President's Award for Research) specialising in the history and theory of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, whose work focuses especially on national and regional identities, dissemination phenomena, housing and public architecture and the architectural culture in bureaucracy. He is the 2014-15 Giles Worsley Fellow of the British School at Rome.