

# The rationalities of social housing construction *in Santiago del Estero, Argentina.*



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## DIPLOMARBEIT

The rationalities of social housing construction  
in Santiago del Estero, Argentina.

ausgeführt zum Zwecke der Erlangung des akademischen Grades  
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# ABSTRACT

In Argentina, 92 % of the population lives in cities (CIA 2019). Due to the continuous growth of cities and an insufficient supply of housing matching a minimum standard, the priority of housing policies has been for several decades to systematically reduce this deficit. One of the national strategies was and still is direct property oriented social housing construction. As the demand for it is high, the creation of modest living spaces – standardized one or two family housing typologies situated in the outskirts of urban agglomeration in a timely and cost-effective manner – has been the habitual way of meeting those needs since the early 2000s. Big housing projects, financed by national funds, have been executed by Provincial Housing Institutes, leaving municipalities and local authorities without any say in significant urban growth processes and land consumption.

Looking at this practice of housing politics and urban planning, the rationalities behind official production of urban space, the tension between the national and the local scale, the public and the private and the quality of urban development areas are crucial points of interest in order to answer the research question: *What are the rationalities behind social housing construction in Santiago del Estero, Argentina?*

The central subject of this thesis is a specific neighborhood in Santiago del Estero, a town of intermediate size with about 400.000 inhabitants in central-north Argentina. ‘Barrio Siglo XXI’, finished in 2012, exemplifies the specific spatial phenomenon of social housing mass construction that this research will focus on. The embedding in Latin American urban development theory and a retrospective of Argentina’s previous housing policies shall allow to contextualize the phenomenon and reveal parallels and changes in urban space production. Through applying tools of systems theory, housing policies on a national level have been critically explored. Empirical findings gained through observations and qualitative interviews have generated knowledge on the scale of the city of Santiago del Estero as well as on the micro scale of the specific neighborhood. By connecting those scales, the abstract and the concrete, five predominant rationalities of space production have been defined, that shape current social housing areas in Santiago del Estero.



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# ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In Argentinien leben 92 % der Gesamtbevölkerung in Städten (CIA 2019). Aufgrund des kontinuierlichen Wachstums der Städte und eines unzureichenden Angebots an Wohnungen, die einem Mindeststandard entsprechen, bemüht sich die Wohnungspolitik seit mehreren Jahrzehnten vorrangig darum, das Wohnungsdefizit systematisch zu verringern. Eine der nationalen Strategien war und ist der direkte soziale Wohnungsbau. Da die Nachfrage nach erschwinglichem Wohnen hoch ist, stellt die Schaffung bescheidener Lebensräume - standardisierte Ein- oder Zweifamilienhaustypen am Rande des städtischen Ballungsraums - den üblichen Weg dar, um diesen Bedürfnissen seit Anfang der 2000er Jahre gerecht zu werden. Große Wohnprojekte, die aus nationalen Mitteln finanziert werden, wurden von den Provinzwohnungsinstituten durchgeführt, wobei Gemeinden und lokale Behörden bei bedeutenden städtischen Wachstumsprozessen und beim Flächenverbrauch kein Mitspracherecht haben.

Betrachtet man diese Praxis der Wohnungspolitik und Stadtplanung, so sind die Rationalitäten der offiziellen Stadtraumproduktion, das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen nationaler und lokaler Ebene, der öffentlichen und privaten Räume und der Qualität von Stadtentwicklungsgebieten entscheidende Punkte von Interesse, um folgende Forschungsfrage zu beantworten: Welche Rationalitäten stecken hinter dem sozialen Wohnungsbau in Santiago del Estero, Argentinien?

Das zentrale Thema dieser Arbeit ist ein bestimmtes Stadtviertel in Santiago del Estero, einer mittelgroßen Stadt mit etwa 400.000 Einwohnern im zentralen Norden Argentiniens. Das 2012 fertiggestellte "Barrio Siglo XXI" veranschaulicht das konkrete räumliche Phänomen des sozialen Wohnungsbaus in Form von homogenen Massentypbauten. Die Einbettung in die Theorie zu Stadtentwicklung in Lateinamerika und eine Retrospektive der bisherigen argentinischen Wohnungspolitik soll es ermöglichen, das Phänomen zu kontextualisieren und Parallelen und Veränderungen in der urbanen Raumproduktion aufzuzeigen. Durch die Anwendung systemtheoretischer Instrumente wird die Interventionslogik der Wohnungspolitik auf nationaler Ebene kritisch untersucht. Empirische Erkenntnisse aus Beobachtungen und qualitativen Interviews haben Erkenntnisse auf der gesamten städtischen Ebene von Santiago del Estero sowie über die Mikroskala des spezifischen Stadtteils generiert. Durch die Verbindung dieser Skalen werden fünf vorherrschende Rationalitäten der Raumproduktion herausgearbeitet, welche die aktuellen sozialen Wohngebiete in Santiago del Estero prägen.

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Figure 1. Geographical overview, shapefile source: Tapiquén 2015, own elaboration

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

Cities are the living space for 92 % of Argentina's population. Still, the rate of urbanization has increased by about 1 % per year since 2015 (CIA 2019). An increasing number of residents does also call for new living spaces. In all parts around the globe the high demand for housing is a challenge, so it is in Argentina. Many people find themselves in situations of inadequate housing conditions or without any perspective of a proper living space at all. In the province Santiago del Estero in the north of Argentina, more than 35 % of all residents live in deficient conditions (Subsecretaría de Planificación y de la Inversión Pública 2010). Housing, nevertheless, is a basic human right. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to an "adequate condition of life" (Article 25) is defined as a precondition for a dignified life. In the Argentinian National Constitution, the *Constitución de la Nación Argentina*, this right is translated into an even more explicit wording, implementing a "right to access to decent housing" in Article 14a. It is, thus, a duty of public planning authorities to work on the reduction of the current deficits. One of Argentina's strategies to meet this pressing challenge are social housing policies that foster the construction of accessible living space. The moment of local implementation this political agenda this is the point where spatial questions enter the field. Urban planning in forms of strategic frameworks as well as spatial city development have long lasting impacts on the functioning and quality of place. The way these new areas are designed and located are partly shaped by national regulations, partly dependent on decisions on the subordinate provincial level and ultimately shape the possibilities and forms of experiences within it.

Social housing areas in Santiago del Estero make about 32 % of the urban surface, which is remarkably high in comparison to the Argentinian average of 11 % (CIPPEC 2017: 141, 235). How the development happens and which reasonings it follows is therefore a very relevant question when aiming to understand the impacts of social housing policies on the city as a whole and the cities society. Even if in Santiago del Estero the spatial results of the subsidy agenda of national housing policies are very visible, there is still a lack of empirical research. This thesis aims to identify the rationalities behind social housing development by putting the focus on a space that is – I assume – very much shaped by those interventions.

After introducing key terms and methodology of this work, in the second chapter some relevant theoretical bases will be introduced. In order to understand the context of Argentina, general development trends in Latin America will be discussed. Further, a short introduction into the scientific-theoretical framework of this work will be given. The third chapter focuses on housing policies, beginning with the Latin American context and later discussing the historic development of Argentina's housing policies with the aim to better classify current policies at the end of the section. In chapter four, Santiago del Estero will be introduced and dynamics as well as actors in the social housing construction will be identified. In chapter five the systemic embedding of the implemented policies on a macro level will be analyzed in a first step. The argument of the chapter then narrows down to a specific neighborhood: Barrio Siglo XXI. The empirical data gained throughout the field research conducted in January and February 2019 in Santiago del Estero will be presented and interpreted. In the discussion, key elements of all chapters shall be get put together in order to respond to the main research question: What are the rationalities behind social housing construction in Santiago del Estero, Argentina?

## 1.2. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

As a first step, the most relevant terms used within this thesis shall be defined. The term 'rationality' is central, it refers to the argumentation of decisions or regulations regarding housing policies and specific construction projects. In order to research ways of collective action, two main terms would be applied: '*Logic*' and '*rationality*'. The term '*logic*' refers to a specific normative of thinking that is followed. It designates the structure of how decisions are negotiated. Within social science theories of action, different variations of '*logics*' are used in order to analyze structural and individual action lines which lead to collective phenomena, for example the "logic of the situation". It is the intent to connect the structural level with the individual one. Therefore, the differentiation between context factors that have an impact on the action and personal room for choice are clearly separated (Kroneberg 2014: 548). '*Rationality*', at the same time, is the "principle of orientation for individual and collective action" (Kaelser, Koenig 2014: 389). '*Rationality*' assumes, that a specific behavior or a decision can be judged as rationally made, that the acting individual is lead by reason, and that the way a position is communicated achieves, that the decision is assessed as reasonable not only by the emitter but also by other subjects. The main characteristic of '*rationality*' is the 'inter-subjective justi-

fiability" (ibid.). There is no separation between the context factors and individual space of action. Due to this difference, '*rationality*' promises to be more suitable when aiming to identify motives and argumentation lines that lead to a specific type of planning. Therefore, in this thesis this term will be used.

The second crucial term within this research is '*social housing*'. This is the common denomination for state-funded housing (which would correspond to the term '*Gemeindebau*' in the Viennese context). In Santiago del Estero however, when talking about the local state residential areas, the term '*official housing*' was used by all actors. Therefore, both terms will be used and are to be understood as equivalents for publicly funded housing, targeted to a low-income population stratum.

Also of central significance for the subject are the different political dimensions. The model of Meyer, differentiating between three dimensions of politics is therefore a useful framework to work with. He distinguishes between the terms '*polity*', '*policy*' and '*politics*' (2000: 52). '*Polity*' designates the structural form of politics, for example the existing institutions or legal norms. '*Policies*' are the content and goal of political negotiation processes in forms of programs and goals. '*Politics*' is the dimension of negotiation itself, it is the process of decision making and power relations between the actors (ibid.). The focus of this thesis is on the contemplation of the dimensions of policies (in terms of housing policies and frameworks) and their urban implementation.

Finally, there is the difference in the connotation and use of the terms '*urban development*' and '*city development*' (or planning) to be considered. While '*urban development*' is understood to be focused on rather strategic processes and would be applied to activities like policy making and the development of strategic documents, '*city development*' is assumed to have a focal point on the spatial design (Gleye 2014: 5). Within this thesis, both perspectives will be taken up. Questions of the strategic framework which creates the context (in forms of housing policies and project calls) as well as of design as will be discussed, with a focus on urban development.

### 1.3. THE RESEARCH IDEA

The idea for the research topic emerged during a trip to the north of Argentina and the discovery of a specific spatial phenomenon: the construction of social housing areas in forms of extensive and monotonous neighborhoods, which lead to a single representative case study of exploratory character. The spatial focus of this research is a town of intermediate size with a population of about 300.000 inhabitants (INDEC 2010) in north-central Argentina, Santiago del Estero. When first visiting the new neighborhoods in the south of Santiago del Estero I instantly wondered what the motivation behind the construction of such a space was. The structure of neighborhood felt extremely uninviting and keeping orientation was still really hard even after spending four months there. It was like a maze, where the only orientation points were specific houses, that had been repainted in remarkable colors, otherwise the way home would have been a challenge. Not an inviting place to live, from my personal perspective. Nevertheless, many people dream to receive a house there and the public opinion is positive about the neighborhoods. In newspaper articles as well as personal conversations, the possibility to have an own house with a garden was always highlighted. Often with the remark, that everybody could adapt the house to their own needs, it does not have to be as basic as it was at the beginning. That is why the question arose whether this was the main motivation why people move there. At the same time, it instantly crossed my mind, that the temperature would probably get very high in summer, having all this additional sealed space and an arid climate anyway. On the yet endlessly seeming streets it would turn out to be impossible to walk for more than a few minutes. Most people would have to purchase a car, or at least a motorbike, which is not really apt to the earthy roads and regular inundations.



Figure 2. New built social housing area, Argentina



Figure 3. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, walled front yard



Finally, there was the realization that it was a social housing area and that Santiago was a province of really high rates of housing deficit, both in numbers and quality. It changes the perspective on what one can expect of housing construction, considering that there is not only financial but political and social pressure. The question about the underlying rationalities of official space production, a term that will be defined in the following, arose.

The focus on Santiago del Estero is considered useful for research purposes as it is a representative case for peripheral but growing smaller towns below 500.000 inhabitants within the Argentinian context. These intermediate sized cities are the living situation of 32 % of the Argentinian population and similar phenomena and developments can be found in various other agglomerations of its size, especially in the northern region (Tella 2016). This makes the outcome of an analysis relevant not only to the specific town of Santiago del Estero, but it provides an adequate context for research questions of relevance for other comparable cities to be answered (Bryman 2012:70). Furthermore, most of the research carried out in Argentina focuses on the two biggest cities, Buenos Aires and Córdoba, and a research gap on peripheral middle-size cities can be identified.

## 1.4. METHODS

After having observed the specific phenomenon of interest during a four months stay in Santiago del Estero previous to this work, a narrative literature review was carried out in order to get an overview over existing scientific work (Bryman 2012: 102). Thematically, the focus was on Santiago del Estero, housing policies and urban development in Argentina and Latin America.

After formulating a provisional research question and work hypothesis, a further six week stay in Santiago del Estero was planned. Local experts as well as residents of the focus area have been interviewed, participatory observations, observatory walks and many informal conversations with urban residents have been conducted. In total, there have been carried out nine semi-structured expert interviews which build the base of the empirical work. They were conducted with help of an interview guide. Within the systematic participatory observations, spaces were observed in a specific time slot of fifteen minutes and documented

in the research diary. The two narrative interviews with residents were conducted without a guide and were aimed to help to widen the perspective on the neighborhood they lived in. They give the opportunity to get a personal insight in individual experiences. Both, the participant observation as well as the narrative interviews were used to open up ideas about the relevant topics to be contemplated within the research (Bryman 2012: 12).

In order to carry out a qualitative analysis of the expert interviews, the methodology of Mayring's structuring analysis has been chosen (1994). The aim was to extract specific passages of the interviews that would allow to answer the research question. By defining five categories, derived from the main research question, the content of the interview was structured and translated from Spanish to English. Those categories were:

- Historical urban development of Santiago del Estero  
(*exemplary passage: "It has always been more of a parallel existence between Santiago and La Banda."*)
- Key elements of current development in Santiago del Estero  
(*exemplary passage: "The center remains a space of a "reduced we"."*)
- Actors and responsibilities  
(*exemplary passage: "The construction lobby is really dominant. Let's say, it is not always easy for the Municipality."*)
- Process of social housing construction  
(*exemplary passage: "There is empirical evidence that tenders are neither open nor competitive."*)
- Characterization of the neighborhood Barrio Siglo XXI  
(*exemplary passage: "There are no direct arteries to access the neighborhoods."*)

Conducting a research in a context that is not the own living space contains risks and potentials. As someone who did not grow up in the observed city, a perspective unattached to general public opinions can be taken. Also, it makes the researcher more independent, as there are no situations of reliance on specific actors. Still, it can be a difficulty to get in touch with important people, as the social network is very reduced. During the stay I lived with a family of Santiago del Estero, partly in the neighborhood Barrio Siglo XXI, partly near the city center. This opened up many social connections to experts. Passing several weeks in the area treated in the work, allowed to get personal impressions about the everyday life there. It opened up the



opportunity to easily get in touch with people on a day to day basis and thereby come to a more complete and intense understanding of the environment. Nevertheless, as Bryman points out, there are also new difficulties that emerge out of an intimate relation with the treated area and its inhabitants, which he calls "the risk of going native" (2012: 445). What he means by this is, that there is a risk in over-identifying with the subject and not being able to keep the role of a researcher. In order to counteract this, I tried to make myself aware of my own role continuously during the whole stay.

Throughout the research stay I conducted a diary, where I noted the activities of the day, topics that emerged, experiences made and new questions that arose. It was used later in the process of writing in order to stimulate reflexion on specific topics and overlap my own experiences with findings I made during the writing process.

## 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

### 2.1. URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

#### 2.1.1. Urban development tendencies

In urban studies, we talk about Latin America as a continent strongly coined by urbanized space. Agglomerations hold more than three thirds of the entire population (Borsdorf 2006). Cities represent therefore the living space for the bigger part of the Latin American population. They have gone through drastic changes in the last thirty years: Changes on a macro level, that affected not only Latin America but created rules of global importance. Some of those fundamental changes in economic systems and the attitudes towards other cities and countries show an impact on the urban form. They materialize in one way or another. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted, if we speak about Latin American cities in general terms, this should not claim at undermining specific logics of each of them. Buenos Aires is not São Paulo, and neither is it Lima or Santiago de Chile. Still, what they do have in common is that they are all metropolis with colonial origins and histories of some common characteristics, that in the more recent times have been influenced by similar dynamics on a global scale and show (some) similar developments on several levels. These developments reach from global and systemic changes and national economic restructuring processes to modernizations of urban lifestyles and changing social concepts and values. The changes in the urban form of the last decades had certain similarities in all of them, at least to some degree. What we describe today as “the Latin American city” is therefore not a mere generalization that ignores local specifics, but an abstraction of similar spatial phenomena observed and analyzed.

##### 2.1.1.1. *The colonial city model*

The model of “the Latin American city” is an abstract archetype of the urban patterns that can be found all over the continent. Most of today’s urban settlements are based on a very planned and organized mode of founding cities which was developed by Spanish colonists during the XVI century (CEHOPU 1997: 65). The different indigenous civilizations which existed before the hispanic colonialization, had established proper ways of urbanization independently from each other. For the colonial forces, cities were not only a product

of settlement but turned into a means of occupation as well as demonstration of power. Over time, the Spanish colonists established a rich base of experience in founding new urban settlements. The Center for Historical Studies of Public Works and Urban Planning (Centro de Estudios Históricos de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo, CEHOPU) published a detailed study on the Latin American urban history, observing patterns and discussing agents of development that shaped the space throughout different historical eras. The study points out that the dynamics which caused the actual form of urban fabric were not caused by explicit agents or applied regulations. Rather, it is due to the experience gained throughout many years of colonization and urbanization practices, that fast and efficient ways of city founding were established. It is, as the CEHOPU argues, rather an a posteriori agent of development that can be formulated, instead of a conscious agent applied when urbanization took place (CEHOPU 1997: 65). The formulated model is, therefore, an archetype, which consists of two basic elements: the streets (*calles*) and the blocks (*manzanas*). These elements form and determine the public and the private spaces of the city. Within the form of the grid, we can detect some general differences. They can be categorized into three main types: grid (*retícula*), orthogonal grid (*retícula ortogonal*) and squared grid (*cuadrícula*). Most of today's Latin American cities rate among the first category, the *retícula* (ibid.).

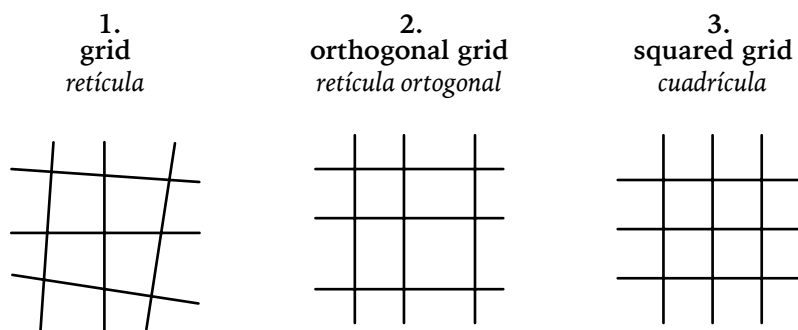


Figure 4. Urban grid structure, CEHOPU 1997: 65, own elaboration

The dynamic within and between the grid structure can be generalized for all three types. The streets manifest the public space, whereas the blocks are private. The grid with a central space in the middle is replicated throughout urban history in many Argentinian cities. The Main Square (Plaza Mayor) occupies the space of various blocks, turning it into a central rectangular or square public space. It is seamed by important institutions and public facilities (ibid.: 67). Therefore, public space had a very privileged situation in cities of colonial origin, which can still be seen in most of Latin American cities, and the differentiation between

public and private was clearly structured.

### 2.1.1.2. *What are today's drivers of change?*

Having the historical common characteristics originated by colonial city founding practices in mind, we can shift the attention to recent developments in Latin American cities. Even if, as mentioned before, it would be inadequate to talk about uniform development agents, some similarities can be identified looking at the changes in urban structure within the last decades.

Globalization affected cities all over the world just as industrialization did more than a century ago. It changed the rules of relations on various levels – between places, ways of economic activities and trade, as well as within society. Four main authors coin the current research and observation of development tendencies in Latin American cities and will be used as main sources: the Uruguayan urban researcher Carlos de Mattos, the Chilean human geographer Rodrigo Hidalgo, the German geographer Axel Borsdorf as well as the German researcher Michael Janoschka. De Mattos describes (in his work) the several and manifold impacts of globalization on Latin American cities and calls the process of change the “urban metamorphosis”. The inherent character of the Latin American city of the last century has fundamentally changed towards what he calls the “generalized urban”. To think about the urban form as something generalized points at one big point he argues: that studies about changes due to globalization are not specific to Latin America. Rather, those are patterns of urban transformation that can be observed in all parts of the world that began to be part of a global network coined by “capitalist modernization” (De Mattos 2010).

Part of what made the progress of globalization possible in its rapid extent, was the radical improvement of connectivity and mobility within and between cities. Information technologies and telecommunication – big technological advances – not only enabled a level and scale of activity which was not possible before, but also fostered the particularly important global and regional roles of cities within this modernization process, as they became explicit centers of fighting over spatial competitiveness (ibid.). In other words, the rising importance of networks and the implementation of neo-liberal economic structures happened on two levels at the same time. On the global level, it created a global network of cities, with the members being in constant relation to and in competition with each other. On the metropolitan level, it created networks in

regional dimensions between middle-sized cities in the hinterland of the metropolis, which were in strong connection to a central city and also showed impacts on the type of local economies towards a tertiarization (De Mattos 2010: 97).

On a national level, many countries in Latin America, Argentina amongst them, have found themselves in situations of economic and political crisis. Living through processes of re-democratization in the 1980s – after military dictatorships like in Argentina – deep institutional changes in the system began to be employed, with differing orientations in the different countries, but with a common focus on growth-orientated visions with their main goal to get into the profitable circle of global trade. As a consequence, the worldwide financial crisis in the 1990s hit hard on most of Latin American countries, and Argentina found itself in serious problems that ended with national bankruptcy in 2001 and internal political problems (Borsdorf, Hidalgo 2010: 24-25). This means that there was no strong role of the state during the following decades. It is clearly visible in today's city structures that the state did not play an active role within many years and that the modernization process was mainly shaped by private capital. Foreign investors realized constructions and projects which would enable a certain kind of lifestyle typical for the globalized world. The lack of public resources left the housing construction and infrastructure building to investors. Following the rationality of generating profit for businesses and financiers, projects oriented towards the common good were not prioritized. Private capital determined urban development with strong impacts on the allocation of access and socio-territorial distribution. Most private investments from the 1990s until now contributed to the creation of isles of entertainment, gated communities, modern business parks, and international chains.

What Borsdorf and Hidalgo point out in their work about the current changes in Latin American urban development is that we should not forget individual and social level and should consider choices as another strong driving force of spatial development. Both the structural and abstract level and also the needs and dealizations within societal change as a consequence of globalization and problems with the neoliberal system have to be regarded. The demand for higher security foresight facing rising urban violence, social isolation within the own neighborhood, or idealized housing typologies of single-family houses with garlens affect the urban form fundamentally (2010: 26-27).

### 2.1.1.3. *How do these changes materialize in urban form?*

The latest articles by De Mattos as well as by Borsdorf and Hidalgo, both published in 2010, describe a very similar image of the urban form. Following De Mattos argument, Latin American cities of today are marked by contrast. This contrast is social as well as physical, built. His core observation is, that it is a contrast between “areas that can be visited” and “areas that cannot be visited”, the competitive and the not competitive (De Mattos 2010: 100). This contrast is visible and can be explained by several elements, that aliment it.

It is the question about the degree of segregation and the impact on the quality of life of the differing members of society that seems relevant. In Latin America we can see a development of segregation that does not orientate any more on traditionally attributed neighborhoods. Traditionally there were neighborhoods that were referred to as being poor or rich, and according to that, people with respective resources would choose their site for building or buying their living space. What we see nowadays is, that this segregation has been split up and is not any more aligned to those typical places. It is a patchwork of multiple small elements that are side by side but that don't have much if anything to do with the neighboring element. Borsdorf (2006: 246), Borsdorf and Hidalgo (2010: 23), Janoschka (2002: 65) as well as De Mattos (210: 99) speak of little islands within the urban fabric. Segregation is a result of polarization within a city's society and is getting more and more small-scaled and fragmented.

Additionally, we can observe an enormous expansion of urbanized space in most of Latin American big cities. It is a common phenomenon that the metropolitan area of cities is expanded by buildings with very low density and thereby create wide spaces that are neither urban nor rural but suburban. It is not only the expansion, but also the dependence on individual vehicles and the relative homogeneity of architectural forms, so De Mattos, that make those spaces seem endless and repetitive (ibid.: 99). There has been much research carried about this phenomenon of suburbanization within the North American context since the 1980s, for example for Los Angeles by Massey & Denton 1988, Ewing 1997 and Pamuk 2004, to name a few.

Thinking about those tendencies, it is unquestionable that the material and physical aspect of urban form has impact on the lives of people who live there. Fragmented and repetitive spaces that do not have relation to the geographically next elements to them (for example neighboring buildings) and sometimes represent

extreme cases of socio-economical polarization have led to the observation of augmented feeling of insecurity by residents of those areas, urban violence and therefore a strong articulated wish for the basic human need of security (De Mattos 2010: 99). This demand is rendered visible by a focussing on the private inner circle of social contacts and an abandonment of neighborhood and city quarter as a space of social interactions. The observation by Borsdorf and Hidalgo, who see this phenomenon as one of social isolation, illustrates it very well: the urban form as we can see in many Latin American cities has changed the idea of urban life and what is expected and wanted of the own near living environment (Borsdorf, Hidalgo 2010: 33-34).

The contrast of the competitive and the not-competitive is best seen in the new centers, that have been established. The city does not any more follow the principles of a centric model, where activities and density are at their peak in the historic center. Rather, the fragments are tending to create own centers of attraction, smaller sub-centers that are mainly coined entertainment utilities and places of consumption. Like it is known also from US-American cities, shopping malls and entertainment centers have gained an important role and turned into places where the urban society spends spare time: they turned into relevant social spaces. This development implies a new layer of social exclusion and does not create public space. Rather, it is addressed to specific groups within the society and is highly depended on individual motorized mobility types. It is there, where contrasts get clear: on the one hand there are shiny, modern entertainment centers offering the assortments of global chains, ready to represent an aesthetically appealing image of the city. On the other hand, there are places that are not meant to compete within the global contest of attractiveness and offer cheaper possibilities to consume. Nevertheless, even if the global competition is faded out, they still follow the capitalist rationality.

Impacts of globalization, economic restructuring, a weak role of the national state, the change of concepts of urban lifestyles and the individual acting have transformed Latin American cities and the idea of the urban. There have been benefits, especially regarding certain types of economic sectors and accessibilities, and other very important negative impacts on physical space with all its non-material implications. What now is crucial to observe is how the national state is trying to establish a balance within the contrasted urban by the means of housing politics.

## 2.2. SPACE (PRODUCTION)

### 2.2.1. Between thinking and living

The question about how to define space has to be asked to find the right approach to be able to formulate the aims of a research project. Space production, the difference between space and place or between representation and lived experience: these terms have to be connected and closely examined. In order to do so, Henri Lefèbvre is a key figure who shaped modern space theory through his intellectual analysis. His work bases on space theory of French phenomenology, especially the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gaston Bachelard (Schmid 2005: 15), which differed from traditional rather technocratic space theory. These former rather technocratic approaches would define the characteristics of space out of a Cartesian perspective, as a system of dualities. At their base is a specific ontological assumption about the nature of space and place (Merrifield 1993: 516). Traditionally, mechanistic world views would define space as the sum of the elements it holds without any relevant interconnection, changing space itself or influence its characteristics. Consequently, the limits between the imagined, perceived, and the material world are clear, the observer observes and does not form part of the scene (ibid.: 518). In contrast, Lefèbvre's viewpoint does suspect much more interrelation between the elements in a space. Hence, the whole space constitutes more than its elements. Therefore, a relational understanding of space demands a more comprehensive understanding of space.

Space is the system of fluxes and exchanges, it is the whole, the functioning – being produced and reproducing at the same time. Place, at the same time, is a specific moment in space, a concrete location at a specific time (cf. Merrifield: 521). Place is where different characteristics and uses of space come together and exist in a specific relationship to each other, which can always be different and change. Merrifield describes place as “where conceived, perceived and lived space attain structured coherence” (Merrifield 1993: 525).

Following this argument, Lefèbvre grounds his claim for a unified theory of space. Instead of clearly separating material space from social or mental meaning, he argues that space consists of different, interrelating dimensions (ibid. 524). The produced space on the one hand and the process of producing on the other form



two elements that cannot be treated separately (ibid. 523). Instead, Lefèbvre elaborated a theoretical model of three moments of space (Lefèbvre 2009; Merrifield 1993):

1) Conceived space is the representation of space. It is the abstraction conducted by planners, architects, etc. in order to describe a city or a region. Ideology has a strong influence on the way space is abstracted. In his article on ideology, Slavoj Žižek underlines this by pointing out that there is no action without ideology, which makes the idea of neutral and “objective” planning void, especially in abstraction processes (Žižek 1997).

2) Lived space is representational space. It is the space of everyday life, a highly subjective space, experienced by its users. Lived space lies somewhere between physical elements and symbolic meaning. Andrew Merrifield describes it as “[p]assively experienced space that the conceived, ordered, hegemonic space will intervene in, codify, rationalize and ultimately attempt to usurp” (Merrifield 1993: 523). He points out the rivalry between the importance of conceived space in comparison to the lived space, which Lefèbvre identifies as one to be found in a capitalist system, where the abstract/conceived space tends to suppress everyday life (cf. Merrifield 1993; Lefèbvre 2009).

3) Perceived space is highly related to spatial practices as it determines them. It is the material characteristic of a space and how it is perceived by people using it. The physical configuration and characteristics of a space consequently shape the use of it. In other words, perceived space influences daily routines of inhabitants, their movements and fluxes, and their points of interaction (Merrifield 1993: 524).

Recognizing the different dimensions of space as forming a whole, a triad, enables an understanding and research of space on a new level (cf. Lefèbvre 2009, cited from Merrifield 1993: 523). Nevertheless, the closer description of this triad shows that the different dimensions of space are not clearly separable. Zhang points out that especially lived space and perceived space are often to be confused (2006: 220). The relation between the different dimensions is overlapping and without clear-cut borders – instead of a side-by-side existence. This fluidity justifies Lefèbvre’s triad and his claim for a unified theory of space, although it renders the concept difficult to apply at the same time. Even Lefèbvre himself is vague about the interrelations

between the dimensions. However, he argues that space is never in a stable and static condition, making analysis highly dependent on the specific time and context (Merrifield 1993: 524). Place, therefore, becomes a useful unit in order to describe a specific moment in space. In conclusion, Lefèbvre describes: „[...] (S)patial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, according to the historical period.“ (Lefèbvre 1991: 46 cited from Merrifield 1993: 525).

Taking Lefèbvres and Merrifields neomarxist dialectical understanding of space as a starting point, several concepts will be presented that differ in their epistemological approaches and the underlying assumption of what space is. This break has been a conscious decision in order to include specific analytic instruments within the research process.

### 2.2.2. The public and the private

The main goal and highest priority in housing policies is to provide access to a proper home for every person living in the respective administrated territory. It was discussed in a prior part of this thesis that housing is a basic human right which has been entitled as such in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights. The home as a secure and fixed base for any human being has a symbolic meaning as it signifies the rights for privacy and security. Those two values have been of significant importance to human communities and settlements for thousands of years. They represent the counterpart to the exterior, the unknown and possibly threatening as well as a protection against the weather and the climate. By feeling secure and having spaces of privacy, deep psychological needs for protection from external endangerments are satisfied. The home is also a place of a specific type of social unit, the most intimate one. It is were familiar constellations get formed in a dialectic relation to bigger, more public social networks with larger parts of the society (Madanipour 2003: 71). Bachelard describes another element inherent to homes: intimacy and imagination (1994, cited in Madanipour 2003: 73). Intimacy and imagination can only occur in a shelter where the individual feels protected and through which they can “find a place in the world”.

Thus, housing policies touch very private matters and shape it by specific programs and subsidies, which foster specific types of homes and tenure structures. Nevertheless, not only private spaces are affected

by the results of housing policies. Especially regarding direct housing constructions in the form of larger ensembles, the surrounding environment of places becomes shaped as well. It is this place, in between the individual homes, where the private and the public sphere meet. Madanipour describes the difference between these two spheres out of an individual's perspective as a separation between places "in control" and "beyond control" (ibid.: 75). Although this separation undoubtedly exists, public and private spaces pervade each other in some areas. Rather than seeing them as two counter-posed poles, Madanipour describes them as "points on the same spectrum" (ibid.: 103), allowing for a discussion on different shades of publicness and privacy in the areas in-between. Even if he sees the distinction between private and public as necessary, he claims that there is no such thing as a clear boundary out of a sociologist's perspective (ibid.: 106), even if they appear to be clear in plans and representations.

The entity of the neighborhood is embedded in this fuzzy area. Neighborhoods show characteristics of both spheres – the intimate and the public. Madanipour, describing the in-betweenness, says: "Neighborhoods show how identity and difference find a spatial shape, while on the other hand public-private distinction works within and across the neighborhood to frame patterns of social life." (ibid.: 136). He underlines the ambiguous character of the broader spatial environment, resulting from the mix of familiarity and strangeness within one unity. As a result, the different layers of intimacy in social relationships demand different layers of privacy.

In urban planning, the role of neighborhoods can serve different purposes. First, it can be a mere economical decision to construct houses in a cost-efficient way by lowering production and infrastructure costs. It can also be argued out of an environmentalist perspective, fostering concentrated settlement activities with the purpose of avoiding uncontrolled sprawl. Ultimately, it can also follow the ambition of creating a sense of community by constructing homes in specific spatial relations to each other. Those purposes can lead to very different results in terms of the produced space. While cost-orientated models (like for example housing construction in Great Britain in the 1940s) often did not even consider the common spaces surrounding private homes, micro-urbanism consciously paid attention to the design of public spaces, with a focus on fostering community building (ibid.: 91, 137).

The analysis of specific neighborhoods regarding the quality and openness of their public spaces and its implication for the inhabitants can be approached by three indicators, first introduced by Benn and Gaus (cf. 1983): access, agency, and interest. By contemplating a place through the perspective of those three criteria, it is possible to measure the degree of publicness or privateness of a space. It also allows to identify changes in the balance between the spheres, which can be useful to evaluate previously applied measures. In this work, this set of criteria will be applied to characterize the relationship between private and public within a specific neighborhood.

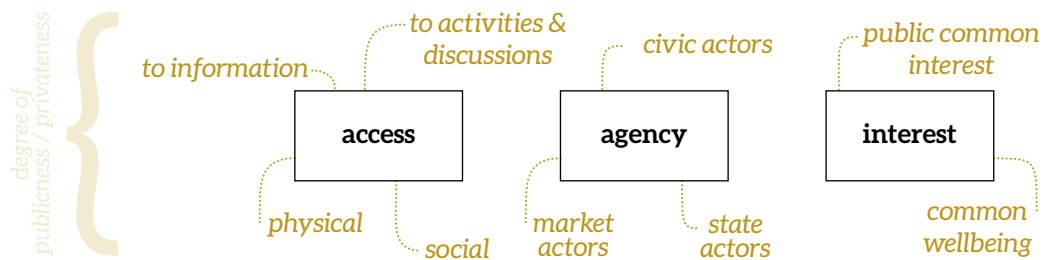


Figure 5. Criteria to define “publicness and privateness”, Benn & Gaus 1983, own elaboration

With regard to the operationalization of the research, the scientific theoretical background introduced through the concepts of Lefèbvre, Merrifield (treated in the previous sub-chapter) and also Madanipour (in the beginning of the current sub-chapter) have been combined with an approach, that shows some differences in their ontological understanding of space. In the following section, system theory will be applied which also differs in its theory of gaining knowledge from the neomarxist dialectical understanding. The goal is to combine the strengths of both concepts in order to operationalize the research. The aim is to identify sensitive points or to gain insights which can then be evaluated and reflected from a critical perspective. This intellectual break has been considered to be a necessary decision in order to make the investigation design more applicable.

## 2.3. SYSTEMS THEORY

When talking about the impact of housing policies, it is highly relevant to find the means to communicate the thought process underlying certain assumptions. Therefore, system theory provides a fruitful background and offers tools enabling this communication. Through the structural analysis of systems, it is possible to visualize simulations and to generate impacts on behavior within the functioning (Ossimitz, Lapp 2006: 25).

Scientific-theoretical system theory is based on a constructionist perspective. The process of analyzing systems is thus a process of modeling. It suggests that there can be various ways of drafting and developing models trying to explain certain dynamics, certain processes, or behaviors. Those dynamics, consisting of elements and their interrelations are systems. Nevertheless, there are two main points to be differentiated. First, some system theorists argue that systems exist independently of being observed, which means that there is one specific defined system that can be described – or not. It exists both ways. Secondly, radical constructionists argue that observers themselves cannot be differentiated from the system, as they are a part of it. Thus, systems emerge by observation and strongly depend on who elaborates upon them. Therefore, the one and only “true” form does not exist (Ossimitz, Lapp 2006: 32). Within this work, the second position will be taken as scientific-theoretical background.

A system is defined as an entity consisting of elements in relation to each other (ibid.: 16), wherein the quality of those relations – mostly causal cause-effect-relations – define the inner structure. The assembly of all elements represents a system that serves a certain purpose. Each element does not define anything about the process of which it is part of. Instead, the reciprocal, retroactive, and remote effect on others is what the system defines – “the whole is more than the sum of all parts” (ibid.: 16). A distinction can be made between open and closed systems, some offering a greater degree of openness than others. What varies is the relation with the system's environment. In other words, some systems are considered to function autonomously, while other are clearly influenced by other systems (ibid.: 19 f.). Within this research systems are considered to be open and interrelated to others. The relation between elements is, therefore, a key focus of the systemic viewpoint. Following radical constructionist positions, their definition and qualities highly de-

pend on the observers. Cause and effect can therefore be judged out of different viewpoints. Further, out of a post-positivist perspective, cause-effect relations are considered not to be mono-causal but multi-causal.

There are two parts of systems that can be differentiated: the structure and the behavior<sup>1</sup> of a system. The structure is to be understood as the inner organization and the relations within a system. It is rather static and only changes over long time periods, mostly involving a change of the system in itself. In change, the behavior is dynamic and is caused by the static structure as well as other external impacts. Ossimitz and Lapp argue that “structure dominates behavior” and that behavior, thus, can be changed by alterations of the structure (Ossimitz, Lapp 2006: 24). In this research, the term 'action' will be used instead of 'behaviour', as the functioning of a system is considered to be sensitive to restrictions and limits on an institutional level.

The rationalities of social housing policies and implementations that frame official housing construction are embedded in a complex field. Therefore, it is helpful to identify and analyze the underlying elements and relations in order to understand behavior within the system and to visualize impact chains (ibid.: 25). It is a way of defining components and relations of the system as well as a means to visualize the thought process of the observer. In complex dynamics, the communication of those thought processes is of specific importance. Also, through impact diagrams, feedback loops can be identified and studied more closely. This can generate knowledge of critical elements within a system (ibid.: 49). A combination of micro and macro level observations are, therefore, effective ways to study, analyze, and communicate knowledge about the observed systems. This means that the focus lies on a precise analysis of single elements on the one hand, and their embedding within the whole system on the other (ibid.: 18).

Tools for impact analysis reach from qualitative to quantitative options. Ossimitz and Lapp present four main tools which can be used, and which have been considered within this work (2006: 41f). The most

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1 The term 'behavior' grounds on an environmental psychologist perspective that emerged with the Chicago School of Sociology, putting the focus of research on individual behavior. Merrifield, representing the neo-marxist perspective, rather uses the term 'action', which highlights the institutional restraints under which an individual can act (Merrifield 2013: 5).

common tool for impact analysis in scientific research is text. It allows to present thought processes without formally restricting information, but at the same time restricts the direction of representation through an inevitably linear development of the subject. Thus, it becomes evident which factor is defined as cause and which as effect. Consequently, it is not an appropriate tool when searching for the identification of key elements or crucial factors. The second tool, the causal-loop-diagram (CLD), touches on exactly this weakness of mere textual analysis. It is the visualization of a system on a qualitative level and aims to give a systemic overview. The stock-flow-diagram (SFD), in contrast to the CLD, requires stock and flow values in order to show quantitative results. The most formalized tools of impact analysis are mathematical equations with fixed value units (ibid.).

When contemplating social housing policies and especially the thoughts behind social housing construction, the CLD offers a promising approach as it does not need fixed quantitative values, allows to include different types of elements, and follows the purpose of identifying relevant feedback loops by generating an overview. These feedback loops define the directness and force of impacts and can provide a base for suggesting meaningful structural changes.

### 2.3.1. The CMEF intervention logic chain

While investigating a system, it is also crucial to take a closer look at the single elements constituting a system. This becomes even more important when talking about policies, and if the specific element is e.g. a specific action. Housing policies establish measures that will become visible as parts of a larger system, as their basic aim is to create impact. Moreover, they not only aim to create impact as such – they want to create the most desired and the less undesired impact as possible.<sup>2</sup> In order to be able to evaluate the impacts of such measures, it is necessary to look at direct and indirect effects in the multilevel context of objectives and impacts. For that reason, it is also an important scale in order to understand and test the inherent logic

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When mentioning desired and the less undesired impacts, it has to be pointed out the different interests of actors and the power relations between them that ground such valuations. It has to be considered, that housing policies (and policies in general) can also be used as a tool of maintaining power (Ergin 2014).

of a program and specific practices. The European Commission introduced it as a legal requirement to continuously evaluate the impacts of its subvention programs (Article 84 (2) of Council Regulation 1698/2005, cited from DG AGRI 2007: 6). The way of how such evaluation is being realized can vary, depending on the instance of responsibility. In 2007, the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) published a framework for their intern evaluation processes, which introduced a systematic approach to impact analysis, evaluation, and monitoring. Within the “Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework” (CMEF), one particular element proves to be an adequate tool to explore the logic of intervention in the case of Argentina: the CMEF intervention logic chain (ibid.: 4). This logic model consists of the opposition of two main pillars: the objectives or needs on the one hand, the indicators on the other hand. Both follow a hierarchic order and therefore establish connections between each other (ibid.: 5).

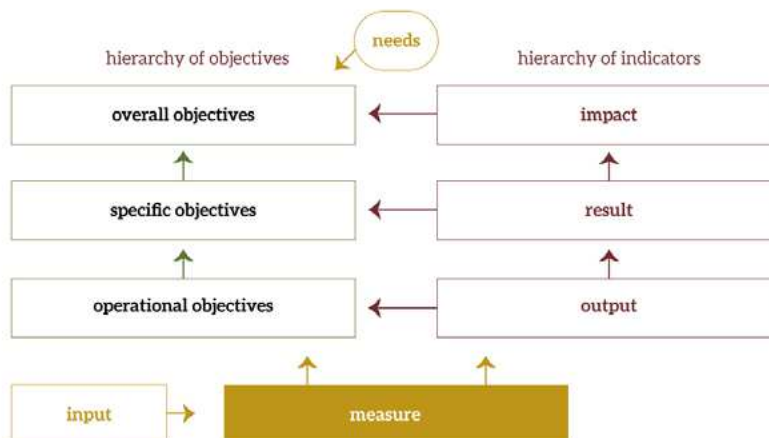


Figure 6. Model intervention logic chain, CMEF (DG AGRI 2007: 4), own edition

When taking a look at planning practices in official housing construction, it is necessary to define a specific measure for analysis. In the case of Argentina and Santiago del Estero the number of approved projects for building social housing with state resources was identified as one crucial element in the system. Therefore, it now will serve as the measure to analyze the coherence of objectives and expected impacts. The displayed measure “commissions for publicly financed social housing projects” leads to the direct output of a number of accepted projects. The output indicator is directly caused by the action of approving and lead directly to the accomplishment of the goal of increasing social housing construction. As a result of accepted projects



on the side of indicators, as a direct result of such measure taken, newly built social housing is the causal reaction. This result addresses the specific goal of the increase of social housing offers.

## 3. THE ARGENTINIAN CONTEXT

### 3.1. ARGENTINIAN HOUSING POLITICS IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT

How do different countries that have experienced those changes in the last decades cope with their new situations? To gain an overview of the state's self-understanding as a provider of basic needs, it helps to define the main characteristics of housing policies in a set of Latin American cities. As the described tendencies are a common feature of city development in Latin America, the conditions of housing are also similar to some extent. This argument is supported by Videla Bañados (2010) in her report for the organization "Un Techo para Chile", where she examines the housing policies of Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, México, Uruguay, and Peru regarding their similarities and differences. The report provides a suitable background for answering where the main challenges in terms of housing are, how these challenges are approached, and which ones have been missed out. These will be summarized as follows.

Housing policies in all examined Latin American countries are based on the fundamental social problem of housing deficit. Housing deficit can generally be approached from a quantitative, a qualitative or a mixed perspective. The first refers to a deficit in the number of housing units, the second to lacking quality of housing facilities' conditions, the third on a combination of both types of indicators (Videla Bañados 2010: 6). Sepúlveda Ocampo and Fernández Wagner describe the main difference between the qualitative and the quantitative approaches: a depoliticizing one – the quantitatively argued technocratic approach – and the qualitative approach, which turns the housing question into a political one (2006: 12).

Considering this starting point, it is remarkable that Videla Bañados states that there is a clear chronological hierarchy between those two qualities of housing deficit. Many countries do not consider aspects like quality of materials, environment, location, or complimentary services when trying to improve the housing situation in the respective countries since the basic need of creating housing at all is a priority. Videla Bañado states: "[...] it is possible to find housing policies that do not necessarily call for generating a quality product, since the problem of quality basically refers to the refinement of the good and not the access of

the latter.” (ibid. 11, own translation). In other words, the access to housing is viewed as a first step in many cases. Only after completion of this first step – e.g. creating many houses by means of little financial resources – it is possible to improve the quality of those housing units. Following this argument, housing policy researcher Paavo Monkkonen recently published a research paper and took position. He argues that in many housing policies applied in the Global South this mistake is undertaken. Policies focusing only on one aspect, in this case the quantitative housing deficit, often begin to create new problems, namely qualitative housing deficits (Monkkonen 2018: 167). If the goal of many housing policies is to produce living units at the lowest cost possible, it is often realized on the lands with the lowest price. Peripheral locations are built in the living environment of people with low income, which does not benefit the targeted population group for two main reasons. While the houses created may be affordable for many, mobility and sometimes infrastructure costs are higher than in well-accessible locations. This is what Libertun de Duren empirically documented in her recent study of mass-produced neighborhoods in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil (2016, from Monkkonen 2018: 170). Moreover, the lack of additional services, qualities of the neighborhood and aspects that go beyond a single constructed house are a result of the focus on the mere quantitative aspect of the housing deficit. The scale addressed by the analyzed housing policies is small, viewing the single plot as the most important unit without regarding the relation with its surrounding or focusing on the neighborhood as a whole. They are limited to the level of an individual, thriving to provide the minimum material assets of a housing unit. Individual-centered problems like the lack of access to housing, financial restrictions, unequal distribution of financial resources, the lack of property titles and communication between different actors, the access to basic services, etc. are tackled in most of the national policies (ibid. 6-7). Location does not form part of housing policies in most of Latin American countries up to now. Also, environmental impacts of housing construction, such as waste treatment, or abundant sealing of soil, are not included in policy papers. Nevertheless, Uruguay, Mexico, and Peru mark a leading position in a conceptual change of scales in terms of housing. Within their housing policies they explicitly address fragmentation as a problem that has to be targeted, shifting the attention from the single plot to the urban fabric as a whole.

Another remarkable point is that in every political framework observed, the state has shifted from being primarily the provider and constructor of housing to playing a mere subsidiary role. Development and construction are, in large parts, undertaken by private enterprises (ibid. 14). Participation of other actors – that

is the direct involvement of future residents – is not habitual and not determined through policies in most countries. There are single, exceptional programs, however, they are isolated examples where participation and formation of home dwellers is fostered, or others where the national state functions not only as a credit provider but takes an active role in the housing provision. It is the latter that is of particular interest in this work and which will be discussed in the following.

The judgment of how successful policies really are is a delicate subject. The lack of any indicators or goal definitions to be reviewed make an evaluation impossible. Further, the qualitative aspect of housing policies must be observed for an extended period of time, as living and its conditions are processes of long duration (Monkkonen 2018: 171). In order to do this, a historic perspective can generate important insights for today's practices. For that reason the development of Argentina's housing policies will be the focus of the following section with the aim of identifying important eras and their key elements that can help to evaluate the current status.

## 3.2. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN ARGENTINA THROUGHOUT THE 20TH CENTURY

### 3.2.1. The Peronist decade (1946-55)

To talk about housing policies in Argentina and the role of the state, it is necessary to go back in history. It is important to understand when and how the national state took position in housing matters and changed it into being not every individual's matter but a matter of public interference. It always serves as a point of reference – there is no understanding of today's practices without an overview over previous ones. For that reason, I want to highlight the beginning of the national state as an actor in housing provision, the transition between concepts during the 19th and the 20th century, and the government of Perón and how housing was approached within those years. In the following chapter, I will outline the development of those positions throughout history, finishing with today's situation.

The context in the beginning of the 20th century is – in some particular aspects – similar to today’s context. Increasing population, growing cities, and caused by all this dynamic, growing pressure and demand of housing. Around 1900 it was the progress of industrialization driving these developments leading to urbanization. Work was provided in cities with central function. The migration towards those poles of attraction resulted in the beginnings of metropolitan areas that are typical for today’s post-industrial city. In Argentina, the majority of migrants went to Buenos Aires. Some migrants came from the exterior (mainly from Italy and Spain), who hoped for work and better living conditions in the big city, but most immigrants coming to Buenos Aires in those years were from the northern Provinces of Argentina (Baer, Duarte 2011: 98). Moreover, many people from Santiago went to the capital during these years (Caumo 2019, Interview).

In the end of the 19th century and until the early years of 1900, the state was quite invisible in terms of housing policies (Baer, Duarte 2011: 95). It was a peak of liberal understanding of the national state, the market was considered to be able to establish the right balance and regulate if necessary. Also, private property had a very high value. It was something fundamental and important, something that everyone thrived for and which was well-protected by the law. So, the state’s actions mainly focused on the protection of private property. However, the growth of cities, mainly caused by lower middle classes that came to benefit from new work possibilities, created housing conditions resulting in uncomfortable conditions – also for the ruling elite. Marginal neighborhoods and the so-called “conventillos” were likely to create serious health issues, which led to first state regulations. Norms for certain minimal standards to prevent illnesses were established in the early 1900s (ibid.: 96). During this period, the state first emerged as an actor in housing issues. For the first time it took action in direct construction of housing for people with low income and created possibilities for the middle to higher middle class to access mortgage credits. Nevertheless, the number of constructions on fiscal land was fairly low and did not solve the housing problems (ibid.), the credit system had much more effect and led to a state policy in favor of people with more financial resources (ibid.).

In 1915, the first public institution dealing with this issue was established, the so called “Comisión Nacional de Casas Baratas”, the National Commission of Cheap Houses. Even if the national state was still not seen as the responsible actor to provide housing to its citizens but rather to mediate between private interests (ibid.), the beginnings of a change in the understanding of the state’s role can be routed there. For

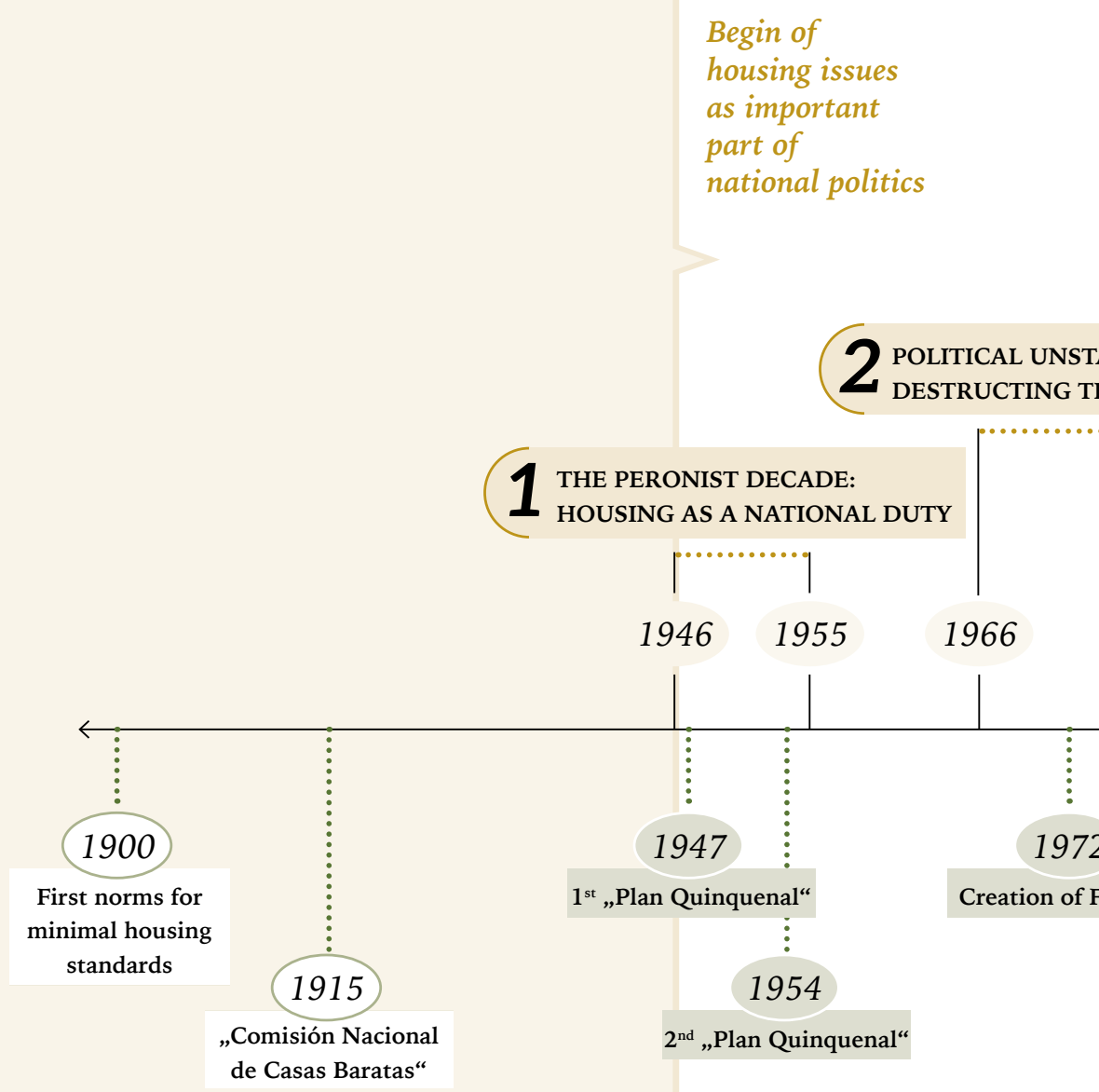
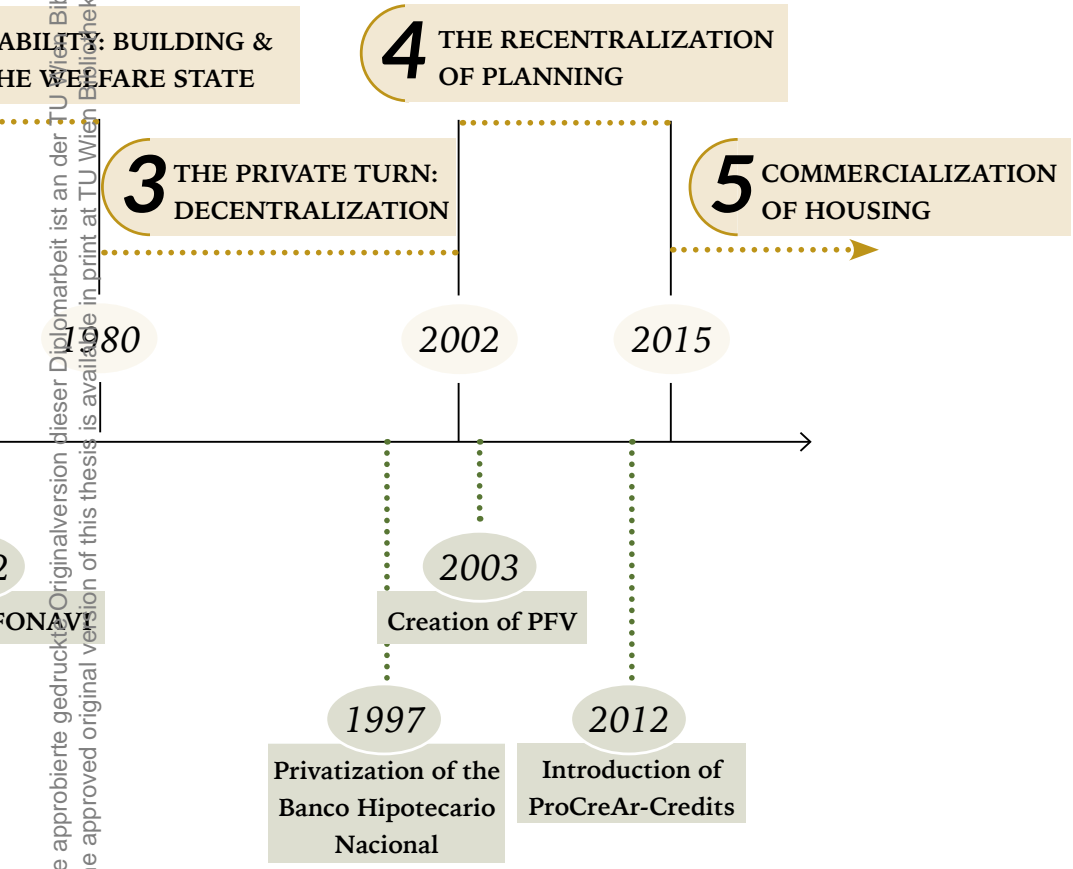


Figure 7. Time line of social housing policies in Argentina, own elaboration



the first time, people with low income were explicitly to be put in favor by the state, and this by means of slowly beginning to question the value of private property (ibid. 97).

With the establishment of the first important policy papers, issued by the two Peronist governments, housing policies faced great changes. The election of Juan Perón in 1943 was followed by a decade of socialist government, with repercussions still present in today's collective memory of Argentina.

The housing politics of the Peronist governments mainly existed within two big frameworks: the first and the second "Plan Quinquenal"<sup>3</sup> (ibid.: 109-110). In these political programs various key elements were developed that are now regarded as the most important characteristics of the politics at the time. Nevertheless, this listing shall not present a complete enumeration of measurements but is instead orientated towards a selection that Baer and Duarte presented in their article of Peronist housing policies. In their paper, published as part of the Argentinian economic journal "Realidad Económica", they aim for a coherent explanation of the different facets of and therefore build the basis of this chapter. In the following, I will talk about four main aspects that are most relevant for an understanding of the changes that took place on behalf of the two frameworks, and which describe the direct and indirect measures taken by the national state.

First, the beginnings of the 1940s mark the beginning of first projects of mass-construction out of the state's action. In this context, mass-construction the production of many housing units in spatial proximity to each other and in a short amount of time. This does not entail massive areas of housing units but rather a large number of rather small neighborhoods that was created, with the exception of the development project in Ezeiza which can be counted as a mega-project (ibid.: 100-101). These houses were mainly single-family houses, the so-called "casitas peronistas" which are still omnipresent in some urban areas of today – mainly in the big metropolitan agglomerations, like Buenos Aires and Córdoba – but can also be seen in smaller numbers in Santiago del Estero. Besides the single-family houses the state introduced typologies for more density, multi-family houses, the "pabellones de vivienda" (ibid.: 101). Those two types of housing were

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3 The "Plan Quinquenal", or five-year-plan, was a common instrument in socialist countries or state federations like Russia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (cf. Stone 2005).



constructed in the peripheral areas around the big cities, reducing the costs by choosing very cheap locations (ibid.: 102). During these years the production of housing was merely orientated towards the cheapest production of property for everyone.

At the same time, as a second key element, the Law for Horizontal Property (“Ley de la Propiedad Horizontal” (LPH)) was introduced (ibid.: 109) which followed a different rationality of housing than before. This legislative norm allowed it to have several owners within one single edification – until then that was not possible. Nevertheless, in reality people had sublet rooms or parts of their houses before which had created informal and precarious situations for people renting those facilities. With the introduction of the new law generating more mixed and denser occupation of houses was set as a main goal, benefiting people who rented rooms, taking them out of their illegal situation and fostering property owner’s willingness to sublet parts of their properties.

This was accompanied by a third key element, the control of rents. Still following the reasoning of taking value off the private property, the government tried to take measures to benefit people who needed to rent facilities. On the one hand, this means that the rights of renters were more protected and improved and landlords did have regulative frames concerning evictions, on the other hand there different models of financial subsidy for renters were developed (ibid.). The first measure is that of fixed rents which was temporarily applied and later canceled because of an undesired side effect, which will be addressed further on. As a second measure I want to highlight the gradual increase of rent reduction financed by the state subsidies. This was calculated by the price of the apartment or house: Starting at a very low rent, the state subsidy was the highest, which was at 20 % of the price. The higher the cost of the housing unit was, the lower was the percentage of reduction, always decreasing by two or three percent. With this model, low income families were intended to be the primary target group which also showed effects (ibid.: 103-104). Still, there was an undesired side-effect as mentioned before, which was the sinking profitability for immobility owners. With fixed prices and the willingness of people to have a cheap rent were introduced by the housing policies, the inversion in real estate and the renting sector sank, working against the desirable effects of the applied policies (ibid.: 105). The state, as a reaction to that, even turned more flexible towards norms about the import of primary materials for construction, and opened the possibilities of buying materials from the exterior by

means to enable more new housing construction at a low price (ibid.: 110).

Following this, the fourth key element took an important role. As an indirect measure, the state decided to keep on giving mortgage credits which, in retrospective, was the most efficient way to combat quantitative housing deficit. During this time the lower-middle class, including simple worker families, could get access to credits in order to finance their living and buy, for example, a casita peronista (ibid.: 105-106).

If the state constructed low-cost houses in peripheral locations, it used the centric locations to install institutions for public interest. In Santiago del Estero, there is a big number of institutions that date to the Peronist era, were Carlos A. Juárez was governor of the Province (1949-1952). The Court House, the monumental building for the Pension and Retirement Fund, the Market Hall in La Banda or the National Networks for gas are examples for the constructions that took place within the years of Peronist government (Alen Lascano 1992: 596).

Looking back on the rationalities of the Peronist housing politics, there was a drastic change of perception regarding the national state's tasks, an orientation towards the lower and lower-middle classes and at the same time somewhat contradictory if it comes to the concept of private property. The goal was to substitute the idea of private property as the absolute solution by a promotion of more possibilities to rent and point out the social function of buildings (Baer, Duarte 2011: 112). For the first time, it related private property to obligations towards the common good, that comes with the privileges of owners, even if the measurements like the fixed rents or import restrictions for constructing materials were loosened in time. With the change of regime by the so-called "Revolución Libertadora" under several civic-military regimes, which lasted until 1962, this political era of housing politics came to an end as well (ibid.: 113).

### 3.2.2. Revolutionary decades: building and destructing the welfare state (1962-80)

The Peronist decade ended in 1957 and was followed by the "Revolución Libertadora", an unstable period of changing governments and the self-denominated "Argentinian revolution", a period of seven years under three different military governments. With the end of the Peronist era the political paths radically changed.

The former politics that were providing state-financed housing units for a very low price and the accessibility of credits for even simple working-class people was considered to be short sighted. Especially the regulation of rents and fixed rents, measures implemented by the previous government that led to a decrease in private investment in real estate, were judged to be useless in order to decrease the housing deficit (Gomes 2017: 10). Critique came from many sides, especially from the Chamber of Construction which called fixed rents the cause of the small number of constructions. Within the first years of the 1960s, the trend of shrinking numbers of private buildings continued, while as the public financing for official housing also decreased in numbers (ibid.). The years 1957 until 1966 were characterized by a strong decrease of the state's interference and public interventions. This can be seen as rebound effect after the strong interventions in public housing during the previous years. Nevertheless, in those years the consciousness about the importance of the state as an actor was growing as well as the idea of housing as a matter of social impact (ibid. 11-13).

In 1963, the Secretary for Housing was created which materialized the consciousness of the state as a responsible actor for the provision of housing. Even if the political acting was very technocratic and the state did still not take an important position in housing issues, it marks the beginning for institutions that would be important for the welfare state in the next decade (CIPPEC 2016: 20).

Until 1966, when the first of three consequent military governments in Argentina came to power, the state's influence on housing and public investment got significantly smaller. During the military regimes from 1966 until 1973, the state's actions changed. With the new government, new ambitious housing policies were launched. The idea of own private housing and property as the essential needs was revived, nevertheless, without progressing in the direction of an integral understanding of housing. Different lines of argumentation can be identified, which guided the governmental actions. Next, I will list the key elements of this period.

) Investment in housing construction was fostered in order to activate the construction market and energize the economy. Again, the national state played an important role, together with big construction companies and architects who realized the mass-housing productions envisioned by the state (ibid. 7-8). The state saw itself in the role of having an impact on the national economy by stimulating the construction

and labor market (ibid. 19). While the Secretary responsible for the BHN followed the rationality of giving credits to the middle class in order to enable them to build their own houses, the Housing Department followed a different course of action. Projects of larger scales were envisioned and credits to realize them were given to big architecture and construction companies. The reasoning behind this was that building costs were able to be held low this way (ibid. 17). The spatial phenomena that emerged were big housing complexes.

2) A principle that was inherent to the whole period was the aim and the need to modernize the city (ibid. 14). If the word “modernization” is used, it indicates an outdated starting position. It was perceived and interpreted within the government, that flows of migration towards the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires were caused by an obsolete condition of many peripheral cities. This migration was considered to bring problems – both sanitary and social – into the suburbs of Buenos Aires, which had to be stopped by the modernization of those urban areas. It was also considered necessary to destroy informal neighborhoods that lacked basic services, hygienic standards, etc. and replace them (ibid. 6). They were seen as places where social problems were created and moral dilemmas were raised. Therefore, and for the whole societies’ sake, they should be eradicated and transformed into normalized housing areas matching the normative criteria. Housing construction was treated as some kind of social medication that should change the behavior of the inhabitants (ibid. 14). “Modernization plans” in form of the strategic destruction of informal settlements were developed and implemented. In 1967, the plan for eradication of informal neighborhoods (“Plan de Erradicación de Villas de Emergencia”) was released by the government. At the same time, the plan for cheap houses (“Plan de Viviendas Económicas”) should provide alternatives for the substandard informal settlements. Houses with different degrees of comfort were built (ibid. 22). This should re-establish the social order. However, the real beneficiaries of the 33.500 housing units built between 1969 and 1972 were the construction companies in charge and people from the middle class. The financially most vulnerable group was not (ibid. 22).

3) The implementation of a decentralized vision of the Argentinian territory both in productive and socio-economic terms was rendered visible by the investments in infrastructure, mainly roads and basic gas and electricity lines. With the Fund of Territorial Integration (FIT, Fondo de Integración Territorial) it be-

came visible that the connection between the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires should be better connected with other cities and parts of Argentina to enable a more polycentric development. By improving conditions in the other Provinces, the government wanted to prevent the migration flows towards Buenos Aires, which were already mentioned as a main cause of social and hygienic problems and informality. Santiago del Estero was heavily influenced by development coming from the FIT in forms of infrastructure (ibid. 16).

4) A last key element of housing politics during the Argentinian Revolution was the attraction of external financial resources. As of 1968, credits from American and international institutions like the World Bank (WB) and, most importantly, the Inter-American Development Bank, (IADB), contributed high sums to housing and infrastructure production in Argentina (ibid. 17).

Next to those characterizing key elements, there has been one important step that would coin the housing policies in Argentina for the following decades. In 1972, the national Fund for Housing (FONAVI, Fondo Nacional de Vivienda) was established as a central fund in order to enable access to housing as well as official construction of housing. As controlling instances, the Provincial Institutes for Housing (IPV, Institutos Provinciales de Vivienda) were created, which were responsible to organize construction and the monetary backflow of money (Cuenin, Moya 2010: 15). The fund, at the time of its establishment, was financed by specially defined taxes on workers and on fuel and was centrally managed. The distribution of funds to the Provinces within the first decades of its existence – until the early 1990s – was automatically calculated for each Province, based on their numbers of housing deficit (Barreto 2017: 408). The location, the beneficiaries, the conditions of access to credits and housing, programs and designs were decided universally on a national level (ibid. 16). With this new, centralized instrument the national state had gained an important role in housing issues in the country, founded the base of many years of housing politics in Argentina and ultimately is the monetary source of big parts of the urban fabric that emerged within the last 40 years in Argentinian cities.

After the Argentinian revolution, the country entered in a politically unstable phase of transition. It ended in the last Argentinian military dictatorship, which lasted from 1976 until 1983.

### 3.2.3. The private turn (1980–2002)

In the beginning of the 1980s, Argentina was in the political situation of its last military dictatorship until the present day. In 1983, it was replaced by a democratic government (CIPPEC 2016: 21). Even if this drastic change in the political system marked two distinctly different phases in the country's history, in terms of housing policies their logic was similar in some respects. The political goal of both regimes was to undo changes that were inherited to the Peronist government which had left its marks in laws and the Argentinian Constitution. First, institutions of the welfare state were functionally disabled, for example by the reduction of financial supports. This started during the military dictatorship and was continued after the system change. Secondly, industrialization of the country was not one of the state's goals anymore. The previous posture, in which the fostering of local and national productive sectors and very critical perspective on liberal import politics, was put into question. This perspective, which also had origins in the Peronist decade, was finally put aside. Thirdly, individual access to micro-credits for consumer goods as well as state regulations on rents, both achievements of the Peronist government, were cancelled. The Plan for Eradication of informal settlements, introduced by the military governments of the 1960s, went on to be implemented (Barreto 2017: 407).

At the same time, the FONAVI, founded in 1972, kept untouched and supported the nation's housing programs of both regimes. Due to strong manifestations of the construction industry's interests and despite the critics on the spatial results of housing complexes in the previous decade, several big-scale projects were developed and executed by important constructing firms. Nevertheless, the total number of constructions was held low. From 1980 to 1990, the quantitative housing deficit augmented, while the quantitative deficit decreased. In total, the housing deficit augmented about one percent, both in numbers as well as proportionally (ibid.: 405).

### 3.2.4. The recentralization of planning (2003-15)

A deep political change took place between the years 2003 and 2015 under the government of the political party "Frente para la Victoria" (FPV), who explicitly declare Peronism to be their political ideology and show

similarities to the Peronist decade in terms of their politics of housing. The political perspective, in comparison to the previous years, changed to be much more inward-orientated, putting in question the impacts of external financial aid and dependencies on the production industry of other countries that had coined the politics of the private turn. It came back to the consideration of the own state construction sector as a necessary tool to decrease the housing deficit as well as to energize the producing sector of industry and the labor market in the country. With the introduction of a new political framework, the “Política Federal de Vivienda” (PFV), planning took a new centralizing shift, as well on the level of infrastructure planning as on the level of housing. It overtook the role that was formerly taken only by FONAVI and made labor intensive work a political goal. The PFV foresaw possibilities of project funding for construction firms as well as for cooperatives, which was aimed to create labor and make it possible for civic communities to benefit from state aids (Barreto 2017: 418). FONAVI was kept in its function as a fund but lost relevance and was clearly subordinate to the lines of the PVA. An important change that was introduced concerned the subsidy regulation for the Provincial Institutes for Housing (IPV, the representation of state housing politics on the level of the administrative Provinces). There was no automatic distribution of funds anymore, instead the mechanism of fund allocation changed to be completely project centered. The IPV were from now on – I will discuss the results in a later stage of this work – responsible for the provision of land, infrastructure, and designs and received funding only for approved projects (ibid.: 416). In terms of the spatialization of the new politics, mass-constructions reappeared in dimensions like never before in Argentina. This had a big impact on city forms and society within the first ten years of government, which was when most of the constructing took place. Ferreira et al. speak about a clear incrementation of the middle class that could be counted as the success of this decade. During the worldwide economic crisis around 2009, the situation in Argentina began to change and had serious impacts on living conditions. Through the creation of a larger middle class with more purchasing power and financial possibilities, there had been created new demands as well. An increasing number of people considered building their own houses and aimed to improve their housing conditions. Due to this new demand of the middle class, a new instrument was created which continues to exist in the present days and has been the enabler for many constructions we can see in today’s cities. The Procrear fund offers mortgage credits with subsidized interests (ibid.417), as it has been known in the past by the BHN credits, known for its influence on the improvement of living conditions. The credits were directed to the middle class which, accompanied by the heavy infrastructure investments that had



been made by the state, increased the value of many formerly peripheral areas in the surroundings of urban centers. Regulation mechanisms, like fixed rents or land prices, did not exist. This caused the strong augmentation of land prices in the last years of the government under the FPV.

To conclude the brief historic overview, it seems useful to recall the analysis outcomes of Barreto. He talks about two basic conceptions of housing that differed within the political leaderships in Argentina during the last century: the concept of housing as merchandise, e.g. commercialization of the good, opposed to the concept of housing as a right, e.g. a de-commercialization of the good (Barreto 2017: 403). Between those two concepts there has been a shifting and changing to one or the other, which – as we will see in the following part – continues until the present day.

### 3.3. CURRENT DYNAMICS & TOOLS OF SOCIAL HOUSING

#### 3.3.1. Tools and programs

Today's housing politics can be characterized by the aspiration for integration of Argentina into the global network (Barreto 2017: 418). In order to participate in international and overseas competition, to increase the quality of construction technologies and to reduce the housing deficit, housing policies were reformed noticeably.

On the one hand, changes were made on a structural level, reforming the embedding of the state program and operational organs. Regulations that had been introduced by the former government – explicitly against high rates of importation and with limitations for exporting products of mineral and agricultural resources – were canceled or at least reduced (ibid.). Economic relations with the exterior were seen as desirable and were fostered. Also, credits by foreign investors and institutions began to increase with the new government, while the budget for public services was cut off by a significant sum. Following neo-liberal ideas, labor regulations were loosened, and flexibility began to become the new paradigm (ibid.: 418).



On an administrative level, the importance of housing was downgraded by subordinating public constructions to the Ministry for Internal Affairs, instead of keeping it as a proper Ministry (ibid. 419). Subordinate to the Secretariat for Housing and Habitat are now two sub-Secretariats, one for Habitat and Human Development and one for Urban Development and Housing. In addition to those, the importance of international organisms gets clearly visible in the organization chart. The IADB and the WB possess proper so-called Coordination Units on the same hierarchic level as the sub-Secretariats themselves.

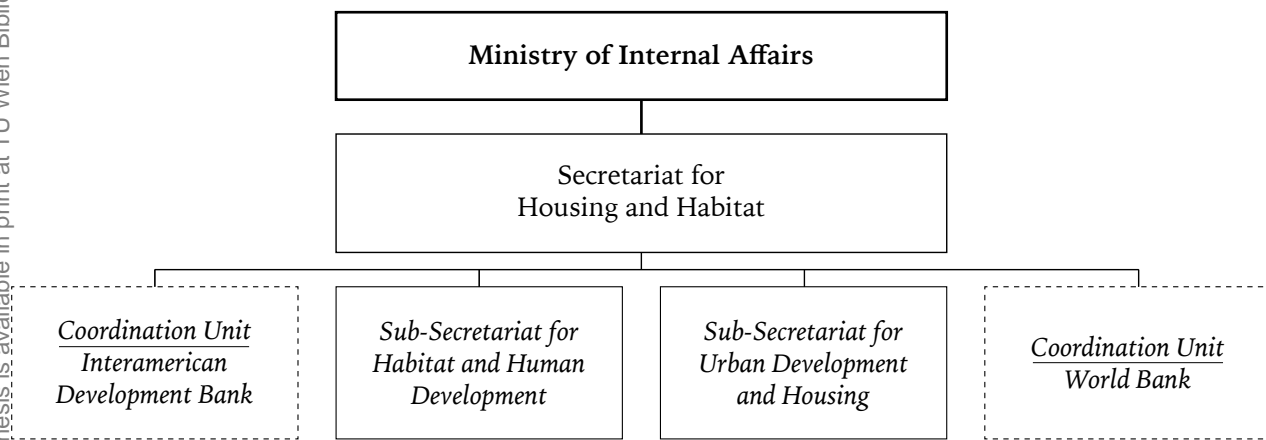


Figure 8. Organization chart, Barreto 2017: 420, own elaboration

The organization chart of the Argentinian Ministry of Internal Affairs shows this remarkable fact: IADB and the WB, both important supranational economic actors, are situated within the structure of a public institution.

On the level of programs, several changes were introduced as well. In general, the investment in housing construction was judged to be too high in the previous legislative period. As a consequence, projects that were planned to be implemented through the PFV were stopped. This had an especially high impact on rural areas – such as Santiago del Estero – as those were the regions that used to profit most of official housing construction. The impact on the national scale can be observed in a modeling of labor statistics that was developed by the National Statistics Institute (INSE, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina), the ISAC . In the first year of the new government, the national number of workers

in construction business decreased by about 12 %, visualizing the reduced projects of new construction. At the same time, the number of mortgage credits rose by 156 % (INDEC 2017, cited from Barreto 2017: 419). International investment increased.

Looking more closely at the specific programs and tools that are available since the beginning of the current legislative period, we can identify a broad variety of action lines. In comparison to the previous period, a diversification of programs alongside with the diversification of the target group can be observed (ibid.: 421). Barreto categorizes them into four main groups:

1) Programs with the financial sector: The most emblematic program of current housing politics is Procrear. Procrear, financed by resources of ANSES and the National Treasure, is directed at the middle class and aims to provide monetary aid in order to finance different types of housing solutions for individuals. By granting mortgage credits, it follows the idea of enabling the purchase of property as the ultimate goal of housing politics. It gives option to build a new house – with or without possessing a lot to build on, gives the opportunity to use an architectural prototype as model in the construction process, or to develop an individual solution. Due to the rise of prices for construction sites that took place in the first years of the program's implementation and what had been a trend since the previous decade, some direct construction projects were also implemented by the state on fiscal land. However, regarding the total numbers these activities are not important. In Santiago del Estero, with hardly any fiscal land, it is not relevant at all. What is remarkable in the Procrear program is that it marks the beginning of implementation of strategic Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) in Argentina. It was introduced as a system of mortgage credits provided by private banks, while the state gives national subsidies to individual debtors. The selection process of the beneficiaries is made by the private bank, following a rating system of vulnerability (Barreto 2017: 422). Procrear's individual credits for housing construction are explicitly targeted at the middle class. It caused much construction activity since its implementation and made the construction sector more dynamic, while at the same time contributing to the rise of land prices (ibid.: 421).

2) Programs with international development organisms: Within this second group, two main lines of action are being applied. The most important is the Promeba program. It is financed by the IADB and exe-

cuted by Provinces and municipalities. Its target group is the most vulnerable social sector. Therefore, the main focus of Promeba is to improve qualitatively insufficient and informal living situations by technical and legal assistance and community development (ibid.: 423). The WB finances the second program: The Comprehensive Program for Habitat and Subsidy of Housing. Through funds of the BD, the financially weak sector gets access to housing subsidies. Remarkably, the operational organs of local institutions –the IPV and municipalities etc. – receive funds as well in order to get stronger and capable of acting (ibid.).

3) Programs by the Sub-Secretariat for Urban Development and Housing: The third category is what we can call the “core” of housing politics on the national level, which runs under the umbrella name Vivienda Nación. Within four different action lines, credits, direct housing construction as well as legalization of informal housing situations are addressed. The neighborhoods, on which this work focuses, have been financed by funds of the Vivienda Nación programs. Its main financing fund is FONAVI – the fund of major importance in previous legislative periods. Currently, FONAVI has gotten less important due to budgetary shortcuts, but it still continues to be a key element in Argentinian housing policy (ibid.: 421). The four main action lines of Vivienda Nación program are:

- Access to first housing (a construction program)
- Access to credits (a grant of micro-credits directed to low-income population)
- Legal tenure of housing (a program that helps in legalization processes)
- Urban development (a program for restoration of existing housing complexes and generation as well as development of lots apt for housing construction) (ibid.: 425 f.)

4) Programs by the Sub-Secretariat for Habitat and Human Development: The fourth group is not exclusively focused on housing. Rather, it supports a comprehensive vision on the most vulnerable neighborhoods and articulates programs that connect social and technical issues. The main focus lies on (hard as well as soft) infrastructure and legalizing processes. Besides cultural and educational initiatives, it consists of programs that finance the creation of public spaces or administrative offices within poorly accessible neighborhoods (ibid. 427).

Regional overview | departments of Santiago del Estero



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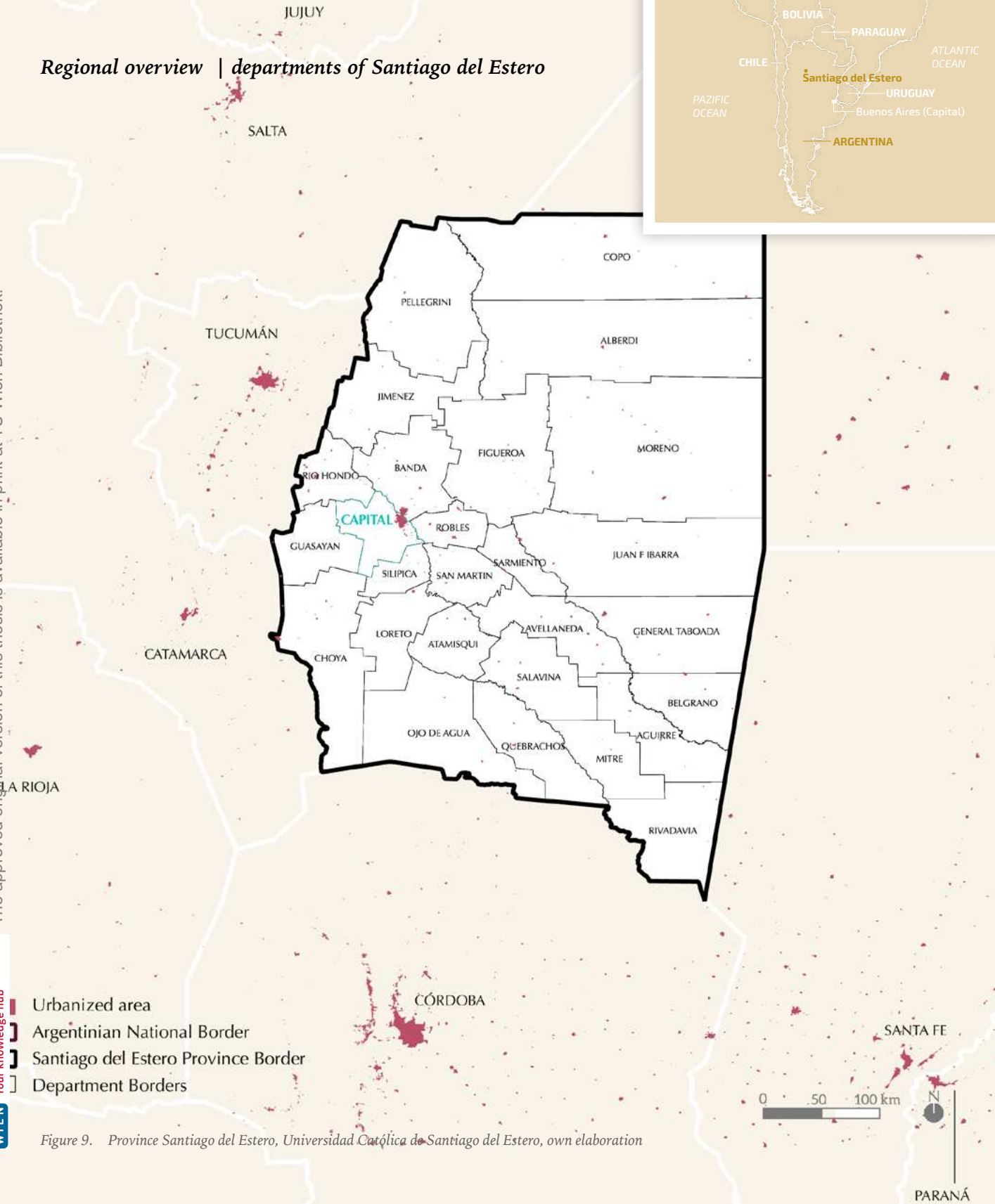


Figure 9. Province Santiago del Estero, Universidad Católica de Santiago del Estero, own elaboration

What can be noticed by looking at the tools of the current housing policies is that the main target group has shifted. While as from the early 2000s until 2015 direct housing construction was a dominant strategy destined to low-income families, the current idea is based on monetary subsidies for individual construction. At the same time, international organizations as the IADB and the WB have provided a larger budget and PPP resulted in the increasing importance of private actors as space producers. Barreto concludes in his detailed analysis of the housing politics of “Cambiamos”, that a noticeable trend towards a “commercialization of housing” has already started (ibid.: 430).

## 4. SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO'S OFFICIAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

### 4.1. SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO'S REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### 4.1.1. The Province Santiago del Estero

*“Santiago del Estero is projected from the most remote of our historical past as a chest that keeps the pure essences of the traditional Argentine soul. An immense plain nestled in the Mediterranean center of the old country confers remarkably to the relief and makes this land a true corridor interposed between the littoral and the north, in a geographical mass whose valuation transcends its territorial boundaries.”*  
(Lascano 1992: 23, own translation)

Santiago del Estero is a province in the north-west of Argentina, sharing borders with the provinces Catamarca, Tucumán, Salta, Chaco, Santa Fe and Córdoba. On 140.000 km<sup>2</sup> it holds about 900.000 inhabitants, which is about 2,2 % of the Argentinian population. Santiago is known for its flat topography with just very few elevations and depressions. It is crossed by two rivers, *Río Dulce* and *Río Salado* and seamed by three mountain ranges: the *Sierras de Guasayán* (750 m at its peak), the *Sierras de Sumampa* (350 m) and the *Sierras de Ambargasta* (634 m), which are the last foothills of the sierras de Córdoba (Lascano 1992: 24). Because of its subtropical climate with little precipitation it is known as the “tierra árida”, the “arid land”.

Many stories and legends exist about the prehispanic history of Santiago del Estero. The artistic manifestations and a rich knowledge in handcraft are only a few indicators of the indigenous empire that the “hot earth” was a part of. The first settlements have been estimated to exist since the IVth century, and when the Spanish colonialists arrived, the north and north-west of today’s Argentinian territory was part of the empire of the Incas (Lascano 1992: 28). The Incas were one of the three most powerful and civilized indigenous populations in the prehispanic Latin America, together with the Mayas and the Aztecs. Their way of organizing and ruling the lands of their territory was really different than how the Aztecs for example reigned. While as the Aztecs were known for their strict rules of submission of the tribes they occupied –





Figure 10. Salines in the province Santiago del Estero



Figure 11. Typical flatlands with cactus plants, Ruta N° 9



Figure 12. View from the ridge of the Sierras de Sumampa



Figure 13. Bushland near the Sierras de Sumampa

speaking in cultural and linguistic terms – the Incas were known for the wider acceptance of other cultural traditions and languages (Cerrón-Palomino 1987b: 72). They had one universal language that everybody in their territory would use to communicate with others, Quechua, but did not impose it as the main language. The difference to Nahuatl of the Aztecs is, that Quechua was really a lingua franca, not the original internal language of the Inca tribe, which was a variety of Aru or Puquina (cf. Gugenberger 2018)<sup>4</sup>. It was not a mono-linguistic – and therefore neither mono-cultural – claim behind the action of imposing Quechua as a trade language. This is relevant, because by means of this politics, a variety of cultural traces of prehispanic cultures remained existing. Today, various toponyms still reflect this variety. Nevertheless, most of remained toponyms stem from Quicha-speaking tribes, which was the variation of Quechua, and only a small number from the numerous smaller indigenous languages that once were practiced all over the territory

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Lecture slides, only available with authorization on the University of Vienna's online platform Moo-

**Factor of urban growth of the 33 Urban Agglomerations in Argentina (GAU)**  
(Urbanized area / population)

Región	Nº	Agglomerado urbano	Factor (Área Urbana / Población)		
			2006-2010	2010-2016	2006-2016
Centro	1	Gran Buenos Aires	0,94	0,76	0,83
	2	Gran Córdoba	1,45	2,16	1,86
	3	Gran Rosario	1,72	3,97	3,13
	4	Gran La Plata	0,14	1,90	1,24
	5	Mar del Plata - Batán	1,27	0,51	0,80
	6	Gran Santa Fé	0,71	1,21	1,01
	7	Bahía Blanca - Cerri	1,36	3,00	2,36
	8	Gran Paraná	0,67	2,14	1,50
	9	San Nicolás - Villa Constitución	3,55	0,76	1,84
	10	Río Cuarto	1,46	2,36	2,01
	11	Santa Rosa - Toay	0,63	0,92	0,80
	12	Concordia	0,94	1,17	1,07
Cuyo	13	Gran Mendoza	0,95	2,30	1,76
	14	Gran San Juan	0,53	1,46	1,06
	15	San Luis - El Chorrillo	0,46	1,52	1,06
	16	La Rioja	0,64	1,31	1,03
NOA	17	Gran San Miguel de Tucumán - Tafí Viejo	0,09	2,01	1,17
	18	Gran Salta	0,47	2,69	1,75
	19	Santiago del Estero - La Banda	1,26	2,18	1,78
	20	Gran San Salvador de Jujuy - Palpalá	0,75	2,14	1,53
	21	Gran San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca	1,17	1,66	1,45
Patagonia	22	Neuquén - Plottier - Cipolletti	1,84	1,74	1,78
	23	Bariloche - Dina Huapi	0,86	0,95	0,92
	24	Comodoro Rivadavia - Rada Tilly	1,51	1,28	1,36
	25	Río Gallegos	2,34	1,72	1,97
	26	Rawson - Trelew	0,67	1,81	1,35
	27	Río Grande	1,67	1,30	1,45
	28	Viedma - Patagones	1,32	1,54	1,45
	29	Ushuaia	1,02	0,55	0,75
NEA	30	Gran Resistencia	0,98	1,59	1,32
	31	Posadas	0,80	1,19	1,02
	32	Formosa	0,29	2,55	1,55
	33	Corrientes	0,62	1,78	1,28
Total			0,95	1,44	1,25
Total sin Área Gran Buenos Aires (AGBA)			0,93	1,85	1,47

Figure 14. Factor of urban growth of the 33 GAU (CIPPEC 2017: 226)



(Lascano 1992: 34). Traditional cultivations were different agricultural products like vegetables, especially corn, and cotton production (ibid.: 33). The territory of Santiago del Estero constituted the most southern part of the Inca empire, and was situated therefore quite remote to the center of the Inca culture, its origins coming from the area around Lima in today's Peru (cf. Gugenberger 2018). Through the coexistence of different indigenous cultures and the overlapping with Quichua/Quechua, a variety of cultural customs and traditions developed. Until the present days, Santiago del Estero is known for its folk music and dance – the chacarera, and its rich cultural heritage, especially in handicrafts like ceramics and plastics.

Argentina consists of five administrative regions, a spatial entity for statistical use, introduced by the National Statistics Institute: Región Centro, Región Cuyo, Región Noroeste Argentino (NOA), Región Patagonia and Región Noreste Argentino (NEA). The zoning is a try to deal with structurally very different situations that the Argentinian provinces are in and consequently being able to classify the differences between them (Cámara Argentina de Comercio y Servicios 2019). The metropolitan region of Santiago de Estero and La Banda is one of five big agglomerations – so called “Gran Aglomerados Urbanos (GAU)” in the NOA region, together with Gran Tucumán / Tafí Viejo, Gran Salta, Jujuy / Palpalá and Gran Catamarca (CIPPEC 2017). The region holds about 2,6 millions of inhabitants. The northern regions, NOA and NEA are coined by its relatively high percentage of people living in rural environments, 19,2 % and 19,7 %, while as in the Center region it is not more than 4,7 % (Cámara Argentina de Comercio y Servicios 2019: 3).

Nevertheless, both have shown tendencies of population growth in cities within the last decades, and also register urban expansion in form of remarkable land consumption (figure 14). Another characteristic that mark the two northern regions is high percentage of housing deficit in the nationwide comparison, speaking in qualitative as well as in quantitative terms. As the figure 15 and figure 16 show, big parts of the provinces Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta, Jujuy and some departments of the province Catamarca show deficits of 35 % or more in quality of housing<sup>5</sup>. It's the same regions that also suffer most under the general lack

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<sup>5</sup> "Deficit dwellings include type B houses and precarious dwellings. Type B houses are considered recoverable deficit dwellings because they present deficiencies in some of their components that can be solved through internal reconditioning, connections to services, or improvement of construction materials. Pre-

of housing units, following the latest official survey from 2010 (Subsecretaría de Planificación y de la Inversión Pública 2010). Looking closely to the departmental distribution of either one of the deficit rates, it is evident that rural areas are the most deprived from housing offers. The GAU show comparably low rates of housing deficit. This has to do with the spatial focus of housing policies, where a clear focus on bigger urban agglomerations has been practiced since the topic first turned into a political agenda (interview V).

### Housing units with qualitative deficiencies (2001 & 2010)

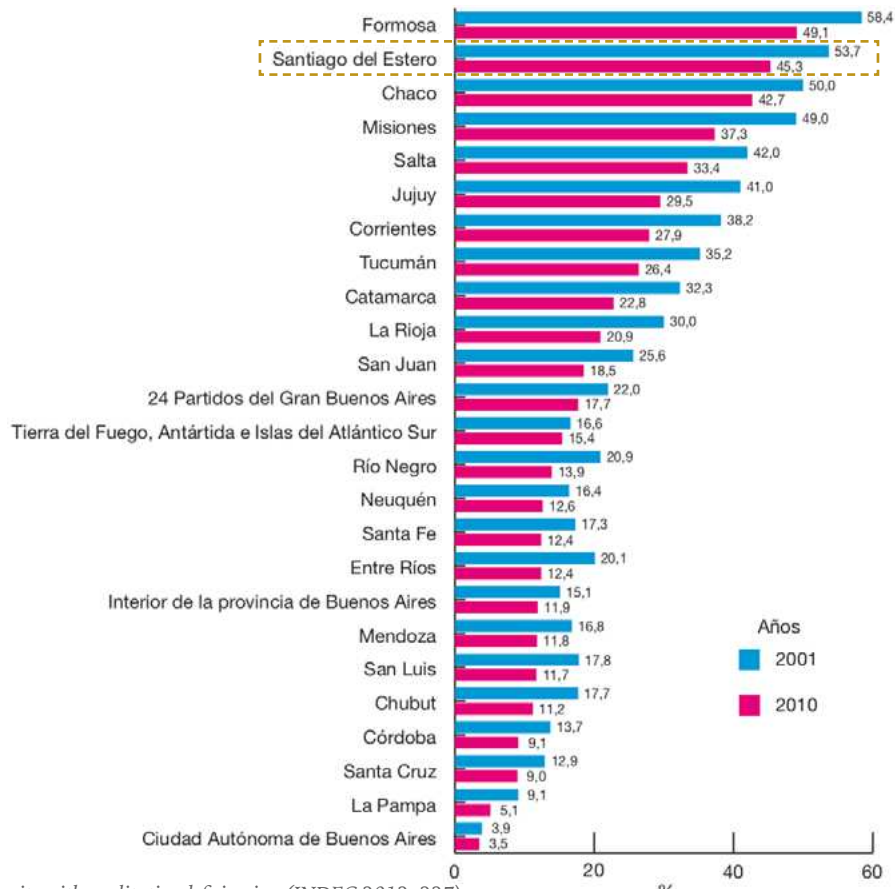


Figure 15. Housing units with qualitative deficiencies, (INDEC 2012: 227)

carious dwellings are defined as unrecoverable deficits, since the construction quality of their materials is considered insufficient, to the point that it is not appropriate to make partial improvements. In these cases, what is indicated is the direct replacement of the dwelling. Under this denomination are included ranches, boxes, pieces in tenancy, premises not built for room and mobile homes." (own translation; INDEC 2012: 223 cited from Bocciolini 2018: 176).

## Housing deficit Argentina (2010)

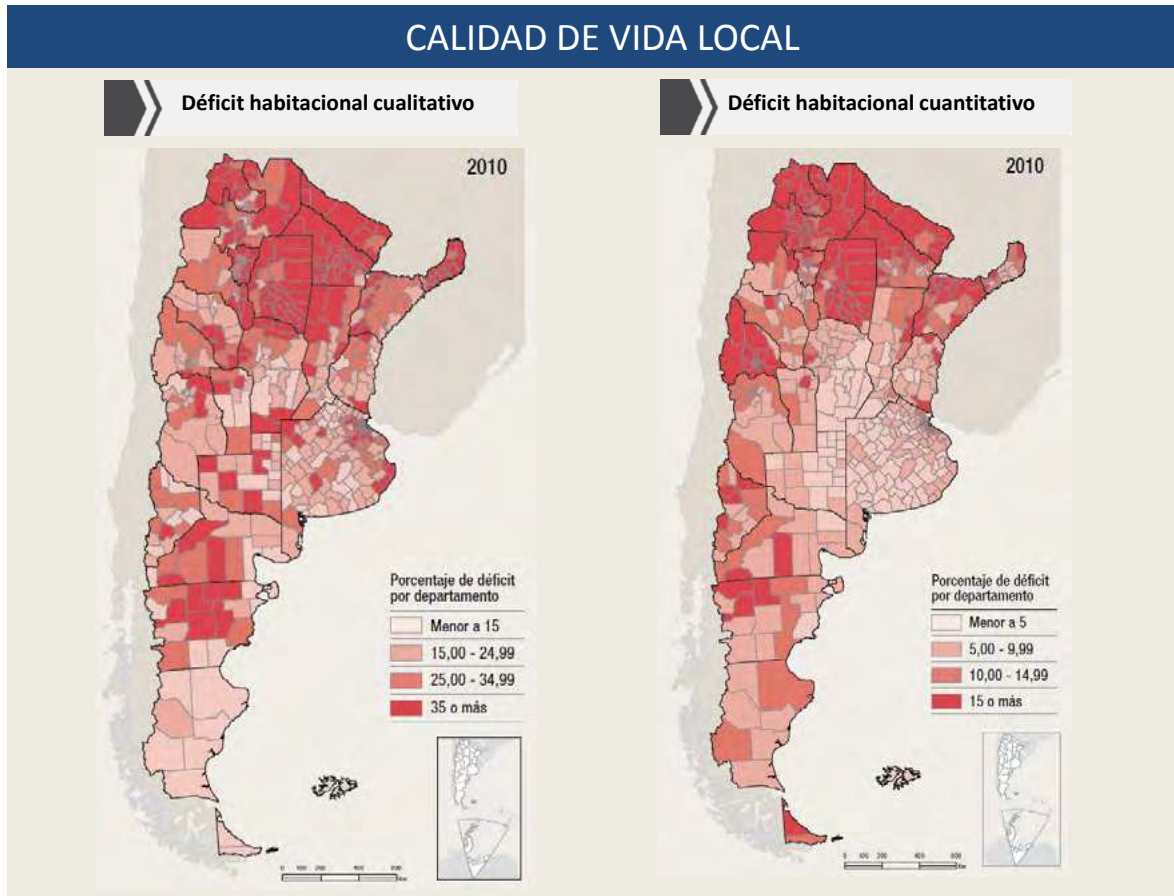


Figure 16. Housing deficit Argentina, departments, source: Subsecretaría de Planificación y de la Inversión Pública (2010)

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The relation between urban areas and countryside in Argentina is very different from what we can observe in Western Europe, for example. On one hand, as we already discussed in a previous chapter, urbanization has been especially strong and cities are the main formative structure in Argentina's settlement structure. While rural village structures still shape wide parts of Western Europe's territory, in Argentina the majority of people already live in cities. On the other hand, population density is not comparable between the two regions. Even if there has been a long history of rural settlements and indigenous populations – especially in Santiago del Estero – the dimensions of unused and open land exceeds European dimensions by far. Consequently, administrative structures of the territory are necessarily approached differently. When the concept of municipal organization of human settlements as the local representation of the vicinity emerged in America, there was introduced one basic differentiation in order to define municipalities: the urban zones

(‘ejido’)<sup>6</sup> and the rural zones (‘alfoz’) (Colucci 2003: 33). The urban zones were “cut out” of a territory of rural environment and turned into an administrative unit. This process is still visible in today’s administrative division and the terminology used.

Two institutional scales possess territorial sovereignty enjoy specific legal power to administer territorial issues (Colucci 2012: 31). Those competences get then split up to a smaller scale, distributing rights and duties to the municipal level and in some cases outsourcing duties to state companies (ibid.). On an institutional level we can therefore define three scales: the federal, the provincial and the municipal, while as the first two scales possess territorial jurisdiction.

Further, there exist different scales of territorial orders. They are split into unities, which define the expansion of the territory affected of orders. Generally, those unities mirror the scales of the institutional level, but show one more intermediate entity, the departments. They serve mostly statistical purposes and represent the decisive factor of how the relation between different municipalities is qualified. In order to make the role of departments clearer and explain the dynamics between different scales, Fidyka developed a characterization of different variations of municipal-departmental constellations that can be found in Argentinian national territory (2003: 3, cited from Colucci 2012: 37).

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6 There is a difference to be made between the terms “locality” and “municipality”, although they are sometimes used as synonyms, as Colucci points out for the Argentinian context (2012: 34-35). “Locality” is a physical entity, which changes in time, when urban areas expand, it is the built urban fabric. “Municipality” is an administrative unity. Limits of locality and municipality don’t normally coincide, localities can form one municipality but can also cross borders. Large localities of more than one municipality and more than 100.000 inhabitants are called agglomerations.

## Types of municipal-departmental constellations in Argentina

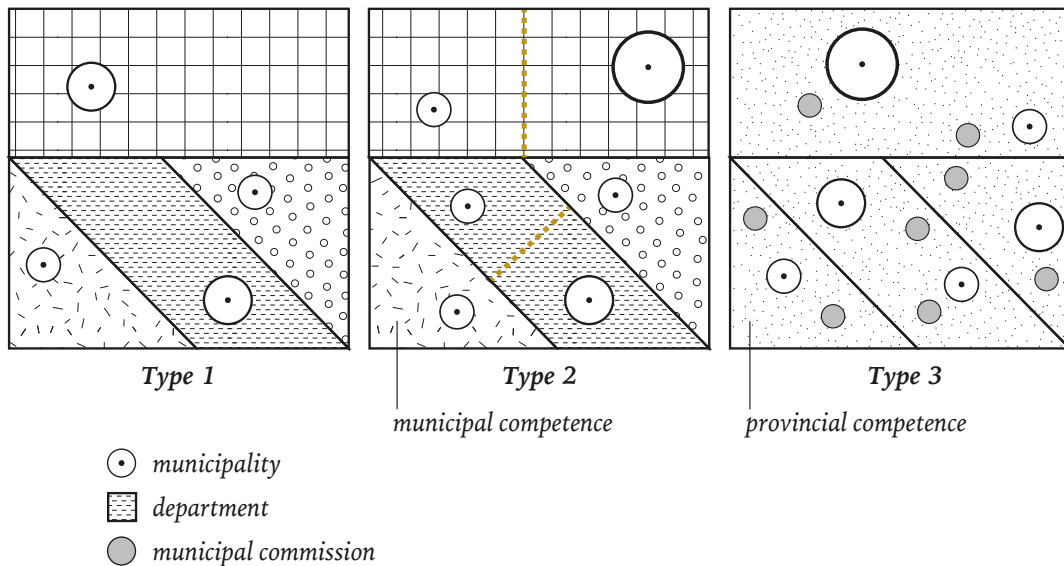


Figure 17. Types of municipal-departmental constellations in Argentina, Fidyka 2003: 3, cited in from Colucci 2012: 37, own adaptation

Departments cover the totality of a province. In other words, every province is split into pieces that form the departments. The organization within the department depends on the province. Generally, there is one administrative unit hierarchically subordinate to the department, the municipality. The main difference between Type 1 and Type 2 province structures is the territory under municipal responsibility. In Type 1 and Type 2 provinces the municipalities responsibility covers the whole territory of the department. The only difference is, that in the first case only one municipality covers one whole department and in the second case it can be one or more. In Type 3 provinces the territory of the department that is outside the borders of the individual municipalities is under the competence of the province. Further, one or more municipalities can be situated in the same department, being categorized into a hierarchy on base of the number of inhabitants. Head cities do provide establishments of provincial services (Colucci 2012: 38). Additionally, through this structure, so called “municipal commissions” emerge. Those are settlements that are not proper municipalities and fall – in most cases – under legal competence of the province. In some cases the territorial order can come from another municipality, to which it is subordinate (ibid. 36). Every province defines the characteristics for what a municipality is by itself. In Santiago a municipality is created when an urban settlement has



# City map, Santiago del Estero in 1874

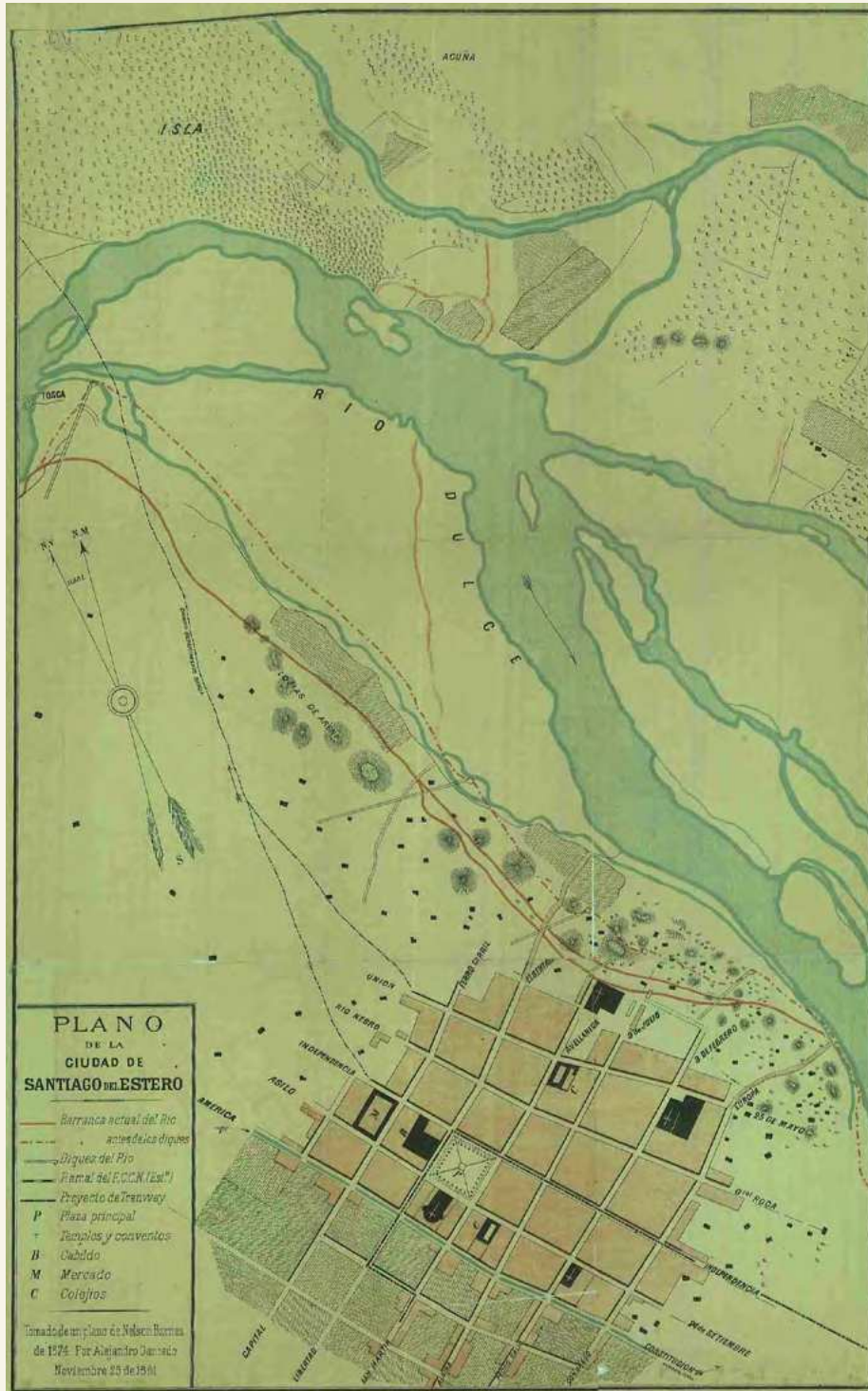


Figure 18. City map of Santiago del Estero in 1874, source: Municipality Santiago del Estero

more than 2000 inhabitants. The municipality will cover a territory of five kilometers radius (ibid. 34). But, what does forming a municipality bring as constraints and rights? Generally, competences are acquired in different fields of planning, public services and public construction (ibid.: 31). Nevertheless, the definition is vague. Colucci, analyzing the administrative and legislative system of planning in Argentina explains, that “every public action of vicinity interest” falls under the responsibility of the municipalities. That means, conserving and bettering public facilities, administering the finances and provide municipal services. It is the duty of the municipality to represent vicinity and regulate the habitable places (ibid.).

Santiago del Estero is a Type 3 province. The capital of the province is the city and municipality Santiago del Estero. The city is situated in the department Capital, one of 27 departments in the province, constituting the head city of the department as well as the capital of the province Santiago del Estero (ibid. 35).

## 4.1.2. The Capital Santiago del Estero

Today, Santiago del Estero is the political, administrative, financial center of the province and the main provider of services in the region. It's situated on the northern border of the department Centro, limited by the Río Dulce. On the other shore of the river is the city La Banda, which started to grow together with Santiago during the last years in terms of urban development and continues to do so. The cities are connected by two bridges, *Puente Carretero* and *Puente Nuevo*. Together, the metropolitan area holds about 400.000 inhabitants, following the census of 2010, nearly half of the province's total population on 9.520 ha, which is a density of 41,9 hab/ha (CIPPEC 2017: 139).

Santiago del Estero was founded in 1553 and counts as the oldest city that constantly existed in the Argentinian territory. In fact, historians state, that legally the city had been founded in 1550 under the name “Ciudad del Barco” (“boat city”) on a different location that the city is today. In the following three years, the city was moved to different places several times, until 1553, when it finally moved to the location where it is today, and it's name was changed into Santiago del Estero (Lascano 1992: 46). This is interesting, because chronics of the founding years describe, that the city – despite it's geographical moves – still was the same city, as it was rebuilt following the same grid. In figure 18, a city map from 1874, the structure of the city

is typical for colonial foundations. Because of its geographical situation it played an important role in the Spanish colonization process of the current Argentinian territory. Its historical importance in the first time of hispanic colonization decreased within the last two centuries, when Tucumán and Córdoba registered demographic as well as economic growth (Colucci 2012: 90). Since the XIXth century Santiago functions as a center on a provincial level.

#### 4.1.2.2. *The metropolitan area with La Banda*

La Banda is the second most important city of the province Santiago de Estero and is situated on the opposite shore of the Río Dulce of the city of Santiago. The time and reason of its foundation is not well known, but what undoubtedly was a decisive and coining moment was the arrival of the railway to where today is the center of La Banda. In 1890 the railway station started operating as part of the strongly growing Argentinian railway network. By this newly gained connectivity, it attracted people willing to settle down there and with them economic activities (Colucci 2012: 96-97). It was mostly jobs related to the train service itself, as well as activities related to services and establishments that would be needed by travelers who trespassed the city. Still today, when the importance of the rail connection can not be compared with what it was in its best days, commercial activities are La Banda's most relevant economic sector. Besides that, food production and agribusiness provide most jobs in the city (ibid.: 99).

The metropolitan region Santiago del Estero - La Banda has shown the highest growing rates of the whole NOA region between 2006 and 2016 (CIPPEC 2017). In both cities this growth can be observed by wide areas of newly urbanized areas, mainly for residential use. Because of Santiago's central function and more diverse job opportunities, a functional connectivity has developed within the last decades. There is a strong interrelation in terms of everyday life structures of people living in the area, and therefore also a functional interdependency between both cities. On the administrative level and in the provision of public services – the department borders get noticeable. There is no political concordance or formalized dialogue between the political decision-makers of the two cities. Metropolitan areas do not possess any legal status in Argentina. This gets most evident in the lack of coordination of public transport and urban development. Still, Colucci states that one can observe an increasing complementarity of services in different areas, such as public hygiene, passenger transport and ecologic protection of the surroundings (ibid.: 100).



# Access routes and main connections

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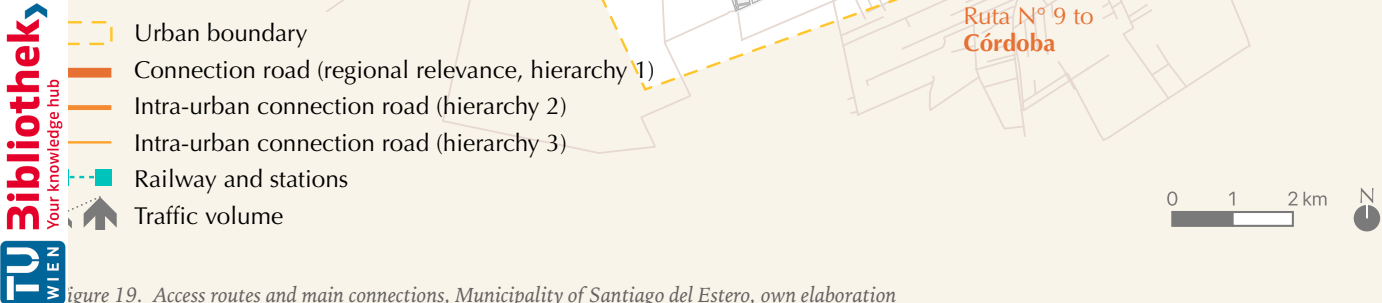


Figure 19. Access routes and main connections, Municipality of Santiago del Estero, own elaboration

### 4.1.3. Today's urban fabric of Santiago del Estero

A look at the distribution of economic activities, the service sector as well as public institutions show a clear spatial concentration. The historic core of Santiago does still function as the only articulated center for the city as a whole. As we heard in a previous chapter, in the years of its founding through Spanish colonialists, several variations of layout patterns existed (CEHOPU 1997: 65). Santiago has been constructed in the most common layout, the basic grid structure (“retícula”), with slightly inclined streets and not strictly the same dimensions of each block. While residential use is clearly dominating the outskirts and more peripheral neighborhoods, in the center areas it is mixed use that can be observed. While there have been installed some municipal services in the bigger neighborhoods, it is still limited to basic needs. In order to reach most work places, schools and universities, the neighborhood has to be left. That also means, that connection roads between those zones and the city center are of high importance and that transport is a crucial issue for general accessibility and social inclusion. There are no official statistics about modal split in transport. Out of own observations it can be deduced, that individual motorized vehicles, like cars and especially motorbikes, are the primary mobility choices. The Ruta N° 9 south, which is the connection to Córdoba, that entering the city becomes the highly frequented Avenida Belgrano, the Ruta N° 64, which function as connection to Catamarca and becomes within the city the important east-west-connection Avenida Libertad, the Ruta N° 9 north-west, the connection to Tucumán and the Ruta N° 34, which is the connection to Buenos Aires. The most frequented access route is the Ruta N° 34 and enters the municipal area via La Banda. Most of long distance buses and overland transportation arrive to Santiago via this point. For the inner circulation, the few north-south and east-west-connections are most important and frequented. One of the essential north-south-connections has been interrupted by introducing a pedestrian area in the center, which is criticized by several actors as a chicane for functioning city traffic (Interview V).

Built after creating the southern neighborhoods, the bypass route – as a part of Ruta N° 9 – that crosses the south-west of the city, has gained special importance. It is, on one hand, the main artery that connects thousands of inhabitants with the city center, but also represents a strong spatial barrier for any other mobility mode than motorized vehicles. It is exclusively designed in order to make motorized circulation efficient. Other infrastructure, like for example crossings for pedestrians or bike lanes have not been foreseen and

# Metropolitan region Santiago del Estero – La Banda

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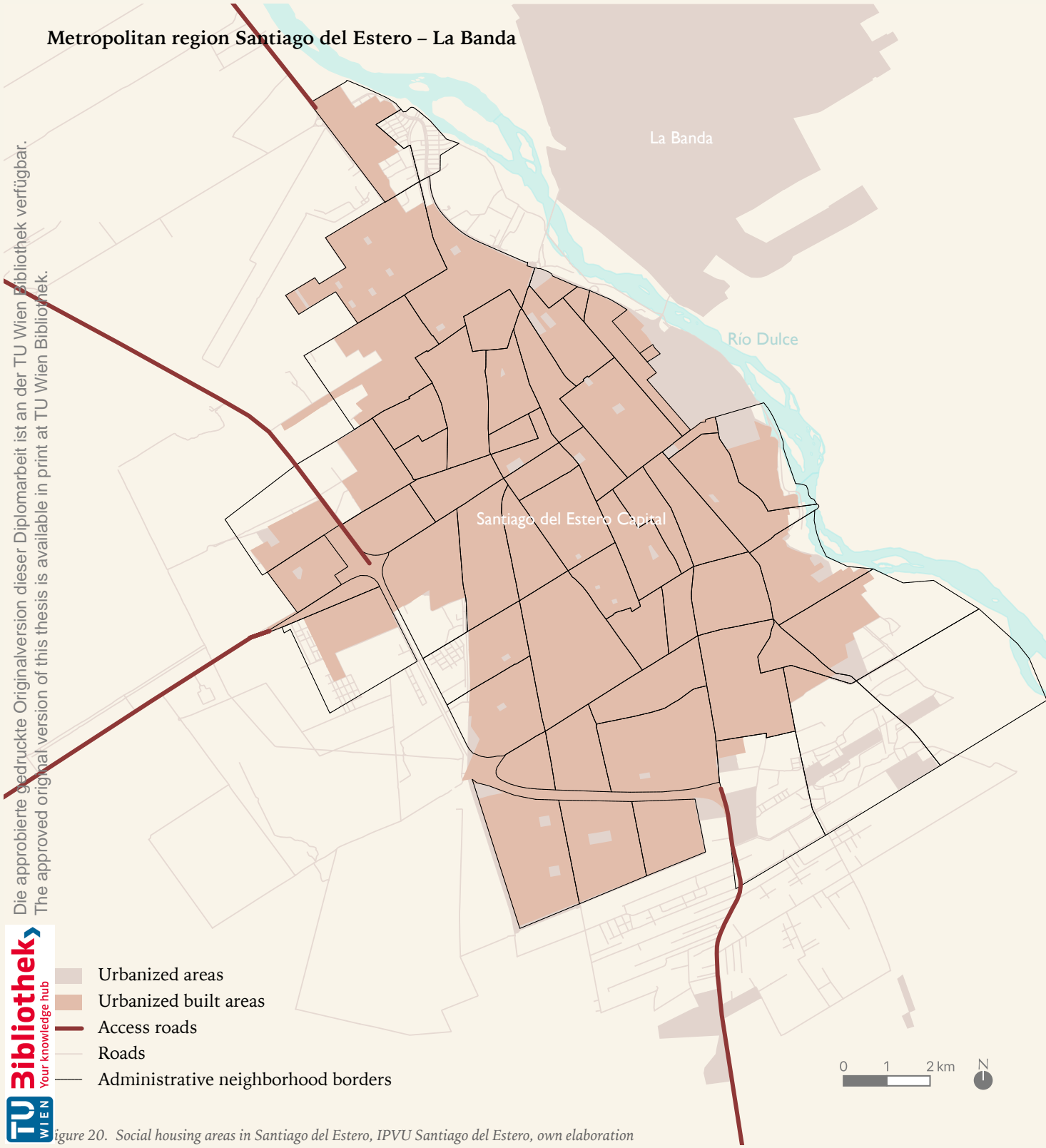


Figure 20. Social housing areas in Santiago del Estero, IPVU Santiago del Estero, own elaboration

make such mobility forms difficult and risky.

Public transport is focused on centric areas. The southern neighborhoods are provided with one bus line that establishes the connection with the center. A fixed and valid map of available bus lines is not available at the moment of writing this thesis, neither from sides of the municipality nor from the provincial delegation of administration. This testifies, that transport services are provided exclusively by one specific private firm, that does not need to cooperate with official municipal instances. Therefore, the network of bus connections could not be explored in depth and findings base on observations and own experiences. Also, in February 2019, when the empirical research was carried out, the private bus company that covered all transportation services in Santiago, stopped it's service temporarily and finally sold it to another enterprise.<sup>7</sup>

The politically most important and also most controversial transport infrastructure project of the last decade was the construction of a railway line between Santiago and La Banda, the so called “tren al desarrollo”, “train to development”. It is an eight km long train line that connects the two cities and offering two additional stops throughout the route with a capacity of 70 people per train. The long term vision of the project is to activate the metropolitan passenger mobility and to establish a connection to Termas de Río Hondo, a nearby city coined by thermal tourism and further to Tucumán. The purpose of this infrastructure project is rather fostering touristic attraction of the region. It is discussed controversially, due to the questionable benefit for Santiago's and La Banda's inhabitant in their every day live mobility.

#### 4.1.4. Today's demographic tendencies

The demographic development of Santiago del Estero as well as of La Banda has been continuously positive withing the last decades. It even showed the highest growth factor of the whole NOA region with an annual

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<sup>7</sup> For two weeks of the research stay in Santiago del Estero, there were barely any bus connections. In some firms and institutions, people living in peripheral neighborhoods were excused in work because the lacked opportunity to get to the city center. This shows how strong the dependence on public transport is, even if it's quality, frequency and distribution is poor.

# Population densities, Santiago del Estero (2010)

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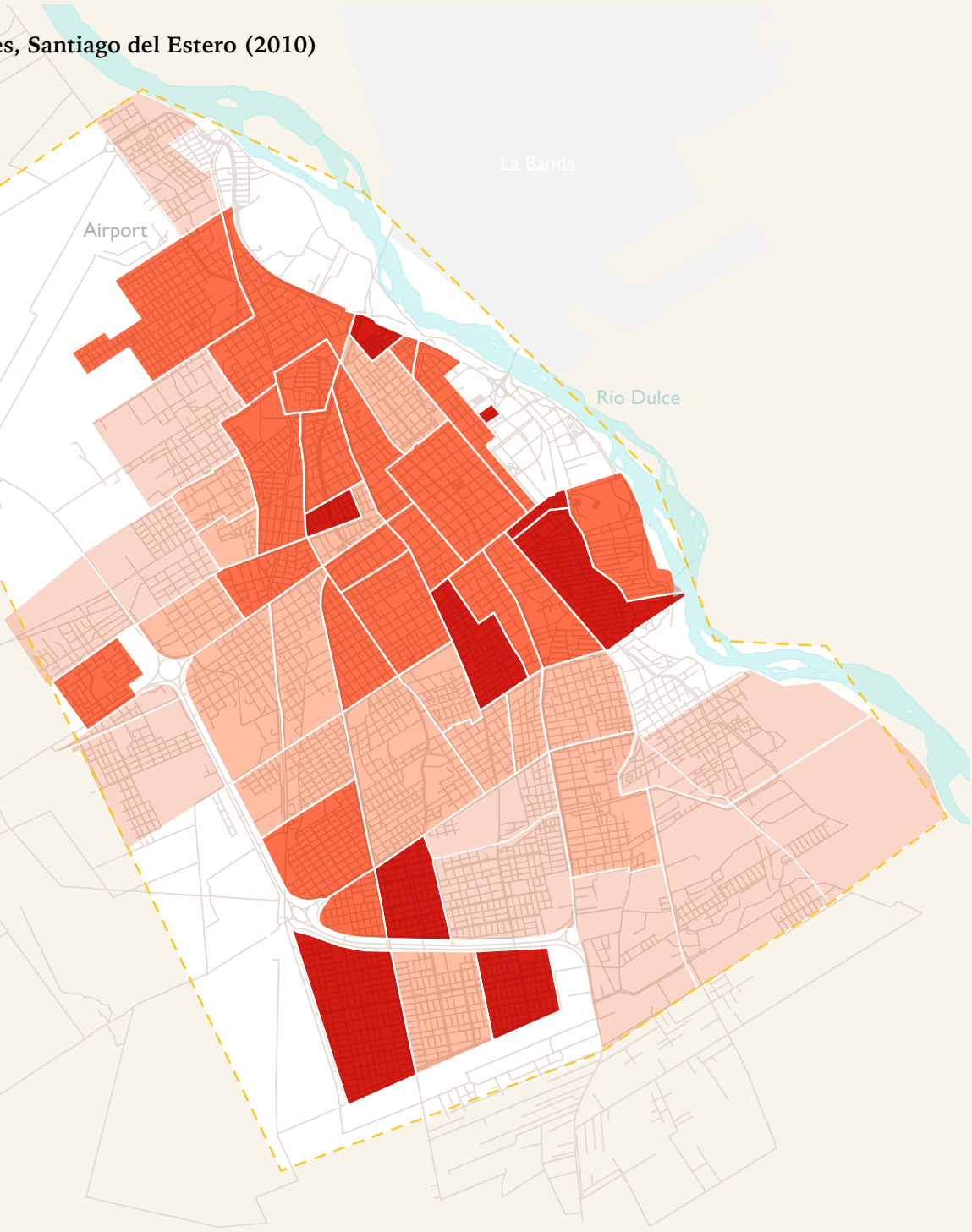


Figure 21. Population density, Provincial Statistics Office Santiago del Estero, own elaboration



growing rate of 1,72 % (CIPPEC 2017: 125). Focusing on Santiago del Estero and comparing the number of residents in 1991 and in 2010, one can state an increase of 32,3 % (INDEC 2010). Consequently, growth is also noticeable in the spatial dimension of the city. In the same time period, the city of Santiago has grown from 1558 ha to 5606 ha of urban areas (CIPUV 2013). This is an increase of about 260% and unproportionally high in relation to the demographic growth. Density therefore decreased in this time period, between 2006 and 2016 it sunk from 47,6 hab/ha to 41,9 hab/ha (CIPPEC 2017: 139).

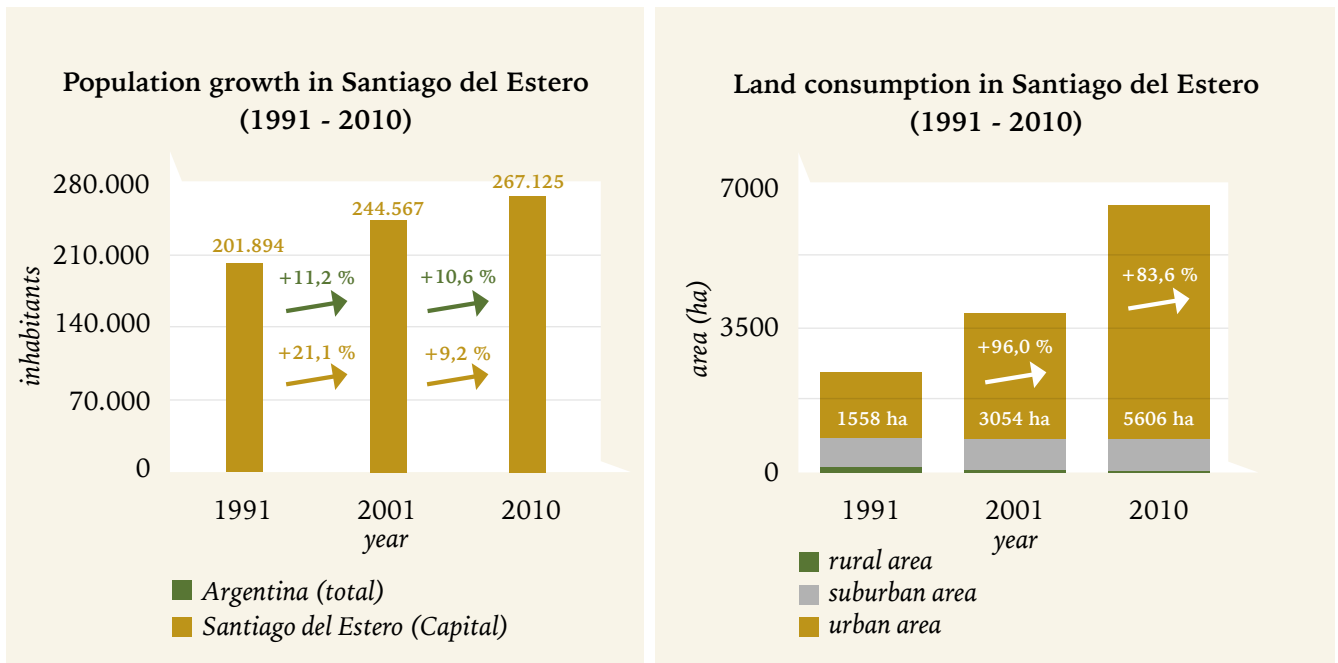


Figure 22. Population growth & land consumption in Santiago del Estero (1991 - 2010) (INDEC 2010), own elaboration

Most of urban space is occupied by residential use, in the metropolitan area of Santiago del Estero – La Banda it forms about 84 %. What stands out is the high percentage of areas used for social housing. While in the NOA region it is about 21 % of urbanized areas that are used for social housing, in the agglomeration area Santiago del Estero – La Banda, it is 32 %. Also, a high number of extra-urban residential use makes 22 % of all urban space (CIPPEC 2017: 141). This form of urban sprawl is mostly visible in the south-eastern neighborhoods near the river, which still possess very rural characteristics and are in continuous process of urbanization by private actors.

# Chronology of urban growth

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## Date of official registering

- until 1870
- 1870 - 1940
- 1940 - 1970
- 1970 - 1980
- 1980 - 1990
- 1990 - 2000
- 2000 - 2014

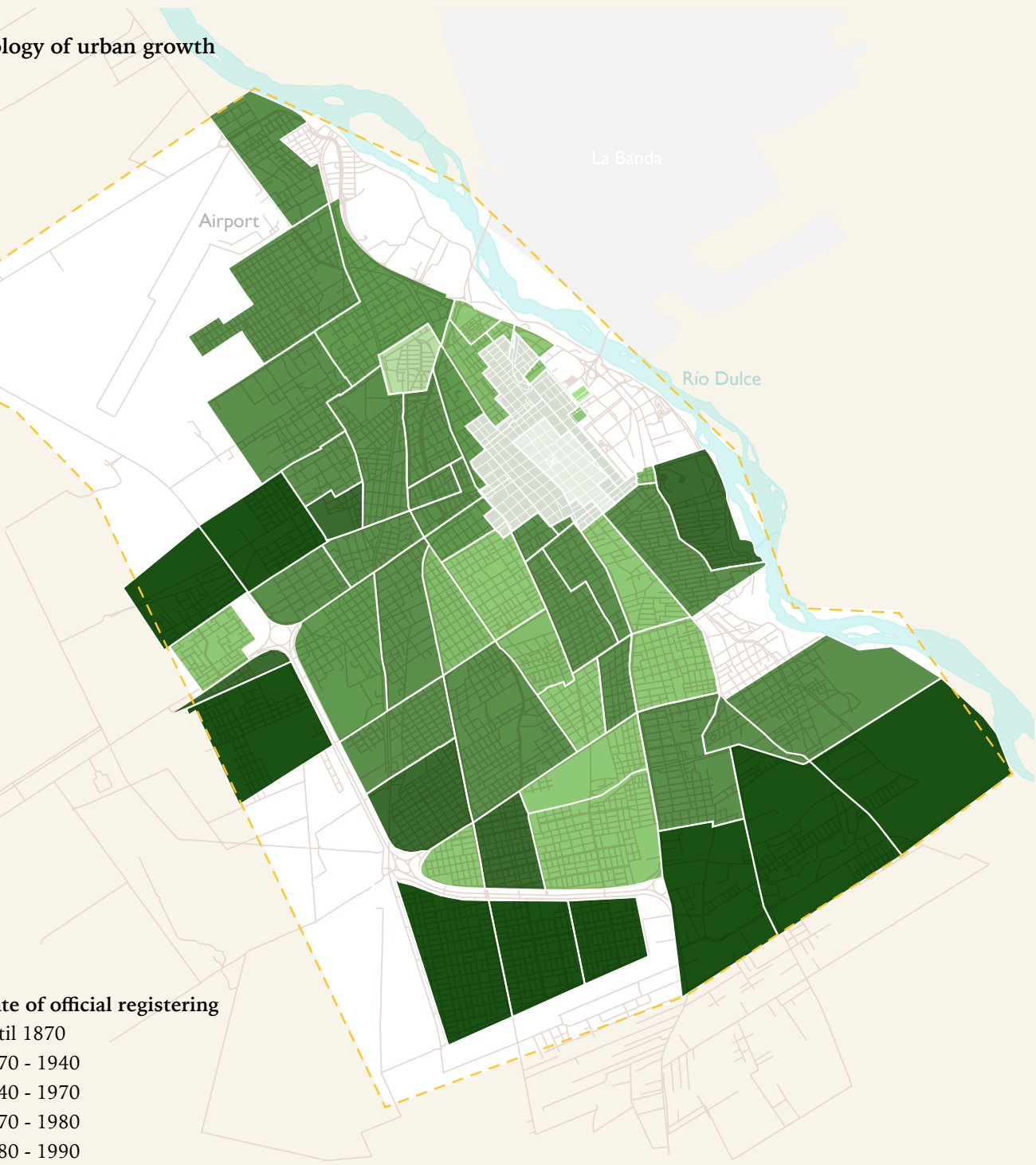


Figure 23. Chronology of urban growth, Municipality Santiago del Estero, own representation



*Plots: City center*

*Plots: New social housing neighborhood*



Figure 24. Plot sizes compared: center and social housing neighborhood, (Municipality Santiago del Estero 2019), own representation

An interesting remark about densities within the cities is, that the new built social housing neighborhoods in the south of the city are under the most dense areas in the city, even denser than most of centric ones. This can be explained by the different size of plots within development epochs of the city. Traditional plots in the center were wider in their dimensions, as it was common for each family to cultivate vegetables and fruits, especially citrus trees, in their own backyard as well as keep animals such as chickens, goats and donkeys (Interview V). A regular lot around 1930 had dimensions of about 10 x 75 or 50 meters. Today, there is a minimum size of lots, fixed by the Municipality, which measures 270 m<sup>2</sup> (Interview V). As in the city center in many cases the old lots still exist as they were before, density of population per block is lower. Still, there are tendencies of densification that are taking place at the moment, splitting lots by selling parts of the backyard or dividing lots into narrower stripes. One phenomenon that has been observed recently by Maria Bocciolini in the city of Córdoba, is micro-densification. It describes the segmenting of original lot structures into a smaller and diverse structure. (Bocciolini 2018). Processes like these can be observed in its beginnings the center Santiago del Estero.

## Age structure, Santiago del Estero (2010)

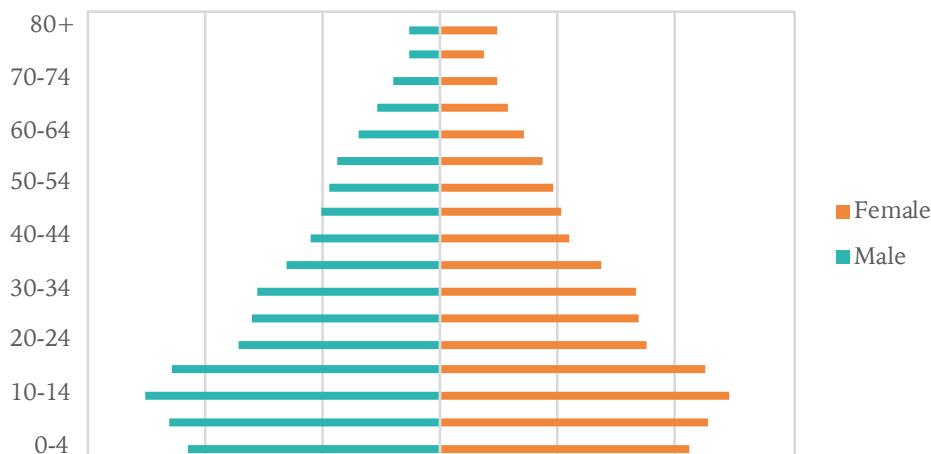


Figure 25. Age structure, Santiago del Estero (INDEC 2010) own representation

Observing the age structure of the city, the population under 30 years makes most of the city's residents.

The age distribution within the new built neighborhoods shows the same tendency (Interview IV).

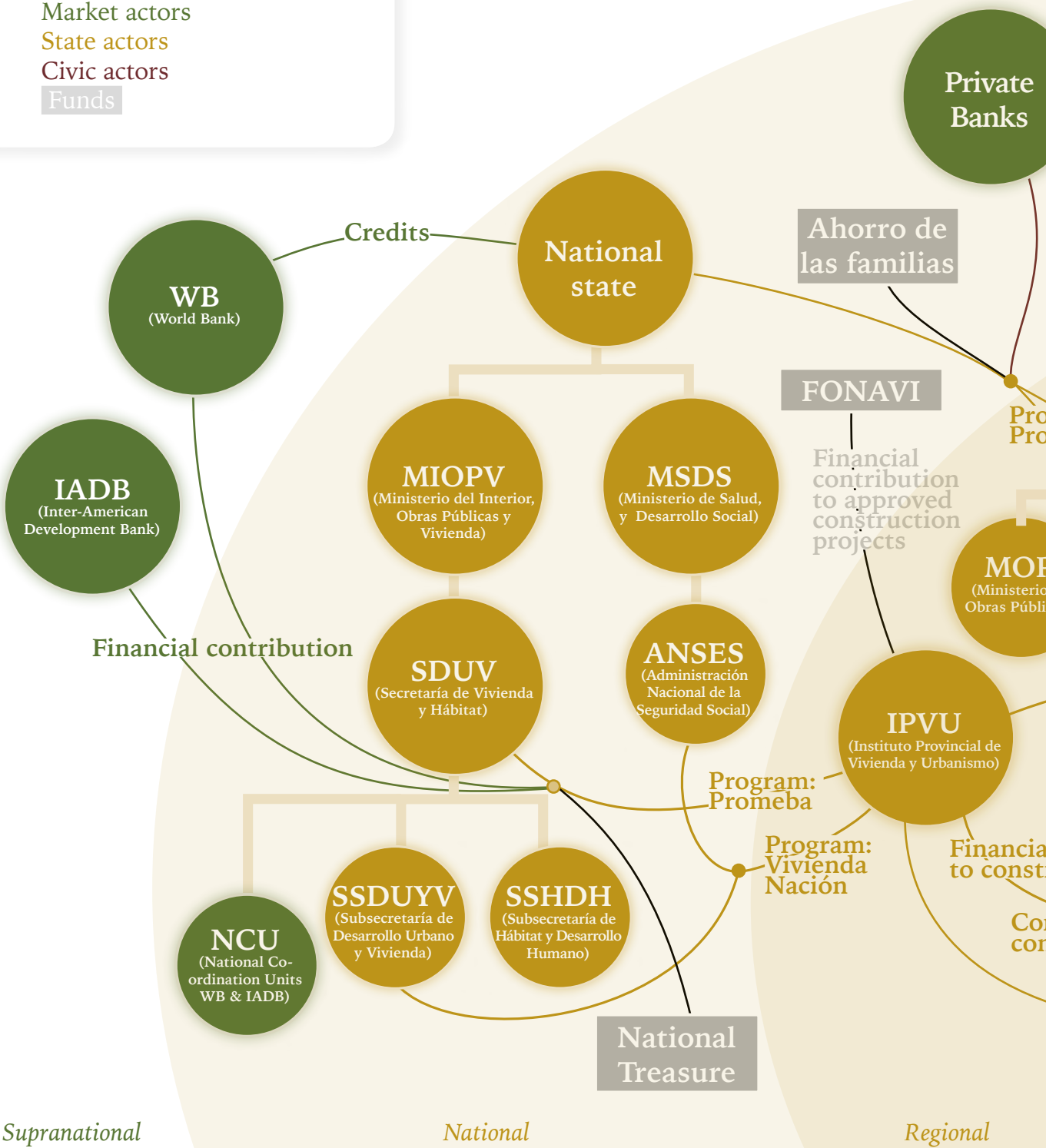
## 4.2. THE ACTORS IN OFFICIAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The landscape of actors in social housing politics is manifold and takes into account various scales, from international funds to projects initiated by communities in specific neighborhoods. An actor analysis is therefore not comprehensive, but aims to identify the most relevant groups of interest that are responsible for shaping developments in field of housing construction. In Santiago del Estero, seven groups can be identified:

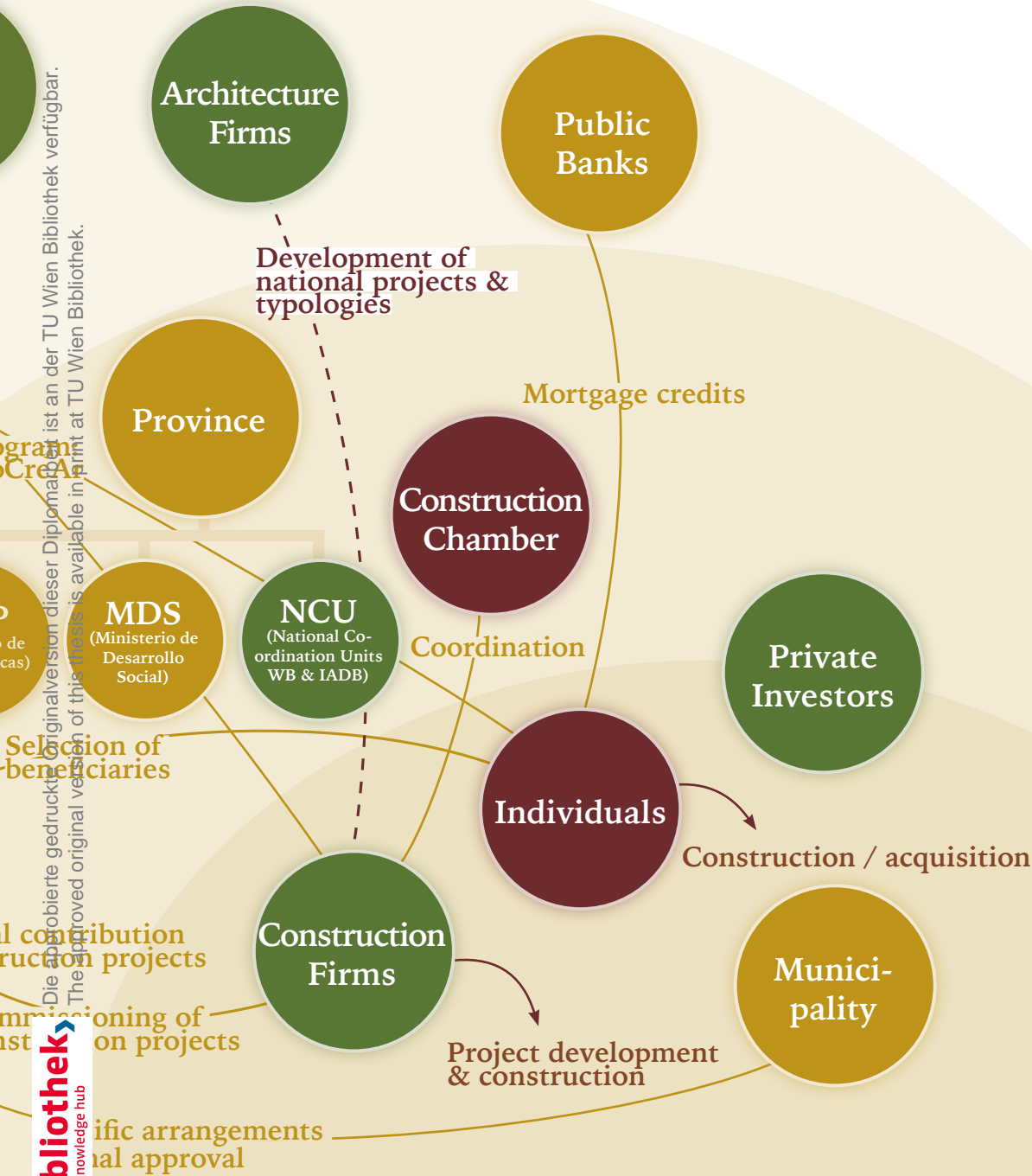
**International organizations:** The World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) are the two most important international organs that contribute to the financing of social housing programs in Argentina. They are, together with the National Treasury of Argentina, funding the Promeba program, which is focusing on the bettering of sub-standard neighborhoods since 1997 (Barreto 2018: 422). Both, the WB as well as the IADB have proper establishments within the Secretariat for Housing and Habitat, the Coordination Units, as well as the Execution Units of the Provincial and Municipal lev-

# Actor analysis

- Market actors
- State actors
- Civic actors
- Funds



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Local

Figure 26. Actors analysis, own elaboration

el. Although these international organizations are not directly involved in housing construction which is the focal point of this paper, but mainly in the mentioned renovation program, it is still important to mention their role because the volume of investment increased since the change of government in 2015 to 200 million US\$ (Barreto 2017: 418 f.; 423). This shows a change in the perspectives concerning international financialization of the housing market, which has taken place in comparison to the previous government and is one element that shows the resumption of the political agenda of the 1990s.

- **The National State:** Before the ministerial reorganization in 2015 planning and housing politics had a separate Ministry, the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Inversion and Services. After the change of government and the following restructuring measures, this Ministry was dissolved and the jurisdictions integrated in the Ministry of Energy and Mining, the Ministry of Transport and in the newly organized Ministry of Internal Affairs, Public Works and Housing. Today, the Secretariat of Housing and Habitat is responsible for housing policies on the national level, which is divided in two main areas: the Sub-Secretariat for Habitat and Human Development and the Sub-Secretary for Urban Development and Housing (Barreto 2017: 421). They have a crucial influence on housing construction in Santiago del Estero, as it the programs and action lines form an important part of financial resources used for social housing construction. The most important funds for housing projects on the national level are the FONAVI, the resources of the National Social Security Administration ANSES (Administración Nacional de la Seguridad Social), the household savings (Ahorro de las familias), and the National Treasure, visualized in the actors analysis (figure 26).
- **The Province:** On this scale there are two main players of importance for housing construction: The Provincial Institute of Housing and Urbanism (IPVU) and the sub-Secretary of Community Development. The IPVU is the link between the national housing policies and project implementations. Their responsibilities lie within three main areas: the planning of new projects, contracting project executers and organizing the repartition to beneficiaries. The role and influence of the IPVU has changed according to the general political framework throughout the last 70 years of housing policies. During the first rise of national housing construction, the IPVU was only an executing instance. Design and typologies were elaborated entirely on the national level. When the importance of state planning di-

minated in the 1980s, constructions by public institutions decreased, which led to a loss of importance for the IPVU. The regulations of the FONAVI changed as well, which became financed entirely by the income of fuel tax rather than by the worker's fund as before. Private construction rose in reaction to the lack of public interventions and thus gained relevance in housing production. The provincial level itself gained competences and expanded its autonomy, it no longer was the executor of entirely pre-designed state projects. Currently, and especially since the early 2000s, state planning again gains importance. While there are some regulations given by national level, like specific dimensions and criteria of quality that have to be fulfilled by any project financed by national funds, a certain degree of autonomy at the provincial level has emerged. Decisions concerning design and typologies can be made by the IPVU. This is an important development because it offers opportunities for specific regionalism in architectural solutions, even if this process is still at its beginning (Interview V). A second actor on the provincial level is the *sub-Secretary of Community Development*, specifically the *Direction of Social Development*. It does not have direct responsibilities for housing issues, but has strong interactions with residential areas of low-income families and vulnerable social groups in forms of trainings or workshops (Interview IV). Cooperations are established between the Direction of Social Development and the Municipality in order to coordinate activities on public spaces.

Several sections of *the Municipality* play a role in the development of urbanized space and housing areas in Santiago del Estero. The most important element here is the section of Planning within the Department for Planning and Public Works and Services. It consists of three sub-ordinate directions: Urban Planning, Urban Soil and Parks. Two main responsibilities of the Municipality that are of importance for the production of housing areas are: 1) Zoning and 2) Provisioning of urbanized areas with basic infrastructure. The Department for Planning has defined four main zones in Santiago del Estero, each provided with different regulations, density provisions and building codes. There is no exact planning scheme for land use, but general determinations for big spatial unities.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the power of the municipality in urban development is very limited out of a practical perspective. Although the municipality has the competence to define zoning regulations and settlement boundaries, the activities of

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Spatial unities are the historic center, residential areas, industrial areas and rural areas.



the IPVU have an important influence on urban space without giving the former the ability for legal intervention. Following statements by the municipality, information about inner-urban wastelands and preferable locations for future residential areas is communicated to IPVU (Interview III). However, the coordination with the Municipality is not mandatory for the IPVU (there is no legal constraint to act according to recommendations of the Municipality). Thus, suggestions from the city administration's side do not necessarily have any effect when it comes to the selection of project areas. This has a relevant impact on the Municipality, because it is its duty to provide basic services and infrastructure to any urbanized area within the city limits. Often, decisions about the location of new residential areas are made based on land prices, which are lowest in the periphery. Large distances between new projects and yet consolidated urban space do not only cause higher development costs but do augment expenses for maintenance as well, which have to be covered by the Municipality. Thus, the Municipality's position is very depended on decisions taken on the subordinate level and is conditioned by the openness to dialogue of concrete decision makers. Nevertheless, in order to be able to construct on a specific territory within the municipal area, the applying construction firm has to present a certificate by the Municipality, that approves the housing construction activities at a specific area, confirming the aptitude of the territory for residential use: the *Certificate of Validation* ("Certificado de Convalidación Municipal"). In other words, through the requirement of this document, the Municipality gets the final right to decide whether a project can be carried out.

- In the process of developing social housing, *construction firms* have to elaborate a proposition in order to receive public funding for the design and construction of official housing areas. There are several conditions that have to be fulfilled (which will be described more in detail in chapter 4.3.), one of them being, that territory for construction has to be owned by the firms and available for the IPVU to buy. That means, that construction companies have to determine when applying for a commission where this project can be realized, buy the needed areas and later sell them to the Province. Cost of the land is heavily impacting the overall costs of a project and gets therefore a crucial point in the selection process. Thus, it is construction firms that try to allocate areas of land apt for residential use for the lowest possible price. Through this practice, private constructing firms have a high influence on where urban



growth takes place.<sup>9</sup>

- **Associations** have played an important role at some point in the history of social housing, especially unions and committees during the Peronist decade.<sup>10</sup> Still neighborhoods or building ensembles exist that have been created by public funds and are coordinated through specific advocacy groups where living space is distributed between their members. Overall, associations in housing production and implementation of housing projects with public financing have lost importance in Santiago del Estero.
- The **private sector** plays an important role within Santiago del Estero's housing construction. In comparison to the general Latin American trend of growing numbers of gated communities and private enclaves (cf. Borsdorf 2006; Borsdorf, Hidalgo 2010), in Santiago it is mostly individual construction and small scale projects that are carried out. Three groups of private construction activity can be identified to be most relevant for housing construction in Santiago. First, investors that buy territory, install infrastructure and different types of services (for example security measures), divide the land into lots and sell it to privates for building individual homes. Secondly, investors that plan out complete projects and contract firms to execute the construction of housing units that later will be sold or rented to individuals. Thirdly, individuals that contract smaller construction firms in order to carry out the building process of their own housing unit. The private sector experienced important growth when the role of the national state got weaker in housing thematics in the 80s (interview V). Individual constructions experienced a huge growth with the introduction of accessible subsidized credits like the Procrear program. Currently, investor driven housing construction, as can be observed in cities like Buenos Aires and Córdoba, is gaining importance in Santiago too, but up until now does not represent an important

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<sup>9</sup> In several conversations the influence of the Chamber of Construction was highlighted as a very powerful force, without further detailing specific situations or patterns.

<sup>10</sup> An emblematic peak of this epoch in Santiago del Estero was the "Plan for Mutual Help" ("Plan de Ayuda Mutua") under the government of Carlos Juárez, where in cooperation with associations 5.000 housing units were built and offered to the population for free (Interview VII).

share of housing offers.

As Barreto states, the power relation between different actors in housing construction has shifted throughout the last decade. What can be observed is an increase of monetary possibilities of the private sector, whereas public construction lost financial potency. At the same time, external international organization have increased their impact on the housing stock (Barreto 2017: 430). Both, IADB and WB have increased their budget for housing improvement in Argentina. Associations and Municipalities hold rather weak roles at the moment (Interviews I, II, V, VII).

## 4.3. SOCIAL HOUSING IN SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO

### 4.3.1. Land selection

When city development takes place, it is relevant not only to examine the project-internal functionality – composed by design and typologies – but also its spatial situation in relation to other parts of the urban agglomeration, its structural embedding. The process of selection land does have huge impacts on the affected parties: the future inhabitants, as they will have to adapt to a specific new context (for example regarding proximity and mobility). Owners of the urbanized territory may expect impacts on the value of their land. As already mentioned in a previous chapter, the urbanizing process has shown a strong impact on general soil prices, due to better infrastructures and general improvements.

In the case of Santiago del Estero, it is therefore a highly important question to ask, how territories have been chosen as residential areas for social housing. For this purpose, data obtained from three different documents by the IPVU Santiago del Estero will be discussed, which provides basic information: two 'Calls

for *Federal Programs for Housing Construction*<sup>11</sup> and one 'descriptive memory' of a more recent project<sup>12</sup>. They represent two different types of documents: the first two are tenders for projects, that call for complete solutions by the applying firms. In other words, they call for project candidacies that have not only a concept for the spatial solution for a specific number of housing unities, but as well can provide available territory and infrastructure. The third one is a call only for a project design and implementation on a determined piece of land in property of the IPVU.

There are some factors that have an impact on the land selection processes and build the decision basis whether a location can be accepted for social housing projects or not. Primarily, the *aptitude* of a territory has to be identified. This is divided into three main aspects: an *environmental*, a *technical* and a *social* component. Every potential location must fulfill the requirements for each aspect. In other words, the location has to show aptitude in all three areas. In terms of the environment, it is necessary to provide a Certificate of Environmental Aptitude, which declares that there is no “defunctionalizing” impact on the surroundings to be expected (IPVU 2005: 46; 2007: 45). The technical aptitude refers to basic characteristics of the soil, like the general suitability for construction work, a manageable topography, not being in danger of inundations as well as a certain degree of porosity of the soil or an adequate canal system in order to deal with rain and waste water. The social aptitude refers to the accessibility through keeping the cost-plus caused by land prices low (IPVU 2005: 47; 2007: 46).

Having proved this basic aptitude, the potential project has to be considered according to further criteria.

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11 Federal Program for Housing Construction 2005: call for construction of 2090 housing unities with infrastructure and provision of territory in Santiago del Estero and La Banda

12 Federal Program for Housing Construction 2007: call for construction of 9000 housing units with infrastructure and provision of territory in Santiago del Estero, La Banda and different rural localities in the province Santiago del Estero

2 Descriptive Memory 2016: documentation of construction of 1464 individual housing units in the neighborhoods *Barrio Villa del Carmen* and *Barrio General Paz*, Santiago del Estero

These criteria are the location within the urban structure, the conditions of the site itself, the urban design of the project as well as the specific housing solutions (ibid. 2005: 2-3; 2007: 2-3).

Regarding the *location* of the future residential area, the territory has to fulfill the following characteristics:

- The area has to be located inside the administrative urban area, following the settlement boundaries defined by the municipality.
- It has to be in continuity of the existing urban fabric, ensuring that future residents do not need to traverse unsettled zones when moving between their neighborhood and the functional city center.
- It has to meet the conditions for residential use, which means, that it is not located near any land uses that are conflictive with residential use (like industrial activities, etc.), potential hazards (like open canals, etc.) and not separated from its surroundings by strong barriers. In case of infrastructural barriers (like multi-lane routes, train rails, etc.), possibilities for risk free crossing has to be provided.
- Further, the area has to show possibilities for infrastructural connections.

Also, the site itself has to match certain requirements. Relevant factors regarding the *conditions of a site* are:

- It has to show adequate dimensions for lots and vehicular infrastructure, following the determinations of the Municipality.
- Access to basic infrastructure as water supply, canal system, electricity and access roads have to be available at a reasonable price.
- Additionally, the site has to be officially registered and unoccupied.

Regarding the basic *urban design*, relevant factors within the evaluation process are the following:

- The internal organization has to be in continuity with the existing urban fabric, respecting existing road courses and hierarchies.
- The distribution and adequate dimensions of green spaces has to be considered in order to get a high degree of usability and accessibility for residents.
- The configuration of building ensembles shall respond to climatic needs and be aware of context factors as wind directions, temperature and rain.
- Visual monotony shall be avoided by the arrangement of lots and buildings.

- Spaces for general use (which will later be transferred to the Municipality) have to be provided.

Finally, the elaborated *housing solutions* also are contemplated following several criteria of evaluation:

- The positioning of the buildings on the lot has to comply with a minimum distance (in the case of the analyzed documents it is a minimum of 5 meters) from the lot boundaries in orientation towards the street “the municipal line”.
- There are required dimensions in terms of living space that have to be implemented in the project’s design. Within the documents available for this study, the requirement was to elaborate a concept for two typologies – one standard type and one type for residents with reduced mobility.
- Also, the use of different materials and construction techniques is regulated: “Proposals with non-traditional construction systems or elements will not be accepted.” (original phrase: “No se admitirá propuestas con sistemas o elementos constructivos no tradicionales.” (ibid. 2005: 3; 2007: 3). The elaboration of solutions encompassing alternative technologies or materials for construction are allowed to be implemented as long as they require at least the same amount of man hours as traditional systems (ibid.).<sup>13</sup> Technological improvements that use automatized processes or prefabricated materials are hence not permitted.

Such criteria are described in a detailed manner in the Solicitation documents, so called “Pliegos”. Every candidature has to provide a series of legal certifications in order to guarantee the compliance of some crucial factors, such as the *Certification of Validation*<sup>14</sup>, the *Certification of Environmental Aptitude*, a soil study and

<sup>13</sup> The original formulation runs as follows: “En relación al sistema constructivo descrito en el Proyecto Ejecutivo del proptotipo que la Oferente debe cotizar, se establece que en el supuesto de presentar posibles “Alternativas Constructivas” a este sistema, deberán responder a “sistemas tradicionales”, cuyos sistemas guarden una relación de insumo de “horas hombre” (oficial y ayudante) por Unidad de Medida, igual o mayor al sistema descrito en el referido Proyecto Ejecutivo.” (2007: 3)

<sup>14</sup> A Certification that confirms, that responsibilities (like for example the maintenance of green spaces) are accepted by the Municipality.

the feasibility of basic infrastructures.

In each candidature these criteria have to be matched. The characteristics are being evaluated by a series of indicators. The base for the selection of a project are two scores: one for technical aspects and one for economic aspects. Those scores get calculated by points in different thematic sections (for example the site, the location, the connections or the supplementary infrastructure). Depending on the size of the project, measured by the number of housing units, a minimum score in the technical section has to be achieved in order to get the admission for the economic scoring. If both, technical and economic score are confirmed to be positive, the project is rated “apt to financing” (IPVU2007: 23-28).

However, the practical selection of projects and areas is often carried out differently than theoretically intended. Representatives of the IPVU mentioned within an interview, that in today's practice the availability of territory plays the crucial role in this process. While previously it was necessary to explain the aptitude of territory in order to qualify the project to get commissioned, nowadays the mere disposal of an area is sufficient. Projects can be accepted even if they do not satisfactorily meet all the criteria. The choice of the potential building area therefore does not have to be comprehensively evaluated according to the above-mentioned criteria in order to obtain approval for a project. This change in assessment is explained by representatives of the IPVU to be necessary facing the increasing need for new areas to urbanize and the sinking availability of suitable land: "There is no alternative." (Interview V).

In addition, critical voices argue that through the strict orientation on generating labor opportunities through official housing construction (which is an explicit political goal, as we already mentioned in a previous chapter) and the following restrictions for technologically advanced construction techniques make improvements in quality and innovations impossible (Interview I).

Also, it is criticized that the target group of official housing is assumed to be very homogeneous in socio-economic features, as there is no variation in typologies required. Consequently, every person that moves to a social housing neighborhood has the very same dimensions inner structuring of the living space, which does not take into account different social constellations and life styles (Interview VIII).

# Areas of social housing construction

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- Urban boundary
- Urban area in 1870
- Urban area in 1940
- Urban area in 2018
- Administrative neighborhood borders
- Areas of social housing
- Areas of future social housing construction
- 1) & 2) Project planned
- 3) Territory to be expropriated

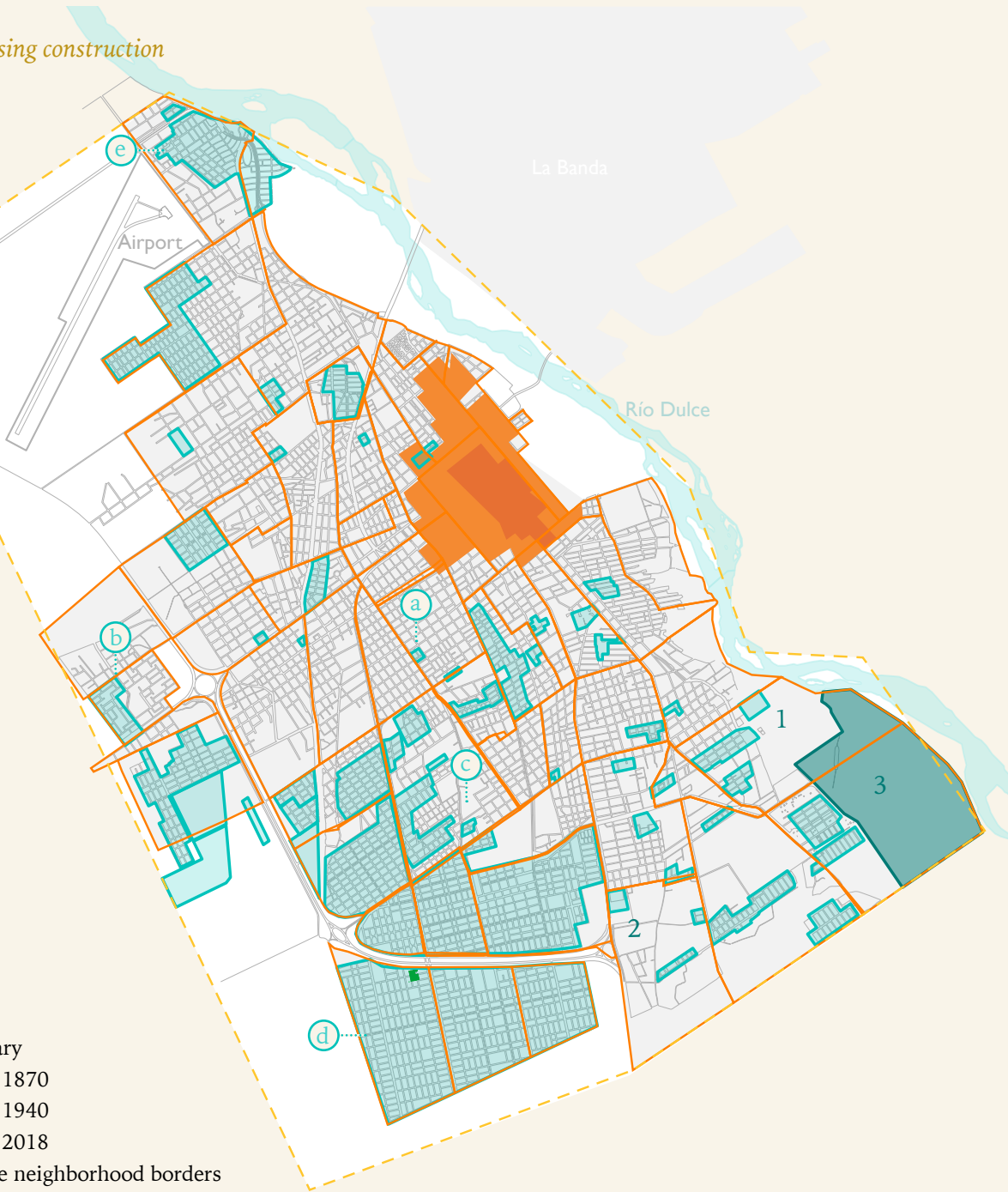


Figure 27. Areas of social housing construction, IPVU Santiago del Estero, own representation



### 4.3.2. Access to housing for beneficiaries

When applying for a social housing unit, personal information regarding income and working situation, family constellation, current housing situation or special issues (for example reduced mobility) have to be presented to prove the entitlement to the service. By September 2019 the limit of income for accessing to social housing financed by the FONAVI (Vivienda Nación) was set at 25.000 ARS (Argentinian Pesos) per household, which is two times the minimum salary (website MIOPV). Within the last legal period the projects financed along the Procrear program increased, which resulted in an offer of urban developments financed by Procrear funds. For those programs, different requirements prevail for different projects and there is no fixed income limit, but it depends on the specific project. Either way, if requirements are met, it is the principle of lottery that picks out the candidates that receive a housing unit. In an interview with two residents of the neighborhood Barrio Siglo XXI in Santiago del Estero, they narrated the process of registering for social housing until receiving their house. Back then, they lived with in their parent's house in the city center, which grew small having recently had a third child. The registering process began with presenting proofs for matching the requirements in 1992. After regularly renewing their application the notification of a right to claim social housing arrived in 2009. In 2012 their house was finished and they could move in (NI I). There is no official time limit for being on the waiting list and due to the random selection by lottery. The long waiting time reported by the interviewed residents points out the lack of social housing offers in comparison to the number of candidates and explains why the dimensions of social housing construction in Santiago del Estero around 2010 were that large.

### 4.3.3. Spatial patterns

Within the last decades of urban development in Santiago del Estero there have been differences in the way of conceptualizing and implementing housing policies. This can be observed by several predominant spatial phenomena that can be attributed to specific periods. Mirta Caumo, Head of the Geography Department of the Catholic University of Santiago del Estero (UCSE) has researched about the different rationalities of urban development since the beginning of national housing policies in the 1940s. She identified characteristics that will be the foundation for a categorization within this thesis, split into four main periods and

complemented by a fifth time sequence, which aims to describe the current spatial logic of urban development, visualized in figure 27.

- a) First small-scale projects (1940 – 1970)
- b) Amplifications of previously built projects (1970 – 1980)
- c) Filling in of gaps in the urban fabric (1980 – 2000)
- d) Mass-constructions (2000 – 2015)
- e) Diversification (2015 - today)

In the first decades of housing policies it was mainly small scale projects that were constructed. It needs to be mentioned, that the city was several times smaller back in the 1940s than today, the period of constant urban growth had not yet begun. The houses were the typical “casitas peronistas”, created under the Plan Quinquenal (Baer, Duarte 2011: 109-110). They used different materials than today (for example tiles that can still be identified by outer observation) and are still known as high quality construction (Interview VII). The lots that belonged to a housing unit were large, the city was still rurally coined (Interview V).

Between the years 1970 and 1980 demographic growth in form of immigration of primarily rural population from remote parts of the province Santiago del Estero began and rationalities of housing production adapted. New neighborhoods were built and the older yet consolidated ones got amplified, which was characteristic for the decade. On a national level, Argentina began to stabilize after the military dictatorship and revolutions. The lot that came with the houses was smaller now, responding to the growing number of city residents (ibid.).

From 1980 to 2000 a further reorientation in spatial rationalities took place. In the Argentinian national context of the private turn in overall politics had an influence on the housing question as well. The impact of the change in basic political visions translated to the decrease of official housing construction in Santiago. Through the increasing number of private construction activities the spatial development happened in patchwork structure, filling gaps and open spaces within the urban fabric but also resulting in dispersed urban sprawl and the gradual occupation of rural surroundings of the city.

In the early 2000s, another change of political forces on the national level introduced modifications in the positioning of the state in housing production. In the first fifteen years of the new millennium, a drastic and visible change in the logic and the role of the state took place. The state itself returned from playing a subordinate role, letting private construction flourish, to being an important stakeholder in the provision of housing, this not only by giving access to monetary subsidies, but as operating as an active producer of living spaces. The time of mass production of housing – never seen in those dimensions before – was introduced in Santiago del Estero in the first decade of the 2000s. At the same time, changes in the legal framework assigned more responsibilities for the IPVU within the construction projects. It received the competence of land provision. In other words, the IPVU of Santiago del Estero turned into the decision maker, where future social housing projects would be constructed (Barreto 2017: 416). Still, there was not a large stock of fiscal land in the province’s property. Official project calls therefore began to include requests for territory provided by private companies, as was already discussed in detail. From today’s perspective one can state that the influence of private construction firms on spatial development in Santiago began to increase strongly at that point. Extensive areas, mostly in the south sector of the city, one of them being Barrio Siglo XXI, were constructed in this period and shaped the city as a whole significantly. The argumentation and motivation of those large homogeneous projects were on one hand the striking housing deficit and on the other hand the limited budgetary possibilities. A specific development that occurred simultaneously with mass-construction was the more integral development of neighborhoods. In comparison to previous projects that were smaller and distributed across the urban area, the provision of infrastructure now became mandatory. As the number of housing units and expected future residents exceeded a formal limit, basic services had to be planned and foreseen in the project design<sup>15</sup>. Previously, small interventions did not exceed

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15 For a neighborhood up to 29 housing units (or 150 residents) it is mandatory to provide only one public space with possibilities for child’s play, first aid service, and a guarantee of basic infrastructural supply. A neighborhood of 501 up to 1000 housing units (or 2501 to 5000 residents) has to provide several types of public spaces and sportive installations, consultancies and advanced medical services, different school levels, kindergarten, a community center, mail and telecommunication services as well as contact points of the police and banks (IPVU 2005: 48).

those limits and did count on yet existing medical equipment, schools, etc., without considering the actual capacity or possible overload of those. By crossing the maximum number of units that made a mere placing of standalone residential buildings possible, the new neighborhoods had to provide some basic services.

The payment quotas for social housing units were held very low at that point in Santiago del Estero as well as in other provinces. Still, the percentage of people actually remitting the quota was quite low, as no consequences needed to be feared if the paying request was not met. That means that an important percentage of beneficiaries of social housing moved in into new constructed houses built by the IPVU but did not pay the monthly quota. Housing politics and the government in this period was rather concerned about keeping the housing deficit as low as possible, than persecuting beneficiaries that did not pay, which is why it was largely accepted, if residents did not pay (Interview V). This is important to have in mind as the way of handling the quota payment changed within the last period and had impact on the kind of projects that were built later.

While in the early 2000s monotonous and extensive neighborhoods of very similar standards and architectural terminations were created, in the last couple of years a commercialization of official housing has gotten noticeable in forms of a more diverse offer in the social housing sector. The operating mechanism of the IPVU and the financing of its projects is at the core of this change. The return of payment quotas, a monetary fee the residents have to pay, stays within the IPVU and enables further investments. Therefore, the higher the percentage of paying residents and the monthly quota, the more budget is available for salaries and new projects. Thus it is crucial for the IPVU to finance projects that generate sufficient income. In order to attract people of a more solvent group that still fits into the social housing requirements, the projects commissioned by the IPVU got more diverse in typology and quality. Neighborhoods that differed in design and materials used in comparison to typical social housing areas were developed and promoted as a kind of "elitist" social housing. An article of the local online newspaper "Visión Santiaguena" is one example of the public discourse on those new types of housing projects, writing about the neighborhood "Lomas del Golf" in the northern part of the city:

*"It is 892 homes of just over 60 square meters that, according to the government itself, will form a "hierarchical zone" in the Airport neighborhood. To access a corner house in this "exclusive" neighborhood built by the*

*IPVU for people with “high income,” the necessary delivery will be \$ 89,000 and an initial fee of \$ 6,186.81.”*  
(*Vision Santiagueña*”, November 24th , 2016)

The difference in terminations as well as the higher amounts of monthly payment and thus a different clientele were used as an advertisement, showing that official housing could be as attractive as private projects and do not just replicate the very-same monotonous typologies.

It is remarkable that through these alterations in the conceptualizing of “elitist” social housing areas, the target group evidently started to change. Also, new development areas are being created in the south-east of the city, near the river. Concepts are not published yet, but representatives of the IPVU announced, that there will be different types of typologies planned, reaching from housing complexes to more spaciouly laid out two-family units (interview V). Thus, it is not the most vulnerable group anymore that is primarily addressed by IPVU neighborhoods, but the middle class. This is a phenomenon that still is singular in the Argentinian context. The reason for this could be that the general income level in the whole province of Santiago del Estero is very low . This results in a big share of the population fulfilling the criteria to enter social housing programs that are not able to access properties in the private sector. Paired with the high demand on affordable living offers and simultaneously the dependence of the IPVU on monetary returns of social housing beneficiaries, this explains the expansion of the target group towards a more solvent one. The IPVU adapted a more entrepreneurial role, a development that Harvey yet described in the 1980s (cf. Harvey 1989).

# 5. ANALYSIS OF RATIONALITIES & THE GENERATED SPACE

## 5.2. INTERVENTION LOGIC & SYSTEMIC EMBEDDING

### 5.2.1. Applied CMEF Intervention logic chain

Returning to the macro-perspective and contemplating the context in which Barrio Siglo XXI was built, the systemic perspective will help to pin down the most sensible elements within the causal network of interrelations. Yet in the beginning of the discussion the restraints of systems theory and the CMEF intervention logic chain have to be considered. The strength of the instrument, which is the visualization and abstraction of rationalities, is its greatest weakness at the same time. This gets palpable in the following examples, showing that the simplistic way of representation simulates a fixed mono-causal logic behind a measure. As it is considered that in urban development relations between elements within a system (and also between different systems) are multi-causal, the representation of the interrelations within the elaborated model is always to be understood as one of multiple possible theses. Nevertheless, the visualization opens up space for discussion and further elaboration of relevant aspects, which is why it will be discussed step by step in the following section. Within the textual discussion of the developed CMEF intervention logic (and later on of the CLD) there will be introduced the visualized argument depicted in the respective graphics in a first step, and at least one antithesis for each example discussed in a second one. The aim of this approach is to highlight that conclusions can not be made on a general level but depend on very specific contexts and constellations while at the same time trying to use the strengths of visualization tools of systems theories.

On the highest level, the overall goal, there are no direct impacts of the specific measure to be found. Rather, it can be interpreted as the defined final achievement of the program as a whole. Yet at this point, the specific formulation and wording of the goal can (and should) be put in question. It is only one assumption, that the overall goal of the intervention logic of housing policies is the increase of life quality of the individuals under its impact. Differently formulated goals could also be the improved international image of a nation, or the decrease of land occupied by informal settlements e.g.. In dependence of the definition of the overall

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goal, conclusions and findings vary.

Focusing on the right side of the intervention logic, the indicators, *increased number of accepted projects* are assumed to be the direct output of the defined measure *commissions for publicly financed social housing projects* which leads then to *new built social housing*. This result is therefore interpreted to be directly causally related to the measure. What is important to consider is, that different aspects which are not part of the intervention logic also influence the result. The actual implementation of projects can also depend on involved actors or possible conflicts of interest e.g.. *New built social housing* is then assumed to directly lead to a *reduced housing deficit*. Nevertheless, the question of definition of housing deficit arises here as well as developments in other sectors of the immobility market. Last but not least, following the CMEF model, commissions for publicly financed social housing projects are considered to ultimately have an indirect impact on the housing deficit and increase the quality of life, which is one possible thesis. At the same time, it can be argued, that housing policies also serve the purpose of power preservation, as Ergin developed in his research about social housing policies in Turkey (Ergin 2014).

Let us have a closer look at the second question and focus on the strategic goal identified in this intervention logic chain. What for sure catches the eye of the reader is a specific term that already emerged in a former chapter of this work: „housing deficit“. As already described previously, housing deficit is not unequivocal term, as it allows a range of possible definitions and interpretations. The most commonly used definition positions itself between a quantitative-technocratic and qualitative-political viewpoint and counts the numerical deficit as well as lacks in terms of materials used and type of equipment within the housing units. (cf. Videla Bañados 2010; Sepúlveda Ocampo, Fernández Wagner 2006). Although the utilization of an open term like 'housing deficit' is common especially in strategic documents, the variety of possible interpretations is noteworthy in order to detect possible inconsistencies in the intervention chain. The same problem we find on the highest level of impacts, when we read „adequate“ housing situations. What adequate is, stays undefined.

We can see one crucial point emerge on this highest strategic level: the fuzziness of its terms that allow a focus on a mere technocratic definition of housing, of which the direct connection to the overall goal, the



increase of quality of life can be questioned.

**CMEF Intervention logic chain**

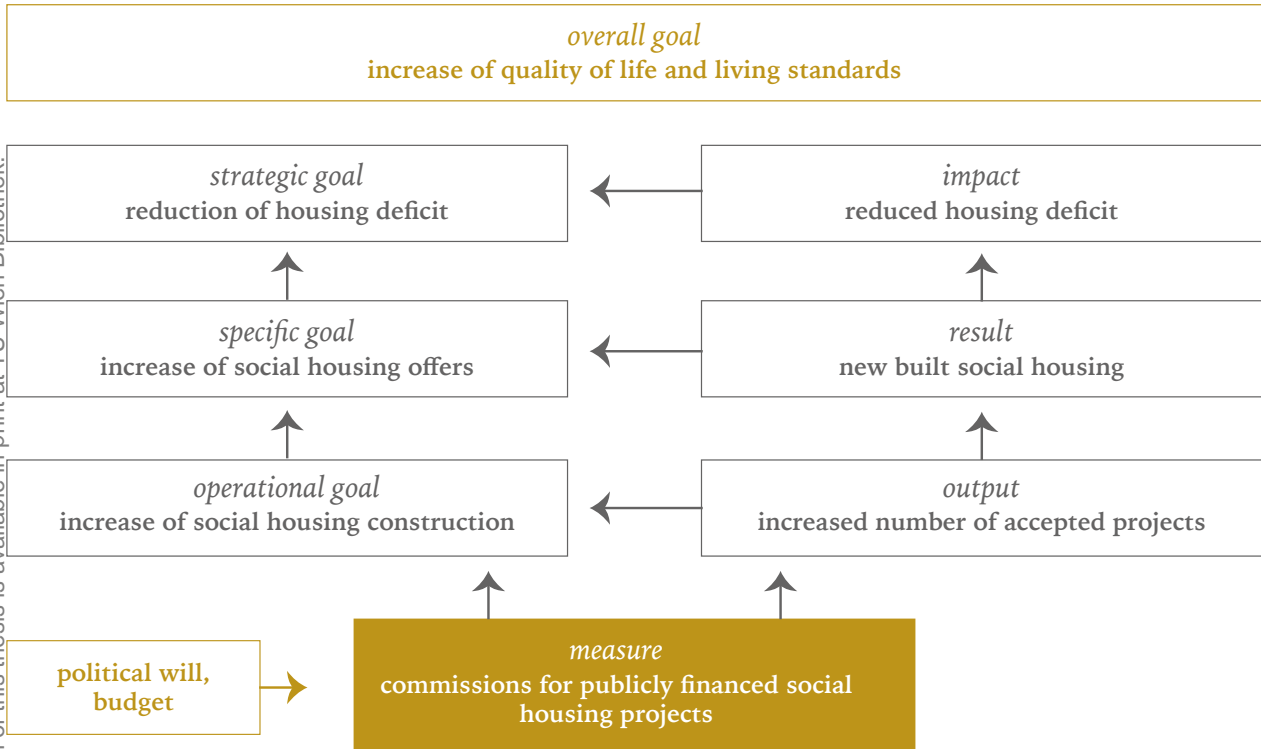


Figure 28. Intervention logic chain „Commissions for publicly financed social housing projects“, own elaboration

Let us have a look at the systemic embedding of the measure, in order to get an overview of the most relevant other elements in the system.

**5.2.2. The systemic perspective**

The causal loop diagram (CLD) allows to expand our vision to the scale of the whole system. It is an analytical and visualization tool. It's strength is to detect feedback loops, which means direct and indirect interrelations between elements (Ossimitz, Lapp 2006: 46). It also helps to identify the quality of the interconnection between the single elements, reaching from strengthening („positive“) to opposed („negative“) or indifferent (ibid.). It's output is a strategic evaluation that can foster the discovery of key elements

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### Causal loop diagram (CLD)

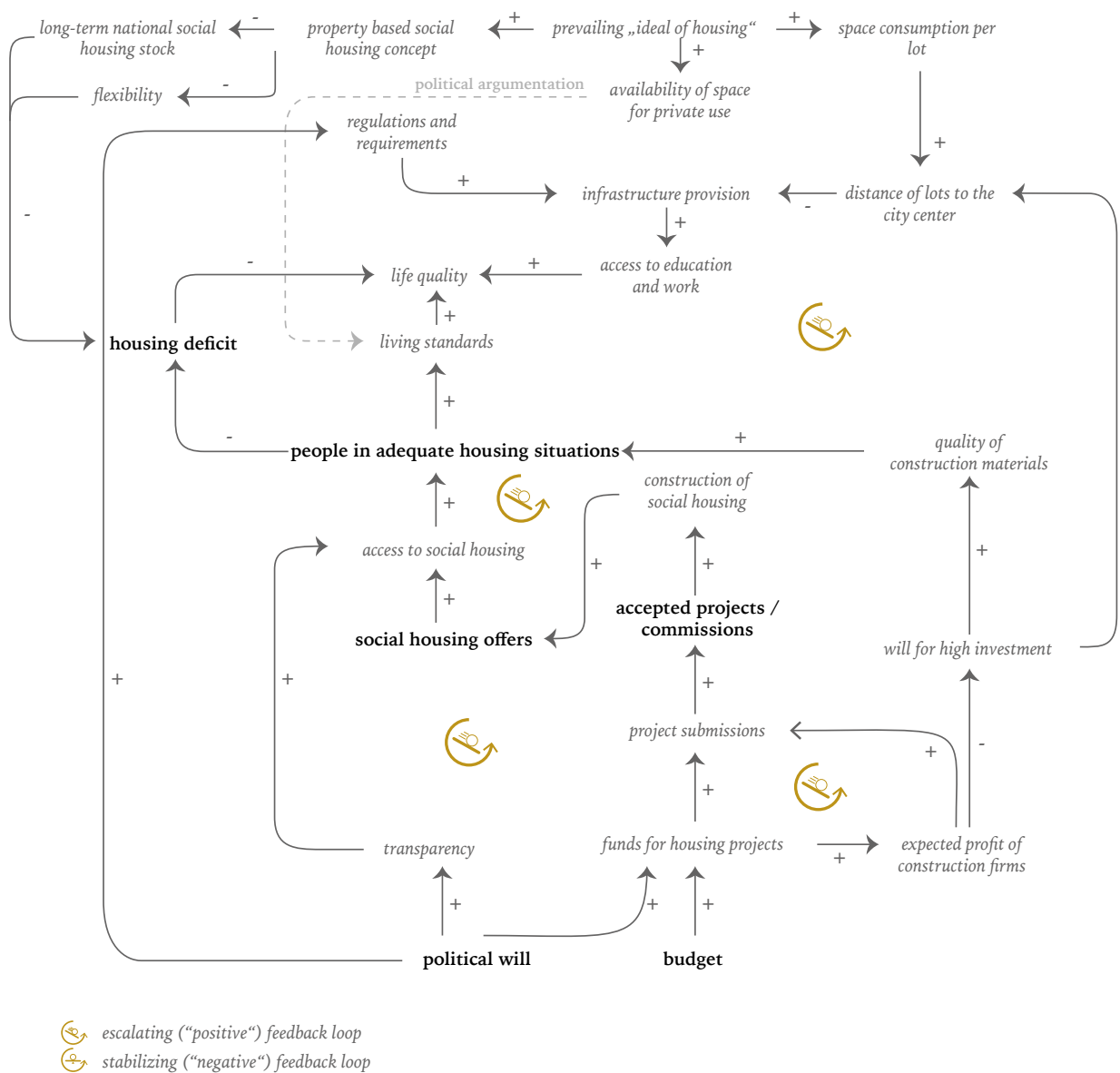


Figure 29. Causal loop diagram, own elaboration

and crucial feedback loops and therefore be useful to detect sensible points to be considered. As already mentioned within the introduction of the CMEF logic chain, also the CLD assumes that a system functions following a certain and specific rationality that can be explained by unidirectional causal relations. Even though the scientific-theoretical framework of this research does not follow these assumptions but rather highlights the multiple reciprocal interrelations between different elements, the visualization is judged to be useful in order to gain overview over possible relevant elements that coin social housing construction and the impact of the respective policies. For that reason, one possible model has been developed in order to create a ground of discussion. In the following some important aspects will be presented and supplemented by possible contradictory assumptions of cause-effect-relations.

At first glance we can see, displayed in bold, the elements of the previously elaborated intervention logic chain. Further, more elements have been added in order to form the systemic environment. Some of them can be identified as relevant middle-steps in order to keep up with the intervention logic chain. For example, the mere acceptance of projects does not result in a larger social housing offer, if it is not really constructed. Also, social housing offer does not lead to more people in adequate housing situations, if the access to social housing is very difficult. As a third key point I want to underline, that reduced housing deficit and adequate housing situations can lead to more life quality, but are not the only factors and that they are in themselves, as discussed previously, not unequivocal.

In order to improve the comprehensibility of CLM some causal relations will be discussed as examples. Beginning at the bottom of the graphic we can see the factors ‚political will‘ and ‚budget‘, which already appeared in the intervention logic chain as impacts.

It is suggested within the model, that more political has two different effects: First, more *political will* of achieving *improved living standards* can cause more *requirements and regulations* regarding the quality of the construction, as the aim is to achieve palpable impacts. The underlying assumption is, that political will does not only target the quantitative output of social housing construction, but aims for long-term reduction of the housing deficit. Therefore, clear regulations get elaborated in order to undermine opportunities to misuse publicly financed housing funds and define quality standards. Secondly, it seems plausible that a high

interest in the impact of social housing policies also lead to a more transparent process in general. Nevertheless, it is recommendable to further test a contrasting hypothesis in order to avoid wrong and seemingly generally valid conclusions. Instead of causing a richer base of regulations and requirements, the high political will to reduce the housing deficit could also lead to a decrease of regulations. In fact, observing social housing construction in Santiago del Estero, one could argue that a process of weakening of requirements is yet to be observed in terms of land selection. As political will to construct additional housing units is high, lack of aptitude tend to be overlooked.

Moving to the next point, both, *political will* and *budget*, are assumed to lead to a political agenda where bigger *funds for housing projects* are considered. Bigger amounts of public financing will lead then firstly to more *project submissions*, as simply more funds are available, but also can lead to more *expected profit* for the applying construction firms. This expected profit, a strong economic motivation will than influence the *will for investment*. That means, if the expectancy of profit is high, one hypothesis is, that investments will be calculated very efficiently. Consequently, it can be argued, that the willingness to use materials and soil for a minimum price is high. This assumed causal relation therefore leads to two elements: the *quality of construction materials* and the location of the lots, which means the *distance to the city center*. Both of these elements, through different elements, have an impact on the overall goal, an increase of *life quality* which puts the element of profit orientation into a crucial position with high indirect impact on live quality. Nevertheless, it can be argued against this hypothesis by suggesting, that a situation of high expected profit can lead to greater openness for risk and a therefore to more important investment sums, as it tends to happen within the logics of the market. Further, the only variable that defines the distance of lots to the city center to be the will for high investment can be put in question as it solely bases on the economic factor, following Neil Smith's theory of rent-gaps (Smith 1979). It is without a doubt a combination of multiple factors that define the location of future social housing areas. The expectancy for profit, therefore, is an ambiguous factor that can provoke both, high or very low will for investment and consequently can have very differing impacts on the quality of construction materials.

Another crucial element to observe in more detail is the *prevailing housing ideal*, which grounds on the previously discussed suggestion that a specific prevailing idiosyncrasy has to be considered in planning. This

ideal of housing influences the paradigms that shape the form of urban space: the value of property, the value of privacy as well as the dimensions of the living spaces. The stronger the prevalent ideal of housing is followed, so the hypothesis, the more property based social housing models with focus on clearly defined private spaces and extensive properties will be constructed. Reacting to this assumption, it could be argued, that the vernacular ideal of housing does not have to lead to such effects. Rather, different factors cause specific characteristics of the urban form and it would be simplistic to establish a clear cause-effect-relation between prevailing housing ideals and the specific spatial results that have been enumerated. In addition to that, the weight of argumentation within political discourses is a relevant factor that has to be considered, as it has effects on how specific ideas are received and implemented. The argument that the amount of private space is primary to life quality of people e.g. is a specific quality of discourse which leads to certain ideals that planning bases on.

To further discuss one interpretation line regarding the ideal of housing as it is practiced in Santiago del Estero currently, the *property-orientated social housing model* shall be highlighted. It shows within the CLD its ambiguous relationship with achieving the goal of reducing housing deficit and consequently increasing life quality. Property-orientated housing models, so the assumption within the CLD, are suggested to be in a conflictive relation with flexibility, as they reduce future possibilities for official interventions from sides of the national state. The traditional concept of property as an important value is consequently assumed to hinder long term capability to act for the public instances. Following the output of the CLD, the adherence to specific housing ideals can counteract the overall goal of improving life quality when contemplating its assumed further impacts. Nevertheless, rather than speaking about a set of specific housing ideals as the one and only cause for those impacts, two steps seem to be useful to be done within the analysis: First, it is necessary to further explore possible factors that interrelate with the counteracting. This exploration is suggested to be carried out by applying a different tool than the CLD in order to not reduce information in order to achieve a clear simplified visualization. Secondly, it seems useful to focus on the more explicitly formulated prevailing values rather than on the vague term "housing ideal"– the value of property, privacy and extensive lands – in order to make outcomes more operational.

**Barrio Siglo XXI, Siglo XX & St. Germain**

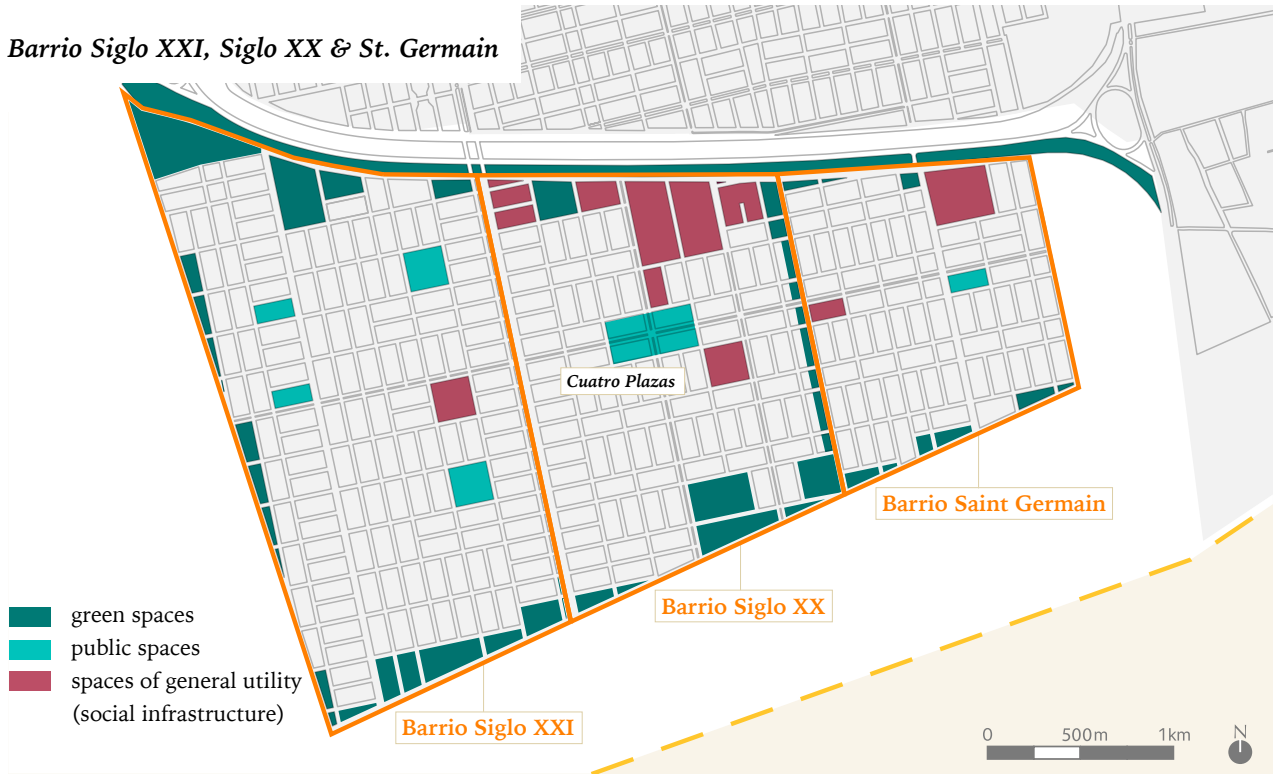


Figure 30. Barrio Siglo XXI, Siglo XX & St. Germain, own representation



Figure 31. Cuatro plazas I



Figure 33. Cuatro plazas II



Figure 32. "Green belt" north of Barrio Siglo XXI



Figure 34. "Green belt" south of Barrio Siglo XX



## 5.2. BARRIO SIGLO XXI

### 5.2.1. Structure on the level of the neighborhood

Having contemplated the development on the scale of the whole city of Santiago del Estero, now the spatial focus will be on an explicit neighborhood, Barrio Siglo XXI, a social housing neighborhood that is part of the development area in the south of the municipal area of Santiago. Its urban structure corresponds evidently to the characteristics of the construction period of the early 2000s. When aiming to analyze the generated space created under the paradigm of mass-construction it therefore provides appropriate ground. In the beginning, the ensemble of the three southern neighborhoods (Barrio Siglo XXI, Barrio Siglo XX and Barrio Saint Germain (see figure 30)) will be contemplated as one entity, as they are similar in structure and socio-economic characteristics. In addition to this, all three of them emerged as mass-constructed areas at about the same time. Barrio Siglo XXI has 15.000 inhabitants on 196 ha and is the biggest neighborhood. Barrio Siglo XX has 5.600 inhabitants on 141 ha. It is remarkably less dense as it provides large areas of areas for general utilities. Barrio Saint Germain is the smallest and densest neighborhood because of some blocks that consist of multi-family typologies and has 8.700 inhabitants on 88ha according to numbers of the Municipality (2010).

Main entry points to the neighborhoods are accessible by the bypass route that was constructed shortly after the residential area itself and which connects the neighborhoods with one of the most important transit roads in Santiago del Estero, the Avenida Belgrano. It is a ten minutes car ride from Barrio Siglo XXI to the historical center. The internal structure of the neighborhoods as well as their connections to the rest of the city are designed for motorized individual transport. As cars and bigger vehicles are expensive and the neighborhoods are social housing areas, many people opt for cheaper transport options (narrative interview ). Even if there is no official data available that would describe the modal split in transportation, based on own observations and narrative interviews it can be stated that motorbikes are the most prevalent transport mode, followed by cars. Two reasons for this can be the large distances to be overcome, as well as the lack of adequate design of infrastructure in order to walk or to use the bike. At the same time, residents are highly dependent on the old town, as public services of the city and workplaces are still highly centralized. Figure



35 is a snapshot of Google Streetview, showing the lack of crossings of the bypass road and informal paths as a sign of frequent crossings.



Figure 35. Crossing the bypass route, Google Streetview, September 2017

Finished in 2012, Barrio Siglo XXI is the most westernly situated of the three neighborhoods. For each one of the zones, a different construction firm had been contracted, which is the reason why each zone shows some slightly different typologies. Still, they share the very same grid structure, clear internal hierarchies and fixed dimensions in terms of lots and houses, which make the visual aspect of the spaces very similar. When trespassing them, it isn't evident to the observer when a neighborhood ends and another starts.

Even if every neighborhood is an independent unit in terms of administrative issues as well as infrastructure, the largest public space of Barrio Siglo XX, Cuatro Plazas, has a center function for all three zones. It is a park area of the size of four blocks, providing different types of infrastructure like children's games, sporting equipment, as well as benches in various constellations. Several subordinate plazas are distributed over the other areas, being smaller and simpler in their equipment than the Cuatro Plazas. Most of them are called "dry plazas" ("plazas secas"). This means, that there is no artificial irrigation provided by the municipality and vegetation is very limited. Along the limits of the three neighborhoods, a belt of green open spaces is situated without any recreation infrastructure installed. It separates the residential areas from the nearby bypass road in the north and from the disperse rural houses in the south. When observing the location of green and public spaces of the neighborhoods, it becomes clear that most of them are situated on the limits of residential zones, creating large areas of exclusively housing units without typological interruptions.

In order to analyze the function and significance of public spaces in the neighborhood, their materiality and their use shall be described. To do this, we shall select two comparable spaces: one situated in the respective new built neighborhood and one situated in the historic city center, in order to identify and discuss the differences. The Cuatro Plazas, as the center of the southern neighborhoods, and the Plaza Libertad, as the historic center, will be contemplated, as both are – to varying degrees – points of social encounter and identification for the residents of the surrounding areas.

Plaza Libertad is the main point of representation of the city of Santiago del Estero. It is the oldest square and the point at which the town was founded. Typical for colonial cities, the plaza is surrounded by the most important institutions like the Municipality building, the Cathedral and the Cultural Center. It is the starting point of the most important pedestrian streets and the economic center of the city. It is characterized by the multiple layers of use and significance. The center of the square is occupied by a statue of Manuel Belgrano<sup>6</sup>, pointing out its symbolic importance for the city of Santiago del Estero. There is a pavilion used for not only cultural activities, but also for political expression such as reunions and demonstrations. The plaza is equipped with different seating possibilities and a meeting point for group activities. Throughout the whole day and especially in the evening hours it is a popular space for ambulant economic activities such as selling snacks or toys (participatory observation, 20.02.2019).

The Cuatro Plazas of Barrio Siglo XX build the center of the southern peripheral neighborhoods. Yet because of its short period of existence, its historic value can't be compared to Plaza Libertad. Nevertheless, its situation within the neighborhoods structure and the quantity of inhabitants within the commuter area of the plaza make it a sectoral center. There are different types of benches and seats distributed over the pace, as well as a set of sports equipment. In addition, there are several stages which are used for cultural activities and are open for use. Most of space is lawn or soil, depending on the season.

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<sup>6</sup> Manuel Belgrano was an important political figure in the Argentinian fight for independence from colonial forces.

Crossing the Cuatro Plazas, one can see a high number of palm trees, as they build alleys along the street and are the dominating tree type on the plaza itself. This is a phenomenon that can be observed in several relatively new residential ones, while as the historic part of the city is covered by citrus plants and a number of native tree species (figure 36 shows a selection of local species). There are three main differences that result from the choice of trees planted: the ability of the vegetation to provide shade in the arid summers of Santiago del Estero, the effort that is necessary for irrigation and upkeep and the conditions for fauna and wildlife that they create. A look at a satellite picture of Plaza Libertad shows that most of the surface is covered by plants providing shade. The Cuatro Plazas show single spots of vegetation, which are primarily palm trees that need much water, cannot provide shade or have a cooling impact on the micro-climate under their leaves.

### 5.2.2. Spatial proportions on the level of the lot

Within the expansion of the city the logic of a grid structure, having a public space in a central location is comparable to the traditional colonial structure. Still, the aspect of the space that has been produced in the past couple of years is fundamentally different. One key element is the relationship between the public and the private space, visible in the relationship between street and block.

In contrast to the enclosed perimeter block development structure of the historical center, Barrio Siglo XXI is exclusively composed of standalone two-family houses (see figure 36). This is the case in every official housing area, because of legal framework at the base of the projects. Within the construction regulations of social housing, there is a require minimum distance between the built unit and the municipal line. Every building is therefore indented and separated from the public space of the street by a front yard. This leads to a totally different experience of the space in terms of density. This is paradox to the previous statistical analysis that showed higher densities in the new built neighborhoods – through the spatial configuration of buildings, density is experienced differently.

## Spatial configuration on the plots

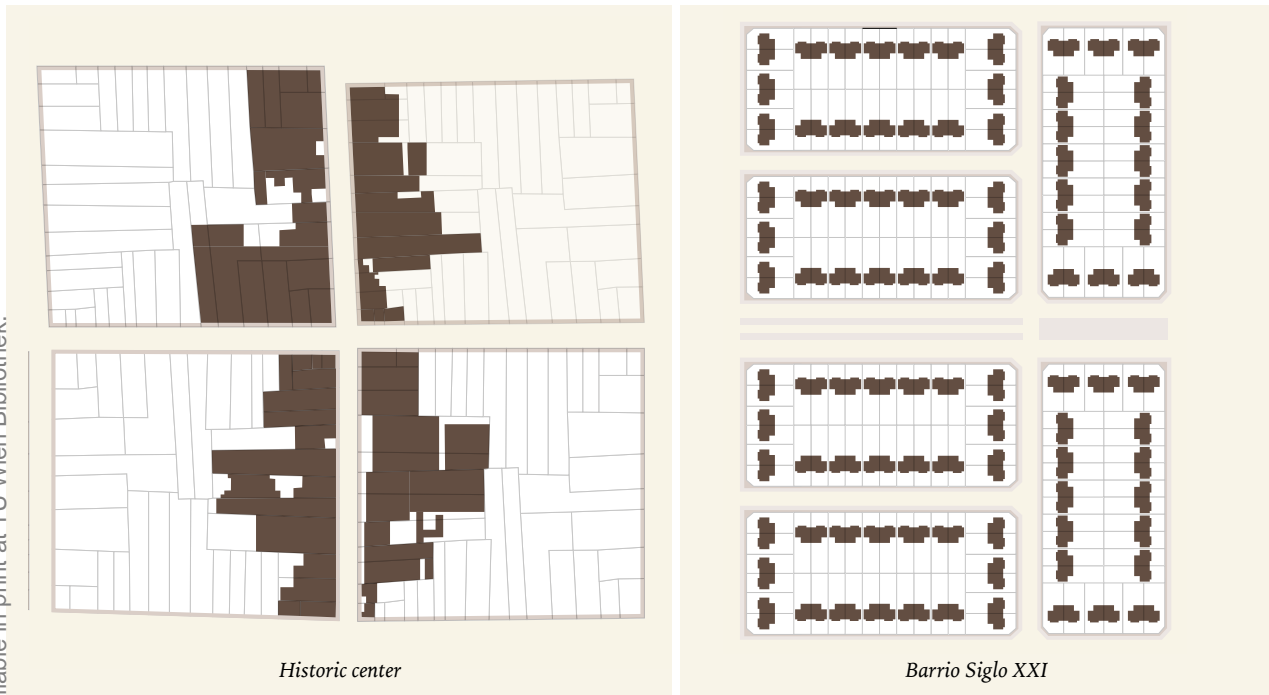


Figure 36. Spatial configuration on the plots, own representation



Figure 37. Street perspective, historic center



Figure 38. Street perspective, Barrio Siglo XXI

It is interesting to take a closer look at the development of the front yard and the spatial organization on the plots within the last couple of years. Since 2012, when the neighborhood was built and residents came to live at their new homes, there have been modifications made on the level of the single plot, which can be observed across the three neighborhoods. Those alterations visualize the relationship of the residents with the public space around them and the value of privacy (see figures 39 to 44).

- 1) Fencing the property. The first stage of modification is the construction of walls or fences on the boundaries of the own property. As the units are not handed over with separated gardens, the first step is usually to coordinate with the neighbors to rise a separating element in the backyard (narrative interview I, 01.02.2019). A look at the satellite picture of Barrio Siglo XXI shows that nearly every housing unit did realize this modification. Depending on the financial situation and personal preferences, fences or walls are often constructed around the property for security reasons (ibid.; observatory walk 01.02.2019).
- 2) Amplifications of the house. As typologies are very simplistic, many residents decide to amplify the houses and remodel them in order to serve personal needs. This process is slow and continuous, depending on the financial status of the owners. Walking through the neighborhood, big differences in stages and volume of amplifications can be observed (observatory walks 01.02.2019, 20.02.2019).
- 3) Construction of car boards in the front yard. A common development on the plot is the creation of car boards in the front yard, separating the house and the private space from the public space of the street, highlighting the importance of the car in the value system of its owners.
- 4) Establishment of businesses in the front of the house. As an area that was planned only for residential use, the development concept did not foresee any commercial zones or services that cover the daily needs of inhabitants. Therefore, many kiosks and small shops for products of daily use, clothing or school utensils have emerged and now build the economic base for the owners. When crossing the neighborhood, such small shops are a common sight (observatory walks 01.02.2019, 20.02.2019). The legal situation of those economic activities is a gray area. In the reviewed contracts, the use of the social housing units constructed by the IPVU is explicitly limited to residency – economic activities are prohibited. Different statements in respect to the legal status about those businesses come from various representatives of the IPVU. One representative stated that economic activities are permitted in case of residency in the same house (interview VI), while other representatives judge any economic activity as non-conforming with the contract (interview V). This results in a vulnerable legal situation of the shop owners, especially since there are plans from sides of the IPVU to establish one single economic center in forms of a market hall, where local supply shall be bundled (ibid.).





Figure 39. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, fenced backyard



Figure 40. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, walled front yard



Figure 41. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, shop installment in the front yard



Figure 42. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, car board and walled front yard



Figure 43. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, shop installment in the front yard



Figure 44. House in Barrio Siglo XXI, car board and walled front yard

### *Spatial development on the plots | Stages of modification*

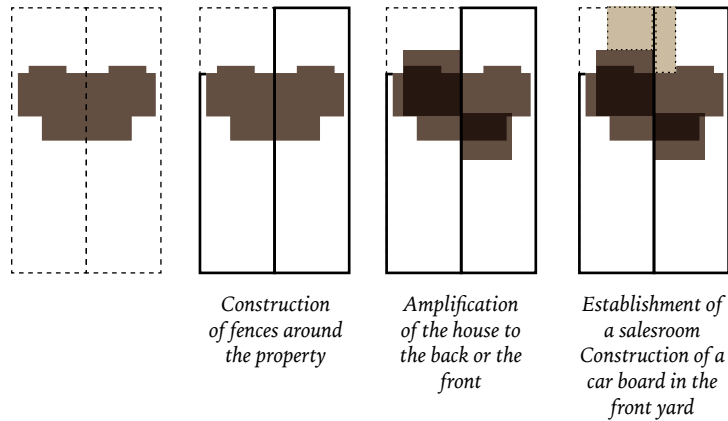


Figure 45. *Spatial development on the plots, own representation*

Having those stages of plot alterations in mind, the characterization of the function of neighborhood seems to be somewhat paradoxical:

*"Neighborhoods [...] are intermediary levels of organizing space, reducing the effects of a dichotomous divide between the public and the private spheres. [...] In other words, the neighborhoods are created to extend the private sphere of individual property and intimate home to a larger part of the city. On the other hand, the neighborhood appears to be a mechanism with which groups find supremacy over individuals, so they can intrude into the private sphere of individuals and households." (Madanipour 2003: 162).*

When looking at the trend of fencing one's own property, it has to be critically asked if the generated neighborhood space really functions as a bridge between the public and the private spheres, as Madanipour describes the role of neighborhoods. The relationship between the housing units and the public space around them mirrors general Latin American development trends. On one hand, an increasing feeling of insecurity and the need for protection leads to spatial isolation by means of fences and walls and in the following leads to a strong separation between the own intimate space and the exterior (Borsdorf 2006: 46). On the other hand, individualization and the liberal valuation of private initiatives are a second important agent that lead to developments of clear delimitations of private spaces (Borsdorf, Hidalgo 2010: 26). The function



that Madanipour refers to, and which was probably developed for the context of grown mix-use neighborhoods, not monofunctional new built areas, is therefore directly attacked by those trends of social isolation through the physical undermining of clear separations between the public and the private.

### 5.2.3. Publicness of spaces

In the following paragraphs, some observations made in Barrio Siglo XXI will be narrated as examples. The aim of those short passages is to transmit some personal experiences and further to illustrate the subsequent analysis of the publicness of spaces.

*Friday, 16:30*

Most of people commute to the city center during the working days, leaving the neighborhood to children and mostly women, taking care of them and in many cases of shops withing their homes. In the late afternoon, the street have turned into spaces of play for children, a few dogs pass by. The little shop on the street is open, a woman is inside, cleaning (observatory walk, 01.02.2019, 16:30 – 17:00).

*Wednesday, 18:00*

Loud music can be heard. One of the tiny houses has amplified the front part of the house and replaced the tiny windows by one bigger glass surface, protected by wrought-iron bars. The interior is brightly illuminated, highlighting the group of women inside, participating in a dance class. The doors are open and some people stand in front of the house, chatting and watching the women. Through the music and the light, the place attracts the attention of people passing by in their cars and motorbikes. Together with the cluster of people in front of the house, this creates a spontaneous place for social encounter, turning the private house into a moment of semi-public life (participatory observation, 06.02.2019, 18:00 -18:15).

*uesday, 23:40*

With its seating possibilities, sportive tools and child's plays Cuatro Plazas has been planned to be a meeting point of the neighborhoods since the conceptualization of the project. On each of the four parts, there is one stage that is open for use, the rest of the area is open space. The time of most frequency are the evenings

when people come because of the wind on the wide area, which brings in the fresh air from the nearby scrublands. It is notably cooler than in the city center. The peripheral location highlighted by the soundscape, it is coined by the chirp of grills, bird noises, motor bikes and a few cars. When paying attention to the noise, it is surprising how silent it is. The area is vast, the density of visitors on the plaza on a Tuesday night is low. Some people arrive to the plaza by motor bike, at least two persons, sometimes three on the vehicle. In the park there are several small groups, young people and families with children, sitting on the benches. One girl is playing ball, another using the fitness devices. Motorbikes pass by, some without lights, one crosses the square. A stray dog runs by. The most lively spaces are the sidewalks, where temporarily the strict boundaries between private and public space begin to fade. Some of the nearby neighbors have pulled out plastic chairs to the sidewalk and sit in groups, chatting. It is more than one family unit that is seated in front of the own house, it is a neighbors reunion, using the spaces in between the houses as semi-public space. A temporary restaurant at the end of the prepares escalopes. It is a simple carriage that will be brought away at the end of the evening. Until that moment, it has a few plastic chairs put out, all of them occupied by men sitting there drinking beer. Next to them is a line of motorbikes. A woman on a motorbike emerges, greets and orders food for home. After waiting a few minutes, she disappears on her vehicle with the escalopes in a white plastic bag (participatory observation, 19.02.2019, 23:40 - 23:55).



Figure 46. Temporary use of space for economic activities I



Figure 47. Temporary use of space for economic activities II

A series of participatory observations like the examples above will serve in the following to conduct an analysis about the quality of public spaces in the neighborhood. For characterizing the *publicness of spaces*, the access, the approach of Benn and Gaus (1983) will be used. Following their proposition, the publicness of

a space can be evaluated by observing three main factors in different emphasis: Access, agency and interest, which shall be examined for the Cuatro Plazas as an exemplary public space for the southern social housing neighborhoods. The contemplation and analysis of the openness or closure of this space shall lead to findings about the generated space within official mass-constructed residential zones.

The physical *access* to the Cuatro Plazas is heavily dependinf on motorized transport modes for most people. Only directly neighboring residents are able to reach it comfortably by feet, due to the lack of adequate pedestrian and bike infrastructure and large distances. As the plaza is the central meeting point in the whole southern zone and for all three neighborhoods, Barrio Siglo XX, Barrio Siglo XXI and Barrio Saint Germain, most of visitors come by car or motorbike (participatory observation, 20.02.2019; narrative interview I, 01.02.2019). There is no public transport line within the barrios, offering internal cross connections. The space itself is not limited by fences or barriers, but is open contentiously and physically well amenable. It provides pathways and ramps in order to guarantee barrier-free access. Socially, it functions to some degree as an identification point for residents of the southern areas, which turns it into a strongly neighborhood related space and makes it accessible mainly for the residents. Nevertheless, most of the time the square is little frequented. For some selective occasions the place is used for official free activities organized by the Municipality or the Province within the cultural agenda of the city. Nevertheless, those events are rare, due to the generally sparse participation, as a representative for the Municipality states by citing the example of recently canceled theater presentations (interview 2). Mostly, the space is used as a point of social encounter, and for play. Temporarily economic activities pop up.

Several actors show *agency* on the Cuatro Plazas, public and private ones. The main public actors are the Municipality, who is responsible for the maintenance of the space and occasionally makes use of the space for community activities as well as the Province Santiago del Estero.<sup>17</sup> In terms of civic agency, it is mostly groups that use the squares as a place of encounter, even if there is very little frequency if bearing in mind

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<sup>17</sup> For example, currently the Province in forms of the Direction of Social Development carries out the program "Healthy Squares" ("Plazas Saludables"), organizing local tree planting events all over the city and as well in the peripheral neighborhoods (interview IV).

the density of the area and the catchment area.

Besides the occasional letterings on some walls, there are little visible adaptations of the space made by inhabitants. Temporary economic activities or spontaneous expansions of restaurant gardens occupy parts of the sidewalks in the evenings.

Generally, the square is aimed to serve the public common *interest*. Through its location in the middle of three neighborhoods, it is central for nearly 30.000 inhabitants. The Municipality does not get too invested in the maintenance, as the costs for care taking are high. Due to the high average temperatures, the dry climate and the transport way of water, irrigation is reduced to a minimum, turning the green plazas into dried out planes.

### 5.2.3. Interpretation of the generated space in Barrio Siglo XXI

Before the development of the new social housing neighborhoods in the southern area of Santiago del Estero began, the zone was coined by uses like individual carbon production and informal waste deposition. These activities were expelled when construction work began and pushed out further outside the municipal area. This led to various conflictive situations, on one hand with people that were living off carbon production and did now have to search for land elsewhere, on the other hand with the societies habit to use the peripheral areas as landfill sites (talk with local expert, 04.02.2019). This issues are still relevant in 2019, as it keeps happening that individuals use their homes within the now urbanized areas for carbon production<sup>18</sup>, which is not permitted by the cities land use regulations. In Barrio Siglo XXI one can also observe the still prevailing habit of depositing waste in decentralized green spaces. Nevertheless, the project was judged positive by the majority of public opinions, as mass-construction was seen as the only possibility in order to reduce the massive housing deficit in the city and promised a cost-efficient way of providing accessible

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18 Carbon ist the primary forest product produced in the province Santiago del Estero. 60 % of all 100.000 tons of yearly produced carbon is elaborated on a small production scale in family businesses (Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria 2016).

housing units (interview VII). Nevertheless, this shows a specific line of argumentation that has been normalized within the society through the conducted discourse. Alternatives, like the construction of multistorey houses close to the center which would lead to reduced mobility costs, less fuel consumption and fewer sealing of soil, would have been able to provide social housing as well.

The dimension of the development area in the south of Santiago del Estero exceeded every previous intervention in terms of the number of housing units and amount of covered area. In order to connect the 30.000 new residents to the city center, a new bypass road had to be built, which today is an important connection between the north and the south part of the city, showing a big impact on the structure of Santiago.

The area was built for a group of residents that can be described as the lower middle class. Even if the dimensions were enormous and not comparable to previous projects, the target group was still many times larger. The selection processes had to deal with a big amount of applicants that all fulfilled the necessary criteria. A lottery system was introduced, that would randomly assign candidates to housing units, turning chance into the deciding instance.

Today we can observe planned and temporary places of public life within the neighborhoods. Generally, a strict limitation can be experienced between the private and the public realm. While there are open public spaces throughout all day and all night – with some lacks of accessibility due to the dependence on motorized vehicles in order to get there – private spaces tend to be highly isolated, thriving for physical and visual separation from the exterior. Nevertheless, some moments of semi-private space production there have been observed, mostly generated by economic activities like courses or gastronomy. In those moments, private space turns into a scene for the (semi) public life. At the same time, as there are financial expectations, those created places can not be classified as entirely public, which would have to be open to everybody for free and without excluding specific social groups without sufficient economic resources. In other words, if points of encounter are bound to the payment of course fees e.g. they can not be denominated public spaces, as they are not open for people that can not make this payment. The street as a public space is affected by the trends of segregation, the decreasing social engagement with the neighborhood and shrinking function of the neighborhood as identifying unit.

Place making by public actors happens occasionally in forms of events on central public spaces of the neighborhood. The green belt around the three neighborhoods, nevertheless, is not used as a space of social encounter or recreation. Rather, it creates more distance to the city center, as it builds a barrier. To use the space as a means of separation seems to be intended within the project design, as it is situated between the bypass route and the settlement. The green belt can therefore rather be seen as a means of dealing with the danger of a frequented road infrastructure nearby a residential area, instead of putting thought into a solution that would make it possible to benefit of the amount of green spaces that have to be provided. The amount of green spaces that are required to be included in any project submission and should be at the inhabitant's disposition get shoved away to unattractive locations. It further reinforces the dependency on motorized vehicles, even if it is just to get to the limiting neighborhood.

## 6. DEBATE

Official housing construction has a nearly 80-year long history in Argentina. During this time, governments, regimes, ideas and the functioning of the world changed significantly. If we go back in history to take a glance at the 1940s, when Perón had just launched the first public housing policy realizing an important step in the political agenda, the problems he dealt with were not too different from today's. There was a lack of adequate housing opportunities and many people lived under precarious conditions. However, he acted in a completely different context. With beginnings of globalization, circumstances in many parts of the world transformed, also in Santiago del Estero. First migration flows started leaving the Province, which had already left its golden days behind, searching for new opportunities in big cities like Buenos Aires. But since globalization did not only bring new possibilities, with it but also pressure, competition, and new requirements for workers, many of those people returned to their home provinces after some time had passed. Not able to participate in these new dynamics, they searched for better living conditions in the small and intermediate sized cities they came from. Santiago del Estero, as one of these middle-sized towns, began to grow again – a growth that has not stopped until the present day. Still, this increase of population was not and still is not easy to handle for a city, and even less for the ones like Santiago, situated in poor provinces with weak infrastructure provision and no strong economic pillar. The lack of housing and the problematic of insufficient living conditions gradually grew more serious, resulting in growing informal housing areas mainly in the peripheral parts of the cities. The city became in desperate need for social housing. It is this particular situation of Santiago – the growth, the relative economic weakness, and the increasing housing deficit – that lead to today's urban fabric, as Santiago is one of the cities with the most officially built housing surfaces in the whole country.

Over time, different manners of producing social housing were practiced, always in strong reliance with the political agenda on the national level. The first housing policies were developed under a welfare state's perspective. Later, rationalities changed towards more liberal ideas during the military government and experienced various shifts forth and back between these opposite economic concepts. During this time, the understanding of the responsibility of the national state regarding the housing question differed. The public sector as the responsible instance for housing provision stood in contrast to the concept of the state as a



mere facilitator of individual action.

This contrast can also be detected in the rationalities of housing production in Santiago del Estero since the 2000s. Whereas within the first fifteen years housing policies and consequently the Provincial Institutes for Housing and Urbanism (IPVU) focused on producing a possibly high number of accessible housing units, the current legislative period focuses on a more small-scale and diverse housing production. The notion has shifted, away from mass-construction, which still is the focal point of the empirical part of this study, towards a more differentiated punctual development. However, these cannot be pinned down to exact time periods with clear beginnings and endings, as some elements remain being applied. The development that had most impact on the urban structure of Santiago del Estero within the last fifteen years was without doubt the social housing area in the south of the city. Barrio Siglo XXI, as one of three neighborhoods consolidating the zone, is an exemplary case, where the logic of mass-construction, under which it was created, can be analyzed.

Even if the ideas and spatial results from housing policies under the government of "Frente para la Victoria" (FPV, 2003 - 2015) and "Cambiamos" (2015 - today) are different, in this thesis it is argued that there is still a set of the same reasons that can be identified as the core of these politics. It is suggested that they can be narrowed down to five main rationalities, on which will be elaborated further.

### 1) Quantitative understanding of housing deficit

The term 'housing deficit' can be understood and interpreted in multiple ways and has neither just one single definition nor just one single method to be pinned down. That means that there is a wide range of possibilities how the deficit is constructed and how the reduction of the deficit is targeted, how the term is translated to different levels and finally picked up in concrete projects. Barrio Siglo XXI shows exemplary, that it was conceptualized out of a merely numbers-orientated interpretation of housing deficit, instead of a more integral comprehension. The distribution of public spaces as well as the positioning of the houses on the plots, the prioritization of motorized transport modes and the spatial dimensions of the neighborhood entity testify a technocratic approach to housing provision.

## 2) Privately driven and profit-orientated land selection

When looking at the distribution of legal competences for urban planning, the local level in form of the Municipalities is responsible for planning and strategic development. Nevertheless, the topic of housing is anchored at the national level within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and executed by the provincial level by the Provincial Institutes for Housing and Urbanism (IPVU). The Municipality therefore is in charge to define regulations like land use and zoning codes and is responsible for basic infrastructure provision within the entire municipal area. Still, the developments that have shaped the city in the recent years most, neither have been decided nor developed in cooperation with the Municipality. By representing the superordinate instance, the province is in charge to invest own and national budget in housing projects. The Municipality is in many cases a powerless observer. The only moment of a formal municipal voice is the mandatory Certificate of Validation that has to be signed by representatives of the Municipality in order to get a project commissioned. Still, most of the time this is rather a pro forma process, because housing deficit is a pressing problem and it is also in the Municipality's interest to provide social housing. High development and maintenance costs are therefore often accepted. Analyzing the seemingly powerful role of the IPVU, a closer look relativizes its actual influence on the choice of land. As fiscal land is barely existent in Santiago (according to the available information of the IPVU) the institute is depended on another player: the construction firms. In comparison to projects that were commissioned ten years ago, today it is common to call for project submissions that include the land on which it should be constructed. That means, that applying construction firms have to acquire land in order to submit their projects and later sell it to the IPVU, if their offer gets commissioned. Putting it differently, the more land a company is able to offer for the least amount of money, the higher the chances are of getting a project funded. This puts private firms in the position of deciding the location of future residential areas, financial factors of acquisition being a matter of priority in the selection process. As peripheral zones are mostly not yet consolidated and cheap, the companies buy utterly cheap agricultural land and urbanize it. Consequently, the city starts to grow there. This results in the creation of neighborhoods in large distance to the center and consequently high infrastructure provision and maintenance costs. The expenses caused by the purchase of land is also very relevant in the project evaluation process of the IPVU. Reducing the expenses on land and construction is crucial for the proper budget of the institute, and consequently important in order to maintain the capacity for further investment. This financial considerations from sides of the IPVU have been relevant throughout the whole 21st century, since

the budget allocation politics had changed. However, it was approached in different manners. While the idea of mass-construction of the first fifteen years was lead by the concept of mere reduction of costs in housing production (a logic applied in many Latin American countries), the diversification tendencies of the following years aimed for a shift towards a more solvent target group in order to get higher payback and facilitate higher land prices and gains when zoning new land to in order to urbanize it. By offering different levels of social housing while basically using the same layouts and typologies but attracting different social groups, price differences could be justified and turned into a financial contribution for the IPVU.

### **3) Application of top down urban design templates**

In terms of typologies, diversification is mostly undermined by this financial reasoning, there is no adaptation to specific requirements of users and different lifestyles. An old alone-standing person receives the same house as a young family with children. There is no possibility for future residents to participate in planning processes or declare specific demands at any point of the conceptualizing phase. The currently practiced approach is strictly top down and does not foresee any involvement of the civil society, which could lead to more diverse and adapted housing solutions and the planning of the neighborhood as a thought through system.

### **4) Reproduction of a social hierarchy**

Through the construction of areas with standardized typologies segregation and social homogeneity are fostered. It creates neighborhoods of cheap housing for specific social groups, while turning others into privileged ones. This trend is one we see in all Latin America: A fragmentation of space and of the urban society. At the same time, the trend of isolating the own house even from the own neighborhood intensifies this fragmentation. While in Latin America the trend to small-scale projects rises and generates an urban fabric shaped by a mosaic of small enclaves of very different socio-economic characteristics, in Santiago del Estero this development is not to be observed (yet). Due to the strong presence of officially produced social housing areas and the still prevailing big-scale logic, there are still not many situations of close proximity between small isolated "islands" without any relation to their surroundings. This is what conserves in Santiago del Estero what in big cities all over the Latin American continent more and more fades away: a clear hierarchical distribution of social groups, the privileged ones in specific zones and the modern city center

and the most vulnerable ones in peripheral locations.

### 5) Property-orientation and "idiosyncrasy" as underlying paradigms

A look at the content of the normative framework of tendering processes, where tasks and requirements are defined, as well as the concrete design of projects, indicate basic paradigms on which the interventions of the past twenty years were building on. They can be broken down to two main aspects: the importance and valuation of property in housing questions and the assumption of the existence of a specific way of life, an idiosyncrasy that is static and has to be integrated in new developments. Social housing in Argentina has primarily been focused on property-orientated models throughout its history. The possession of a house or at least a flat has been and still continues to be an important value in the country's society. This can be argued out of a cultural perspective, as a heritage from the hispanic value system that is still present, but it is often also referred to as a consequence of economic instability on a national level. Property, according to this perspective, provides security. Social housing continues to be property orientated. This has consequences for the capability of intervention by the public hand. Instead of keeping the constructed houses in public property in order to generate a public housing stock and rent them to beneficiaries in need, the system foresees to acquire land, construct and sell the housing unities to privates. The public sector – in that case the IPVU – thus loses future possibilities to act upon those areas, as soon as the lot is sold. However, the system also includes a mechanism that there has to have passed a certain amount of time until it is possible for beneficiaries to actually buy free the house. The regular situation would be to pay a small monthly amount until having completed to pay the whole sum in about twenty to thirty years. This generates a certain degree of flexibility within the system. If a resident misuses a housing unit for other activities than residential ones, the IPVU can cancel the contract, stop the buying process and give the housing unit to another candidate. As the process of buying the house normally takes up to several decades, the first generation is mostly still not owner of their house. Not so in the future second generation, when most people will be done paying the house and they get the official certificate of ownership. At that point, the zone turns from a social housing area into a common neighborhood, only its urban structure indicating its origin. Since from all sides the value of property is rated high and seen as some kind of basic security asset, this model is not seriously discussed or questioned and keeps being the predominant way of action.

The logic of colonial city development can still be identified regarding specific aspects. The layout of Barrio Siglo XXI shows some of the key characteristics of the historic city model. First the internal structuring bases on a grid, which clearly marks the elements 'block' and 'street' and separates the private from the public sphere. Secondly, the neighborhoods are orientated towards a central lot of plots that change their function from private use to be a central public space. Nevertheless, the situation of the area does not follow the rationalities which drove traditional colonial city development. Big barriers like the bypass route impede a structural continuity of the urban fabric. Also, it is the significance of use for residents that differs from the old town center. While in the historic core, all important institutions are situated around the main plaza, there is hardly any use other than residential around the central public space in the new neighborhoods. Thus, it does not fulfill the original function as a center for public everyday life activities anymore.

Further, it is necessary to discuss the output and the key findings of the CMEF intervention logic chain and the CLD and evaluate their significance critically. The application of systems theory and some selected tools have been in order to explore the methodological potentials for knowledge production within this thesis. Some sensible elements could be discovered by the visualization of the two models and helped in the ongoing process to be aware of those specific aspects. An example is the influence of prevailing planning paradigms that conduct discourses and planning practices in a direction that has impacts like high rates of sealing soil, articulated private spaces and the adherence to property based housing models. Within the process of establishing a possible rationality of today's housing policies (CMEF intervention logic chain) and influential factors (CLD), different hypotheses have been developed. Nevertheless, through the simplification of the models seemingly causal relationships get created which can produce the impression of simple monocausal relations between elements, that do not represent their actual complexity and do not foster the exploration of possible other interrelations. In summary, the tools of systems theory turned out to be useful within an exploratory phase and in order to identify important elements to be aware of. Nevertheless, on account of their rigid structure, they demand for a high grade of simplification and simulate monocausal relationships. It would be beneficial to think about more flexible ways to use these tools for further research.

There are some interesting approaches of previous political agendas to be considered in the current debate of social housing. In the 1940s, during towards a legitimation and increase of renting models. Rent regula-

tions (fixed rents and state subsidies for renters) should help getting away from a housing model completely orientated towards the possession of property and improve rental models in order to provide more security for tenants. This move towards a devaluation of the home as property came alongside first ambitions to build with certain density. By implementing the "Law for Horizontal Property" the legal base for multi-story buildings was made and one multi-family housing unit was designed as standardized building type for social housing areas. Despite the mass-construction of one and the same typologies there were barely any massive projects, but rather small ensembles built. In the following decades until the early 2000s, those changes were gradually reversed. The state as a direct provider of housing became continuously weaker, a trend that started with different military governments in the 1950s and endured until the private turn, which took place in the 1980s and 1990s. By the ends of the 1990s, private construction was at its peak. State subsidies mainly returned to mainly fostering the acquisition of property. Even if the government under FPV (2003–2015) restructured housing policies towards a new rise of direct official housing construction (explicitly following the example of the Peronist government), there were no focus on a more renter-friendly legal framework. Rather, direct housing provision was planned and promoted to become property of the beneficiaries. The rent regulation, which was an innovative element of the 1940s did not get implemented. After the political change in 2015, these characteristics can still be identified.

When facing today's housing situation in Santiago del Estero, having in mind the development and changes in historic political rationalities can be helpful. Especially, specific elements of the very first era of housing policies in the 1940s should be reconsidered and analyzed in detail for their potential to offer solutions for current challenges caused by underlying rationalities. It is not the aim of this research to enumerate specific recommendations or suggestions how to change rationalities of social housing in Santiago del Estero. Rather, it was elaborated under the premise of exploring the current situation. Nevertheless, during conversations with local experts of the Argentinian urban development domain, some of them from Santiago del Estero, others speaking about general Argentinian housing issues, some interesting ideas and thoughts came up. A selection of these shall be presented to conclude this investigation in order to open up possible fields of interest for further research.

Opening the planner's and architect's "black-box" and bringing in a socially orientated perspective in

order to achieve changes in the planning practice: Interdisciplinary approaches to urban planning could enrich traditional planning. This could be enabled by mixed teams and methods within the development of housing projects, as well as the inclusion of the academia in order to generate new ideas and concepts in terms of typologies, internal organization of neighborhoods or construction processes.

- Recognizing the potentials of turning planning into more democratic and participatory process: By including future residents and civic actors into planning processes, new solutions could emerge and prevent critical effects on the level of the urban society.
- Rethinking the role of the Municipality as a stronger actor in urban and city planning questions: Potentials have been detected by various interview partners, specifically regarding politics of land purchase. Nevertheless, the political intertwining and dependence between the Province and the Municipality do rise some critical points in terms of the actual capacity to act self-determined on a local level. An easier step would be to encourage Municipalities to actually make use of the current possibilities in order to organize land use.

Those three thoughts shall present possible starting points for further research. As a final issue to consider I want to pronounce the limits of this paper. The scope of the work was adapted to the frame of a master thesis. The empirical research was carried out within a six week stay in Santiago del Estero, building on previous general knowledge about the city. Nevertheless, a more extended stay in closer cooperation with local institutions and the academia would give the possibility for a greater amount expert interviews and facilitate a differentiated methodology. This work has exploratory character and wants to draw attention to a specific spatial phenomenon, whose relevance goes beyond the borders of Santiago del Estero, produced by social housing construction. It ultimately aims to constitute a contribution to enlarge the knowledge stock on peripheral middle-sized cities in Argentina.



## 7. CONCLUSION

The starting point for this research was the observation of a specific spatial phenomenon: extensive social housing areas in the town of Santiago del Estero in the north of Argentina. The middle-sized city provided ground for a case study of social housing policies and their urban implementation in form of mass construction. Methodologically, a combination of literature review and methods of empirical social research have been performed. Additionally, with the aim of methodological exploration, tools of systems theory have been applied.

A historic retrospective of the development of Argentinian housing policies showed that until the early 1900s housing was barely considered to be within the responsibility of the national state. First innovative policies emerged in the 1940s in the form of five-year-plans, the "Planes Quinquenales". They introduced mass construction for the first time, pursuing the creation of neighborhoods of simple and standardized single family houses. After politically unstable years and weak housing policies the newly ascent of national planning can be dated at the beginnings of the 1970s, when the National Fund for Housing (FONAVI). This fund turned into an emblematic tool of the new established Argentinian welfare state and represents a key element of housing policies until the present day. During the 1980s until the 2000s, public planning lost importance once more and the national state defined its role rather as a facilitator of private construction activities then a direct provider of social housing and reduced public construction dramatically. It was in 2003, when social housing construction reemerged, again in forms of mass construction, but in previously unseen dimensions in the Argentinian context. It is the implementation of these housing projects and the underlying rationalities of housing policies during the first decade of the 21st century, that have been the focal point of this thesis.

Santiago del Estero, one of the regions with the highest quantitative and qualitative housing deficit in Argentina, is coined by social housing areas created within this period. Within the analysis, several important groups of actors that are particularly powerful regarding the processes of planning and implementing those publicly funded housing projects were identified. Private construction firms have been made out to be highly influential regarding spatial dimensions of development, while the municipality often lacks of planning

competences – a situation which creates challenges in terms of adequate infrastructure provision as well as raises questions concerning the role of the public hand. In comparison with older parts of the city, remarkable differences in terms of spatial structure could be observed in the social housing areas. Especially, contrasts regarding the functional mix of spaces, the relation between the private and the public sphere as well as the qualities of spaces where public everyday life practices can take place have shown to affect the living situation of the residents.

In today's social housing policies a new change of rationalities in social housing policies can be observed. For the executing institution, the Provincial Institutes for Housing and Urbanism (IPVU), the adaptation of a more entrepreneurial role is getting necessary in order to finance new construction projects. Furthermore, international organizations have gained importance in the provision of housing. Regarding these developments, critical observation of approaches applied within the past century can be used in order to stimulate a constructive debate about new visions for social housing. It is a duty of public planning authorities to work on the reduction of the current deficits and thus assure the basic human right of housing.



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## 10. GLOSSARY

CEHOPU, Centro de Estudios Históricos de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo

CLD, Causal loop diagramme

CMEF, Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

FIT, Fondo de Integración Territorial

FONAVI, Fondo Nacional de Vivienda

PFV, Programas Federales de Vivienda

IADB, Inter-American Development Bank = BID, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo

INDEC, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos

IPV/IPVU, Institutos Provinciales de Vivienda (y Urbanismo)

INSE, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina

# 11. ANNEX I: LIST OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

## GUIDED TOURS

- Tour through the neighborhoods, 01.02.2019, 16:00 – 17:00
- Tour around El Zanjón, 13.02.2019, 17:00 - 18:00

## SYSTEMATIC WALKS

- Observatory walk in the neighborhood, 01.02.2019, 16:30 – 17:00
- Observatory walk in the neighborhood, 20.02.2019, 22:00 - 22:30

## SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATIONS

- Systematic participatory observation, Calle Barrio Siglo XXI, 05.02.2019, 07:00 - 07:15
- Systematic participatory observation, Calle Barrio Siglo XXI, 06.02.2019, 18.00 -18.15
- Systematic participatory observation, Plaza Libertad, 07.02.2019, 11:30 - 11:45
- Systematic participatory observation, Plaza Libertad, 17.02.2019, 11:00 – 11:15
- Systematic participatory observation, Cuatro Plazas, 20.02.2019, 23:45 - 00:15

## EXPERT INTERVIEWS

- I) Castor López, Docente de Economía, UCSE, 07.02.2019
- II) Rodolfo Legname, Subsecretario de Cultura, Municipalidad, 13.02.2019
- III) Nilda Rodríguez de Mishima, Directora de Planeamiento, Municipalidad, 13.02.2019
- IV) Nancy Bravo, Directora de Desarrollo Social, Municipalidad, 14.02.2019
- V) Patricia Legname, Juan Pablo Luna, Juan Carlos Luna, Subsecretaria y Técnicos del IPVU, 18.02.2019
- VI) Silvana Esperguín, Socióloga IPVU, 19.02.2019
- VII) Mirta Caumo, Docente de Geografía, UCSE, 20.02.2019
- VIII) Sara María Boccolini, Arquitecta, Córdoba, 27.02.2019
- IX) Alicia Gerscovich, Profesora UBA, Buenos Aires, 01.03.19



## TALKS WITH LOCAL EXPERTS

- Rocío Carreras, Directora del Instituto de Estudios Ambientales, UNSE, 04.02.2019
- Omar Romero, Planeamiento, Municipalidad, 06.02.2019
- Maria Isabel Castro, Instituto de Estudios Ambientales, UNSE, 08.02.2019
- Bernardo Santillán, Director de Suelo Urbano, Municipalidad, 18.02.2019

## NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

- NI I) Inhabitant Barrio Siglo XXI, 01.02.2019
- NI II) Inhabitant Barrio Siglo XXI, 21.02.2019



