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three approaches to
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space from the state

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# Index

# «Introduction to Issue #1 of Cuadernos LDU: Three approaches to understanding urban space from the State»

«Introducción al Nº 1 de Cuadernos LDU: Tres líneas para pensar el espacio urbano desde el Estado»

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The first issue of Cuadernos LDU launches a new platform for scientific publication by the Urban Development Research Group at the Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales (CEUR),[1] one of the research institutes of Argentina's National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET). This biannual publication seeks to complement traditional academic dissemination channels –such as peer-reviewed journals and scholarly books– by offering a flexible space for contributions that do not always conform to established editorial formats or structures. Technical reports, roundtable discussions, interviews, short essays, work-in-progress contributions, and experimental formats are all welcome within this rigorous yet open editorial framework.

This inaugural issue presents an overview of current research by members of the group. Written in English to broaden its reach, the contributions are structured around three key analytical axes that guide our collective work: urbanization processes and urban public policies in the 21st century; the production of state space in Latin America; and the territorial effects of contemporary techno-economic paradigms. These research lines form part of a shared, critical, and transdisciplinary agenda aimed at understanding urban transformations from a situated Latin American perspective –one that foregrounds the historicity, complexity, and inequality that shape socio-spatial processes in the region.

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[1] The Urban Development Research Group (*Línea de Desarrollo Urbano* - LDU) is one of the four research groups that make up the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CEUR-CONICET). LDU builds upon CEUR's longstanding research traditions, drawing on the pioneering studies of Jorge Enrique Hardoy in the 1970s on the specificity of urbanization processes in Latin America, as well as Oscar Yujnovsky's investigations into Argentina's housing problem in the 1980s. Equally significant during that decade were the contributions of César A. Vapnarsky, whose research on urban structure and settlement systems provided key theoretical and methodological foundations for territorial and demographic analysis in the country. This approach was resumed in the 1990s by Nora Clichevsky and later by Beatriz Cuenya, who coordinated the group until 2019. From the 2000s onwards, Cuenya focused on mega-urban projects, analyzing their implications from urban planning, economic, and regulatory perspectives. With the incorporation of Daniel Kozak, Gonzalo Rodríguez, and Pablo Elinbaum in the 2010s –Elinbaum currently serving as the group's coordinator since 2019– LDU expanded its scope by introducing new theoretical and methodological frameworks focused on urban fragmentation, gentrification, and urban practices. These approaches have enabled the articulation of multiple dimensions and scales of analysis, particularly in relation to mega urban projects. Since 2018, the group has further consolidated its structure with the incorporation of Patricia López Goyburu, María de la Paz Toscani, and Natalia Lerena into CONICET's Scientific Researcher Career Track (CIC), and Florencia Aramburu into the Career of research support staff (CPA).

# 1. — Urbanization processes and urban public policies in the 21st Century

This line of inquiry explores how state interventions –particularly in housing policy– have contributed to socio-spatial fragmentation and the entrenchment of urban inequalities. The texts gathered here examine both the conceptual frameworks behind housing policy and the concrete effects of public interventions in specific urban territories. This research builds on the tradition of critical urban studies in Latin America, with foundational contributions from scholars such as Oscar Yujnovsky and César Vapnarsky in the 1980s, who emphasized the structural limits of state action and the concrete forms of space production.

Three contributions are featured in this section. Joseph Palumbo proposes a broader definition of housing policy that includes legal, institutional, and symbolic instruments, offering a critical agenda for analyzing its urban impacts. María de la Paz Toscani investigates boarding houses as a form of precarious dwelling sustained by state omission, revealing a de facto housing policy that perpetuates exclusion. Gonzalo Rodríguez examines the impact of two mega urban projects in Buenos Aires, questioning their role in displacement and advocating for methodologies capable of exposing "invisible" gentrification processes.

# 2. — Spaces of Latin American Statehood

This section examines how Latin American states produce space amid global transformations. Rather than viewing the state as a homogeneous, territorially fixed actor, the contributions analyze how its territorial presence is reconfigured, scales of intervention become more complex, and new governance arrangements emerge. The "spaces of statehood" are thus conceptualized as historically contingent, situated, and contested, enacted through material, institutional, and discursive mechanisms.

Patricia López Goyburu's article proposes an epistemology of the metropolitan edge as a dynamic and multi-scalar territory, requiring flexible conceptual tools for analysis and intervention. Pablo Elinbaum examines supralocal urbanism in the Rosario Metropolitan Area as a state strategy that reorganizes governance scales and frameworks through situated urban projects, seeking to articulate inclusion, sustainability, and planning.

## 3. — Territorialization of Techno-Economic Paradigms

The third axis investigates the spatial impacts of contemporary techno-economic paradigms, focusing on the material and digital infrastructures that mediate urban processes. It explores how digital platforms –especially those involved in short-term rentals– affect housing markets, forms of inhabiting, and the right to the city. This line of work takes a transdisciplinary approach attentive to both accumulation logics and the technological devices that shape contemporary urban space. Natalia Lerena's article presents research on short-term rentals via digital platforms in Argentina and Latin America, analyzing their effects on housing markets, urban inequality, and regulatory challenges. Drawing on a perspective that links economy, territory, and the state, the piece shows how platforms function as new accumulation devices that strain the right to the city and demand appropriate governance frameworks.

Through this first issue, Cuadernos LDU aims to highlight the multiple scales, languages, and registers that make up the scientific production of the CEUR's Urban Development Group. In doing so, it seeks to strengthen the links between research, teaching, and outreach by promoting open knowledge circulation and enabling new formats for critical debate on cities and territory in Latin America. ◣

# «Notes for a Renewed Research Agenda on Housing Policy in Argentina (and Beyond)»

«Notas para una agenda renovada de investigación en políticas habitacionales en Argentina (y más allá)»

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**Abstract**

**This article offers a critical discussion of the notion of housing policy, proposing a broad conceptualization that connects the full range of state actions related to housing with actual housing outcomes and living conditions. Grounded in a synthesis of contributions from Latin American and international literature, the proposed framework is used to review the main features of Argentina's housing policy throughout its history. It argues that the outlined analytical tools provide a basis for advancing a renewed housing policy research agenda from the perspective of the social sciences in the region.**


**Resumen**

**El presente texto presenta una discusión de la noción de política habitacional, proponiendo una conceptualización amplia que permite relacionar el conjunto de acciones estatales relacionadas a la cuestión habitacional con los resultados en el sector de la vivienda y las condiciones habitacionales de la población. Dicha conceptualización se basa en una síntesis de aportes de la literatura latinoamericana e internacional, y se utiliza para realizar una revisión de los principales elementos de política habitacional en Argentina a lo largo de su historia. Se plantea que las herramientas analíticas delineadas sirven para promover una agenda renovada de investigación sobre política habitacional desde las ciencias sociales en la región.**

Sitting in an office with a public official who had traveled from his Patagonian municipality to be interviewed by a consulting firm specializing in urban planning, I heard the following statement: "The thing is, in my city, we don't have housing policies." That bold claim echoed in my ears. In addition to working with the consulting team conducting a diagnostic of urban issues in southern cities, I was in the early stages of a research project on recent housing policies in Argentina. At the time, I had been reading extensively about the wide range of measures that could fall under the label of housing policy. I found it striking, then, that a government official would assert the complete absence of such policies. Could the State truly remove itself entirely from matters of housing? Troubled by this question, I followed up: "What do you mean there are no housing policies?" His clarification came quickly: "Well, since we're not receiving any funds, the truth is we can't build any social housing units, so there's no construction underway at the moment." That comment helped me understand the source of my confusion. While I had been working with a broader (if somewhat abstract) notion of housing policy as encompassing many different dimensions, the official's definition was far more concrete and linear: housing policy was synonymous with building homes using public funds.

This lack of shared definitions around what constitutes housing policy is not limited to conversations between public officials and researchers. In fact, many academic texts that examine housing policies do not explicitly define them. In some cases, it even seems that research continues to reproduce a "housing-centric" view—like the one expressed by the official—where housing policy is equated solely with the production of dwellings. Confronted with this realization, I set out to explore the specialized literature in order to develop a theoretically grounded yet broad and flexible definition of housing policy—one that could contribute to expanding the research agenda on this topic. The outcome of that inquiry was published in the article "Elements for a Comprehensive Conceptualization of Housing Policy," which appeared in 2022 in *Perspectivas de Políticas Públicas*, a journal edited by the Department of Planning and Public Policies at the National University of Lanús (Palumbo, 2022). The article had two primary aims: to reflect on the concept of housing policy while weaving together theoretical considerations with Argentina's specific historical experience.

Figure 1. "The betrayal of housing policies"
Source: Own elaboration using OpenAI.

At the same time, this line of work can be understood in continuity with a long-standing research agenda of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CEUR). Housing policy has long been among the various issues addressed by the CEUR, along with the complex relationship between housing, the city, and the State. The current work carried out by members of the Urban Development Research Group builds upon these debates while bringing them into the present day, examining implications for social inequalities, the urban form, and territorial imbalances in the contemporary moment. In this regard, the aforementioned article draws inspiration from Óscar Yujnovsky (1984)—a member of CEUR since its early years and the institute's director during two terms—whose influential book *Claves políticas del problema habitacional argentino, 1955–1981* marked a turning point in the tradition of housing studies in Argentina. This article thus seeks to revisit Yujnovsky's complex and detailed discussion of the political dimension of housing in the country while also contributing to contemporary debates on the subject.

To arrive at this formulation, various perspectives have been articulated to explicitly define what this type of public policy entails. To that end, the article draws upon a range of contributions, both from Argentina and Latin America (Barreto & Lentini, 2015; Pradilla Cobos, 1987; Yujnovsky, 1984) and from other regions (Bourdieu, 2001; Clapham, 2019; Kemeny, 1992; Topalov, 1979). Moreover, the discussion is supplemented by the comparative literature on housing and housing

policies—closely linked to welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990)—particularly through the concept of *housing regime*, understood as the set of social practices articulated around the provision and distribution of housing in a given context. Based on these theoretical and conceptual coordinates, the article arrives at the following definition: "housing policy consists of all State actions and provisions that directly or indirectly shape the housing regime in a given context" (Palumbo, 2022, p. 65).

This definition can be broken down into a series of analytical components that together form a conceptual "toolkit" useful for conducting social research on housing policy. First, what may be considered the *explicit* elements of housing policy are identified, including: the legal and legislative foundations of the housing regime, the institutional framework that supports State action in the housing sector, and the concrete modes of state involvement in the production and distribution of housing. In addition, a set of *implicit* elements are highlighted as relevant for the analysis of housing policies: the ideological underpinnings that shape housing policy decisions, the interests and discourses of different social groups that contest these policies, and the contextual factors that condition their feasibility. Finally, a set of impact-related factors must be considered in order to assess and potentially rethink policies. These include: the housing conditions of different social groups that result from State action (or inaction) on housing, the effects of public policy on access to housing and the city, and the ways in which different State provisions regarding housing shape urbanization processes.

The applicability of the various components of this conceptual framework can be illustrated through an analysis of Argentina's historical experience. In the aforementioned article (Palumbo, 2022), this is done in detail through a historical periodization of the main shifts in the dominant orientation of housing policy in the country, drawing on the work of several authors (Barreto, 2018; Fernández Wagner, 2015; Rodulfo & Boselli, 2015; Yujnovsky, 1984). The aim is to identify, in each period, both the State's direct involvement in housing as well as the actions more closely related to shaping the general context and conditions of housing access. Five historical periods are considered: (1) from the consolidation of the Argentine national State to the mid-20th century; (2) the early Peronist governments and the expansive phase of welfare institutions; (3) a period of alternation between military regimes and weak civilian governments, during which a corporatist public housing system took root; (4) a period of housing policy marked by the deepening of the neoliberal model following the return to democracy; and finally, (5) the period after the 2001 crisis, characterized by a mix of previous policy orientations and actions. The timeline in Figure 2 summarizes some of the key elements of housing policy in each period.
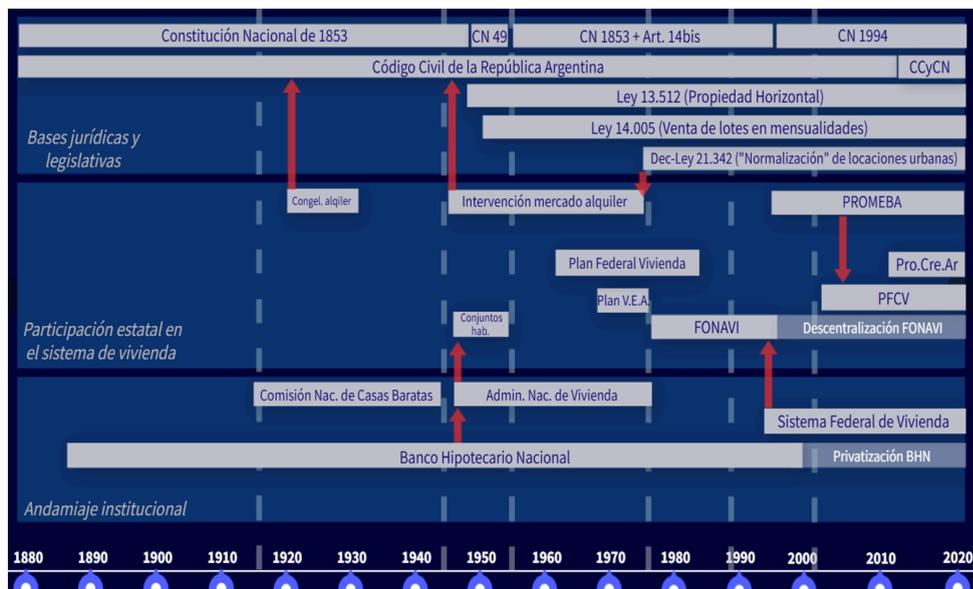
Figure 2. Examples of explicit elements of Argentine housing policy
Source: Own elaboration.

Note. CN: National Constitution; CCyCN: Civil and Commercial Code of the Nation; PROMEBA: Neighborhood Improvement Program; VEA Plan: Argentine Economic Housing Plan; PFCV: Federal Housing Construction Programs; FONAVI: National Housing Fund; Pro.Cre.Ar: Bicentennial Argentine Credit Program for Single-Family Housing; BHN: National Mortgage Bank.

Figure 2 allows us to appreciate the different "layers" of State action that have influenced the Argentine housing regime throughout history. For example, the National Constitution of 1853 laid the foundations for the Argentine housing regime, essentially oriented toward private land ownership, while subsequent laws contributed to specifying and modifying this framework. Additionally, the incorporation of Article 14bis established access to decent housing as one of the social rights that the State should safeguard, which had an undeniable influence on later laws and programs, making this a constitutional right enforceable through the courts. The interrelation of the various explicit elements is also evident in Figure 2, considering how the institutional framework and modes of direct State participation operationalize these principles outlined by law. For example, the creation of the National Housing Administration within the National Mortgage Bank enabled the mobilization of housing construction and homeownership access for numerous families during the first Peronist governments. Likewise, shifts in the housing regime through State action can be discerned; for instance, various attempts throughout history to intervene in the rental market served to modify contractual conditions outlined in the old Civil Code, while the Decree-Law imposed by the civil-military-ecclesiastical dictatorship reversed these conditions to their previous state. Furthermore, the National Housing Fund, which oversaw the construction of the largest number of social housing units in the last decades of the 20th century, was profoundly impacted by the political-administrative reforms of the 1990s and the creation of the Federal Housing System.

The key point here is that housing policy includes far more than the production of housing units with public funds. Rather, diverse State provisions decisively influence the conditions of production, distribution, and consumption of housing, and by extension, the population's housing conditions. In other words, without neglecting the analysis of concrete actions of direct state participation, the perspective must be expanded to explicitly relate these actions to other aspects of the housing regime, which are themselves strongly conditioned by State action.

These considerations pave the way for outlining a renewed research agenda in housing policy. On the one hand, this contemplates the need for continued research into the concrete instruments of housing policy, which include several aspects: the legal bases that define social relations around housing production and consumption; the institutions created to regulate, act, and intervene in housing issues, which in turn act as the basis for the trajectory housing policy subsequently takes; and finally, the concrete plans, programs, and projects implemented by public authorities with the aim of directly or indirectly participating in the housing sector, whether promoting certain production modes or rectifying deficient situations after the fact. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on the importance of analyzing their effects on access to housing in general, the housing conditions of the population, and impacts on urbanization processes. Nonetheless, this also demands an analytical framework that integrates less tangible, yet equally relevant aspects when guiding housing policies and their outcomes, namely: the ideological and symbolic substrate that "guides" the very conception of policies and the discourses that articulate the "common sense" which prioritizes and legitimizes certain modalities over others, as well as the contextual factors that may (or may not) generate possibilities for innovation in housing policy. ◣

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# «Tenant Households in Residential Hotels: Precarity, Evictions, and Organizing Processes»

«Hogares inquilinos de hoteles-pensión. Precariedad, desalojos y procesos organizativos»

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**Palabras clave**

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Abstract

Residential hotels in the City of Buenos Aires (CABA) represent a persistent, precarious, and largely invisible form of inhabiting the urban core—characterized by informal rental arrangements, permanent risk of eviction, and assistance-based public policies. This article aims to analyze the specific features of this way of inhabiting the city, as well as the everyday and collective strategies deployed by tenant households. The methodology combines semi-structured interviews, participant observation, fieldwork in collaboration with social organizations, and secondary data sources. The article argues that access to housing through residential hotels reflects not only a deficient mode of inhabiting the city but also a form of urban poverty that is not contemplated by traditional analytical categories, and therefore challenges conventional public policy responses.

Resumen

Los hoteles-pensión de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires son una forma persistente, precaria e invisibilizada de habitar en la centralidad urbana, atravesada por relaciones informales de alquiler, riesgo permanente de desalojo y políticas públicas asistenciales. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar las características específicas de esta forma de habitar en la ciudad y las estrategias -cotidianas y colectivas- de los hogares inquilinos. La metodología combina trabajo de campo etnográfico, entrevistas semi estructuradas y observaciones participantes, articuladas con el trabajo en redes barriales y fuentes secundarias de información. Se sostiene que el acceso a la vivienda en hoteles-pensión expresa no solo una modalidad deficitaria de habitar, sino una forma de pobreza urbana que desborda las categorías tradicionales de análisis y desafía las respuestas públicas convencionales.

# 1. — Introduction

In the City of Buenos Aires (CABA), as in the rest of the country, a process of growing reliance on rental housing (*inquilinización*) is reversing the historical trend of access to housing through homeownership (Consejo Económico y Social de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2015). This phenomenon is reflected in census data: in 2001, tenant households represented 22.2% of the total; by 2010, the figure had risen to 30% (Rodríguez, Rodríguez, & Zapata, 2018), and by 2022, to 36.8% (INDEC, 2023). This trend evidences increasing inequality in access to housing, exacerbated by a number of structural factors: the consolidation of a housing regime overwhelmingly dominated by the private sector; the marginal presence of social housing policies or mortgage credit schemes; and the growing disparity between household income levels and soaring real estate prices—fueled by a market that functions largely in foreign currency. Simultaneously, a process of elite reconfiguration (*elitización*) of the formal rental market (Cosacov, 2012) has unfolded, making access increasingly exclusionary due to its restrictive entry requirements.

In this context, the submarket of room rentals (Rivas, 1977)—which includes both conventillos and inquilinatos (tenement houses) and residential hotels—emerges as a residential strategy (Di Virgilio, 2013) for households that depend on central city access to key urban resources—education, healthcare, employment opportunities, leisure—but lack the financial means or documentation to enter the formal housing market. Far from being a new phenomenon, these conditions deepen a long-standing structural issue: the sustained presence of precarious tenants for whom this type of housing constitutes virtually the only option available to reside within the city (Verón, 2008). Despite the generally poor living conditions in this submarket—overcrowding, deficient infrastructure, risk of eviction, informal rental agreements—it remains largely unaddressed in public policy. This omission contributes to its long-term invisibilization, reflected in: (i) the lack of specific statistical data to quantify and characterize these households and their territorial distribution; (ii) the absence of public policies to regulate this submarket or respond to its challenges; and (iii) the continued violation of the right to housing through unchecked rent increases, abuse, and evictions.

Studying the room rental housing submarket within the consolidated urban core raises the challenge of producing situated knowledge on processes that have received little scholarly or institutional attention. To address this gap, a qualitative research approach was adopted (Sautu, 2005), combining fieldwork with collaboration with social organizations and public health providers. The methods used were designed to facilitate interaction with research participants and enable interpretation, inductive reasoning, and reflection on data within their social context (Vasilachis, 2006). Fieldwork included semi-structured interviews with tenant households in residential hotels and key actors

from grassroots organizations involved in housing advocacy; participant observation in a range of collective spaces (hotel assemblies, street protests, festivals, public debates on the right to housing); and the analysis of secondary and statistical sources, including public reports, local regulations, and census data that shed light on the evolution of the room rental market and the housing policies implemented by the city government.

## 2. — Access to the City through the Room Rental Housing Submarket

The room rental housing submarket (which includes tenement houses, boarding houses, and residential hotels) constitutes a specific and persistent form of precarious housing access for low-income sectors in CABA. This housing modality combines informal rental agreements, poor basic services, and insecure tenure, shaping a way of life marked by uncertainty and the constant risk of eviction.

This type of housing emerged alongside the early stages of the city's economic development and expansion (Rivas, 1977; Cuenya, 1988). Various studies (Mazzeo, 1991; Mazzeo et al., 2007; Pastrana et al., 1995; Pastrana et al., 2008) have helped trace the cycles of expansion and contraction of this submarket in relation to housing policies and urban planning. At the beginning of the 20th century, tenement houses and boarding houses served as low-cost housing options—particularly in the southern areas of the city—for European migrants arriving in the country during a period of economic growth and global integration as an agro-exporting nation. In the 1960s, internal migrants and those from neighboring countries also turned to these spaces as a housing option (Marcús, 2007). It was during this same period that residential hotels originated as a commercial strategy by former tenement and boarding house owners. Law 14.821/59 marked a turning point by excluding hotels from the rental housing regime, thereby incentivizing the conversion of boarding houses into residential hotels as a means to avoid state regulation (Rivas, 1977). This shift enabled the consolidation of a parallel submarket that simulates hotel services while concealing informal rental relationships (Cuenya, 1988).

In the 1970s, in the context of urban policies aimed at eradicating informal settlements, residential hotels became a housing option for low-income groups being displaced from the city. In the 1980s and 1990s, as a result of social policy transformations and economic adjustment measures, these spaces became a temporary housing alternative for impoverished middle-class households (Pastrana et al., 2008). Moreover, residential hotels began to be incorporated into the city's housing policies as a response to populations facing homelessness or at risk of eviction

(Cuenya & Toscani, 2018). Following the 2001 crisis and the worsening of household poverty, the presence of entire families in this submarket intensified and persists to this day (Royo, n.d.; Furlong, 2003).

According to the 2022 National Census, it is estimated that more than 40,000 households reside in this type of housing, representing around 2.9% of the city's total households. Specifically, Communes 1, 3 and 4 exhibit concentrations more than double the city average — 8.7%, 7.8%, and 5.9% of households, respectively, live in this type of housing.

# 3. — Living in Uncertainty

Living conditions in residential hotels are precarious. These buildings typically consist of numerous small rooms with limited ventilation or natural light, often lacking windows and accessible only through a door that opens onto a corridor connecting the rest of the units. Bathrooms and kitchens are generally shared among all tenants. Electrical wiring is often makeshift, and hot water is scarce. There are virtually no play or recreational areas. They are usually old buildings with minimal maintenance, as owners seek to reduce operating costs and maximize profitability.

This research has made it possible to construct a typology of residential hotels based on the diversification of their current conditions, reflecting the increasing complexity of their original features:

1. "Legal" hotels: those officially registered as commercial enterprises and regulated by hotel legislation. Within this category, we can distinguish between:
   a) Guest hotels, and
   b) Family or residential hotels.
   Some of these hotels are technically closed down due to failure to meet minimum operating standards but continue to function without interruption.

2. "Illegal" hotels: not officially registered and, in some cases, buildings that were vacant and have been occupied and converted into hotels. In both types, informal or clandestine economic activities are frequently present. In such cases, residential use coexists with activities that yield higher returns for those who manage the property. Examples include drug preparation, sale or consumption; the use of rooms as short-stay accommodations; or sex work establishments. Moreover, although ownership of these buildings has often remained opaque, investigations have identified individuals who own multiple properties and the presence of organized groups or mafias managing these establishments.

Rental agreements are typically made verbally upon advance payment for the room—usually by the month—and no written contracts are signed that would guarantee security of tenure. Rules of cohabitation are unilaterally imposed by the building's manager or owner, who exercises discretionary control over residents' stay, rent pricing, and the frequency of increases. This situation produces a constant state of uncertainty, as tenants never know how long they will be able to remain in their homes. This insecurity is reinforced by the permanent threat of eviction, which functions as a mechanism of discipline and control. Out of fear of losing their shelter, tenants adjust their everyday practices, avoid complaints, and refrain from demanding improvements (Toscani, 2018).

The profile of tenant households has evolved over time. Originally, these hotels were a housing option primarily for single men who faced barriers to accessing rental or homeownership markets. Today, the profile is more heterogeneous: single individuals, families—many of them households headed by a single mother —trans people, internal and international migrants, informal workers, and the unemployed. Some individuals who end up living in these spaces were previously homeless and entered the hotel system through a state program, receiving a temporary housing subsidy to cover part of the cost of renting a room. In some cases, once the subsidy ends, they return to the streets until they can gather enough money to re-enter a hotel, generating a cycle of "residential intermittency" between the hotel and the streets (Rosa & Toscani, 2020).

In general, these are households with housing trajectories marked by frequent moves, evictions, instability, and the repeated loss of personal belongings due to displacement. These processes are often accompanied by a sense of guilt and internalized individual responsibility for the situation they find themselves in.

# 4. — Everyday and Collective Strategies of Hotel Tenants

In response to housing uncertainty, tenants develop everyday strategies to sustain their lives within the hotel. These are micro-resistances (De Certeau, 1984) that counterbalance the negative experiences associated with hotel life and involve a range of daily actions—from circumventing operational rules (e.g., plugging in electronic devices without paying extra, or hiding a pregnancy to avoid being evicted), to demanding building improvements from the owner or manager, under the condition of withholding payment if the repairs are not carried out. These actions often also involve instances of solidarity and mutual support among tenants.

Collective organization emerges as a key strategy for households living in residential hotels (Toscani, Belcastro & Rosa, 2015) to confront evictions and to devise longer-term housing pathways, such as forming housing cooperatives for self-managed construction of permanent homes, or organizing as a group to gain access to social rental programs. These collective strategies are always tied to alliances with social organizations, which provide resources and specialized knowledge to support tenants in their struggles.

The organizational processes observed are cyclical, influenced by the broader political climate, windows of opportunity, and the availability of people to sustain them over time. Across different organizing experiences, a process of resistance has been identified—one that gives meaning and direction to action. These processes involve breaking with the passivity embedded in daily life and asserting one's place within the residential hotel as part of a broader claim to inhabit the city under better conditions. Resistance also involves struggles over meaning: to construct a new narrative capable of reshaping power relations among affected populations, challenging the individualizing discourse around housing insecurity that places the burden solely on each person to find shelter (according to their purchasing power). Instead, this reframing enables the articulation of collective claims before the State, demanding housing as a right, and, beyond that, claiming the right to the city itself.

This dynamic is closely linked to the subjective dimension of organizing processes, which entails a transformation in how people view themselves, relate to others, and understand rights—not only recognizing them, but internalizing them to the point of engaging in struggle. Connecting with others allows individuals to break away from the dominant logic of individualism and recognize that housing inequalities stem from structural conditions, not merely from personal histories. Ultimately, participation in these processes—beyond their concrete results—is a form of action that allows them to think and experience that collectively, the path towards building another reality is possible.

# 5. — Final Reflections

The persistence of the room rental submarket—and specifically, of residential hotels—reveals a historical form of exclusion and urban poverty that remains largely invisible and neglected by public policy. Renting rooms under informal and abusive conditions reflects the extreme commodification of housing and, in effect, the price impoverished sectors must pay in order to access the urban core. Far from being a temporary solution, these hotels have become one of the few viable alternatives for households excluded from the formal rental housing market.

Residential hotels operate as a de facto housing policy sustained by State inaction: they are not regulated as residential spaces, yet they are partially maintained through public programs that subsidize rents in them. In this way, a form of chronic emergency assistance is reproduced—one that not only fails to resolve housing precarity but also contributes to its institutionalization. In this sense, the persistence of residential  hotels indicates that the housing problem lies not only in a lack of resources, but in the orientation and priorities of public policy. It is here that collective action becomes essential as a site of political dispute.

In the context of an increasingly commodified urban land market, defending the right to housing requires making these precarious ways of inhabiting the city more visible, denouncing their structural causes, and building stable, dignified, and accessible housing alternatives for working-class and marginalized sectors. ◣

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# «Gentrification and Displacement in Buenos Aires: Assessing the Impact of Urban Mega-Projects (1991–2010)»

«Gentrificación y desplazamiento en Buenos Aires: Evaluando el impacto de los megaproyectos urbanos (1991-2010)»

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Gentrificación
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**Abstract**

This study examines the socioeconomic effects of two emblematic Urban Mega-Projects (UMPs)—Abasto and Puerto Madero—on their surrounding residential areas in Buenos Aires between 1991 and 2010. Using a quantitative methodology, I analyze census data to evaluate whether these UMPs triggered gentrification and displacement, comparing results with citywide trends. Contrary to common assumptions, I find that while Abasto experienced significant gentrification, displacement was negligible. Puerto Madero's surroundings showed no evidence of either phenomenon. However, displacement was widespread elsewhere in the city, particularly in northern neighborhoods, suggesting UMPs are not the primary drivers of displacement in Buenos Aires. These findings challenge conventional narratives about UMPs and highlight the need for mixed-method approaches to study "invisible" displacement.

**Resumen**

Este estudio examina los efectos socioeconómicos de dos Grandes Proyectos Urbanos (GPU) emblemáticos —Abasto y Puerto Madero— sobre las áreas residenciales aledañas en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires entre 1991 y 2010. A partir de una metodología cuantitativa, se analizan datos censales para evaluar si estos GPU desencadenaron procesos de gentrificación y desplazamiento, comparando los resultados con las tendencias generales de la ciudad. Contrariamente a los supuestos habituales, se observa que, si bien en Abasto tuvo lugar una gentrificación significativa, el desplazamiento fue prácticamente nulo. En el entorno de Puerto Madero no se identificaron evidencias de ninguno de estos fenómenos. No obstante, el desplazamiento fue generalizado en otras zonas de la ciudad, en especial en los barrios del norte, lo que sugiere que los GPU no constituyen el principal factor explicativo del desplazamiento en Buenos Aires. Estos hallazgos cuestionan los relatos convencionales sobre los GPU y subrayan la necesidad de enfoques metodológicos mixtos para el estudio del desplazamiento "invisible".

# 1. — Introduction

A significant yet underexplored aspect of Urban Mega-Projects (UMPs) is their impact on the residential areas where they are implemented. Much of the literature on UMPs warns of potential negative effects, such as increased land prices, gentrification, and the consequent displacement of lower-income populations. In line with this idea, the most recent Habitat III Conference organized by the United Nations in 2016 produced a document explicitly advocating for urban renewal policies, provided they do not violate the right to the city, particularly regarding urban centrality and the coexistence of social classes.

Evaluating the impact of UMPs on their residential surroundings, specifically in terms of gentrification and displacement, thus emerges as an issue of great interest. This article presents the results of an exploratory study on two emblematic UMPs implemented between 1991 and 2010 in the City of Buenos Aires (CABA): Abasto and Puerto Madero. The key question underlying this research is whether gentrification and displacement occurred in the immediate vicinity of these UMPs, and if so, how significant they were compared to other areas of the city without such urban developments. The proposed methodology is strictly quantitative and attempts to overcome limitations derived from the lack of precise statistical data on residential trajectories.

# 2. — Concepts and background

UMPs are large-scale urban renewal operations aimed at the physical and functional transformation of strategic areas "left behind by the decline of previously dynamic functional uses during the industrialist phase, to adapt them to the new accumulation and consumption requirements of contemporary capitalism" (Cuenya and Corral, 2011: 28). They are typically implemented in areas with obsolete uses, such as railway infrastructures, ports, large silos, and other facilities. From an entrepreneurial logic, public-private partnerships are a defining feature, with the state acting as a promoter by contributing land, investment, and regulatory changes. The result is new urban spaces combining commercial, residential, office, gastronomy, or tourism uses, targeting corporate users and high-income social sectors.

There are enthusiastic, reformist, and critical stances on UMPs (Jajamovich, 2019). Enthusiasts highlight their ability to repurpose large obsolete urban spaces with private sector support. Critics and reformists, however, tend to agree that UMPs can trigger gentrification and displacement of lower-income populations, both within the intervention area and its surroundings (Cuenya, 2011; Cuenya and Corral, 2011;

Davidson and Lees, 2005; Lungo and Smolka, 2005; Rosenstein et al., 2016: 137). The argument is that the significant land valorization of UMPs is not confined to the specific area of implementation but extends to adjacent zones, making them more attractive to higher-income residents and/or higher-tier activities compared to pre-existing ones. In other words, UMPs exert a sort of "contagion effect" on their surroundings.

Gentrification has been the subject of extensive research and debate since sociologist Ruth Glass first coined the term in 1964. Analyzing the transformation of working-class neighborhoods in central London, Glass observed:

"One after another, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes [...]. Poor and modest cottages [...] were taken over when their leases expired and transformed into elegant, expensive residences. Large Victorian houses [...] have been remodeled once again [...]. Once this process of gentrification begins in a district, it advances rapidly until almost all the original working-class occupants are displaced, and the entire social character of the district changes" (Glass, 1964: 18).

Since Glass's definition, the term "gentrification" has evolved, giving rise to multiple interpretations, some more faithful to the original than others. For some, displacement is intrinsic to gentrification, to the point of defining it directly as a process of replacing one social class with another (Herzer, 2008: 19; Marcuse, 1985: 199). However, there is debate about whether it is appropriate to use the term for processes that do not meet the requirements outlined by Glass half a century ago. This has led to interpretations where the term is accepted for processes that: 1) occur outside of central areas, even in peripheral ones (Sabatini, Robles, and Vásquez, 2009); 2) involve an original population more generically referred to as "lower class," not necessarily industrial working classes in the classic sense (Rodriguez and Cuenya, 2018); 3) may include new developments alongside the renovation of pre-existing housing; and 4) occasionally involve displacement (Inzulza and Galleguillos, 2014).

Here, we define gentrification as a change in the socioeconomic profile of a residential area (previously and significantly inhabited and consolidated) due to the arrival of higher-income populations. This definition does not assume displacement as intrinsic to gentrification. At least in theory, the social composition of a neighborhood could change (even radically) solely due to the arrival of new residents without a single displacement occurring.

Regarding the concept of displacement, it refers to a process of relocating lower-income populations, economically conditioned by an increased cost of remaining in place. This includes various factors such as rents, goods and services, local taxes, etc. It can increase directly (with constant family income) or indirectly, due to a decline in family income (with constant local costs).

Displacement can encompass a wide range of situations: 1) tenants whose contracts end and who cannot afford to renew them (the

typical case mentioned by Glass); 2) lower-income homeowners who find it beneficial to sell or rent their property to maintain or increase their purchasing power; 3) forced evictions of irregular occupants, whether from so-called "squatter houses" or originally regular occupants who, for whatever reason, transitioned to irregularity; and 4) new households (e.g., young couples) who originally lived in the same neighborhood but, upon forming a new household, are economically compelled to relocate elsewhere.

Empirically establishing the link between gentrification and displacement is extremely challenging due to the absence of statistics on residential trajectories. In the face of gentrification, we do not know who, how many, why, or where people go. As Atkinson (2000) puts it, quantifying displacement is like trying to "measure the invisible."

In the absence of data, Wacquant (2008: 199) recommends that researchers themselves should take on the task of producing it, whether through surveys or qualitative studies (interviews, reconstruction of residential trajectories, etc.). In this vein, some ethnographic studies have documented displacement, primarily evictions of irregular occupants, linked to gentrification in North American and Latin American cities (Barenboim, 2016; Carman, 2011; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Olivera and Salinas, 2018; Toscani, 2018).

On the other hand, some quantitative studies have provided evidence refuting the hypothesis linking gentrification and displacement (Ellen and O'Regan, 2011; Freeman, 2005; Freeman and Braconi, 2004; McKinnish, Walsh, and White, 2008). Some even suggest that many poor households not only remain in place but also improve their overall quality of life. Regarding why gentrification might lack a notable effect on displacement, several hypotheses are proposed. Freeman and Braconi (2004) posit that many poor households, especially homeowners, may make economic sacrifices (adjusting or redirecting expenses) to stay in a neighborhood where crime decreases and better services become available. According to Slater (2006), however, such evidence is insufficient and should not be considered the final word on the matter.

In Argentina, a first attempt to clarify the possible link between UMPs, gentrification, and displacement was a study on the city of Rosario (Rodriguez and Cuenya, 2018). In that research, we asked whether the Puerto Norte mega-project could have had a gentrifying effect on the neighboring Refinería district between 2001 and 2010. In this regard, we proposed an initial version of a statistical index that —unlike the current version— conceived displacement as constitutive of gentrification. We identified gentrified zones as those where there was simultaneously a significant change in the socioeconomic profile due to the arrival of higher-income households and a decrease in lower-income households significantly more intense than in the city as a whole (presumed displacements).

The main conclusion we reached in Rosario was that there was a mild and incipient gentrification in Refinería, especially in the sector

closest to the UMP. However, when comparing Refinería to other areas of the city without UMPs, the level of gentrification was lower (Table 1). We found that gentrified zones followed a well-defined spatial pattern within what could be called the first ring around the city's central area, where Puerto Norte and Refinería are also located. Thus, it was impossible to determine whether the incipient gentrification in Refinería was a consequence of Puerto Norte or would have occurred anyway without the UMP.

| | Distance to city center (km) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Center 0 - 2.5 km. | Ring 1 2.6 - 5.0 km | Ring 2 5.1 - 7.5 km | Ring 3 7.6 a 10 km | Periphery > 10 km. | **Total** |
| **Gentrified tracts** | 0 | 45 | 41 | 11 | 12 | 109 |
| | 0% | 41% | 38% | 10% | 11% | 100% |

Table 1. Gentrified census tracts by distance from the city center of Rosario (2001–2010). Source: Rodriguez and Cuenya (2018)

# 3. — UMPs in the City of Buenos Aires

The City of Buenos Aires (CABA) is the capital district of the Argentine Republic. With nearly 3 million inhabitants, it is part of the Greater Buenos Aires Agglomeration (AGBA), with approximately 15 million inhabitants. In CABA, two emblematic UMPs were implemented over nearly twenty years between the 1991 and 2010 censuses. Below, I summarize some general characteristics of both projects and their residential surroundings. I define the surroundings of UMPs as the set of census tracts directly adjacent to those tracts included in or intersected by the UMP polygon (Figures 1 and 2).
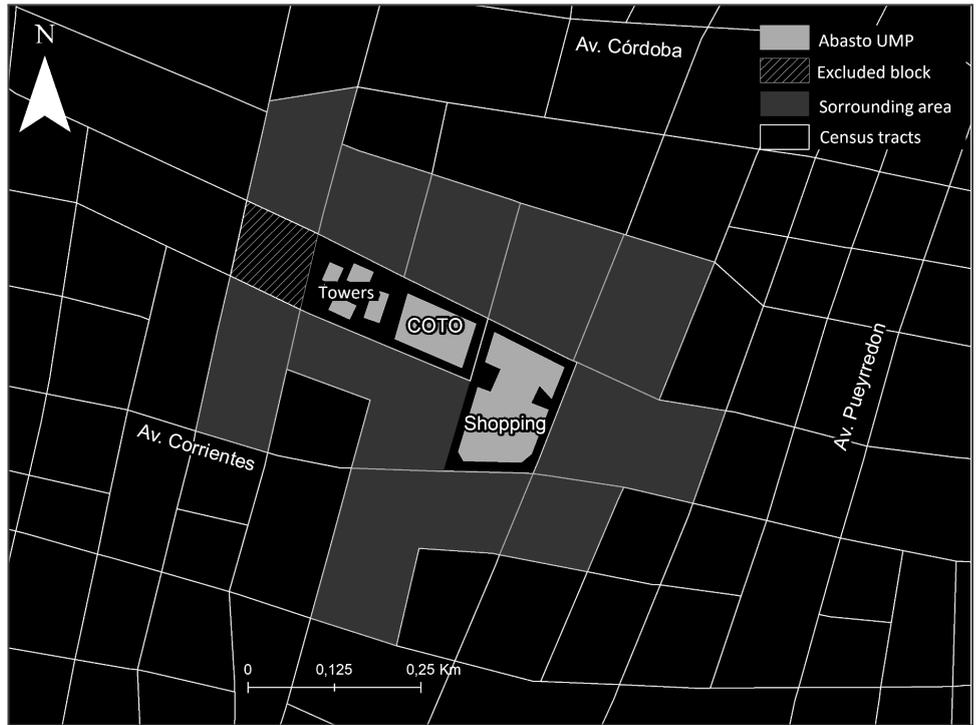
Figure 1. The Abasto UMP. Source: Rodriguez (2018)
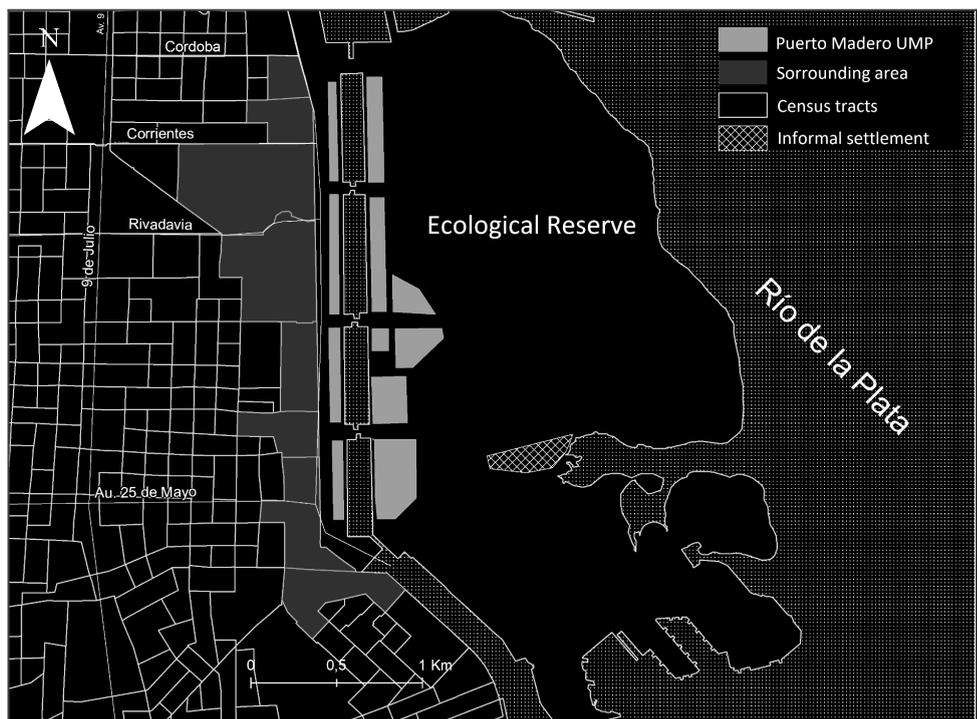


Figure 2. The Puerto Madero UMP. Source: Rodriguez (2018)

The Puerto Madero project began in 1989 on 170 hectares of public land previously used for port activity. It is strategically located next to the political and administrative center of the country's capital, facing the river and the Ecological Reserve, giving it a unique landscape in the city. It included a set of sixteen obsolete but high-value heritage buildings (old

port docks). The project's purpose was the repurposing and commercialization of these areas with private investors and developers, targeting corporate users and high-income individuals. Twenty years later, the built surface area reached 2.3 million square meters, and the stable population was around 16,000 (Cuenya and Corral, 2011). Currently, land prices in Puerto Madero are among the highest in the city, around $6,000–7,000 per square meter. The UMP comprises a single 1991 census tract, also including the Ecological Reserve to the east and, to the southeast, a sector occupied by various facilities and businesses (Buenos Aires Casino, Tandanor shipyards, etc.), but with almost no population.

The Abasto UMP is located on the border of the Almagro and Balvanera neighborhoods. Its scale is significantly smaller than Puerto Madero, covering just 4 hectares. Its main component (2 ha) was the repurposing of the old Central Market building, constructed in 1889 and closed almost a century later in 1984 (Kozak, 2012; Kozak, 2011). The building was converted into a shopping mall that was inaugurated in 1998. Two other components were the construction of a chain supermarket and a complex of four residential mega towers on old railway land. The area was predominantly residential, with a middle- to lower-middle-class socioeconomic profile, a strong presence of tenement hotels and boarding houses, and owed much of its vitality to the Market, whose closure led to many nearby properties being abandoned and progressively occupied irregularly. Carman (2011) argues that the Abasto project intentionally sought to "ennoble" its surroundings, replacing lower-class populations with middle- and upper-class ones. The author has documented testimonial and other evidence of displacement, both indirect and direct, especially forced evictions.

# 4. — Methodology

The methodology proposes to statistically and spatially analyze sociodemographic transformations to determine: 1) whether gentrification and displacement occurred in the immediate vicinity of the Abasto and Puerto Madero UMPs, and 2) whether displacement occurred in other parts of the city without such real estate developments. It includes some adjustments and innovations compared to the methodology used in Rosario. The main difference is the conceptual —and thus operational— distinction between gentrification and displacement. The new definition retains at least two essential aspects of Glass's definition. First, the idea of a "change in the social character of the neighborhood"; second, that this change involves a gentrifying group. But it differs regarding displacement, which is now considered a possible effect of gentrification.

Data from Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (Indec) for the 1991 and 2010 censuses at the census tract level were used. Households were grouped into two systems of socioeconomic status categories, using the variable "Maximum Level of Education Completed by the Head of Household" as a proxy (Table 2). The first grouping consists of four categories: SES1 households (lowest level), SES2, SES3, and SES4 (highest level). From this grouping, we are particularly

interested in SES4, which includes households where the head has completed tertiary or university education. The second grouping is a dichotomous reclassification of the previous four: low socioeconomic level, SESL (categories SES1 and SES2), and high socioeconomic level, SESH (categories SES3 and SES4).

| Education Level of Head of Household | First SES Grouping | Second SES Grouping |
|---|---|---|
| No formal education<br>Primary incomplete | SES1 | SESL (potentially displaced group) |
| Primary complete<br>Secondary incomplete | SES2 | |
| Secondary complete<br>Tertiary or university incomplete | SES3 | SESH |
| Tertiary or university complete | SES4 (gentrifying group) | |

Table 2. Socioeconomic categories based on the head of household's education level. Source: Rodriguez (2018)

| SES Group | 1991 | | 2010 | | 1991-2010 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Absolute | Percent | Absolute | Percent | Absolute | Percent points | Percent |
| SES1 | 85,582 | 8% | 49,164 | 4% | -36,418 | -0.04 | -43% |
| SES2 | 428,894 | 42% | 282,202 | 25% | -146,692 | -0.18 | -34% |
| SES3 | 316,177 | 31% | 450,459 | 39% | 134,282 | 0.08 | 42% |
| SES4 | 186,242 | 18% | 365,035 | 32% | 178,793 | 0.14 | 96% |
| Total | 1,016,895 | 100% | 1,146,854 | 100% | 129,959 | 0.00 | 13% |
| SESL | 514,476 | 51% | 331,390 | 29% | -183,086 | -0.22 | -36% |
| SESH | 502,419 | 49% | 815,464 | 71% | 313,045 | 0.22 | 62% |
| Total | 1,016,895 | 100% | 1.146,854 | 100% | 129,959 | 0.00 | 13% |

Table 3. Changes in the socioeconomic composition of households in the City of Buenos Aires, 1991–2010. Source: Rodriguez (2018).

To measure gentrification and displacement, we constructed two statistical indices that take as reference the variation in the number of households in each group per census tract relative to their respective variations in the city as a whole (Table 3).

We will consider a UMP's surroundings as gentrified if: 1) there was a significant improvement in its socioeconomic composition, and 2) there was a significant influx of new higher-income households. The gentrification index is thus built from two logical conditions. First, since the SESH group increased its relative presence in the city as a whole by 22 percentage points (and conversely, the SESL group decreased by 22 pp), the area in question must show an even greater increase, here set at 26 pp. Second, there must have been an increase in the number of SES4 households more intense than the urban average, for which we defined a minimum threshold of 1.1 times the urban mean (where their presence increased by 96%). We assume gentrification occurred if both conditions are met.

To determine the intensity of displacement in each UMP's surroundings and other city areas, I began by estimating the number of relocations for the SESL and SESH groups. By "relocations," I mean households that presumably left an area, regardless of the causes or destination. Relocation includes both "original" households (existing in 1991) and new households that may have formed between 1991 and 2010.

The number of relocations (R) of a group can be calculated as the difference between the observed number of households (O) in 2010 and the expected number (E) in the same year if the group had experienced the same proportional variation (V) as in the city. If R is positive, it means relocations occurred; if R is zero, there were none; and if R is negative, the group grew in the area (new locations):

$$E = O_{91} + (O_{91} * V_{91\ 10})$$

$$R = E_{10} - O_{10}$$

The relocation index (RI) for each group is calculated by expressing R as a percentage of the expected number (E). Like R, negative values indicate the extent to which the group's presence increased in the area:

$$RI = \frac{R}{E} * 100$$

Initially, we would say displacement occurred where the SESL group's RI is greater than the SESH group's RI, and the intensity of displacement is greater the larger the difference. The displacement index (DI) would then be calculated simply by subtracting the SESH group's IR from the SESL group's RI:

$$DI = RI_{sesl} - RI_{sesh}$$

However, the exact value of DI is only relevant when the SESL group's IR is positive and greater than the SESH group's RI. Thus, DI must be assumed as zero whenever the SESL group's IR is less than or equal to the SESH group's IR, regardless of the difference. Additionally, to correctly estimate DI, we must use corrected IRs (CRI), assigning them a value of zero whenever their actual value is negative. Otherwise, inconsistencies could arise, such as obtaining a positive DI where both indices are negative but the SESL group's IR is greater than the SESH

group's IR (i.e., claiming displacement occurred where there was actually an influx of both groups, albeit at different intensities). Thus, the corrected displacement index (CDI) will have a minimum value of 0 where there was no displacement and a maximum of 1 where there was 100% relocation and all of it was displacement.

$$CDI = CRI_{sesl} - CRI_{sesh}$$

The displacement index should be interpreted as a simple approximation of the phenomenon under study. A CDI value equal to or less than zero should not be interpreted as a total absence of displacement. An SESL household may have been displaced but "replaced" by another SESL household that moved in, something we cannot infer from the available data. It is simply assumed that, on average, displacement will tend to be greater the higher the CDI value.

# 5. — Application of the indices

Tables 4 and 5 show the socioeconomic transformations between 1991 and 2010 in the UMPs' surroundings, from which we infer levels of gentrification and displacement. The statistical evidence suggests that the two UMPs had partially different impacts on their immediate surroundings.

In the Abasto surroundings, a fairly strong gentrification process is observed. SES4 households increased their presence in the area by 1.9 times the urban average, rising from 262 to 732. The area's socioeconomic profile also changed, with SESH households increasing by 29 percentage points, above the city's 26 pp. However, such gentrification had little correlation in terms of displacement. Only 25 SESL household relocations emerged, representing an CDI of just 3 pp. In the case of Abasto, we can speak of gentrification enabled by a large new housing supply exclusively for gentrifiers, but with almost no displacement.

The Puerto Madero case is somewhat different, with no displacement but also no gentrification in its surroundings. SES4 households increased by 46%, well below expectations (0.48 times the urban average). The SESL group showed almost no relocations (RI 1%, 7 relocations). In fact, the SESH category showed a much stronger relocation level (RI 9%, 139 relocations). Thus, since both groups experienced relocations, but the SESH group's was greater than the SESL group's, the CDI takes a value of zero (no displacement). The data suggest an exodus of households from both groups, primarily higher-income ones.

| | Group | 1991–2010 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Puerto Madero | Abasto |
| Percentage Change | SES4 | 46% | 179% |
| | SESL | -36% | -37% |
| | SESH | 47% | 108% |
| Percentage Point Change | SES4 | 9 | 14 |
| | SESL | -20 | -29 |
| | SESH | 20 | 29 |
| Relative to City Change | SES4 | 0,48 | 1,87 |
| | SESL | 1,02 | 1,04 |
| | SESH | 0,76 | 1,73 |
| Expected Households 2010 | SESL | 596 | 1136 |
| | SESH | 1512 | 1584 |
| Relocations | SESL | 7 | 39 |
| | SESH | 139 | -312 |
| Relocation Index (RI) | SESL | 1% | 3% |
| | SESH | 9% | -20% |
| Corrected Relocation Index (CRI) | SESL | 0,01 | 0,03 |
| | SESH | 0,09 | 0 |
| Displacement Index (DI) | SESL | -0,08 | 0,03 |
| Corrected Displacement Index (CDI) | SESL | 0 | 0,03 |

Table 5. Changes in socioeconomic composition and displacement levels in the surroundings of Puerto Madero and Abasto, 1991–2010.

Now, if there was no significant displacement in the surroundings of Abasto and Puerto Madero, did it occur elsewhere? Figure 4 shows the CDI value by census tract across the city. At first glance, it is evident that tracts with medium and high displacement levels are mainly located in the north (north of Rivadavia Avenue). However, the extent to which they are randomly distributed is unclear.
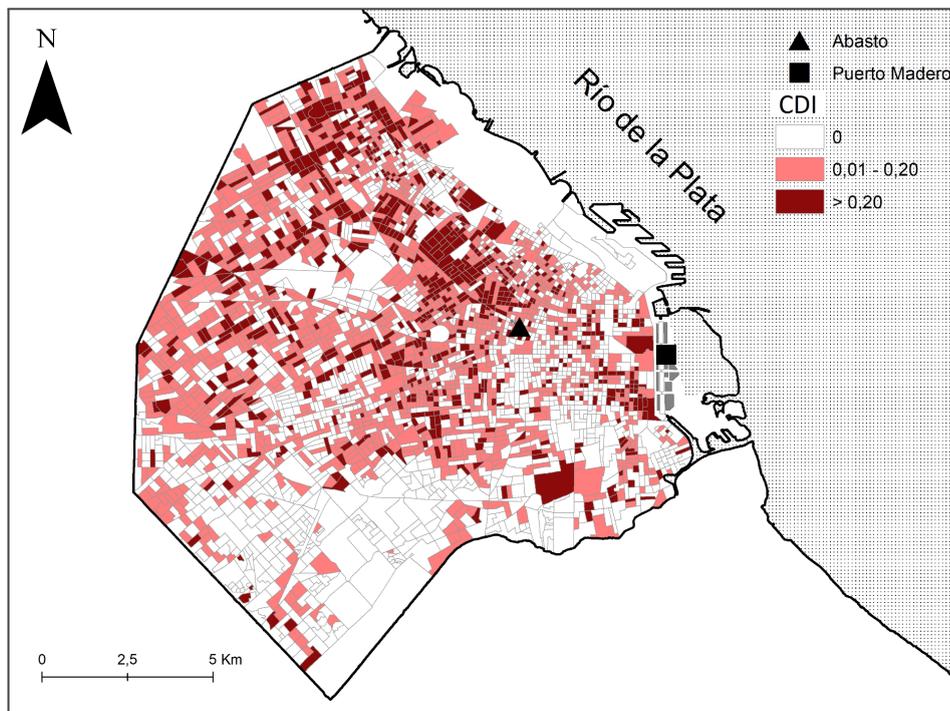
Figure 4. Displacement index by census tract in CABA, 1991–2010.

Figure 5 shows the result of cluster mapping, providing a clearer picture of the sectors and neighborhoods where census tracts with significant high or low displacement levels tend to concentrate. Broadly, it confirms the initial impression that displacement primarily affected the city's north.
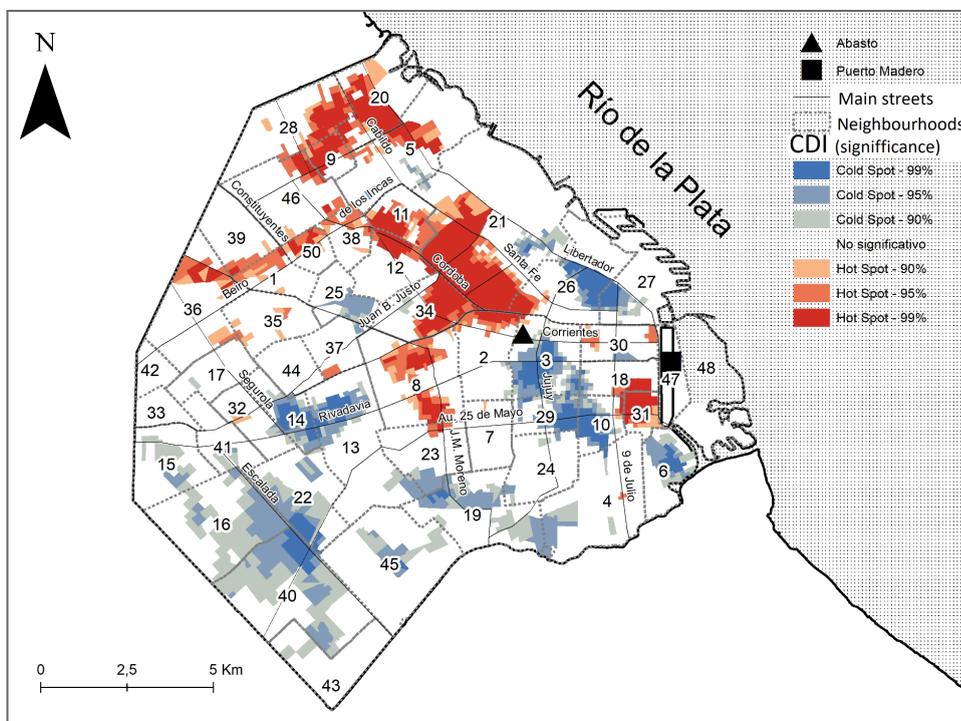


Figure 5. Spatial clustering (Getis-Ord coefficient) of areas with and without displacement in CABA, 1991–2010.

In the northern zone, several sectors stand out for their extent:

1. A large sector between Santa Fe, Córdoba, and Corrientes avenues, covering Palermo and parts of Almagro, Villa Crespo, Chacarita, and Colegiales.

2. Parts of Belgrano and Núñez neighborhoods, along Libertador Avenue.

3. Parts of Saavedra, Coghlan, and Villa Urquiza, north of Congreso Avenue.

4. The sector north of Beiró–Los Incas Avenue, including Parque Chas, Agronomía, Villa Pueyrredón, and Villa Devoto.

5. The northern part of Caballito.

In the south of the city, displacement appears as a less widespread phenomenon. Still, it is worth mentioning:

1. The San Telmo neighborhood, west of Puerto Madero's surroundings.

2. The southern part of Caballito, west of José M. Moreno Avenue.

Note that both UMPs and their respective surroundings are outside (though very close to) the sectors where displacement is concentrated. This finding aligns with the earlier analysis, where no significant displacement levels were found in these surroundings.

The "cold zones" are also noteworthy. The highest concentration of areas without displacement is in the south of the city—precisely where theory predicts displacement should be more significant due to proximity to the central area, initial sociodemographic composition (lower class), and high patrimonial value. A large sector stands out, covering almost all of Balvanera and parts of San Cristóbal and Constitución, including the traditional La Boca neighborhood. Of course, this evidence does not rule out the possibility that these neighborhoods may become potential hotspots for displacement today or in the near future.

# 6. — Conclusions

We sought to determine whether there is an association between UMPs, gentrification, and displacement in Buenos Aires between 1991 and 2010. Our main finding is that, in Buenos Aires, the Abasto and Puerto Madero UMPs are not generally associated with the displacement of lower-income populations in their surroundings. In the case of Abasto, there was a high level of gentrification—the neighborhood's profile changed notably—but displacement was almost negligible. In contrast, Puerto Madero's surroundings showed no signs of gentrification or displacement.

A second relevant finding is that displacement has been a widespread phenomenon in the rest of the city, including sectors without UMPs. We detected strong evidence of displacement in gentrified

neighborhoods like San Telmo and Palermo (but not in La Boca, where gentrification was commercial rather than residential). Displacement levels were highest in the city's north, in neighborhoods we might classify as middle- rather than lower-class (Saavedra, Villa Urquiza, Chacarita, among others), which have not been the focus of studies to date.

That said, asserting that UMPs are not the direct cause of displacement does not equate to dismissing the issue. The evidence invites researchers to break certain methodological biases that often lead us to find displacement only in places where we already know or suspect it exists. Signs of significant "invisible" displacement in other city areas indicate the need to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to deepen our understanding of the problem and make the underlying social and urban processes visible. ◤

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# «Between urban and rural: towards an understanding of the metropolitan edge»

«Entre lo urbano y lo rural: hacia una comprensión del borde metropolitano»

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**Abstract**

This paper revisits a series of debates regarding the attributes and methodologies necessary to define the territory that stretches between urban centers and rural areas, aiming to assess whether it can be considered a specific object of research. These discussions are explored in the article titled *"Between Urban and Rural: Towards an Understanding of Metropolitan Edge."* Based on a critical review of four core propositions –"spaces undergoing sociospatial transformation," "multi-actor project," "multiple, dynamic, and heterogeneous uses," and "non-universal spatial delimitation"– the article seeks to contribute to epistemological knowledge about the metropolitan edge. In dialogue with theoretical approaches that attempt to conceptualize the territories located between urban and rural areas in different metropolises, these propositions are put forward as interpretative layers of a complex territory. The findings suggest that diverse processes, scales, and territorial configurations must play a central role in constructing an epistemological framework aimed at integrating urban order and socio-environmental form.

**Resumen**

Este trabajo retoma una serie de planteos y discusiones en torno a los atributos y metodologías necesarios para definir el territorio que se extiende entre los núcleos urbanos y el espacio rural, con el objetivo de evaluar si es posible considerarlo un objeto de investigación específico. Estas discusiones se encuentran presentes en el artículo titulado "Between Urban and Rural: Towards an Understanding of Metropolitan Edge". A partir de la revisión crítica de cuatro postulados –"espacios en transformación socio espacial", "proyecto multiactoral", "usos múltiples, dinámicos y heterogéneos" y "delimitación espacial no universal"–, el artículo busca construir conocimiento epistemológico sobre el borde metropolitano. En diálogo con propuestas teóricas que intentan responder al interrogante de si es posible formular un concepto que identifique los territorios situados entre lo urbano y lo rural en distintas metrópolis, estos postulados se proponen como capas de lectura de un territorio complejo. Los resultados muestran que los distintos procesos, escalas y territorios deben ser los protagonistas en la construcción de un marco epistemológico orientado a cohesionar el orden urbano y la forma socioambiental.

Identifying a theoretical framework capable of illuminating the transformations unfolding at the metropolitan fringe and guiding their investigation remains a significant challenge. The tendency towards what has been termed 'planetary urbanization' appears to be irreversible, positioning the territories at the edge of metropolitan areas as key sites of this process. Various authors have demonstrated how, in industrialized countries, the location and configuration of new leisure, commercial, and tertiary developments act as triggers for renewed perspectives on the urban periphery. In cities that are non-industrial or have lower levels of industrialization, multiple studies suggest that these features often coexist with social housing and the gradual outward expansion of the urban fabric, among other dynamics.

Although the need to intervene in urbanization processes has long been a central concern throughout the history of urban planning—and despite the existence of an extensive body of literature on the subject—the epistemological aspects of the metropolitan fringe are not always addressed explicitly. In this regard, the article titled *'Between Urban and Rural: Towards an Understanding of the Metropolitan Edge'* sets out to examine the attributes and methodologies through which this territory should be defined, in order to assess whether it can constitute a specific object of inquiry. The discussion is approached through the critical review of four main postulates: 'spaces of socio-spatial transformation,' 'multi-actor projects,' 'multiple, dynamic, and heterogeneous uses,' and 'non-universal spatial boundaries.'

It is worth noting that this work builds on the concepts of material and social infrastructure as developed by Harvey (2004, 2008) and further debated and applied in research conducted within the Urban Development research group at the Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales (CEUR, CONICET). These frameworks enable the author to interpret these emerging spatial configurations as dynamic territories that support the circulation of capital and to relate them to the ways in which state space is configured and regulated. As Elinbaum (2019) points out, state space appears as a dynamic institutional-political territory shaped by the actions of multiple actors. The notions of material and social infrastructure make it possible to reveal how the state seeks to mediate and produce new territories. In Brenner's (2014) words, material and social infrastructure are key to the reproduction of social relations and the transformation of territory.

The article *'Between Urban and Rural: Towards an Understanding of the Metropolitan Edge'*, published in 2024, is also the result of a process initiated some time earlier. Methodologically, the author has explored the production of interpretative cartographies (Secchi, 1992) of the metropolitan fringe. This knowledge instrument has made it possible to reveal aspects that are difficult to grasp through other analytical approaches. The cartographic description enables an understanding of the territory simultaneously as a material object and as a social construct,

highlighting the conflicts and interests at play across space and time (López-Goyburu, 2019; 2024).

The author has also approached this territory from an empirical perspective. The ways in which metropolitan fringes are actually occupied follow their own logics, dynamics, and characteristics (López-Goyburu & García-Montero, 2018). When understood in their diversity, these territories have been addressed by various studies conducted in different contexts and geographies. In Buenos Aires, the metropolitan fringe is characterized by multiple, overlapping processes: extensive patterns of growth (commonly regarded as the traditional mode of expansion) coexist with new forms of land occupation, such as commercial and leisure developments, industries, and new-generation residential spaces (López-Goyburu, 2019).

The way of conceptualizing these territories that stretch between urban cores and rural spaces has been shaped through different episodes that reflect the concerns and interests projected onto them. Urban planning documents show that these areas have received special attention at different historical moments. In Buenos Aires, for instance, at certain times the fringe has been conceived as a frontier, while at others it has been viewed as a space to be explored and understood, or as an area designated to absorb urban growth (López-Goyburu, 2017; 2019; 2024).

In the article "Between Urban and Rural: Towards an Understanding of the Metropolitan Edge", the postulates are presented as interpretative layers for reading this complex territory. Postulates 1, 2, and 3 adopt a qualitative approach to the depth of the metropolitan fringe, drawing on different areas of knowledge –urban planning, public health, sociology, among others– and multiple fields. (1) From a functional perspective, the fringe is conceived as a space in transformation that lacks distinctly urban or rural attributes, or as an area designated for urban expansion. (2) From a social perspective, it is interpreted as a space undergoing transformation through the actions and interactions of multiple actors and logics. (3) From an environmental perspective, it is understood as the space where flows of goods and services between production centers and urban cores are articulated. Meanwhile, Postulate 4 combines this qualitative perspective with quantitative approaches proposed by various authors. In the European context, Bravo Bello (2013) offers an estimate –based solely on spatial criteria– of approximately 500 meters. In South America, specifically in Bogotá, the Territorial Ordering Plan defines the fringe as a strip ranging from 50 to 100 meters in width.

Thus, in response to the question of whether a single concept could define the territories that stretch between urban and rural spaces across different metropolises, the article argues that we may need to abandon the search for a single term capable of representing the diverse territorial configurations of urban fringes. Postulate 4 maintains that the metropolitan fringe should be understood as the outcome of the specific spatial practices of each territory, and that identifying the various situations encompassed under the generic label of 'metropolitan fringe'

constitutes an opportunity to rethink and investigate these spaces. This postulate contends that the epistemological frameworks guiding research and theory on the metropolitan fringe should avoid conceiving of this territory as a universal form that unfolds within fixed, stable boundaries. Research on its dynamics should include the study of specific forms or units at different spatial scales.

Furthermore, in Postulate 1, from a theoretical standpoint, various studies examining the interplay between urbanization patterns and social structures demonstrate that the edges of urbanization represent a shifting reality that has evolved over time. This postulate proposes that the metropolitan fringe should be viewed as a space of ongoing transition and transformation, one that cannot be understood as a permanent form. In this sense, the postulate reorients the study of the fringe as a dynamic configuration that changes across time and space and should be theorized as a process that transforms inherited spaces in accordance with their socioeconomic, historical, and environmental contexts.

On the other hand, the author questions whether the metropolitan fringe can be understood as a theoretical category. Postulate 4 indicates that an understanding of this territory must shed light on its specific historical patterns through which its various configurations take shape, while Postulate 2 demonstrates that there is no single morphology of the metropolitan fringe but rather different transformation processes that materialize in diverse territories and spatial scales. Postulate 2 also shows that the metropolitan fringe emerges as a collective project that spans multiple jurisdictions, where tensions arise between urban and rural uses. It is not only co-produced and transformed through its users –who generate new ways of experiencing the territory– but also through the actions of the state. The article shows that the boundaries of the unit used to comprehend the territory influence the institutions or organizations involved in its governance and must reflect its functional dynamics. This postulate emphasizes that the metropolitan fringe is a collective project mediated through institutions, strategies, and socio-spatial struggles that intersect and combine. It suggests that an epistemology of these territories must reflexively connect the various actors who shape them, in order to offer interpretive perspectives.

Postulate 3 highlights that the accelerated process of spatial differentiation taking place at the metropolitan fringe has drawn the attention of various disciplines. The discontinuous and heterogeneous urbanization processes occurring there render obsolete concepts that define the urban–rural divide solely in terms of population density, the continuity of the built environment, or levels of infrastructure and services. The article argues that the metropolitan fringe is therefore defined as a territory characterized by unequal socio-spatial and environmental developments that intersect to generate new patterns and dynamics of growth. It proposes that this opens up a new epistemological path for deciphering the interconnections between land uses and this territory, and for designing policies and programs specifically aimed at intervening in

this shifting, intermediate space that stretches between the consolidated city and rural land.

Taken together, all the postulates demonstrate that the concept of the metropolitan fringe is contested and diverse: it is a multidimensional space that demands to be understood and calls for the deconstruction of monodimensional epistemologies. The article shows that the metropolitan fringe has historically been conceived both as an area to accommodate urban growth –as proposed by Decree-Law 8912– and as a space to contain urban expansion, as suggested by Howard (1965) in his concept of the 'garden city.' However, these notions do not seem to reflect the full range of its characteristics and dynamics, from state investment in technological infrastructure to its multiple uses, actors, and interests. Therefore, starting from the premise that these territories require specific descriptions and explanations before they can be planned, and acknowledging the need to understand their processes, the article argues that the metropolitan fringe should be conceived as an empirical category.

Within this framework, the author questions which criteria should be used to define the metropolitan fringe and identifies several aspects to be considered: recovering theoretical foundations that take into account the ways in which inhabitants perceive the territory; examining the sense of indifference regarding the arrangement of elements and the logics of discontinuous forms; and exploring the positive potential of the diffuse city. Another possible entry point is the role of actors: the metropolitan fringe is the result of the social relations among the various actors who shape it. The fringe can also be analyzed from an environmental and systemic perspective, with urban-agricultural parks presented as an appropriate response.

The article titled "Between Urban and Rural: Towards an Understanding of the Metropolitan Edge" represents an attempt to construct epistemological knowledge about this territory that stretches between urban cores and rural spaces. The findings indicate that it is necessary to develop terms and classifications that make it possible to distinguish the multiple landscapes within this territory and to question their specificities. The article concludes by emphasizing that the configuration of the metropolitan fringe reflects its historical processes and socio-spatial and environmental frameworks. It also underscores that the different processes, territories, and scales must be placed at the center of the epistemological framework, seeking to articulate urban order with socio-environmental form. ◤

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# «Reclaiming the urban project: toward a renewed framework for metropolitan planning»

«Reivindicar el proyecto urbano: hacia un marco renovado para la planificación metropolitana»

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**Abstract**

This article critically examines the role of the urban project within the framework of supralocal urbanism in the Rosario Metropolitan Area (RMA). It argues that traditional urban planning, dominated by quantitative indicators and generic principles, fails to address the complex socio-spatial dynamics of contemporary metropolitan growth. Through the analysis of three urbanization prototypes developed by the Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), the study illustrates how supralocal urbanism integrates metropolitan guidelines with localized, flexible interventions. These prototypes emphasize morphological innovation, adaptive land subdivision, multi-actor governance, and the reintegration of everyday practices into the urban fabric. The article highlights the renewed articulation between plan and project, fostering negotiation and cooperation across scales and sectors. By promoting inclusive housing production, diversified actors, and sustainability, supralocal urbanism reclaims the public sector's active role as mediator and facilitator in metropolitan transformation. Ultimately, this approach advocates for a planning paradigm attuned to complexity, adaptability, and spatial justice.

**Resumen**

Este artículo examina críticamente el papel del proyecto urbano en el marco del urbanismo supralocal en el Área Metropolitana de Rosario (AMR). Sostiene que la planificación urbana tradicional, dominada por indicadores cuantitativos y principios genéricos de diseño, resulta insuficiente para abordar las complejas dinámicas socioespaciales del crecimiento metropolitano contemporáneo. A través del análisis de tres prototipos de urbanización desarrollados por el Ente de Coordinación Metropolitana de Rosario (ECOMR), el estudio ilustra cómo el urbanismo supralocal articula lineamientos metropolitanos con intervenciones localizadas y flexibles. Estos prototipos ponen en valor la innovación morfológica, la subdivisión adaptativa del suelo, la gobernanza multi-actoral y la reintegración de las prácticas cotidianas en el tejido urbano. El artículo destaca una renovada articulación entre plan y proyecto, que promueve la negociación y la cooperación entre escalas y sectores. Al fomentar la producción habitacional inclusiva, la diversificación de actores y la sostenibilidad, el urbanismo supralocal reivindica el papel protagonista del sector público como mediador y facilitador de la transformación metropolitana. En última instancia, se propone una renovación del paradigma de planificación, orientado a la complejidad, la adaptabilidad y la justicia espacial.

# 1. — Introduction

Urban planning in Latin America experienced a pivotal transformation in the mid-20th century, influenced by technical models imported from Anglo-American planning, French aménagement, and, to a lesser extent, Soviet centralized planning. These approaches aligned with the developmentalist strategies advanced by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which framed urban and regional planning as key instruments for industrialization and economic growth. Yet, after more than five decades, the territorial planning systems shaped by this paradigm have lost their effectiveness, both locally and regionally, diminishing their role in structuring urban form and governance (Elinbaum et al., 2024).

Since the 1990s, strategic planning has become the dominant model, reshaping regulatory frameworks to prioritize quantitative performance indicators over the spatial and morphological dimensions traditionally addressed by urbanism. Combined with the limited technical capacity and institutional fragmentation of local governments, this shift has significantly reduced their ability to engage with the complex realities of contemporary urbanization –marked by internal migration, land-use competition, and increasing spatial fragmentation. As a result, urban planning has struggled to deliver equitable and sustainable responses to the challenges of extended and uneven urban development (Sánchez et al., 2023).

These structural shortcomings are further compounded by longstanding debates that remain unresolved, including the relationship between planning and design (Campos Venuti, 1984; Secchi, 2001), the enduring tension between architecture and planning, and the disconnection between urbanism and broader regional governance (Tafuri et al., 1972). Current disputes also revolve around regulatory mechanisms and the capture of land value, particularly in a context where real estate markets impose exclusionary dynamics that urbanism rarely questions (Elinbaum, 2021). Although international experience shows that urban projects can be profitable, institutionalized urban renewal often fails to account for the broader social and territorial impacts of spatial production (Metaxas et al., 2023).

In light of these challenges, this article argues for reclaiming the potential of the urban project as a critical tool for reimagining metropolitan space through a normative and design-oriented lens. It examines an innovative codification process developed by the Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), which integrates regulatory and design dimensions into metropolitan planning. Central to this process is the development of three urban prototypes that serve as conceptual, exploratory, and communicative tools within planning practice (Coughlan et al., 2007).

These prototypes are designed to respond to the realities of extended and differentiated urbanization (Brenner & Katsikis, 2023),

integrating architectural, urban, and regional scales. Rather than replicating standardized models, they function as platforms for negotiation and learning –bridging design intelligence, which emphasizes specificity and innovation, with regulatory intelligence, which promotes stability and generalization. In doing so, the urban project is reimagined as a strategic device for supralocal planning, enabling new forms of intervention that combine operational flexibility with a redistributive ethos.

# 2. — Urban project and supralocal urbanism

Over the past three decades, territorial transformations in the Rosario Metropolitan Area have clearly reflected many of the central tensions debated in contemporary urban studies, particularly those related to urbanization processes. The conventional dichotomy between compact and dispersed growth –still present in many regulatory frameworks and technical assessments– has proven inadequate to explain the complex socio-spatial dynamics shaping metropolitan territories today. In this context, critical urban theory has challenged static conceptions of the urban, often tied to the idea of the "city" as a bounded and fixed unit, advocating instead for a reading of urbanization as a dynamic, open-ended, and differentiated process (Schmid et al., 2023).

Since the 1990s, urban theory has been deeply influenced by a series of "spatial turns" that have redefined how territory is conceptualized and governed (Jessop et al., 2008). These approaches reject linear understandings of urbanization as the outward expansion of the urban footprint, proposing instead a framework articulated around three interrelated moments: concentrated urbanization, associated with traditional forms of city growth; extended urbanization, referring to the expansion of urban processes beyond conventional administrative boundaries; and differential urbanization, which captures the socio-economic, political, and ecological asymmetries embedded in these processes. This framework –advanced by scholars such as Brenner and Schmid (2014)– provides powerful conceptual tools to analyze the spatial reconfigurations of contemporary capitalism.

Parallel to these theoretical developments, a critical rethinking of the role of urban planning as both discipline and institutional practice has taken place. Within this renewed discourse, the concept of supralocal urbanism has emerged as a way to overcome the limitations of traditional municipal planning as well as classical territorial ordering (Elinbaum, 2012, 2025). This approach acknowledges the existence of an intermediate scale –between the local and the regional– that is particularly well-suited to address urbanization processes that transcend administrative jurisdictions and demand more integrated political and technical strategies (Esteban, 2012).

Supralocal urbanism is not defined solely by the scale at which it operates, but also by a methodological orientation that emphasizes

situated action, clear objectives, and the urban project as both an operative and epistemic tool. Far from being a mere extension of architectural design, the urban project functions as a catalyst for processes, a platform for negotiation among diverse actors, and a mechanism for the co-production of territorial knowledge. Rather than adhering to a top-down logic of cascading plans, this approach calls for the articulation of multiple spatial and temporal scales, viewing territory not as a passive backdrop but as an active and constantly evolving structure.

From this perspective, traditional categories such as "urban" and "rural" or "city" and "countryside" are increasingly inadequate. Alternative notions –such as territorial city or horizontal metropolis (cf. Piccinato et al., 1962; Viganò et al., 2018)– better capture the diffuse, hybrid, and decentralized configurations of contemporary metropolitan space. In these emerging geographies, the urban project acquires a strategic role: it enables the articulation of local interventions into broader constellations, the alignment of political decisions with morphological and socio-economic variables, and the development of design-based intelligence capable of complementing –and at times transforming– existing regulatory frameworks.

Thinking urbanism from a supralocal lens also implies a critical stance toward the fragmentation produced by uncoordinated, piecemeal interventions. In contexts marked by political volatility, real estate pressures, and limited public resources, traditional planning instruments–such as comprehensive master plans–often prove ineffective. Instead, supralocal urbanism promotes progressive, interpretive, and adaptive strategies anchored in the specific conditions and long-term structures of each territory. This project-based approach embraces the ongoing tension between ad hoc development and guided intervention, mobilizing available resources while responding to constraints, without abandoning the aspiration to spatial transformation (Avermaete et al., 2009).

This theoretical framework is operationalized through a qualitative methodology, oriented toward the analysis of concrete cases. The study focuses on a comparative examination of three urbanization prototypes developed by the Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario between 2021 and 2023. These prototypes were selected from a larger set of 30 prioritized areas identified using the Spatial Decision Support System (SADE), which evaluated 128 potential intervention zones across the RMA.

The analysis draws on both secondary sources –including scholarly literature, policy papers, and technical documents– and primary materials, particularly the regulatory and design instruments produced by Metropolitan Coordination Authority. Special attention was given to key dimensions of urban planning such as layout, subdivision patterns, and building typologies, across both local and metropolitan scales. Additionally, the study incorporates two often-overlooked aspects in housing policy research: land production (understood as the configuration

of property regimes, actors, and governance mechanisms) and housing production (examined through modes of inhabitation and the institutional articulation of design, implementation, and allocation phases).

The research also includes semi-structured interviews with key technical staff at MCAR. These interviews provided insights into the professional practices underlying the development of the prototypes: the formulation of technical and political objectives, negotiation processes within and across institutions, and strategies for overcoming bureaucratic and administrative constraints that affect the implementation of urban policies at the metropolitan scale.

# 3. — Supralocal urbanism in the Rosario Metropolitan Area: guidelines, morphologies, and design strategies

In the context of the Rosario Metropolitan Area, contemporary urban planning has sought to articulate supralocal directives with local strategies in order to address the complexity of metropolitan growth (Fig. 1). The institutional consolidation of the Metropolitan Coordination Authority in 2012 –emerging from various provincial and local planning initiatives– has enabled the development of innovative regulatory frameworks aimed at balancing macrocephaly, territorial fragmentation, and housing deficits. Through the implementation of Local Urban Plans (Planes Urbanos Locales, or PULs) and a revised land classification system, MCAR has laid the groundwork for more coordinated urbanization processes. This system distinguishes between urban, non-urban, infrastructure, and special-use land, and introduces the concept of "primary urban development areas", defined by temporal horizons and adaptable development criteria.
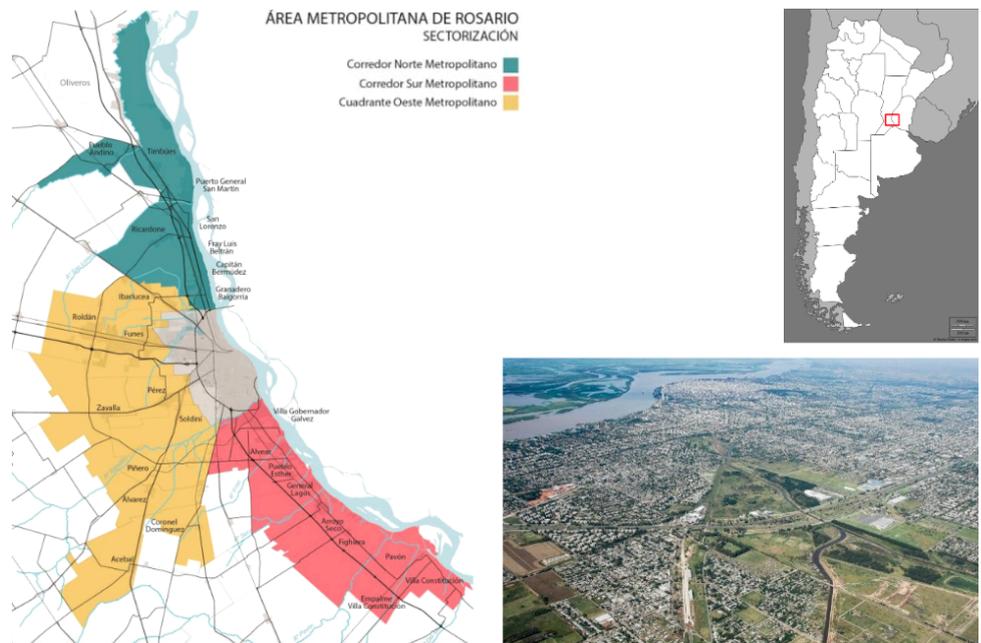
Figure 1. Location of the Rosario Metropolitan Area (RMA) in Argentina and its main urban subsystems. Note. 1) Northern corridor, 2) Southern corridor, and 3) Northwestern quadrant. Aerial view of Rosario's waterfront along the Paraná River. Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2014, p. 47.

From a supralocal urbanism perspective, MCAR's technical staff conceptualize the Rosario Metropolitan Area as a horizontal metropolis, adopting a growth morphology that goes beyond traditional models. Within this framework, a new typology of metropolitan space has been proposed, identifying three key spatial categories: interstices (intra-urban voids with densification potential), hinges (rótulas, functionally and environmentally strategic articulation zones), and islands (peripheral areas disconnected from urban infrastructure). These categories provide a nuanced understanding of the metropolitan territory's heterogeneity and allow for the design of targeted interventions that integrate spatial, social, and environmental dimensions of urban expansion.

Complementing this territorial framework, a design-oriented methodology has been developed based on the codification of urban morphologies using a theoretical urban block of 50 × 100 meters (Fig. 2). This approach allows for the systematic evaluation of the interactions between building typologies, land tenure regimes, and housing densities. From this methodological base, six key projective strategies have been formulated: concerted morphological management, rural-urban articulation, real estate diversification, density and centrality calibration, regulation of modern expansions, and land co-production (Fig. 3). These strategies serve not only as replicable design hypotheses but also as mediating devices between regulatory frameworks and the specific territorial dynamics they are meant to address.
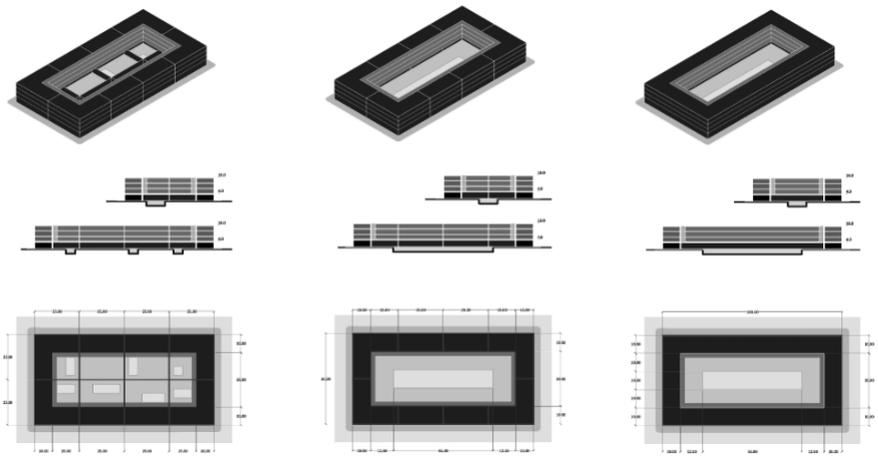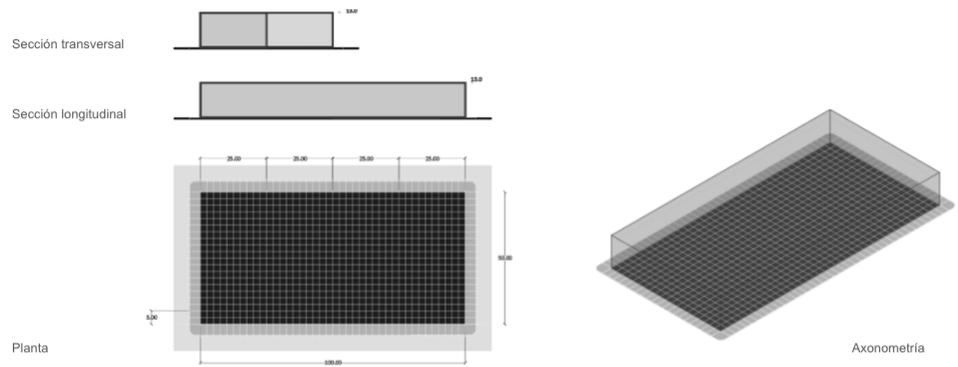
Figure 2. Diagram of the theoretical urban block and the property regimes considered in the codification of urban planning paradigms.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 20.
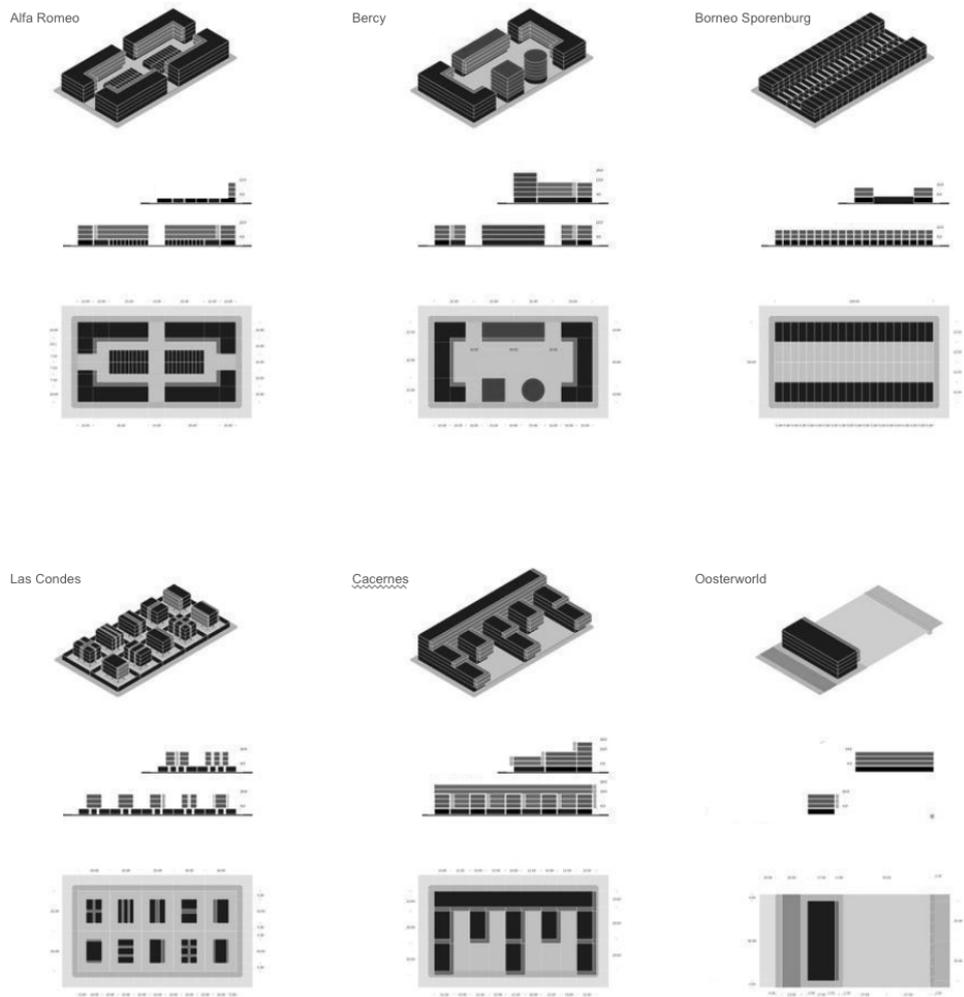
Figure 3. Six design strategies codified in regulatory terms.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 20.

# 4. — Three urban development prototypes

Following the parameters outlined in the previous section, MAR's technical team selected three areas within the RMA for the development of urbanization prototypes. These prototypes articulate metropolitan-level guidelines with localized interventions, integrating criteria related to urban development, urban design, and the production of land and housing. As project-based instruments of supralocal urbanism, the prototypes are aligned with interjurisdictional plans and proximity-based strategies aimed at relieving pressure on the central city.

### 4.1. — Villa constitución prototype: the expansion

The urban prototype developed for Villa Constitución by MAR, within the framework of the Interjurisdictional Plan "Southern Metropolitan Industrial and Logistics Corridor," constitutes a strategic expansion

initiative integrated with housing policies and territorial planning efforts in the southern area of the RMA. Its location –between the Constitución Stream and Route 21– defines a fragmented urban-rural corridor where the goal is to balance residential, productive, and recreational uses without undermining the semi-rural character of the surroundings (Fig. 4).

The project is organized into four complementary sectors: a 6-hectare collective housing cluster; a public and recreational space situated at a key environmental and infrastructural intersection; a productive zone that integrates rural and industrial activities; and a 20-hectare structured urban expansion, conceived as a planned extension of the existing fabric of Villa Constitución.

From a morphological and design perspective, the scheme adopts a system of rectangular superblocks aimed at reducing vehicular traffic and enhancing accessibility through a hierarchical network of avenues, pedestrian pathways, and transversal streets. This spatial organization enables parcel diversity based on a base module of 5 by 30 meters, which accommodates a mix of residential and small-scale commercial uses. The open-block configuration, featuring linear housing blocks interspersed with patios, setbacks, and gardens, supports a flexible morphology that can accommodate various models of land and housing management –public, private, or mixed– and both individual and collective typologies (Fig. 5).

The design also introduces differentiated scales of neighborhood organization. At the superblock level, cooperative or trust-based development models are proposed, including the potential for public land ownership. In smaller units organized around pedestrian passages, the project envisions shared-use arrangements that incorporate parking areas, commercial spaces, workshops, and communal facilities, encouraging a mixed, inclusive, and community-oriented living environment.

Figure 4. Location of the Villa Constitución Urban Development Plan (PDU) within the peri-urban corridor along the Constitución Stream.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 23.
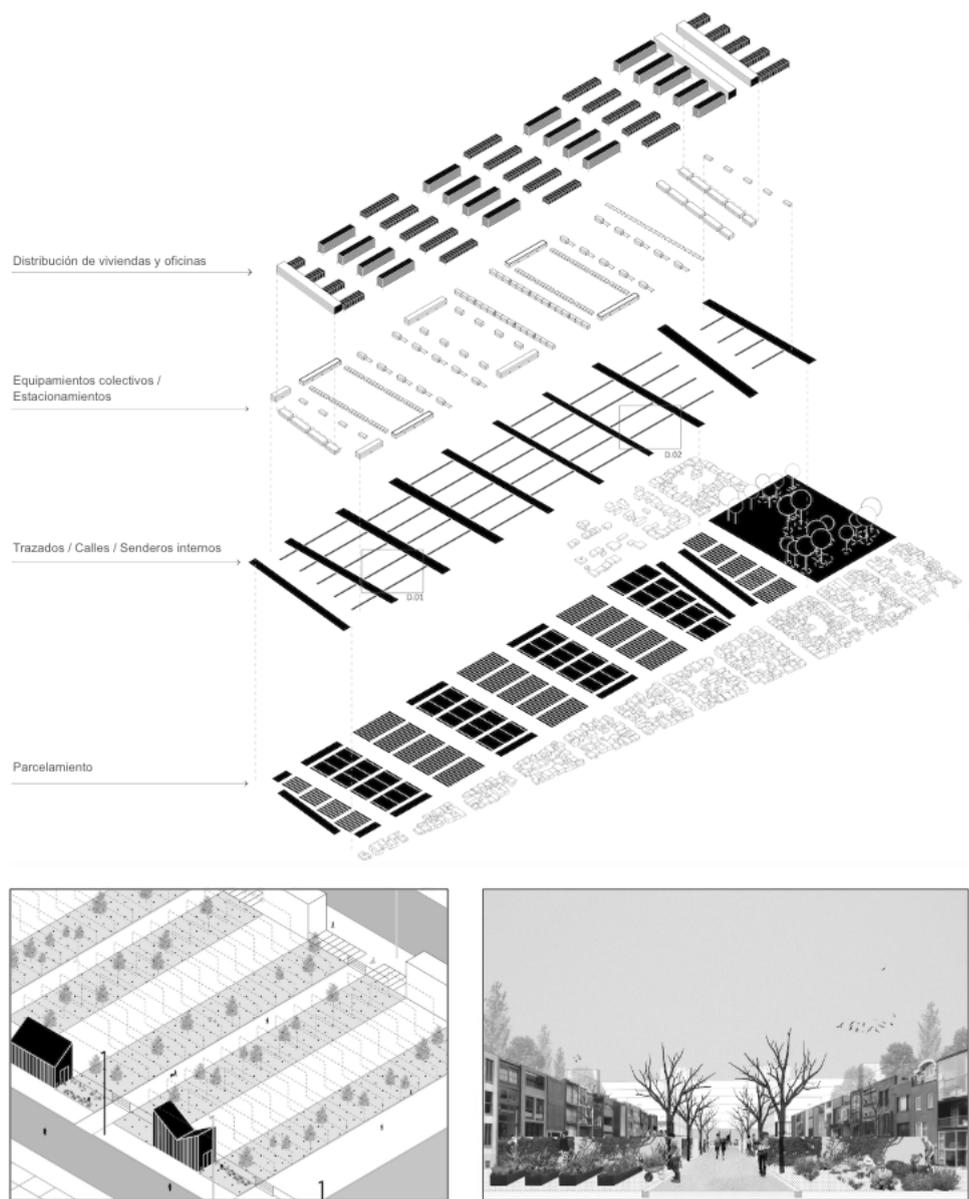
Figure 5. Planning components of the Villa Constitución PDU.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 22.

## 4.2. — Funes prototype: the hinge

The second urbanization prototype was developed for a sector of the Western Metropolitan Corridor, specifically in the municipality of Funes, as part of MAR's New Centralities Plan. The selected site, covering approximately 10 hectares, is strategically located at the intersection of two primary roads that connect contrasting territorial contexts: to the north, Rosario's airport and its surrounding commercial areas; to the south, rural land undergoing incipient urbanization near the Ludueña Stream (Fig. 6). Within this setting, the prototype is conceived as a territorial hinge, capable of integrating centrality programs –commercial, service-oriented, and residential– while establishing functional links with the broader airport development.

The proposed road network is designed to optimize accessibility through an internal avenue that structures the area along three transversal streets (Fig. 7). The intersections of these streets create a series of "corners" that serve as key nodes for the emerging neighborhood. Overlaid onto this structure is a finer-grained, semi-public and multifunctional network, intended for complementary residential uses. This comb-like configuration allows the land to be subdivided into two parcel types: larger lots (1,000–1,500 m²) designated for collective or institutional uses, and smaller lots (approximately 200 m²) intended for single-family housing, thus generating a spatial transition from active urban edges to a more suburban interior.

The urban morphology combines freestanding towers of up to 15 stories positioned at key intersections, with mid-rise infill buildings along the internal streets. This arrangement requires a differentiated system of public spaces, including buffer parks and stand-alone plazas designed for mixed uses. In terms of land production, the prototype proposes a multi-actor governance model: the public sector assumes responsibility for development along the new avenue; private developers oversee collective housing; and individual owners manage single-family parcels. This model is intended to promote a diverse range of stakeholders–including small and medium-sized construction firms, contractors, and architectural studios–while ensuring urban coherence across the development (Fig. 8).

Figure 6. Location of the Funes PDU as a regional hinge.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 23.
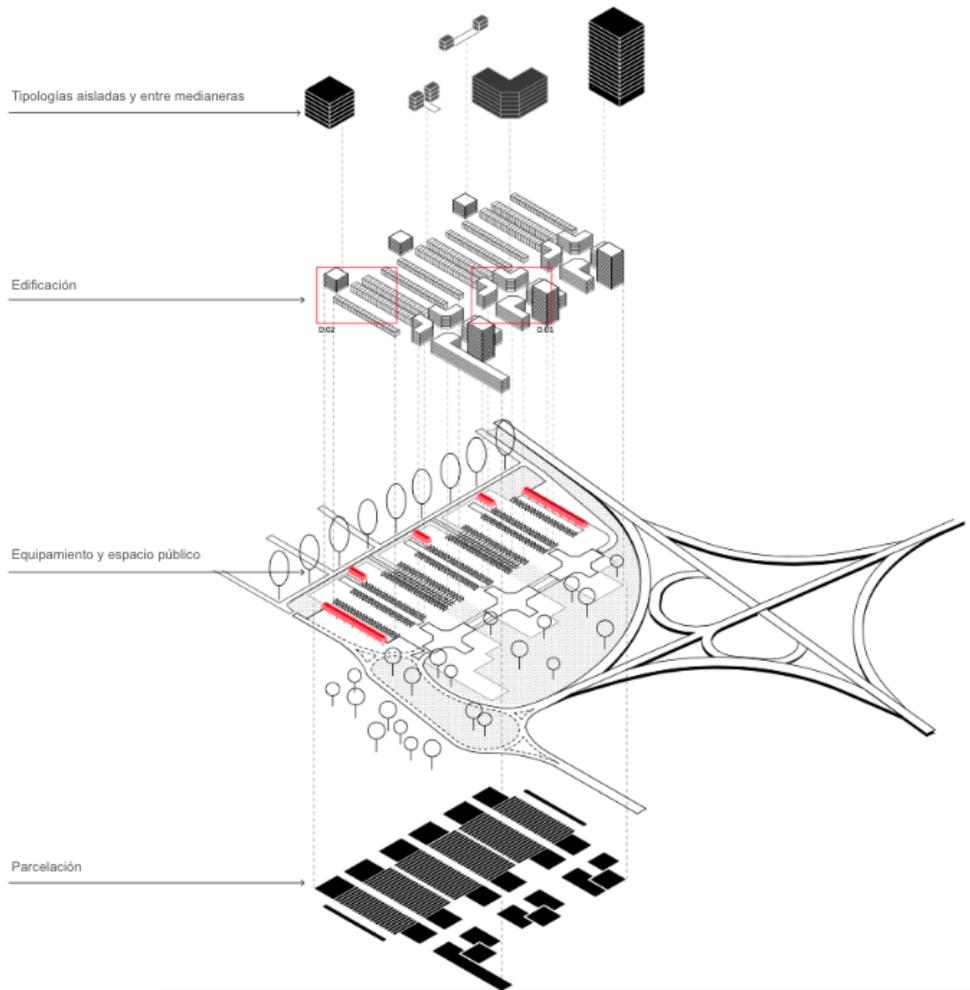
Figure 7. Planning components of the Funes prototype.
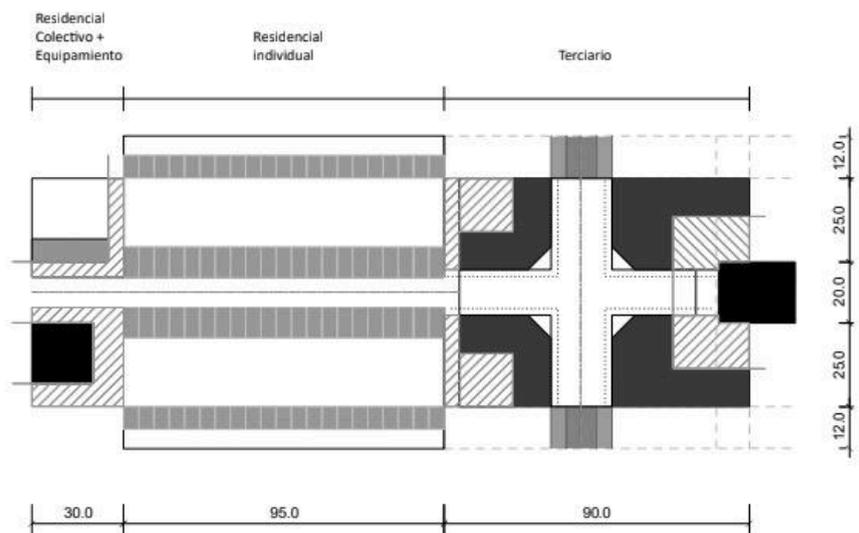Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 242.



Figure 8. Hybrid block model turned into urban planning regulation.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 242.

### 4.3. — Capitán bermúdez prototype: the interstice

The urban prototype developed for Capitán Bermúdez forms part of MAR's proximity projects, with the primary objective of structuring the shared riverfront with the neighboring municipality of Fray Luis Beltrán. Located along an axis perpendicular to the Paraná River–linking the Rosario–Santa Fe highway with the local urban grid–this strategic sector weaves together regional accessibility, commercial centralities, and public spaces within a linear, spine-like urban structure (Fig. 9).

The project addresses a 17-hectare urban interstice, organized into two morphologically distinct components (Fig. 10). The first, situated along the edge of the adjacent neighborhood, is composed of a perimeter block–designed as a 13-meter-wide programmed strip–aligned with the municipal frontage. This active edge integrates housing, small-scale commerce, and public amenities into a continuous, open perimeter that avoids enclosed enclaves and fosters new connections with the surrounding fabric. The second component, located in the interior of the site, is structured around a parametric zoning model in which each landowner assumes the role of developer and designer of their own parcel–on the condition that they adhere to predefined proportions among land uses, guiding the overall development logic of the site. Regulated through a system of minimum and maximum lot sizes (ranging from 120 to 5,000 m²), this approach encourages functional and social diversity while limiting the concentration of land ownership.

Unlike conventional subdivision models, this morphology is intended to grow incrementally through progressive aggregation, which requires robust institutional coordination. This coordination is directed toward ensuring universal accessibility, enabling neighborhood-level agreements, and promoting cooperative forms of housing production–from land acquisition to construction. Furthermore, the model incorporates sustainability criteria, including the adoption of energy-efficient technologies, decentralized service management systems, and collective practices aimed at strengthening neighborhood autonomy and fostering a closer relationship with the riverine landscape.
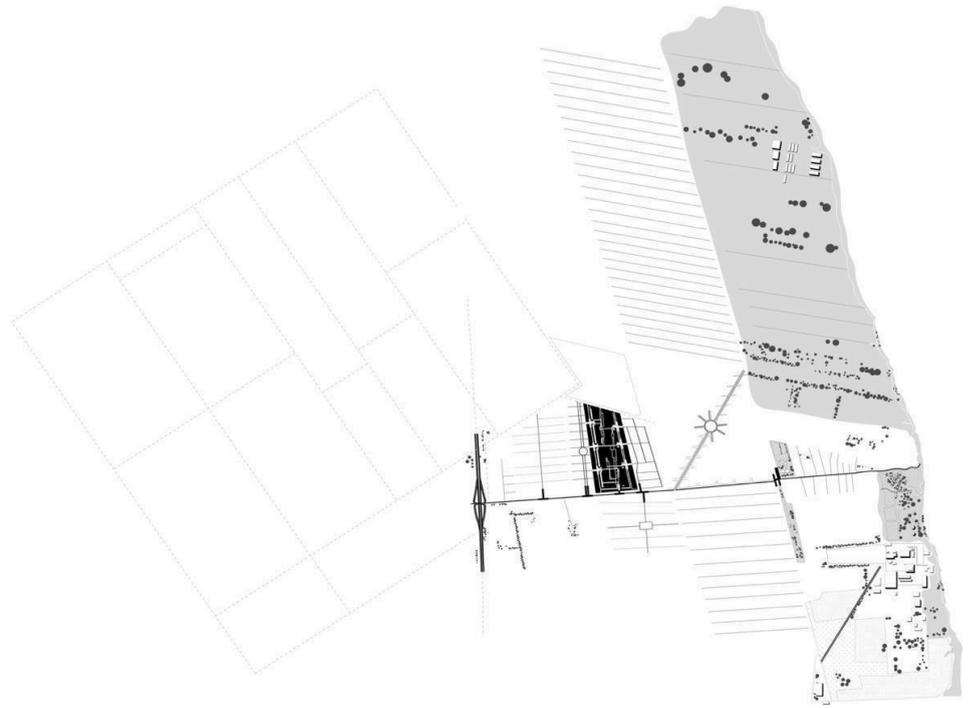
Figure 9. Location of the PDU in an interstitial area at the entrance to Capitán Bermúdez.
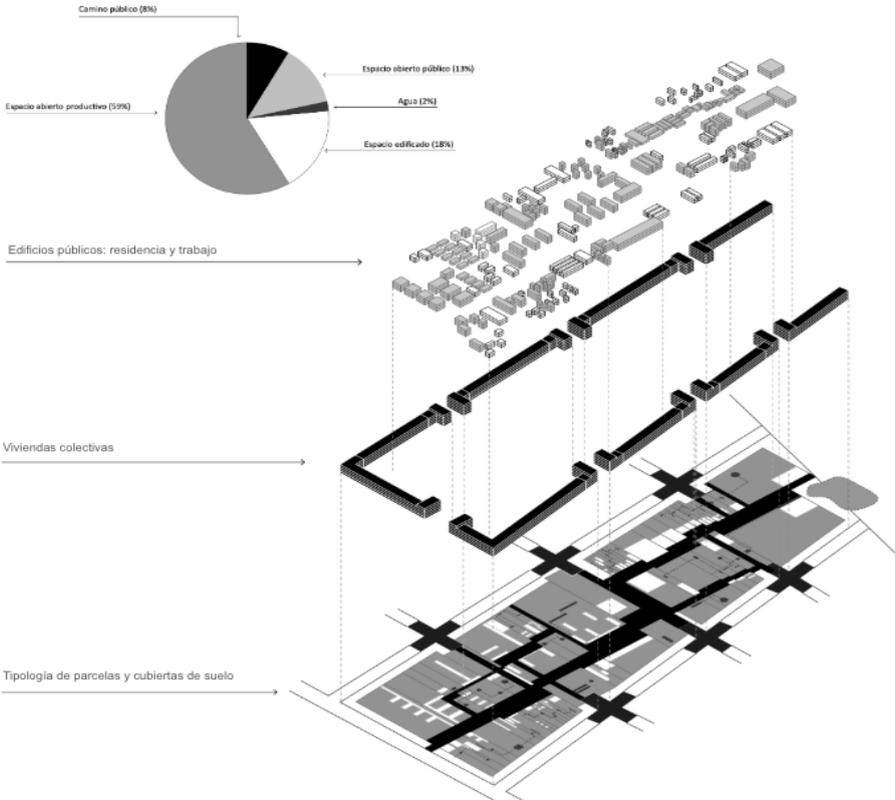Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, p. 25.



Figure 10. Planning components of the Capitán Bermúdez PDU and parametric zoning
criteria assigning each plot mandatory proportions of use.
Source: Metropolitan Coordination Authority of Rosario (MCAR), 2024, pp. 26–27.

# 5. — Discussion and conclusions[1]

In the context of supralocal urbanism, the urban project is redefined as a process of territorial research and interpretation –one that anticipates emerging issues and activates spatial potentials before they materialize as demands or crises (Meijsmans, 2010). This situated perspective prioritizes an attentive reading of local actors, conflicts, and available resources, enabling the design of flexible strategies and the construction of cooperative frameworks rooted in specific territorial conditions.

Far from relying on ready-made solutions, the project unfolds as a "project of projects": an open-ended and dynamic process in which spatial responses emerge through experimentation and iterative design, especially in complex, multi-jurisdictional metropolitan settings. This logic allows for the combination of projective precision–through drawings, spatial models, and geometrical definitions–with higher levels of abstraction that remain open to redefinition during implementation.

In contrast to market-driven logics and the retrenchment of the state, supralocal urbanism reasserts the role of public institutions –not as mere managers of indicators or regulators of private investment, but as active agents in the creation of adaptive, collaborative territorial frameworks. This is not a return to centralized authority, but rather a reimagining of the state as a mediator and facilitator of diverse social, economic, and spatial interests, promoting a type of planning that is locally grounded, adaptive, and oriented toward the production of urban space as a common good.

This approach challenges the prevailing tendency in planning to reduce urban complexity to standardized metrics or generic policy goals –such as sustainability, compactness, or social cohesion– often detached from specific spatial configurations. Supralocal urbanism proposes instead a renewed articulation between plan and project, overcoming their traditional separation. Rather than seeing them as separate or hierarchical instruments, the two are integrated through spatial management units of morphological relevance–particularly the urban block–which can structure both public and private action within a coherent territorial logic.

This integrated framework gives meaning to local interventions as part of a broader metropolitan constellation, preventing land fragmentation and functional segregation. It also fosters the revaluation of everyday and reproductive activities by partially ruralizing the built environment, reinforcing proximity between housing, work, and essential services.

One of the key contributions of this approach lies in its departure from rigid, traditional land subdivision models. The prototypes explored

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[1] An earlier version of this research was published in Revista de Urbanismo No. 52, 2025, https://doi.org/10.5354/0717-5051.2025.74932

here introduce more flexible, adaptive forms of land parcelling that accommodate a variety of uses, building typologies, and stakeholder configurations. Through morphological and parametric–not purely Euclidean–criteria, the spatial structure is designed to respond to local dynamics while maintaining overall coherence. This parcel flexibility is paired with new forms of architectural aggregation–such as programmed subdivisions or open block structures–that support a mix of public, semi-public, and private spaces, and reconfigure the relationship between architecture and urbanization.

Within this framework, the urban project is no longer a static representation of a future scenario but becomes an iterative and negotiated process. Rather than reproducing pre-established schemes, the prototypes function as open platforms for co-production, in which multiple actors–state agencies, private firms, cooperatives, architectural practices, small-scale developers, and community organizations–actively participate in shaping urban space. This openness allows planning to make visible and engage with social and economic variables –such as land production, urban value capture, and access to housing– that are often obscured by technocratic or neutral discourses.

Moreover, supralocal urbanism offers a concrete alternative to centralized models of housing production dominated by market logics. By incorporating shared services, cooperative housing schemes, and self-managed systems, the approach fosters non-stereotypical forms of urban development that enable more inclusive and situated spatial practices, capable of escaping conventional market dynamics. This diversification of actors and production modalities –combined with collective service provision– contributes to the emergence of a more equitable and resilient urban matrix.

In sum, supralocal urbanism asserts itself not as a circumstantial alternative but as a structural necessity in metropolitan contexts increasingly shaped by polymorphic urbanization processes, overlapping spatial regimes, and a proliferation of actors. It calls for a form of planning that embraces complexity, fosters institutional cooperation, and recovers the project as both a tool for territorial intelligence and a catalyst for spatial transformation. ◤

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# «Digital platforms and urban change. Temporary rentals as emerging patterns of real estate valorization»

«Plataformas digitales, y transformaciones urbanas.. Los alquileres temporales como nuevas formas de valorización inmobiliaria»

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**Abstract**

This article synthesizes key research findings from the past five years on the expansion of digital platforms and their territorial effects in Argentina and Latin America. Drawing from an understanding of platforms as central technologies within the techno-economic paradigm of information and telecommunications, the study focuses on the impacts of short-term rental platforms on the conventional rental market, housing infrastructures, and ultimately, the right to housing and the city. The methodological strategy was both qualitative and quantitative, and included: literature reviews; in-depth interviews with actors involved in the short-term rental supply; data collection and mapping of short-term and conventional rental listings; systematization of regulations governing rental activity through digital platforms; and analysis of technical and governmental reports. The article presents twelve thematic-problematic axes that outline a research agenda on short-term rental platforms in Argentina and Latin America.

**Resumen**

El artículo sintetiza los principales hallazgos de investigación de los últimos cinco años, acerca del despliegue de las plataformas digitales y sus efectos territoriales en Argentina y América Latina. Partiendo de entender a las plataformas como tecnologías centrales del paradigma tecno-económico de la informática y las telecomunicaciones, se pone el foco en los impactos de las plataformas de alquileres temporarios en el mercado de alquileres convencionales, las infraestructuras de vivienda y, en definitiva, en el derecho a la vivienda y la ciudad. La estrategia metodológica fue cuali-cuantitativa e incluyó: relevamientos bibliográficos, entrevistas en profundidad con actores de la oferta de alquileres temporarios, relevamiento y mapeo de ofertas de alquileres temporarios y convencionales, sistematización de regulaciones sobre el alquiler a través de plataformas digitales y análisis de informes técnicos y gubernamentales. Entre los hallazgos, se presentan doce ejes temático-problemáticos que delinean una agenda de investigación sobre las plataformas de alquiler temporario en Argentina y América Latina.

# 1. — Problem Statement and Conceptual Framework

Each technological revolution reorganizes the techno-economic paradigm (TEP) that shapes society and territory at a given time and place (Perez, 2010). Digital platforms are part of the "fifth technological revolution" in the age of information technology and telecommunications. These cross-cutting TEPs affect productivity, costs, and the availability of key inputs, and shape physical infrastructures, imposing a predominant spatial design (Arthur, 1988).

There are ongoing debates regarding the role of digital technologies in spatial transformations –whether they represent a qualitative shift in the organization of capitalism (Moriset & Malecki, 2009), or rather a reconfiguration or intensification of existing structures and processes (Zook & Shelton, 2016). Regardless, it is possible to affirm that digital technologies have enabled greater dispersion of economic activity and expanded the capacity of producers to reach increasingly distant consumers. For capital, this has meant a partial release from certain territorial and social frictions. As a result, the circulation and accumulation of capital have accelerated, along with the social contradictions they entail.

Digital platforms can be defined as intermediation technologies that connect individuals or organizations with objects or with other people. They thus constitute a new organizational form (Kenney & Zysman, 2020), or a medium that provides infrastructure (Srnicek, 2018), based on the relationship between the platform, its ecosystem of dependent firms, and the users who interact and transact through them. In this sense, platforms function simultaneously as infrastructures and as actors.

From a spatial perspective, the platform economy is redefining the spatial organization of capitalism and generating a new spatial arrangement (Harvey, 2014), characterized by extreme sectoral (within the industry) and territorial concentration of power, along with a wide dispersion of its impacts (Kenney & Zysman, 2020). Paradoxically, "although creators can be located anywhere, there remains a centripetal pull of geography in this seemingly spatially neutral activity" (Kenney & Zysman, 2019:16, own translation).

Richardson (2020) proposes thinking of platforms as flexible spatial arrangements that do not have a specific territorial fix but instead operate through territorialized networks. The strength of platforms lies precisely in their capacity to articulate urban elements. The goods and services mobilized through them –food, transport, people, accommodation, etc.– thus become material expressions of this spatial (and temporal) fix (Harvey, 2014).

In this sense, "platform capitalism" (Srnicek, 2018) has significantly reshaped urban life, giving rise to new ways of knowing, understanding, working in, and inhabiting the city –ultimately fostering what has been termed "platform urbanism" (Sadowsky, 2020; Graham, 2020). Among urban studies, the impacts of temporary accommodation platforms (such as Airbnb) on the real estate market, tourism, and housing have been analyzed in particular, as well as the impacts of delivery platforms on the labor market, urban traffic, and public space. In this paper, we will focus on the former.

## 2. — Short-term rental platforms: main research approaches and issues

Although platforms like Airbnb initially disrupted short-term rental markets in the tourism and hotel sectors (Moreno-Izquierdo et al., 2016; Ustrov, 2020), they quickly expanded into permanent housing rental markets. Many of these dwellings were reoriented toward short-term rentals, especially targeting foreign visitors, leading to rising prices and a reduced supply of affordable housing for local residents (Gil García, 2020; Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2021; Gil & Sequera, 2018). In this way, short-term rentals (STR) have emerged as a new real estate product that has sparked conflicts regarding access to housing and the right to inhabit the city in many parts of the world.

Most studies on STRs approach the phenomenon through the lenses of touristification (Díaz Parra & Sequera, 2020; Jover & Díaz-Parra, 2020) or tourism gentrification (Gotham, 2005; Cocola-Gant, 2018; Yrigoy, 2019), focusing specifically on their impacts on real estate markets and on the barriers they generate for local residents' access to housing (Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018; Zou, 2020), the displacement of low-income populations (Pinkster & Boterman, 2017), and local resistance to these processes (Gil & Sequera, 2018). Broadly speaking, these studies concur in highlighting that STRs have contributed to the emergence of new forms of surplus investment and capital accumulation in cities (Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2021; Gil García, 2020; Gil & Sequera, 2018), thereby driving the financialization and transformation of local real estate markets (Fields & Rogers, 2021; Sadowsky, 2020; Shaw, 2020).

From a different angle, a growing number of studies underscore the central role played by governments in the proliferation of STRs in many cities (Jover & Cocola-Gant, 2023), while others examine the challenges of regulating this phenomenon (Colomb & Moreira De Souza, 2021; Von Briel & Dolnicar, 2021).

While an expanding body of literature on STRs in European and U.S. cities exists, academic reflection on (and from) Latin America remains limited. Nevertheless, the issue has gained prominence on the region's public agenda, as the presence of Airbnb in cities like Buenos

Aires, Mexico City, and Rio de Janeiro rivals that of major European and North American cities. For example, in 2023, there were 18,321 listings in Barcelona, 32,202 in New York, and 13,327 in Berlin, compared to 33,490 in Buenos Aires, 26,760 in Mexico City, and 36,008 in Rio de Janeiro (Inside Airbnb, 2023).

In Latin American urban studies, several works have examined issues such as the regulatory challenges posed by platform economies for labor markets and taxation frameworks (see Amunátegui, 2019); the effects of tourism on cities and the tensions between tourism-related and traditional land uses (see González et al., 2020; Lerena & Rodríguez, 2019); and the impacts of STRs on affordable housing markets in large cities such as Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, São Paulo, and Santiago (Lerena Rongvaux, 2022; Cícero Ferreira, 2023; González Loyde, 2023; Rolnik et al., 2021), as well as in smaller tourist cities, particularly in Brazil and Chile (Braga-de-Souza & Viana Leonelli, 2024; Cáceres, 2024).

In line with studies that analyze STRs from a political economy perspective (Gil, 2023; Jover & Cocola-Gant, 2023), we argue that the emergence of this rental market –facilitated by the rise of digital platforms– must be understood within the broader context of the restructuring of the current financialized accumulation regime (Chesnais, 2003), which is increasingly characterized by its rentier nature (Christophers, 2020). STRs are not merely a result of technological disruption or new tourism practices: they represent novel forms of real estate valorization, which foster the concentration of capital among service corporations and landowners –both local and transnational– thereby exacerbating the housing and rental crises. STRs function as a flexible mode of surplus accumulation and investment, accelerating capital turnover and enabling its global circulation through new transnational financial instruments (such as PayPal, Payoneer, etc.).

Politically, the spread of STRs takes place in a context of urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). Local governments not only lack significant regulatory capacity over these new forms of real estate rent extraction, but often actively promote their expansion as part of the ongoing inter-urban competition to attract both domestic and foreign investment (Vainer, 2000). Numerous studies have shown how local governments facilitate processes such as touristification and promote STR growth via digital platforms (Cáceres, 2024; Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2021). In Latin America, the lack –or complete absence– of regulation further enables the rapid expansion of STRs (Lerena et al., 2024).

Ideologically, platforms such as Airbnb, Rappi, or Uber present their services as tools for turning idle resources (a spare room, a few free hours with a car or motorcycle) into highly productive assets. In line with this logic, the city itself –and the domestic sphere– is framed as an inefficient and underutilized system: a network of resources that have not yet been fully valorized (Sadowsky, 2020). In this way, capitalism

advances into new frontiers of commodification, targeting both public and private space, as well as urban leisure time. In a context of rising underemployment, declining job quality, and increasing precarity, these platforms often appear as low-barrier, flexible income-generating tools—yet ones that are as precarious as they are accessible.

# 3. — Main Findings

Based on a review of the issue, the work carried out over the past five years (Lerena et al., 2024; Lerena Rongvaux, 2022, 2023; Lerena Rongvaux & Rodríguez, 2020; Lerena Rongvaux & Rodriguez, 2023; Elinbaum & Lerena, 2024; Lerena & Gonzalez Redondo, 2025; Lerena & Orozco, 2025) puts forward a series of claims –and also questions– about the nature and urban impacts of short-term rentals (STRs) through digital platforms. While most of these studies focus on the city of Buenos Aires, they are in dialogue with other Argentine tourist cities and Latin American metropolises. Among the main insights, we highlight twelve key points:

- **Digital platforms have transformed urban accumulation dynamics.** STRs emerge and proliferate as a flexible investment vehicle and means for surplus accumulation. From a local-global perspective, they enable faster capital rotation and its global circulation (often in a south-north flow) via platforms such as Airbnb and financial tools like PayPal, Payoneer, among others. At the local level, owners expect higher returns compared to conventional rentals.

- **Flexibility is the key technological leap of STRs.** Although these expectations of higher profitability are often unmet, landlords show considerable flexibility, shifting back and forth between conventional rentals and STRs. Rather than operating as separate markets, it is more accurate to understand both as different modalities within a single real estate market. Both digital platforms and the evolving institutional arrangements around rental housing grant landlords unprecedented flexibility. This very flexibility constitutes the technological breakthrough that has enabled new ways of urban rent extraction.

- **Impacts on the conventional rental market.** Even when STRs do not yield higher returns, their expansion through platforms has two major consequences for housing access: first, they contribute to generalized rent increases; second, they reduce the supply of long-term rental housing, depending on the context. In large cities, STRs mainly pressure rental prices through expectations rather than reducing unit availability. In smaller rental markets or high-tourism cities, however, the long-term rental stock is

effectively reduced.

- **Rapid growth of STRs in Argentina.**. In recent years, the supply of temporary rentals through platforms has grown rapidly across Argentine cities For example, listings doubled in Ushuaia and increased by 220% in Bariloche between October 2021 and February 2023. In Puerto Iguazú, they tripled in less than two years (2018–2020) (Granero Realini & Alvaredo, 2023).

- **Geographically differentiated impacts.** The socio-territorial effects of STRs depend on the characteristics of each city –its urban hierarchy, productive structure, housing shortage, and land values. For instance, STR impacts differ in large, diversified urban agglomerations compared to smaller or mid-sized tourist cities. According to a recent study (Realini & Alvaredo, 2023), tourist cities have the highest ratio of STRs to total housing stock (Census 2022). In San Martín de los Andes, more than 4% of homes are STRs; in Bariloche, Pinamar, and Ushuaia, the figure is around 2.7%. In contrast, cities within major urban agglomerations show STR shares below 0.2%.

- **Social ties as a condition for accessing long-term rentals.** In tourist cities like Bariloche, STRs have nearly displaced conventional rental supply. As of January 2025, AirDNA[1] recorded 3,551 Airbnb listings in Bariloche, compared to just 18 on ZonaProp[2]. A similar pattern –though on a different scale– is evident in Buenos Aires, with 35,443 STRs on Airbnb versus 232 long-term listings on ZonaProp. In this context, accessing long-term rentals largely depends on social and community networks, with housing circulating off-platform. This puts newcomers and migrants at a disadvantage if they lack such connections.

- **Intra-urban heterogeneity in the STR distribution and the features of supply.** On the one hand, already established areas are being reinforced. These areas offer the largest and best selection of properties, the most professional service management, and new real estate developments designed for these rentals. On the other hand, new areas beyond the traditional tourist circuit are opening up, where STRs are offered through "sharing" formats (e.g., rooms in shared homes) or owner-managed entire homes. In Latin America, the sharing or self-management model is still very widespread, although it is the least efficient and tends to disappear with competition.

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[1] https://www.airdna.co/

[2] https://www.zonaprop.com.ar/ is one of the leading platforms for buying, selling, and renting properties in most cities across the country.

- **STRs open new frontiers of commodification in urban space.** The sharing model considers part of one's own home as an asset. Thus, temporary rentals open up new frontiers for the commodification of intimate space and time, which until now had been outside the logic of capital.

- **The material-spatial and institutional infrastructure of STRs becomes increasingly complex.** Understanding housing as infrastructure (Elinbaum & Lerena, 2024) allows for the development of a typology capturing the evolving logics and spatialities of STRs. From sharing a sofa to buildings exclusively designed for this purpose, there is a continuum of complexity in STRs, visible both in domestic spatial arrangements and in institutional frameworks.

- **New and underexplored links between STRs and financialization in Argentina.** Most of the literature associates STR growth with the financialization of housing, especially in Europe, Mexico, and Brazil (Rolnik et al., 2023). In Argentina, financialization is not strongly linked to housing production, but rather to the use of international financial tools –such as PayPal or Wise– by landlords to store foreign currency earnings. In this way, local value flows to international financial circuits.

- **STRs reflect new user profiles that deserve attention.** In large cities, STRs are not only used by tourists, but also by people undergoing medical treatment, attending events, moving houses, going through separations, or young adults seeking independence. It is essential to consider this diversity when evaluating the pros and cons of STRs in contexts of high mobility, and to shape regulations not only in relation to tourism, but above all in terms of housing access.

- **Regulation remains one of the biggest challenges.** As with other digital platforms, global STR companies like Airbnb are poorly regulated, create monopolistic dynamics, and effectively "set the rules." Existing regulations often focus on tourism and fail to address housing market impacts. In Argentina, very few municipalities regulate STRs, and enforcement is nearly nonexistent. Most regulations merely require property registration and basic safety standards. Urban-scale controls –such as limiting the number of STR units per neighborhood or their geographic concentration– are absent. This lack of regulation reshapes neighborhood dynamics, replacing local shops with tourist-oriented businesses and creating security and coexistence issues between residents and visitors. Possible regulatory tools include zoning to protect certain neighborhoods and tax schemes that allocate a share of STR revenue to support social rental programs.

# 4. — Challenges

These twelve points reveal that the issue of short-term rentals through digital platforms merits a greater presence in regional urban studies agendas. In particular, there is a need to better understand their impacts on non-metropolitan tourist cities; to systematize Latin American and national specificities in order to establish tailored research agendas and deepen knowledge; to thoroughly investigate the financial instruments that have proliferated with the "platformization" process; and to systematize and support initiatives of resistance, opposition, and proposals for regulating short-term rentals and urban digital platforms. To this end, we are advancing the formation of international research networks (both regional and global). ◤

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