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| Pani Darqui, Mario (1911-1993) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Mexican architect Mario Pani spent his formative years between Belgium, Italy, and France due to his father’s diplomatic posts. After graduating from the *Écoles des Beaux-Arts* (1934), he returned to Mexico just prior a period of massive urban transformation in Mexico City. During his first decades in Mexico, Pani worked intensively to establish his career, quickly winning his first commissions, perhaps the most important of which was the *Hotel Reforma* (1936), which Pani controversially took over from Carlos Obregón Santalicia. Indeed, his early career in Mexico saw him actively participating in many competitions against the most renowned architects of his time. In 1938 he founded the magazine *Arquitectura/México* (1938-1979) not only to disseminate contemporary architecture in Mexico, but also, to republish material from international magazines.  Over the course of his career, Pani designed a huge variety of projects. These included educational buildings, such as the National Conservatory of Music (1946), the National School of Teachers (1947), and his famous Rectory Building in Mexico City (1952); touristic complexes such as the Acapulco Yacht Club (1955); administrative centres like *Condominio Acero* in Monterrey (1959); and urban plans such as the *Medical Center Masterplan* (with Jose Villagran Garcia, 1942), the University Campus of the National Autonomous University (with Enrique del Moral, 1952), among many others. However, Mario Pani is more commonly remembered for his housing projects. |
| Mexican architect Mario Pani spent his formative years between Belgium, Italy, and France due to his father’s diplomatic posts. After graduating from the *Écoles des Beaux-Arts* (1934), he returned to Mexico just prior a period of massive urban transformation in Mexico City. During his first decades in Mexico, Pani worked intensively to establish his career, quickly winning his first commissions, perhaps the most important of which was the *Hotel Reforma* (1936), which Pani controversially took over from Carlos Obregón Santalicia. Indeed, his early career in Mexico saw him actively participating in many competitions against the most renowned architects of his time. In 1938 he founded the magazine *Arquitectura/México* (1938-1979) not only to disseminate contemporary architecture in Mexico, but also, to republish material from international magazines.  Over the course of his career, Pani designed a huge variety of projects. These included educational buildings, such as the National Conservatory of Music (1946), the National School of Teachers (1947), and his famous Rectory Building in Mexico City (1952); touristic complexes such as the Acapulco Yacht Club (1955); administrative centres like *Condominio Acero* in Monterrey (1959); and urban plans such as the *Medical Center Masterplan* (with Jose Villagran Garcia, 1942), the University Campus of the National Autonomous University (with Enrique del Moral, 1952), among many others. However, Mario Pani is more commonly remembered for his housing projects.  Following the Mexican Revolution, Mexico city experienced a population explosion and many were left in precarious living conditions. A general housing shortage had become a broad concern for the city, and Pani was determined to take action on an urban scale, impatiently commenting, ‘we must build for all… Plan! Build! Plan well! Build now!’[[1]](#footnote-1) With this enthusiasm, and influenced by Le Corbusier’s *Ville Contemporaine* (1922) and *Ville Radieuse* (1924), Pani began promoting for high density housing projects in response to Mexico City’s urgent social needs. During his life Pani designed over 300,000 apartments in Mexico. His first large-scale project was the *Multifamiliar Presidente Miguel Aleman*, a housing development of approximately 1000 housing units. It was the first large-scale housing project in Mexico following modernist principles. Perhaps his largest and most memorable endeavour, however, was the *Habitational City of Nonoalco-Tlateloco* (1966). Designed as a vertical city on 198 acres located just outside the city centre, the development was to house about 70,000 inhabitants and was organised in 101 buildings, together with an iconic, triangular profile administration building topped by a belfry. The project remains controversial to the present date for its lack of social cohesion and Pani’s conscious avoidance of the cultural and historical importance of the site.  While a majority of his buildings remain in use, many have been heavily damaged or destroyed by historical events. His project in Tlatelololco was the site of a student massacre in 1968, and heavily damaged by the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City. Other projects, including the *Centro Urbano Presidente Juarez* (1952), were also partially demolished following the earthquake. Still, his work has remained widely appreciated, and among many awards, Pani was a recipient of the National Prize for Arts of 1986. Selected List of Works: *Hotel Reforma*, Mexico City (1936)  *Medical Center Masterplan*, Mexico City (1942)  *National School of Teachers*, Mexico City (1947)  *National Conservatory of Music*, Mexico City (1946)  *Multifamiliar Presidente Miguel Aleman*, Mexico City (1950)  *Regional plan for Yucatán*, Yucatán (1951)  *Centro Urbano Presidente Juarez*, Mexico City (1952)  *Masterplan for the University Campus of the National Autonomous University*, Mexico City (1952) *Rectorate Tower*, Mexico City (1952)  *Regional plan for Acapulco*, Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico (1952)  *Apartment Building in Reforma and Guadalquivir*, Mexico City (1956)  *Ciudad Habitacional Nonoalco-Tlatelolco*, Mexico City (1966) |
| Further reading:  (Adrià, Zamora and Pani)  (Larrosa and Noelle)  (Pani and Garay) |

1. Smith, Olive B. (1967) B*uilders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects*, Texas, USA: Architectural Book Publishing Company, page 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)