

INITIATIVES ON THE METROPOLITAN BORDER OF BUENOS AIRES: 1920-2020

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Abstract

The metropolitan border of Buenos Aires has been conceived in different ways between 1920 and 2020. The tensions between the existing city and the proposed city invite us to reflect on how urban documents shape different initiatives to define the metropolitan border. We hold the hypothesis that the initiatives that define urban plans and regulations respond to different problems. To do this, we focus on the critical review of 4 urban planning initiatives that affect the metropolitan edge: "segmenting growth"; "contain growth"; "know the territory" and "decentralize growth". The initiatives by urban planning documents show that in some moments the metropolitan border is conceived as a border while in others it is conceived as a space to be explored and known or also as a place to receive urban growth. The results reflect that the way of thinking about the metropolitan border is being built through different episodes that confirm the concerns and interests about them.

Keywords: urban planning, metropolitan border, Buenos Aires, state space

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the metropolitan border has been conceived in different ways. In the first half of the 20th century, the need to control the advance of urban space over rural space was put into discussion with the term urban-rural continuum (Sorokin and Zimmerman, 1929). Then, around 1950, the term urban-rural dichotomy reflected an opposition between urban and rural uses (Durkheim, 2003). Subsequently, with the accelerated process of spatial differentiation that occurs in these territories at the end of the 20th century, various discontinuous urbanization processes occur. In the words of Brenner and Schmid (2015), the distinction between urban and rural is being diluted and its demarcation as a field of study is a process of theoretical abstraction that changes in relation to the context.

The demarcation of the metropolitan border appears to mediate between the existing city and the proposed city. Jessop, Brenner and Jones (2008) highlight how the State, in the face of the tensions that occur in space at a given moment, discriminates against certain actors and interests over others. Brenner and Schmid (2015) land this on the territory, pointing out that the State privileges some geographies over others and manifests its spatial form through urban regulations. A spatial form, which as these authors

point out, is the result of the struggles between different actors to change the institutional frameworks through which urbanization processes are managed. In the words of Elinbaum (2019), the state space is presented as a dynamic institutional political territory on which different actors act.

These critical approaches applied to the tensions between the existing city and the proposed city invite us to reflect on where the border line is drawn and how it varies in time and space, and allow us to problematize how urban documents shape different initiatives to define the metropolitan edge. We understand these initiatives, following Jessop, Brenner and Jones (2008), Brenner and Schmid (2015) and Elinbaum (2019), as actions that aim to weigh the economic development of one territory over another, as a reflection not only of the proposals techniques but also related interests.

Since urban planning, the metropolitan border has been the object of various urban planning documents, from detailed studies to general guidelines, through different initiatives. Concepts such as "green ring", formulated in the plans of the County of London and Greater London, or "green wedge", established in the Finger plan of Copenhagen, have been references in proposals for physical planning of Buenos Aires plans, and concepts as a territorial project or scenarios futures, have been references in methodological proposals and management of local urban documents.

Different references of international urban planning linked to the metropolitan border were reinterpreted in different local urban planning documents. Urban plans and regulations are conditioned by technical conceptions and political wills (Novick, 2004), crossed by the circulation of ideas and the lack of congruences and anachronisms that occur in their importation (Novick, 2009) and allow to account for some of the modalities according to which specialists think about the territory.

Based on these precepts, we support the hypothesis that the initiatives that define the urban documents respond to different problems and their references are not always contemporary, producing a gap between the existing city and the proposed city. Starting from this argument, the objective of this article aims to highlight the initiatives in the definition of the metropolitan border of Buenos Aires of some local urban planning documents and detailed studies up to general guidelines, through different initiatives. Concepts such as "green ring", formulated in the plans of the County of London and Greater London, or "green wedge", established in the Finger plan of Copenhagen, have been references in proposals for physical planning of Buenos Aires plans, and concepts as a territorial project or scenarios.

For this purpose, we focus on the critical review of 4 urban planning initiatives that affect the metropolitan edge, developed between 1920 and 2020: "segment growth"; "contain growth"; "know the territory" and "decentralize growth". These initiatives act as key episodes of the study carried out and are proposed as a reflection of the rationale behind the proposals in urban planning documents. For this, this research,

whose object of study is urban planning documents and the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires as a case study, relies on the qualitative research technique through urban and bibliographic documents.

The work consists of 5 parts. After the introduction, the theoretical framework of the research around the historical contextualization of the metropolitan edge of Buenos Aires is developed. Then, the main spatial and strategic initiative used in each urban document analyzed is addressed. Subsequently, the results are discussed linking the initiatives with the referents and with the theoretical notions. Finally, the article concludes with a reflection that raises new questions.

2. PLANING THE METROPOLITN BORDER_ HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Cities have conceived of the metropolitan border in various ways due to different economic, political, environmental, and social needs. In 1915, Geddes (1949) observed that new technologies (electrical energy, combustion engine, among others) made large cities expand over rural areas due to the possibilities of movement and services offered by these technologies. Geddes's view of urban evolution from biology and Howard's idea of "garden city", postulated years earlier, expanded. The Town and Country Planning Association was formed and congresses were organized in different cities.

In the 1920s, various professionals promoted the idea of regional planning¹. With the federalization of the city of Buenos Aires and the increase of three and a half times its population, between the census of 1887 and the census of 1914, the Bonaerense agglomeration began to be a recurring theme in the debates of the time. In the plan "Buenos Aires and its surroundings", belonging to the Cadastral Atlas of the Argentine Republic, Chapeaurouge (1901) shows the city that grows through subdivisions² and Della Paolera, since 1916, begins to publish diverse works on the expansion of Buenos Aires.

In the 1920s, a stage of articulation of Argentine urbanism with the outside began. Martín Noel, brother of the then Mayor of Buenos Aires and graduated in Paris in 1913, facilitates the presence of Forestier as an advisor to the plan of the Buenos Aires Building Aesthetics Commission (1925). Years later, Della Paolera, who in her doctoral thesis addresses the formulation of a Regulatory plan for Buenos Aires, plays an important role in the visits of Jaussely and Hegemann, among others. Jaussély, a French urban planner, visited Buenos Aires in 1926 and reinforced what Forestier outlined in the plan of the Building Aesthetics Commission, proposing a regional plan that seeks to limit urban growth. Subsequently, Hegemann, a German urban planner, visited Buenos Aires in August 1930, invited by the Municipality and the Friends of the City, with the aim of studying urban problems and proposed generating a regulatory

¹ Studied by Novick y Piccioni (1990).

² Studied by Favelukes (2016).

body on a metropolitan scale through planning and building regulation (Novick and Piccioni, 1990; Gutiérrez, 2007).

On the other hand, in 1929, Le Corbusier visited Buenos Aires, invited by the Friends of the Arts Association. On this trip, he meets Kurchan and Hardoy, who join his studio in Paris to carry out the Master Plan of Buenos Aires (1937-38) and introduce the starting point of Modern Urbanism in the city.

Thus, two urban paradigms are beginning to be glimpsed in Buenos Aires: functionalism by the hand of Le Corbusier and CIAM and organicism by the hand of Della Paolera (Fernández, 2016).

In 1932, with the return of democracy after the 1930 coup, the Municipality created, by Ord. N ° 4576/1932 HCD, the Technical Office of the Urbanization and Extension Plan of Buenos Aires directed by Della Paolera (Novick and Piccioni, 1990). Della Paolera's regional outlook is reflected in a metropolitan program that proposes stopping urban expansion through proposals on: the rail and road network, the protection of rural land, suburban localities, among others, and the office has an inspired program in the organic model: (1) studies on the evolution of the city (diagnosis), (2) statistical studies (censuses and studies on the evolution of buildability and uses) and (3) proposal (Novick, 2000). However, it is not possible to prepare and approve a Regulatory plan.

Years later, around 1958, within a developmental state, the Regulatory Plan office, dependent on the Municipality of Buenos Aires, began the study to prepare the Regulatory plan. At that time, Buenos Aires experienced a great low-density expansion that consolidates the parties of the first ring and the concern is centered on the advance of the city on its metropolitan edge, in particular on its productive lands. Current legislation allows for subdivisions simply by managing the subdivision of the rural parcel with the local government. The "Organic Law of Municipalities" leaves the establishment of industrial and residential zones in the hands of the Deliberative Councils, allowing them to impose restrictions and limits to the domain for the best urbanization.

This urban document is framed within the model of rational and comprehensive planning, being one of the main references the English post-war experiences. The London County Plan (Abercrombie, 1943) and the Greater London Plan (Abercrombie, 1944), coordinated by Abercrombie, become the model to follow. These documents seek to limit urban expansion through a "green belt" that protects agriculture, prevents urban expansion, and maintains a recognizable urban form. Abercrombie takes from Geddes the idea of open space as a structuring instrument and the development in concentric rings (inner urban ring, suburban ring, green ring and outer ring) and Howard's concept of "garden city" and proposes the growth of London through of the "new towns"

The Regulatory Plan was approved in 1962 and became the main input of the Urban Planning Code of the City of Buenos Aires, which was sanctioned in 1977, under the de facto government of Mayor Cacciatore. The Code has printed the functionalist ideas with the differentiation of the city in areas to work, recreate, live and move. Following Fernández (2016), functional zoning opposes the views of Della Paolera who proposed to homogenize the suburbs of Buenos Aires to turn them into an organic whole while functionalist urbanism considers the suburbs as a space to be urbanized.

Towards the 1990s, the regional importance resurfaces in Buenos Aires with the strengthening of local economies in the face of globalization and economic integration (García Delgado, 1998; Ciccolella, 1999; Icañiz Moscardó, 2008) and the Plan is questioned as valid tool to intervene on the territory. Novick (2003) shows how, at this time, the predominance of the project is advocated as an adequate tool to trigger processes of territorial transformation.

On the other hand, this lack of plans can be supported by the complex political-economic context. With the military coup of 1976, in Buenos Aires public policies were decentralized towards the municipalities and the actions of private capital on the territory began to be evident. Ciccolella (1999) and Ciccolella and Baer (2008) report that the most relevant transformations of the metropolitan territory respond to its insertion in the global market. In the United States and European countries, faced with a similar context, a criticism of urban planning from political economy begins to emerge. Harvey (1973) analyzes the role of urban planning in capitalism and Castells (1979) studies the urban structure as a materialization of the forces of capitalism.

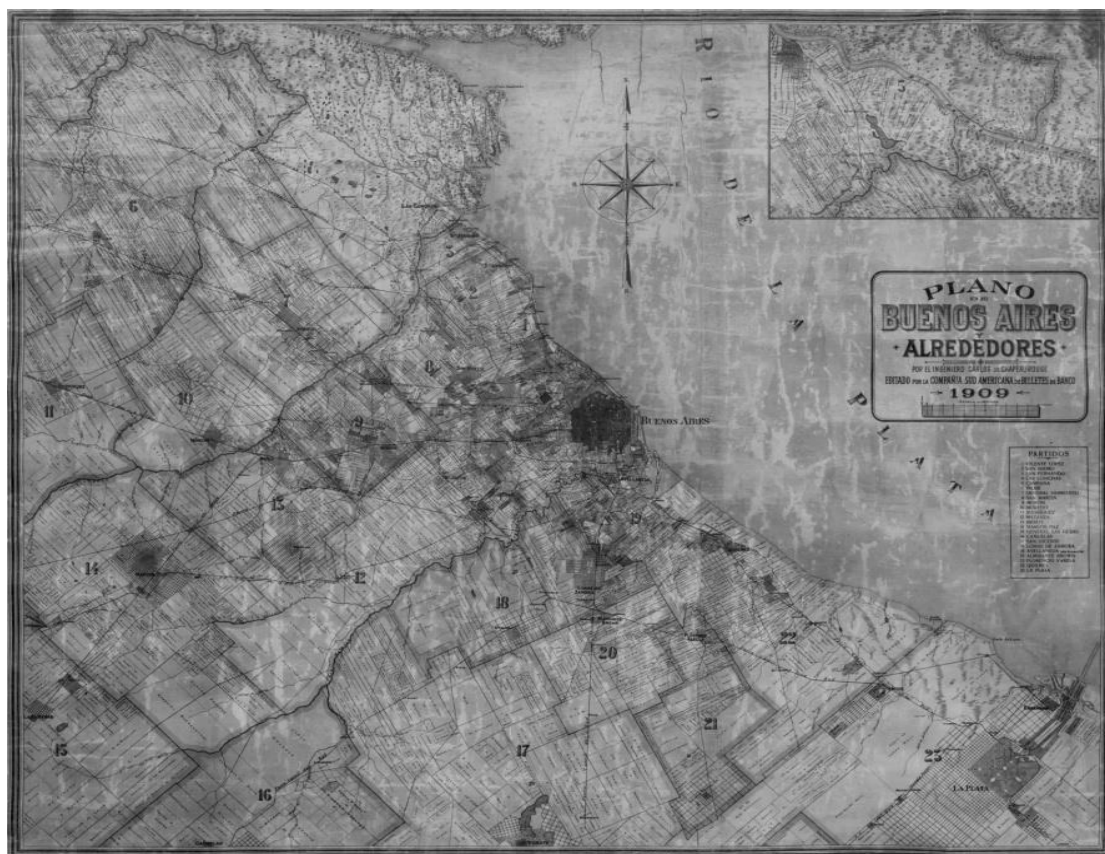
In this framework, the Ministry of the Interior of the Nation, through the National Commission of the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (CONAMBA), commissioned at the beginning of the nineties, a diagnostic study of the metropolitan area that responds to the demand of the governor of the province to carry out a subdivision of municipalities. The general coordination of the document is in charge of Néstor Magariños and Alfredo Garay. The work, entitled *El Conurbano Bonaerense* (CONAMBA, 1995), is collected in two volumes: Survey and analysis and Cartographic Annex. The document shows an exhaustive work of surveying and building data manually from the metropolitan area, which in 2004 the Ministry of Infrastructure and Housing of the province of Buenos Aires deepened, studying the distribution of land uses in the metropolitan region, and plasma on a georeferenced basis.

Towards the 2000s, the criticisms of strategic planning (Steinberg, 2001; Garay, 2004; Fernández Güell, 2006) and of the figure of the management plan in “rational and comprehensive” planning, were replaced by sectorial plans, or singular territorial projects. Within this framework, in 2007 the Undersecretary of Urbanism and Housing of the Province of Buenos Aires prepared the document *Strategic Guidelines for the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires* (2007), proposing different scenarios. The document takes up

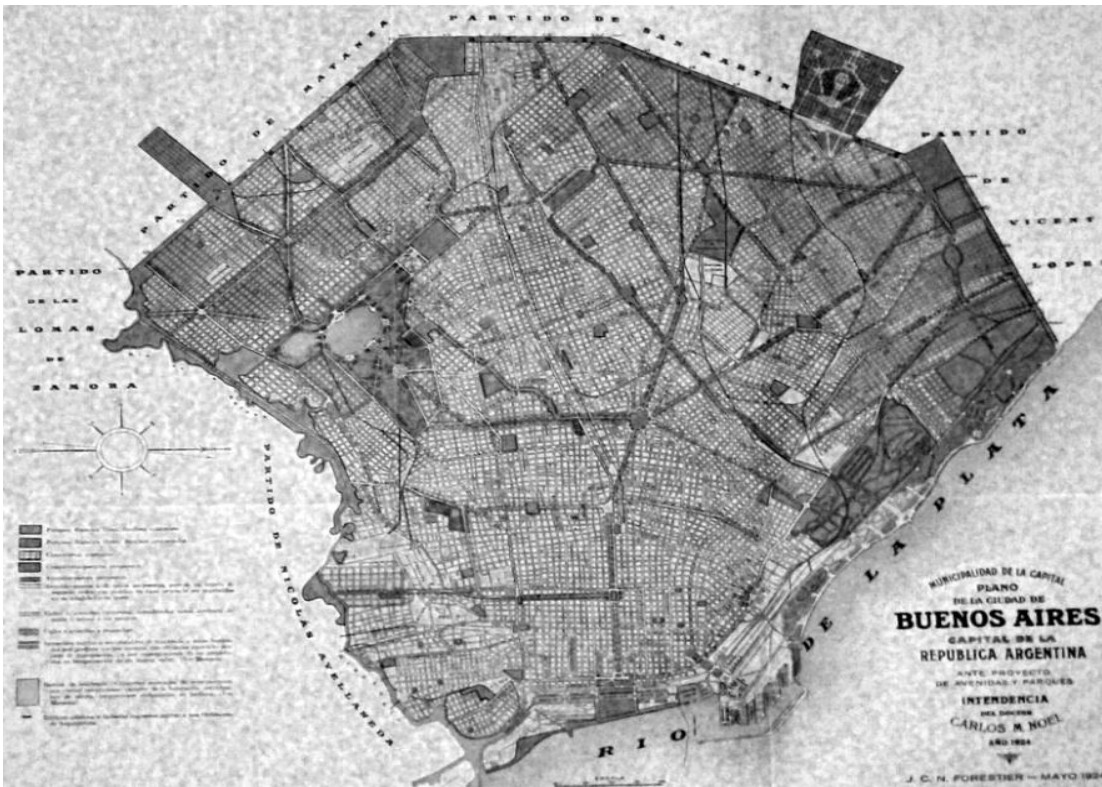
and re-elaborates the cartographies of El Conurbano Bonaerense (CONAMBA, 1995) and proposes limiting the expansion of urbanization through administrative restrictions and the territorial ordering of the sector through the location of new nodes of centrality.

In 2010, the Undersecretary of Urbanism and Housing of the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires carried out a diagnosis and elaborated a proposal to intervene on the metropolitan border. The document, called Border Guidelines (2010), deepens what is addressed in the document Strategic Guidelines for the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires (2007) and gives it continuity in the propositional stage. The document overcomes the polarization that began to be manifested by the local bibliography of the time, which focuses on gated communities, large new-generation facilities and intensive agricultural uses.

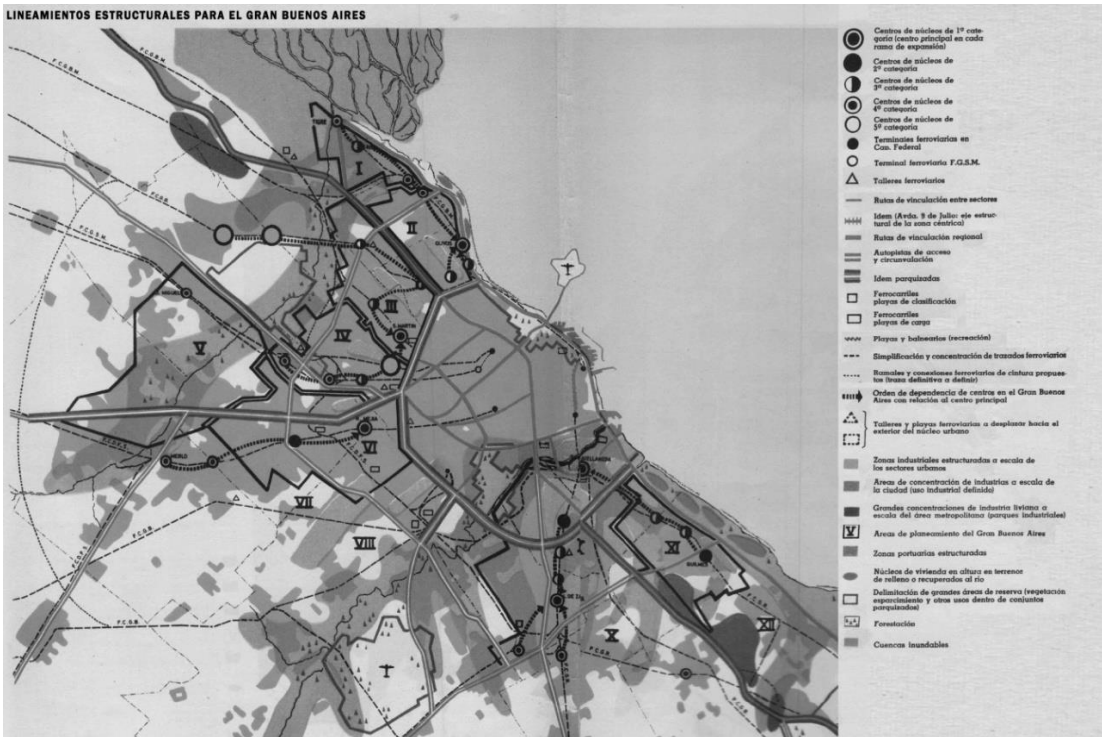
Urban growth is raised again and the edges of urbanization regain their interest. This brief contextualization of the urbanism of the metropolitan border highlights the international models and the theoretical notions of departure of each episode addressed in this work.



Source: Atlas Catastral de la República Argentina, Chapeaurouge (1901)
FIGURE 1 - "BUENOS AIRES AND ITS SURROUNDINGS"



Source: Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires.
 FIGURE 2: -PLAN OF THE BUILDING AESTHETICS COMMISSION

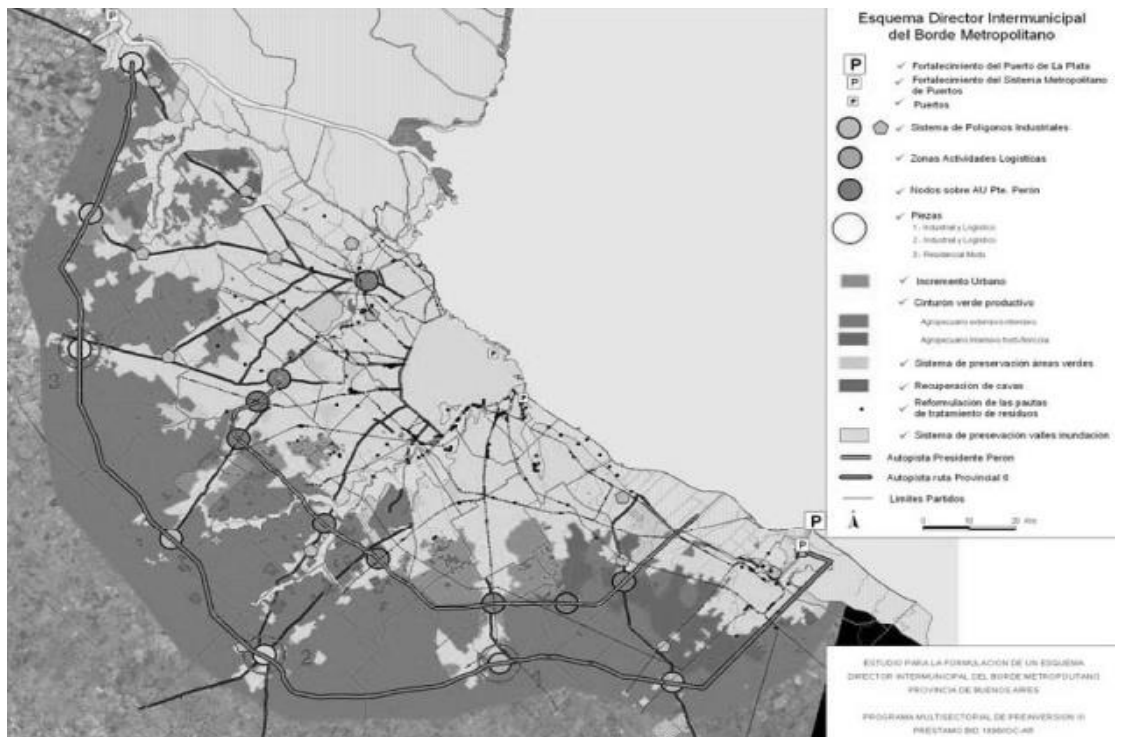


Source: Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, 1958.
 FIGURE 3 - STRUCTURAL GUIDELINES FOR GREATER BUENOS AIRES.



Source: CONAMBA, 1995.

Figure 4 - PLAN OF USES OF THE BORDER TERRITORY OF BUENOS AIRES.



Source:Lineamientos de Borde, 2010.

Figure 5 - PROPOSAL.

3. THE METROPOLITAN BORDER OF BUENOS AIRES: INITIATIVES

3.1. *Segment growth*

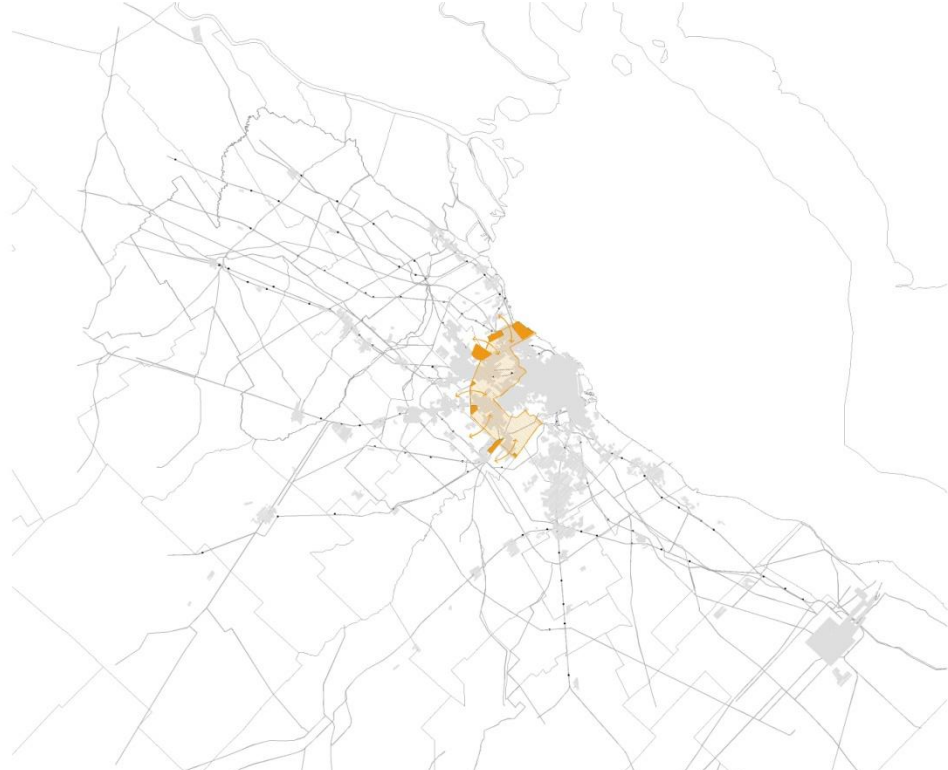
The first initiative detected to influence the metropolitan border of Buenos Aires is the search to control and differentiate the urban from the rural system by limiting the urban space by creating a visibly identifiable border, General Paz Avenue. Instead of allocating a strip of rural space reserve in the city environment, which acts as a public device to limit the growth of the urban surface and maintain the balance between urban and rural space, as Howard proposed at the end of the century XIX in the "garden city", a narrow urban-rural border strip is formed, materialized by a ring road, which is extended in certain sectors through green spaces and railway networks that generate new urban agglomerations inside and outside the city limits.

During the presidency of Alvear (1922-1927) and the Intendency of Carlos Noel (1922-1927), the Building Aesthetics Commission elaborates the Organic Project for the Urbanization of the Municipality of Buenos Aires. Although the plan considers that "Avellaneda, Matanza, Lomas de Zamora, San Martín and Haedo cannot remain outside of Buenos Aires's own interests since, located along its urban belt, they are called to share their future and being at present sources of supply and tributaries of the urban services of the "Federal Capital" (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1925), the proposal is centered within the administrative legal limits of the capital city.

The plan of the Building Aesthetics Commission seeks to segment growth through a bypass avenue, General Paz avenue. Based on the demographic and building data, the Commission proposes that not all the city have the same regulations, it proposes a decrease in building as one moves away from the center and approaches the periphery and that the zoning around the municipal limits are equated with those of the border districts, achieving a situation of continuity on either side of General Paz Avenue. This intention of exceeding the municipal limit can also be read in the system of free spaces that Forestier proposes in the plan.

This quest to turn the border into a buffer space is combined with the idea of guiding urban growth through the railway lines. The plan of the Building Aesthetics Commission takes into account the topographic characteristics of the city of Buenos Aires. These determine the logic of distribution of the railway networks, which run along the highest levels generating new urban centers on either side of General Paz Avenue. The adoption of these criteria allows for greater integration between the city of Buenos Aires and its neighboring parties.

In this way, the project initiative seeks to segment the urban growth of the rural space in order to define the limits of the new capital, separating, in the words of Sarmiento, civilization from barbarism. The conceptualization of "ring" that was proposed in the "garden city" as a limit to the growth of the urban surface to maintain the urban-rural balance is reinterpreted as a narrow strip, materialized by a ring road.



Source: Own elaboration based on images from the DGPBA and plot from the Atlas Ambiental de Buenos Aires site (2016)

FIGURE 6 - SEGMENT GROWTH

3.2. *Contain growth*

The second initiative detected to influence the metropolitan border of Buenos Aires is the search to establish a clear delimitation of urban and rural spaces through their restructuring and organization. But instead of forming "green belts" and "new towns", as proposed in 1943 and 1944 by the London County plan (Abercrombie, 1943) together with the Greater London plan (Abercrombie, 1944) or "green wedges" as established in 1947 the Copenhagen Finger plan (Ministry of the Environment, 2015), it seeks to strengthen existing urban centers by revitalizing rural areas, in order to organize the territory in a state of tension, and generate a networked mobility system, in order to generate a balance between urban space and rural space

The Regulatory plan seeks to address the expansion of the city through three planning scales: (1) urban (the city of Buenos Aires, 19,950 Ha.); (2) metropolitan (the city of Buenos Aires and the neighboring districts within a 30 km radius, 284,300 Ha.) AND (3) regional (the Metropolitan Area and rural sectors for

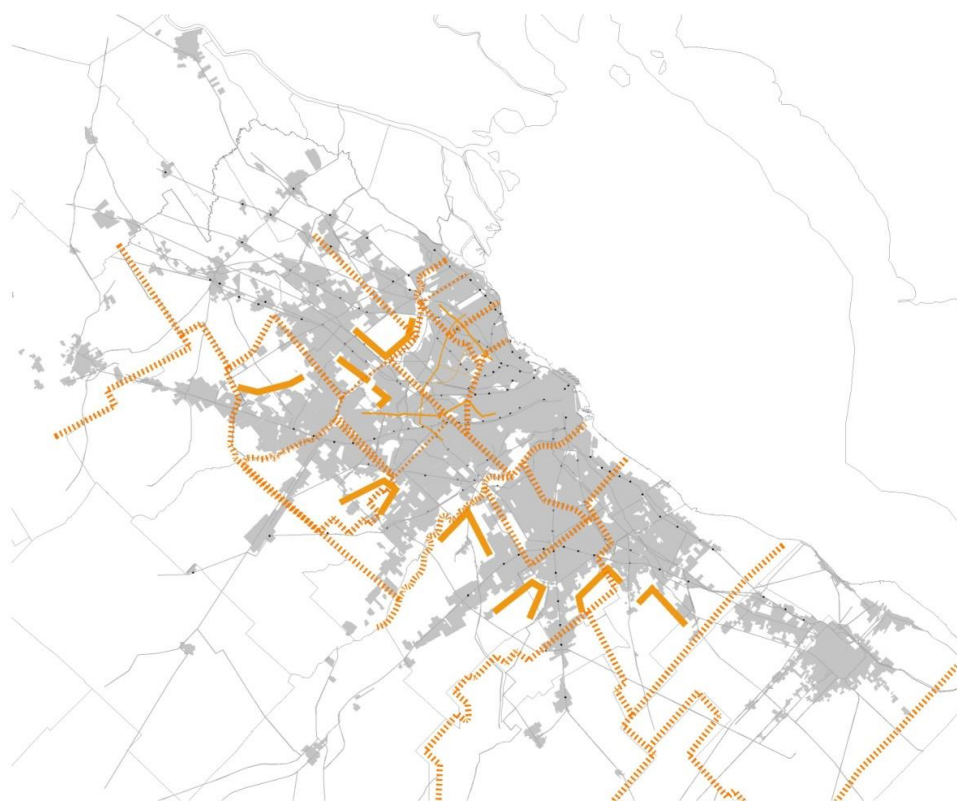
the production of basic perishable foods for the inhabitants of the conglomerate urban, in a radius of approximately 100 km., 2,772,994 Ha.).

The plan proposes to generate a balance between urban and rural areas, ordering activities at sectorally differentiated levels and interconnecting their areas of action appropriately with each other and with the total complex in order to achieve an efficient functional structure. The diagnosis made to carry out the plan shows the potential of the dirt road network if it is connected to the paved roads to promote the socio-economic development of the different areas. Thus, to favor interregional exchange by increasing the link between urban space and rural space, regional penetration routes are used on a metropolitan scale, rapid sectoral distribution routes on an urban scale, inter-area service routes between sectors and local circulation routes. The proposal seeks to mitigate the centralist effect that the radial convergence of the rail and road networks caused by the relationship between the agricultural areas and the port has had on the city.

In this sense, the plan also proposes that the process of controlling urban expansion be made possible through the zoning and land division regulations, through agreements between communes. The city is divided into integrated and defined planning units based on land use, population density, fabric, among others, administratively coordinating them through intercommunal agreements. The city is divided into five urban sectors within which there are different urban areas and they are delimited by regional, metropolitan and fast sectorial distribution routes. The urban areas are 46 planning units, contained in the sectors, crossed by roads of slow circulation and delimited by roads of fast circulation.

On the other hand, the plan proposes to avoid that the lands of greater fertility are divided into urban lots or uses that degrade the soil such as brick kilns in order to guarantee the reserve of productive lands for the elaboration of perishable products for the supply of the population. The definition of "fifth" zones, as intermediate zones between urban and rural, seeks to prevent arbitrary and speculative subdivisions. The conformation of these zones makes it possible to increase the number and importance of intensive agricultural enterprises, and the proximity to a growing market makes it possible to simplify the marketing mechanisms, also favoring their development.

In this way, the project initiative seeks to revitalize agricultural areas and strengthen existing urban centers with the aim of containing urban growth. The proposal marks a transition from the "ring" model of the previous episode that limited the capital city of the bordering parties, understanding the metropolitan border as a territory that exceeds the administrative legal limits.



Source: Own elaboration based on images from the DGPBA and plot from the Atlas Ambiental de Buenos Aires site (2016)

FIGURE 7 - CONTAIN GROWTH

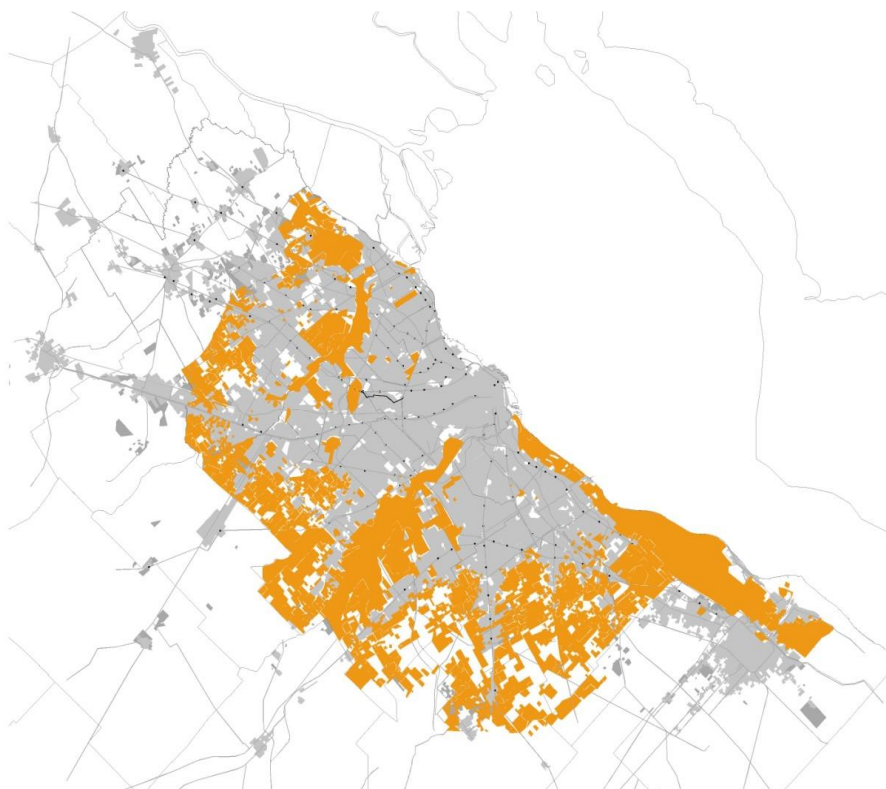
3.3. *Knowing the territory*

The third initiative detected to influence the metropolitan border of Buenos Aires is the search to know the territory. Criticisms of rational and comprehensive planning and the zoning of modern urbanism, together with the initiative to study the legal-administrative organization of the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires lead to a detailed study of the land uses of the metropolitan border. The document *El Conurbano Bonaerense* (CONAMBA, 1995) takes as a reference the new Spanish legislation that enables the supramunicipal organization through the formation of *Mancomunidades*.

The document recognizes the existence of supralocal problems and has a specific chapter on the metropolitan border that its authors, Cuenca and Bozzano, call “border territories”. These authors point out that “border territories” are understood to be those areas where the trends in the appreciation of space decrease to a greater extent and propose two types of “border territories”: “hard limits” and “soft borders”. In the words of these authors, the “hard limits” are usually abrupt and of remarkable permanence in their affectation (large facilities, certain road or rail communication networks, flood areas and the most consolidated horticultural areas are the most frequent cases), while the “soft borders” are those that are subject to more dynamic territorial transformations, those spaces that are more permeable to new urban subdivisions or to the illegal settlement of the population.

The diagnosis made on the "border territories" of the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires is the result of a precise study of land uses. The map shows that the limits of these territories are given by a multiplicity of heterogeneous uses, which are listed in the map references: floodplain areas not occupied by urban subdivisions, recent urban subdivisions (between 1972 and 1992), precarious settlements and "shanty towns", vacant blocks and subdivisions with less than 10% of built-up spaces per block, unused rural or livestock plots in areas of urban real estate appreciation, large facilities (airports, airfields, military units, green spaces and air stations), peripheral industrial establishments (bordering rural parcels, extensive agricultural areas, extractive activities in furnaces, decapitated soils, cellars and *tosqueras*, and road and rail corridors.

In this way, the document marks a transition with the previous model. On the one hand, it replaces the abstraction of the modern movement with a detailed knowledge of what is happening in the different sectors of these "border territories". On the other hand, the document does not make a proposal for intervention on the territory and reduces the scale of intervention to the metropolitan area, which is the area of concern of the Agency that is in charge of work.



Source: Own elaboration based on images from the DGPBA and plot from the Atlas Ambiental de Buenos Aires site (2016)

FIGURE 8 - KNOW THE TERRITORY

3.4. *Decentralize growth*

The fourth initiative detected to affect the metropolitan border of Buenos Aires is the search to decentralize growth through the location of new centrality nodes at intersections of radial roads with the layout of provincial route No. 6 and the planned layout of the future President Perón highway. The uncertainty of metropolitan dynamics, criticism of strategic planning, and the diversity of actors involved in shaping the territory mark a change. The plan becomes a scheme of general guidelines, capable of being modified in the face of a dynamic reality and a context marked by conflicts of interest between the different actors involved.

The Undersecretary of Urbanism and Housing of the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires prepares the document *Border Guidelines* that calls the metropolitan border "periurban border" and defines it as the space between provincial route N° 6 and the future highway President Perón. *Border Guidelines* shows that illegal settlements, human settlements in floodplain valleys and productive lands, closed urbanizations, urban extension of the main roads, nodes with different roles at the intersection of provincial route N° 6 with roads are located in the "peri-urban edge". radial lines, industrial estates, strong presence of agricultural activity, concentration of green areas and reserves around the urbanized area and the transport network lacks a system of transverse rail and road connection. The study allows to highlight the heterogeneity of the territory and carries out detailed studies of the land uses and the main roads at the intersection of:

- RP 6 and North Access (Pilar-Fátima-El Remanso),
- RP 6 and Acceso Oeste (General Rodríguez-Luján),
- APP and RP 200 (Mariano Acosta),
- RP 6 and RP 200 (Zamudio-General Hornos),
- APP and RP 3 (Virrey del Pino),
- APP and Ezeiza-Cañuelas highway,
- RP 206 (Tristán Suárez),
- APP and RN 3 (Virrey del Pino) and
- RP 6, RP 3 and RP 206 (Cañuelas).

In this framework, three scenarios are determined to characterize the vacant-potential land in the "peri-urban edge": rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban, and three pilot pieces are selected:

Node 1 - Route 210-Alejandro Korn (San Vicente) Rural-Rural Scenario

Node 2 - Route 3 – Cañuelas (Cañuelas) Rural – Urban Scenario

Node 3 - West Access-Route 7 (Luján) Urban-Urban Scenario

In these pilot parts, residential, green, equipment areas and roads are established. Also, residential densities are set. For the high-density housing sector, 250 inhabitants/ha are established, for the medium-density sector, 125 inhabitants/ha are established. and for the low-density one, 65 inhabitants/ha are established.

In this way, the study marks a continuity with the detailed study of the land uses of the metropolitan border that El Conurbano Bonaerense introduces, expanding it to the metropolitan region. But, unlike this, it is not limited only to the diagnosis of the territory, but also makes a proposal for intervention on the territory, decentralizing urban growth through nodes at intersections of main roads. The plan, in a framework of uncertainty and difficulty in understanding the processes and dynamics that cross the metropolitan border, incorporates the figure of guidelines and scenarios.



Source: Own elaboration based on images from Google Earth 2012 and plot from the Atlas Ambiental de Buenos Aires site (2016)

Figure 9 - DECENTRALIZE GROWTH

4. DISCUSSIONS

Brenner and Schmid (2015) state that the demarcation between urban and rural varies according to different contexts. The review of key episodes in the planning of the metropolitan border of Buenos Aires indicates that between 1920 and 2020 different initiatives have been adopted on the metropolitan border to respond to different problems. In the mid-1920s, the initiative to segment growth sought to respond to the need to define the capital city with respect to its border districts, to differentiate the urban from the rural system. Then, in the late 1950s, faced with a scattered low-density expansion and lack of facilities, the proactive initiative to contain growth was combined with the strategic initiatives to revitalize productive areas and strengthen existing urban centers. Later, towards the mid-1990s, we identified the initiative to know the territory and study the administrative legal limits that seeks to respond to the problem of the lack of plans of metropolitan scope during the eighties and the limited municipal power. Finally, around 2010, the need to define the boundary of the agglomeration leads to the initiative to decentralize growth and define nodes of urban expansion.

Gallent and Shaw (2007) state that despite the evidence of changes in urban, rural and border space, planning continues to consider urban and rural development as the only distinctive and opposing realities. In this sense, despite the detailed analysis of the uses of the metropolitan border made by the document *Border Guidelines* (2010), culminates with the proposal to intervene on this territory through the formation of growth nodes as an expansion of the traditional city. In these nodes, green areas, equipment and residential areas are established, with high, medium and low density housing sectors. Under the criticisms of strategic planning raised in the 2000s, the plan proposes unique territorial projects that seek to limit the expansion of urbanization through similar administrative restrictions on a diverse territory.

This detailed study of the territory carried out in the document *Border Guidelines* (2010) marks a continuity with the previous episode. Towards the middle of the nineties, under the questioning of the plan as a valid tool to intervene on the territory, the decentralization of public policies towards the municipalities and the action of private capital on the territory, an exhaustive work was carried out to survey the land uses in the metropolitan area. This responds to the demand of the governor of the province for a diagnostic study of the metropolitan territory to carry out the subdivision of municipalities and shows the heterogeneity of activities that take place: urban and agricultural.

In this sense, Bowman and Thompson (2009) argue that cities are planned in relation to economic growth and social problems or needs, while the natural is usually perceived as alien to the city. However, the Regulatory Plan seeks to generate a balance between urban and rural space by ordering uses at different interconnected sectoral levels. This incorporation of rural areas in urban planning responds to the search

to contain the advance of the city on its productive lands. For this, framed in the model of "green belt" that sought to limit urban expansion in order to protect agriculture and maintain a recognizable urban form, it is proposed to revitalize agricultural areas and strengthen existing urban centers.

This search to limit urban growth is shared by the plan of the Building Aesthetics Commission which, under the "ring" model, reinterprets the green space proposal proposed by Howard at the end of the 19th century in the "garden city", seeking to differentiate the urban from the rural system. The increase of three and a half times the population of Buenos Aires, between the census of 1887 and that of 1914, and the definition of the new legal administrative limits of the City of Buenos Aires is reflected in the initiative of the plan to segment growth and define the capital.

The imported paradigms adopted by the urban planning documents analyzed reflect the anachronism addressed by Novick (2009) regarding international exchanges. The results show that the initiatives that define the urban documents reflect how political objectives, interests at stake and technical knowledge are combined, raising the question about the use of non-contemporary references, producing a gap between the existing city and the proposed city, and on the use of paradigms used in industrial countries, this being a country that has not been. Brenner and Schmid (2015), in their study on capitalist industrialized cities, postulate the urbanization of the territory and market-oriented territorial regulation at supranational, national and sub-national scales, creating a new regulatory framework that encourages speculative urban investment. However, in the metropolitan edge of Buenos Aires, the processes of commercial and leisure ventures, industries and new generation residential spaces overlap processes, progressive extension of the plot and consolidation and intensification of horticultural and floricultural uses.

The changes shown by the results that occur in the metropolitan edge of Buenos Aires demand dynamic and multifunctional planning. Metropolitan borders are heterogeneous territories of natural ecosystems and productive, agrarian and urban systems and postulate that they should be part of planning as a system different from urban and rural. However, Gallent and Shaw (2007) and Gallent, Bianconi and Andersson (2006) argue that the concept of the net physical boundary that distinguishes urban from rural along with zoning are the two main types of tools designed to contain urban growth. and they do not correspond to the reality of these territories but they are destined to contain, not to improve or to administer the metropolitan border.

In Buenos Aires, the prospects of the different initiatives of the urban planning documents analyzed could account for progress towards the improvement and administration of this territory. This is reflected in the search of the document El Conurbano Bonaerense to know in detail what is happening in this space and

that later the document Borde Guidelines deepens, expanding the study area and establishing possible scenarios.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The metropolitan border is a space associated with the transitory that has been approached in Buenos Aires through different local urban planning documents between 1920 and 2020. The initiatives proposed by the urban planning documents show that at times the metropolitan border is conceived as a border while that in others it is conceived as a space to be explored and known or also as a place to receive urban growth.

The results reflect that it is not possible to define the metropolitan border from a unitary perspective and that the way of thinking about them is built through different episodes that confirm the concerns and interests about them. Faced with the foregoing, the need to investigate the conceptual evolution of this territory in non-industrialized countries is considered and it also opens up a series of questions about what happens in this intermediate and mutant territory that extends between the consolidated city and the rural space and on which it is necessary to deeper into.

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